

# Games Master International Issue 3

## *Plague Lords Preview*

**Joe Dever** is the creator of the bestselling Lone Wolf adventure books and novels.

This is a reproduction of an article that originally appeared in the October 1990 edition of Games Master International magazine regarding the forthcoming publication of Joe Dever's *The Plague Lords of Ruel*.

Also included in the issue and reproduced herein is a competition to win a copy of Peter Andrew Jones' gorgeous cover artwork for the book.

**Contributors** for Project Aon Editions

This project would have been impossible without the helpful contributions of:

**Simon Osborne** – scans of the original article, creator and maintainer of this document.

**Jonathan Blake** – some graphical manipulation of the artwork.

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# Games Master

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INTERNATIONAL

The Independent Fantasy Gaming Monthly

EXCLUSIVE!

**MEET  
JOE DEVER'S  
PLAGUE LORDS**

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Roleplaying  
made easy?

**SNAKE  
EYES**  
A Runequest  
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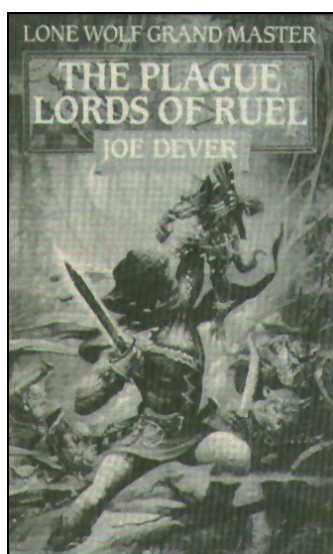


# THE

GAMESMASTER BOOK EXTRACT

# PLAGUE LORDS OF RUEL

BY  
JOE  
DEVER



“Your victory is total. At last you have fulfilled your destiny to avenge the Kai and rid your world of an evil which has threatened it for thousands of years. You return to Sommerlund a conquering hero and, as Kai Grand Master, you begin the task of restoring the Kai to their former glory. The chronicle of your struggle against the Darklords of Helgedad will pass into legend, inspiring future generations of Kai warriors to keep alive your ideals of bravery, skill and selfless courage. Yet the saga that is the story of your life does not end here. In future times the

chronicle will tell of the adventures you undertook during your Kai Grand Mastership. Until the time comes for their telling, may the Gods Ishir and Kai watch over you, Grand Master Lone Wolf, hero and saviour of Sommerlund.”

So ended *The Masters of Darkness*, the twelfth book in Joe Dever’s acclaimed Lone Wolf adventure game-book series in which you, intrepid reader, became Lone Wolf—the last Kai Master of Sommerlund. In the course of the first twelve books, your ongoing quest was to restore the warrior Order of the Kai and avenge their massacre by destroying their murderers—the mega-bad Darklords of Helgedad. This quest was finally completed in Book 12. But ever since *Masters* was published, back in April 1988, Joe Dever has been inundated with literally thousands of letters from Lone Wolf fans all over the world, urging him to keep his promise to continue the saga of the Kai. Well, this is exactly what he’s done and GamesMaster International is proud to bring you this Lone Wolf exclusive.

*The Plague Lords of Ruel* is the first of the Lone Wolf Grand Master

Series, published this October by Red Fox Books. Here, for the first time, we publish an extract giving the background to the new series, and details of the perilous quest which awaits you.

The Story So Far . . .

**Y**ou are Grand Master Lone Wolf, last of the Kai Lords of Sommerlund and sole survivor of a massacre that wiped out the First Order of your élite warrior caste.

It is the year MS 5075 and twenty-five years have passed since your brave kinsmen perished at the hands of the Darklords of Helgedad. These champions of evil, who were sent forth by Naar, the King of the Darkness, to destroy the fertile world of Magnamund, have themselves since been destroyed. You vowed to avenge the murder of the Kai and you kept your pledge, for it was you who brought about their downfall when alone you infiltrated their foul domain—the Darklands—and caused the



Illustration: Peter Andrew Jones Copyright: Solar Wind Library

destruction of their leader, Archlord Gnaag, and the core of their cancerous power that was the infernal city of Helgedad.

In the wake of their destruction, chaos befell the Darkland armies who, until then, had been poised to conquer all of Northern Magnamund. Some factions which comprised this huge army, most notably the barbaric Drakkarim, began to fight with the others for control. This disorder quickly escalated into an all-out civil war, which allowed the Freeland armies of Magnamund time in which to recover and launch a counter-offensive. Skilfully their commanders exploited the chaos and secured a swift and total victory over an enemy far superior in numbers.

**F**or five years now peace has reigned in Sommerlund. Under your direction, the once-ruined Monastery of the Kai has been thoroughly rebuilt and restored to its former glory, and you have begun the task of training a Second Order of Kai warriors so that the skills and proud traditions of your ancestors will be carried forward in the centuries to come. The new

generation of Kai recruits, all of whom were born during the era of war against the Darklords, possess latent Kai skills and show exceptional promise. These skills will be nurtured and honed to perfection during their time at the monastery so that they may teach and inspire future generations, thereby ensuring the continued security of your homeland in future.

Your attainment of the rank of Kai Grand Master brought with it great rewards. Some, such as the restoration of the Kai and the undying gratitude of your fellow Sommlending, could have been anticipated. Yet there have also been rewards which you could not possibly have foreseen. The discovery that within you lay the potential to develop Kai Disciplines beyond those of the Magnakai, which, until now, were thought to be the ultimate that a Kai Master could aspire to, was truly a revelation. Your discovery has inspired you to set out upon a new and previously unknown path in search of the wisdom and power that no Kai Lord before you has ever possessed.

In the name of your creator, the God Kai, and for the greater glory of Sommerlund and the Goddess Ishir, you have vowed to reach the very pinnacle of Kai perfection—to attain all of the Grand Master Disciplines and become the first Kai Supreme Master.

**W**ith diligence and determination you set about the restoration of the Kai Monastery and organized the training of the Second Order recruits. Your efforts were soon rewarded and, within the space of two short years, the first raw recruits had graduated to become a cadre of gifted Kai Masters who, in turn, were able to commence the teaching of their skills to subsequent intakes of Kai novices. Readily the Kai Masters rose to their newfound responsibilities, leaving you free to devote more of your time to the pursuit and perfection of the Grand Master Disciplines. During this period you also received expert tutelage in the ways of magic from two of your most trusted friends and advisors: Guildmaster Banedon, leader of the Brotherhood of the Crystal Star, and Lord Rimoah, speaker from the



High Council of the Elder Magi.

In the deepest subterranean level of the monastery, one hundred feet below the Tower of the Sun, you ordered the excavation and construction of a special vault. In this magnificent chamber wrought of granite and gold, you placed the seven Lorestones of Nyxator, the gems of Kai power that you had recovered during your quest for the Magnakai. It was here, bathed in the golden light of those radiant gems, that you spent countless hours in pursuit of perfection. Sometimes alone, sometimes in the company of your two able advisors—Banedon and Rimoah—you worked hard to develop your innate Grand Master Disciplines and grasp the fundamental secrets of Left-handed and Old Kingdom magic. During this time you noticed many remarkable changes taking place within your body: you became physically and mentally stronger, your five primary senses sharpened beyond all that you had experienced before, and, perhaps most remarkably, your body began to age at a much slower rate. Now, for every five years that elapse you age but one year.

At this time many changes were also occurring beyond the borders of Sommerlund. In the regions

to the northeast of Magador and the Maakengorge, the Elder Magi of Dessi and the Herbwardens of Bautar were working together in an effort to restore the dusty wasteland to its former fertile state. It was the first tentative step towards the reclamation of all the Darklands. However, although they had had notable successes in these regions, generally their progress was

**"The liquid was discovered to be a powerful vaccine against a new and complex plague virus."**

painfully slow and both parties were resigned to the fact that their efforts to undo the damage caused by the Darklords would take not years but centuries to complete.

In the far west, the Drakkarim had retreated to their homelands and were engaged in a bloody war against the Lencians. Much of Nyras had been reclaimed by the armies of King Sarnac, the Lencian commander, and his flag now flew over a land which, two thousand years ago, had once been part of Lencia.

Following the destruction of the

Darklords of Helgedad, the Giaks, the most prolific in number of all of Gnaag's troops, fled into the Darklands and sought refuge in the gigantic city-fortresses of Nadgazad, Aarnak, Gournen and Kaag. Within each of these hellish strongholds there exists now a state of frenzied civil war as the remnants of the Xaghash (lesser Darklords) and the Nadziranim (evil practitioners of Right-handed magic who once aided individual Darklord masters) fight for control. By virtue of their geographic locations, and the struggles taking place within them, each of these city-fortresses is isolated from the next and poses no immediate threat to the peoples of the Free Kingdoms. It is widely believed that by the time the Elder Magi and the Herbalish reach the walls of these strongholds the occupants will have long since brought about their own extinction.

Elsewhere, throughout the Northern Magnamund, peace reigns victorious and the peoples of the Free Kingdoms rejoice in the knowledge that the age of the Darklords has finally come to an end. Readily men have exchanged their swords for hoes and their shields for ploughs, and now the marching they do is along the ruts

## LONE WOLF MASTERFILE

Publication of *The Plague Lords of Ruel* (336pgs, £3.99) spearheads a veritable invasion of **Lone Wolf** related material to hit the streets this winter.



Joe Dever

**Red Fox Books**, the teenage imprint of **Arrow Books**, is reprinting the entire Lone Wolf series (Books 1–12), all featuring new cover artwork by **Peter Jones**.

Prolific as ever, **Joe Dever** has already finished a further two

**Grand Master** gamebooks entitled *The Captives of Kaag* (No. 14) and *The Darke Crusade* (No. 15), which will be in the shops in December 1990 and March 1991 respectively.

The four novels which so far comprise the *Legends of Lone Wolf* set, by Joe Dever and **John Grant**, based on the gamebook saga, have proved something of a commercial success. Joe and John have now been signed up to write a further four titles in the series. The first of these, entitled *The Claws of Helgedad*, will be published in June 1991, alongside reprints of the first four titles, by Arrow Books.

Going online early this month are five new telephone adventure games on the **PhoneQuest** line (0898 555 525), all written by Joe Dever. Four of the games—*Ninja*, *Tomb of the Sphinx*, *Vampire Hunter* and *Alien Intruder*—encompass popular role-playing themes, while the fifth—*The Forbidden Tower*—is a completely new Lone Wolf adventure. The game features the voice of former

Doctor Who, **Tom Baker**, and has been produced using new telecommunications hardware designed specifically to eradicate the problems which plagued the first PhoneQuest release *The Fortress of Doom*. A completely new rules system, prizes, limited time duration to keep costs down, and a new game each month will make the PhoneQuest line very interesting.

There's even Lone Wolf knitwear now available from a company called **Fantasy Knitwear**. A colour brochure is available if you send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to **Fantasy Knitwear c/o C&EG, PO Box 120, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 1PB**.

And finally, there's a new range of Lone Wolf miniatures shortly to be available from **Alternative Armies**. The first release is planned for November with regular releases to follow. For a brochure, send an SSAE to **Alternative Armies, Unit 6, Parkway Court, Glaisdale Parkway, Bilborough, Notts, NG8 4GN**.

of their freshly furrowed fields. Few are the watchful eyes that scan the distant horizon in fear of what may appear, although there are still those who maintain their vigilance, for the agents of Naar come in many guises and there are those who wait quietly in the shadows for the chance to do his evil bidding.

Often, over the past two years, Lord Rimoah has warned you to be wary of one such group. They are known as the Cener Druids and they occupy a small, forested realm to the south of the Stornlands called Ruel, which they have made virtually impregnable to invasion through the use of evil herbcraft. Once, long ago, after the defeat of Naar's greatest champion—Agarash the Damned—they were used by Naar as agents of revenge. Then they formulated and released a plague that decimated the Elder Magi and left the way open for their conquest of Magnamund. Now the Elder Magi fear that, as before, Naar will use them again to enact revenge for the defeat of his champions. They fear that they will seek to destroy the Second Order of the Kai before it becomes too strong, for your quest for mastery of the Grand Master Disciplines has opened a door to such goodly power that even Naar himself may be unable to counter it. Unless he closes that door, others of your kind could soon be following in your footsteps.

**A**lready the Elder Magi have petitioned the courts of all the Freeland rulers, beseeching them to act immediately and destroy the Cenerese before it is too late. Many of the kingdoms they have visited unwittingly harboured secret sects of Cener Druids who practised their vile herbcraft, often in remote areas. Sommerlund was one such land. Only a year ago, a sect of Cenerese was found in the foothills of the Durncraggs engaging in blood rituals at a site less than a day's ride from the Kai Monastery. News of this prompted action which brought about a scourge of the Lastlands and forced many Cenerese sects to flee to the safety of Ruel. The regular armies of three nations—Palmyrion, Lourden, and Slovia—are now encamped around its border in an attempt to contain the Cener threat. They remain watchful, but that is all they can hope to do. The Cenerese are too powerful within their own domain for the Freeland armies to

dare launch an invasion. One such attempt has already ended in disaster. Six months ago an allied force numbering seven thousand men entered the Forest of Ruel, intent on storming the Cenerese fortress of Mogaruith and razing it to the ground. Seven thousand men went into the forest: only seventy returned alive.

Despite the vigilance of these

**"The Cenerese are getting ready to unleash an airborne plague virus that could kill all the living creatures of Magnamund."**

three Freeland armies, the containment of the Cenerese threat within Ruel has not been entirely successful. To the south, the Cenerese can enter and leave their realm by means of tunnels which honeycomb the Skardos Mountains. These secret passages emerge in the free state of Caron, at the northern edge of the Rootstrangle Swamp which, in due course, drains into the Tentarias (the great waterway which divides the northern and southern continents of Magnamund). Once access to the Tentarias has been achieved, the Cenerese are virtually free to sail to any port or country of their choosing. Caron is helpless to prevent the Cenerese from using this route through their land. They are a poor nation with few resources, and the Rootstrangle Swamp is one of the most difficult places to patrol. It comprises a constantly shifting morass of mud flats and rotting vegetation, inhabited by Tzargs—a carnivorous race of frog-like animals originally bred by the Cenerese for the sole purpose of guiding them through the swamp's ever-shifting channels.

**O**n midsummer's day, Lord Rimoah arrived at the monastery without, as customary on such occasions, any forewarning of his visit. His unexpected appearance surprised the other Kai and caused them to speculate in whispers about the reasons for his journey. Yet his coming was of no surprise to you. For days you had experienced a feeling of unease, a presentiment that your orderly life at the monastery was about to undergo a dramatic change. Rimoah brought with him a glass

phial of pale green liquid, a liquid that was proof-positive that the Cenerese were indeed preparing to enact Naar's revenge upon the Free Kingdoms of Magnamund.

The phial had been found among the possessions of a Cener Druid who had been caught in the city of Ragadorn after having been followed there by a watchful Herbwarden from Bautar. Under interrogation, the Cener revealed that he had been sent to Ragadorn by Arch Druid Cadak, the ruler of Ruel, to distribute the phials of this liquid to agents sympathetic to the Cenerese cause. The Herbwarden had sent the phial to Dessi where the Elder Magi, upon analysing the liquid, discovered it to be a powerful vaccine against a new and complex plague virus. Judging by the composition of the vaccine, this plague virus would prove to be several times more lethal than the Great Plague which had so devastated their race thousands of years ago. The Cener succeeded in taking his own life before he revealed further details, but, judging from the evidence in their possession, the Elder Magi were convinced that the Cenerese are getting ready to unleash an airborne plague virus that could kill all the living creatures of Magnamund, save those that had ingested the vaccine.

Rimoah informs you that the Elder Magi are unable to replicate the vaccine in huge quantities, and even if they were so able, to distribute it to every living creature on Magnamund would be an impossible task.

"The Herbwardens are sure that the Cener they found in Ragadorn was one of the first of those sent out of Mogaruith to distribute this vaccine," said Rimoah, his voice uncharacteristically sombre. "Therefore we must act quickly if we are to destroy the virus before Cadak is ready to release it into the atmosphere. Someone must enter Mogaruith. They must find and destroy the plague virus, and they must ensure that this evil work can never again be resumed."

**F**or a long moment you stood in silence staring into Rimoah's unblinking eyes. Then, with a nod of your head, you acknowledge what had to be done. Only a Kai Grand Master possesses the skills and experience that would be essential to the success of this vital mission . . . and there is only one Kai Grand Master.

**WINMASTER**  
Competition

# WIN A SIGNED LIMITED-EDITION PRINT OF THE ORIGINAL LONE WOLF



## THE PLAGUE LORDS OF RUEL COVER ARTWORK!

A strictly limited-edition of 10 full-colour prints of the Lone Wolf

*The Plague Lords of Ruel* cover art are up for grabs.

Each of these superb prints will be signed by the author Joe Dever and artist Peter Jones,  
and will come with a number certificate of authenticity.

Ten runners-up will each receive copies of the Lone Wolf *The Plague Lords of Ruel* gamebook,  
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To enter, all you have to do is answer the following questions based on this month's  
exclusive Lone Wolf *GamesMaster International* book extract.

1. How many years have passed since the massacre of the Kai took place?  
Answer
2. Who is the leader of the Brotherhood of the Crystal Star?  
Answer
3. Who is your creator?  
Answer
4. What is the name given to the lesser Darklords?  
Answer
5. Who is the ruler of Ruel?  
Answer
6. Name the great waterway which divides northern and southern Magnamund?  
Answer
7. How many soldiers of the Freeland armies survived the ill-fated invasion of Ruel?  
Answer

Name.....

Age.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Send your answers to Newsfield, Lone Wolf Competition,  
GamesMaster International, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1JW.  
The closing date is 18th October 1990.

# ERRATA:

## Page 38:

Replaced 'Sommerlund' with 'Sommerlund.', italicised 'The Masters of Darkness', replaced 'game book' with 'gamebook', and 'on-going' with 'ongoing', italicised 'Masters', replaced 'Plague-Lords' with 'Plague Lords', and replaced 'MS' with 'ms'.

## Page 39:

Replaced 'monastery of the Kai' with 'Monastery of the Kai', and 'Kai monastery' with 'Kai Monastery'.

## Page 40:

Replaced 'left-handed' with 'Left-handed', 'twoards' with 'towards', 'north-east' with 'northeast', and 'right-handed' with 'Right-handed'.

## Page 40 (Lone Wolf Masterfile):

Replaced 'Plague-Lords' with 'Plague Lords', both occurrences of 'No' with 'No.', and 'roleplaying' with 'role-playing'.

## Page 41:

Replaced 'able ,' with 'able,', 'Kai monastery' with 'Kai Monastery', 'Cener druid' with 'Cener Druid', and 'vaccine," Rimoah' with 'vaccine," said Rimoah'.

## Competition (Page 46):

Replaced 'LIMITED- EDITION' with 'LIMITED-EDITION', 'full colour' with 'full-colour', 'GamesMaster International' with 'GamesMaster International', and all three occurrences of 'Plague-Lords' with 'The Plague Lords'.

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30 June 2006

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