The DJINN-EFREET WAR

A NEW VARIANT FOR THE OLDEST *MAGIC* EXPANSION

By Michael Searle

Sure, you've controlled a jungle full of Kird Apes, or commanded the awesome power of Aladdin's Ring. You may even have faced the insidious Juzam Djinn with only a Camel and a handful of white magic.

If you have, you've stepped outside the bounds of the normal *Magic* Universe and entered the myriad of worlds that populate the multiverse of Dominia. How cool is it that Wizards of the Coast actually based their first expansion set on real fairy tales? Think of the possibilities: imagine a *Magic* set based on the Arthurian legends!

WotC's Arabian Nights is taken from *A Thousand and One Arabian Nights*, fairy tales that are supposed to have taken place during the eighth-century reign of Great Caliph Haroun al Raschid of Baghdad. The basic story goes that the Sultan Shahriyar married a new wife each evening and executed them the following morning. (Sounds like a nut case to me. Don't ask me why he offed them—I guess he's really fickle.)

One young bride told the sultan a story on her wedding night. Cleverly, she stopped her tale when she got to the most interesting part, just before dawn, and promised to conclude the tale the next day. It was a good scheme, and after continuing for 1,001 nights—the sultan might have had no patience for women, but he was a sucker for a good story—the sultan was convinced of her fidelity and intelligence, and she got to sleep without worrying about breakfast in bed being a knife blade.

Neat, huh? But did you know that the clever young bride's name was Shahrazad?

There's all kinds of other cool tidbits you can learn from actually reading the *Arabian Nights* tales. During Sindbad's great voyages, seven in number, he traveled to the treacherous Diamond Valley, was ensnared by the giant Rukh, and met the Old Man of the Sea. Ali from Cairo braved a deadly haunted house; he lived to tell about it, and gain great riches too. Ma'ruf, the poor cobbler, rose to power with the help of a djinn. King Suleiman, seen by some as a prophet of God, was so powerful that he could imprison djinns and efreets in bottles of brass, sealing them in with molten lead.
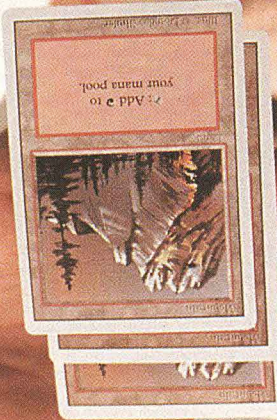
There are so many memorable tales...so many that we decided to build our own story...

How to Play

Here's our variant for *Magic*. It creates a special world setting for the battling players. Here's a step-by-step breakdown on how to play:

Overview: The game is limited to *Arabian Nights* and Revised cards. The object of the game is to be the first team to reach 10 Victory Points. The Victory Points chart on page 40 tells you how to earn points.

Team Play: You can play with any amount of players (well, other than one). It probably works best with Emperor-style rules: three on three, with the Resources set to the side in plain sight of both teams. However, you can use whatever team-play rules you wish, or even try a big multiplayer chaos game.

Setup: Cards used in the setup cannot be used in player decks.

First, place all the one-point Resources in a row on the table. The two- and three-point Resources like City in a Bottle and King Suleiman should be in a separate row behind the first (see diagram on page 40).

Second, shuffle up all 18 Guardians (creatures from the Revised set—mix in weak and strong ones) and put them face up beside each Resource. One creature guards each of the Resources in the front row, and two or three guard the back-row Resources.

Finally, create the Treasures and Traps. The former are the remaining nine *Arabian Nights* artifacts (Jeweled Bird, an ante card, is out; you should have Bottle of Suleiman, Brass Man, Dancing Scimitar, Ebony Horse, Flying Carpet, Jandor's Ring, Jandor's Saddlebags, Pyramids, and Sandals of Abdallah). Then choose Traps—spells that will injure the player who uncovers them. We suggest Oubliette, Desert Twister, and Magnetic Mountain. Mix the Treasures and Traps together, then slip one face down under each Resource. Each will be revealed when its Resource is uncovered.

Try building player decks in different ways. Allow each player to use one of each remaining *Arabian Nights* card in her deck. Or take the leftover *Arabian Nights* cards and deal them out to the players. Fill out decks with Revised cards.

Sample Guardians: Air Elemental, Bog Wraith, Earth Elemental, Fire Elemental, Frozen Shade, Giant Spider, Juggernaut, Mahamoti Djinn, Mesa Pegasus, Savannah Lions, Scryb Sprites, Sea Serpent, Sengir Vampire, Serra Angel, Shivan Dragon, War Mammoth, Water Elemental, and White Knight.

Story: King Suleiman can destroy djinns and efreets whenever he feels like it. In order to gain King Suleiman's trust, you must sacrifice an *Arabian Nights* artifact to him—that's *if* you break through his Guardians and win an audience with him. If you break into the king's fortress, you can remove him from the game, though it's probably in your best interests to fork over an artifact and gain the most powerful ally in the game!

Starting the Game: Do whatever you normally do to decide who goes first and start the game.

Attacking: Basically, you have two choices: attack your opponents or attack the Resources. If you attack another team, follow your usual rules. If you attack the Resources—well, that's why we wrote this.

Victory Points

Task Completed or Resource Acquired	...Points
Eliminating an Emperor (in Emperor games)	3
Eliminating another player (in non-Emperor games)	3
Eliminating a General (in Emperor games)	2
King Suleiman	3
Aladdin's Ring	2
Ali from Cairo	2
City in a Bottle	2
Ring of Ma'ruf	2
Aladdin's Lamp	1
Bazaar of Baghdad	1
Diamond Valley	1
Island of Wak-Wak	1
Library of Alexandria	1
Old Man of the Sea	1
Sorceress Queen	1

1) Decide which player is attacking which Resource. Only one attack can be launched at the same Resource by one player or team each turn; if you want to go for two separate ones, that's fine.

2) Follow the normal combat rules for *Magic*, except that the Guardian(s) blocks *all* creatures, regardless of flying or other special abilities. In addition, your opponents (the group to your immediate left in games with more than two teams) get to distribute damage to your attackers as they choose. If the Guardian has any special abilities, your opponents also control them, using their available mana as applicable.

3) To defeat a Guardian, you must kill it in combat. If a Guardian is alive, you cannot claim its Resource. If you destroy the Guardian and some of your creatures survive the fight, then you claim the Resource and the Treasure or Trap beneath as well. So if you attacked Diamond Valley and won, the Valley would come back untapped to your playing area and could be used immediately. However, if you kill the Guardian but lose all your attackers in the battle, the Resource lies open, and can be claimed by whoever can successfully send a creature. Remember, only one attack on a Resource per turn!

4) Beneath each Resource is a Treasure or Trap. The Treasures come straight into play on your side, just like a Resource. Should you pull a Trap, your opponents (or the group to your left in games with more than two teams) get to choose how the spell affects your team. If a Desert Twister lay in wait, your opponents would choose which card it destroyed.

5) Finally, and most importantly, all Guardians and unclaimed Resources are only considered in play during the combat phase of an attack. At all other times, they are considered out of play, and thus are unaffected by any general effects such as Earthquake, Wrath of God, or Pestilence.

Ending the Game: The game ends as soon as a team reaches 10 victory points, or all other teams are eliminated.

If you like this variation, there's lots more versions you can try. After all, why limit yourself to the *Arabian Nights* expansion? Just come up with your own story, set up the cards, and have some fun!

Game Diagram — Set your game up as follows ◄- - - - - - - - - - - -