



# THE DIE CASTER



## EDITORS INTRODUCTION



Going back through the history of GEAS magazines, I found that one staple is ever-present: the Editor's rant. I am told (since there is no date anywhere that I can find actually in the magazine) that the first issue of Obscurity Inc. was published in 1984. The last GEAS magazine published was the last issue of The Sign in 1995. In those two, and in every single GEAS magazine in between that I can find, there has been a

section, the sole purpose of which seems to be to provide the Editor with an opportunity to vent about the fact that no one seems to want to contribute to the magazine. That's an impressive 11 years (well, it would be if there had ever been any consistent publishing schedule) of phlegm, despair and spite projected onto GEAS by a long line of hard working editors. I, of course, intend to respect this tradition, although I fear it will be difficult with this first issue, since it is mostly the fault of my, and only my, poor life organising skills that what you are reading is probably still warm from its time within a printer. So I'll let you off this time GEAS, but be warned: if you haven't enjoyed this issue, then the way to fix that is by sending us pieces for the next issue. Game system reviews would be absolutely wonderful (and if other people don't send them in, then I warn you, you may end up reading my thoughts on D&D 5e, which aren't at all pretty), but letters or art or anything else would be much appreciated. We also have ideas for recurring pieces of which I plan to inform members of the society in person at Sunday and Wednesday sessions, but if you keep an eye out (and record) any amusing out-of-context gaming quotes, or if there are any dice you are particularly keen on publicly shaming, then please, let us know and send anything that you think might be of interest to us to [DieCasterMag@gmail.com](mailto:DieCasterMag@gmail.com) (which, I hope, should be easier than fulfilling the requests of the first editor of Obscurity Inc, who asked for pieces, "preferably typed", to be mailed to what I presume was his home address).

So with the moan and the plug out of the way, I'll quickly introduce myself. My name is Milo van Mesdag and if you've never heard of me then I can only apologise that you've been missing out. Although in all seriousness it's probably because, up until this term, I've been a Wednesday purist (because if you're not having to fight over tables in the New Amphion you're not gaming properly). This will be my third year at GEAS and I very much look forward to being your Editor in Chief for the coming year, at least. However, much as I would like to claim all of the credit for this magazine, the real work, as well as the idea to bring back the fanzine in the first place, was all that of Ruth Gray, our Creative Editor.

### Creative Editor

Good morning! As I'm currently sitting editing this magazine the night before it needs printed (yay planning!) I will keep my greeting brief. I have been a part of GEAS since I was a wee fresher, and have been adding colour and glitter to the society since. I can usually be found drawing and rolling an impressive number of failures in a row!



I am responsible for all the artwork within this issue – but can only partly take credit for the cover! It was inspired by the society crest, which I did not even know existed until we started researching this committee. I also would like to take this opportunity to mention that despite my style, the committee is not in fact 12. That aside, I have been informed they do largely resemble them, so if you meet them, say hi! They are all lovely people. Think you can do better? Feel free to submit artwork and suggestions to the magazine! We'd love to see it. But for now, enjoy!

## GREETINGS, GRAND ADVENTURERS!

Welcome to the Grand Edinburgh Adventuring Society, where we roleplay and throw dice and also occasionally do some other things! To those returning, welcome back, to those new to the society, please make yourself comfortable! My name is Judith, and I will serve as your President this year. I hope it will be just as good, if not better, than previous years!

As our main society activity, we will be running roleplaying games every Wednesday and twice every Sunday, beginning with the first round of pitches on September 20th and 24th respectively. Members are free to play or GM as they like, and games can last from six weeks (as pitching happens every six weeks) to a semester to possibly an entire year, depending on the GM and the players.

To make sure you're entirely up to date on all the details regarding rooms, dates and times, make sure you are signed up for our mailing list! It's full of useful information and written quite passionately by our lovely secretary Tudor. The mailing list will also keep you up to date with potential dates for pub socials, society outings and much, much more. Coincidentally, so will our Facebook group!

Then we have the other events we will be organising, as we do every year: Compulsion, our yearly weekend-long gaming convention, Propulsion, our 24-hour charity gaming event, and the Student National Roleplaying Games, where we duke it out with the other gaming societies in the UK. They're all very exciting and /extremely/ fun - and as we all know, fun is mandatory.

All in all, we have a busy year ahead of us, and I hope that you'll all stick around the society to see it through!

**Judith Spaargaren**  
GEAS President 2017-18

## THE HISTORY OF GEAS

The history of GEAS is long and shrouded in myth. Few chronicles survive of the olden times and those who were there to witness it dare not speak of it. What follows is all that can be gleaned from diving into the vast and confusing archives of the legendary GEAS website.

In amongst the hundreds upon hundreds of pages on the ten years worth of archived webpages, only one solid mention of the history of the society could be found (amongst pages detailing the society's position on Babylon 5, cheese, fundamentalist attacks, Irn Bru and literally hundreds of other subjects) and it goes as follows:

*"GEAS was founded in 1978, and somebody needs to add some more about its history here. If you would like to contribute, please contact the Chronicler."*

Where we stand now, fourteen years after that post was written, we have no chronicler, but this humble editor will attempt to fill in at least a few more details. In 1987, after what we can only presume were several years of blood magic and shadowy back room global political manipulation, GEAS hosted Dungeon Aid, Scotland's first gaming convention and an attempt to raise money for charity. The event went through a couple of name changes before finally in 1995 becoming the event we all know and love today: Compulsion, host of the Griffie and Banquo awards, Scotland's largest and oldest gaming convention and the only event that this editor knows to have a 'Chief Griffinologist' on the organising committee.

But going further back for a second, the society had a number of 'Fanzines', much like this one, the earliest of which ran from 1984 to at least 1995, but their purpose seems to have been usurped by the GEAS website, called the GEAS village. This is, unsurprisingly given our main source of information on the history of the society, the area of the society we know most about. I shall let its last post, written by its creator, David Donachie, do the talking:

*"The GEAS website, under the name of The GEAS Village, was once the largest independent roleplaying website in the world."*

*Founded in the very first years of the Web (1993 and 94) the Village led the way with graphics, archives of roleplaying material, some of the web's first message boards and online role playing games, and a vast following of regulars.*

*At times the accesses to the Village topped 200,000 visits a week, in a time when the University of Edinburgh as a whole barely got twice that. [...]*

*At times controversial, at times immensely popular, the Village set a standard for University and independent gaming sites, and generated many imitators the world over.*

*The Village was the creation of David Donachie [...], a student at the University of Edinburgh, who was a member of the council of GEAS for 8 years”*

Sadly, the GEAS Village closed down in 2001 and the society has had no consistent voice since.

Until now.

Just as the Fanzines of the early 90s gave way to the website, we here at The Die Caster are attempting to go full circle and once again recreate the glory of GEAS days past. After all, going back to the nostalgic wonder of recent history seems to be all the rage nowadays....

## INTRODUCTION TO ROLEPLAYING

“What is this ‘roleplaying’ thing?” you may be asking yourself, probably most likely prefaced by the thought, “When I saw Grand Edinburgh Adventuring Society, I thought it was mountain climbing”. Fear not, for we are here to tell you!

Roleplaying, as defined by the Oxford Living Dictionary, is “The acting out of the part of a particular person or character”, or, not particularly usefully, “Participation in a role-playing game”.

Satisfied?

No?

I’ll go on. The best definition of Roleplaying I’ve heard was “collaborative improvisational storytelling.” While, of course, like any good definition this is still frustratingly vague, it hits the main points in just three simple words.

Practically, roleplaying games usually take the form of a group of people coming together and telling a story. Traditionally, one person, whom we shall call the Games Master, or GM, is in charge of creating and describing a world: a collection of places, things, characters and stories. Each other roleplayer will be a ‘player’, who will control a single character within the world that the GM creates. The players will then describe what they do within the world, limited and enabled by the rules of the system, usually manifested by a rulebook or set of rules. So in any given scene, the GM would describe the surroundings that the players’ characters, the PCs, are in, the players would then state what they want their characters to do within that space, abiding by the rules (so if the rulebook says that your character can’t fly, you can’t describe your character flying), and then the GM will describe how the world and the people in it, the non-player characters or NPCs, react.

In reality, while this is the most common form of roleplaying, found in many table-top game systems such as Dungeons and Dragons, Pathfinder and many, many others, there is no set rule on the structure of a roleplaying game. Live Action Roleplaying Games, or LARPs, require the players to actually dress up as their characters and act like their characters. However, here at GEAS we mainly play table-top roleplaying games: games where we all sit around a table and merely describe our character's actions (although often we act out our character's speech), but even these exist in many different flavours, from games with no GMs to games where each player controls multiple characters, or all the players control one character.

So what's it like to play a roleplaying game? Why would I want to play one? Well, that question has as many different answers as there are different systems of roleplaying games (hint: there are thousands). Different ones focus on different things, including tactics, acting, improvisation, creativity, discovery, mathematics, storytelling, strategy, luck and comedic wit. There are games for budding actors, enthusiastic story/character/world builders and great strategists.

And what is the setting of these roleplaying games, you ask? Is it all elves and dragons? Of course, if you want elves and dragons, then we've got plenty. But anything you can think of can be a setting for a roleplaying game. In my two years at GEAS, I've roleplayed an alien, a DOTA champion, a Liberal Democrat who shapeshifts into a dragon god, a Jedi, a dimension shifting priestess, the avatar of the colour beige (see page 14) and a cultist determined to subvert Trump's Presidential campaign into a summoning ritual for an alien god. (*Creative ED: For comparison, I have played a magical princess, the Good Fairy (terrifying), a robo-puppy, a ninja with mittens of doom and a delusional jedi who believed they were a magical girl. So pretty much anything goes!*) As a player you'll have a huge variety to choose from, but as a GM the limit is quite literally your imagination.

So now that you know what roleplaying is, go out and find yourself a game!



## MEET THE COMMITTEE!

Judith Spaargaren  
GEAS President  
Neutral Good(?)



Hi, I'm Judith - President and the youngest member of the committee at the time, but voting for inexperienced blondes seems to have been a trend when we held our elections. Jokes aside, I absolutely adore GEAS and all its members - if you have any questions at all, don't hesitate to ask; I'd be delighted to attempt to answer them for you, or

direct you towards someone who actually knows answers. I've been a member of the society for two years now (which, coincidentally, is the amount of years that I've been studying history - going into third year) and the time I don't spend there I spend reading more books than I have time for and growing more plants than I have room for. I also really like poetry, necromancy, and tea.

Possibly due, but at least related, to my interest in history and stories, I'm really into story-heavy, character-driven systems and games. Anything with a sweeping narrative and a vibrant world will drag me in in no time - intrigue and politics, personal tragedy, the role of man in a world where he is not alone, all of that good stuff.

My main role as the President is to be the leader and the organiser of the society, which, believe me, sounds a lot more intimidating than it is - we have a fantastic committee that is just as passionate about the society as I am, which makes my job so much easier. That being said, if you ever have anything - any questions, comments, concerns, ideas, curses, grievances - definitely come and talk to me. Even if you don't have anything to say, please come and chat sometime. Again - welcome to GEAS, and I really hope you'll stick around!

Erich Essman

Level: ??

Eternal Treasurer



Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Madness,  
Magic, Finance

Alignment: Unknown

Then down the wide lane betwixt the two columns a lone figure strode, with prismatic robes and crowned with a golden pschent that glowed with inherent light. Close up to the Adventurer strode that regal figure; whose proud carriage and swart features had in them the fascination of a dark god or fallen

archangel, and around whose eyes there lurked the languid sparkle of a capricious humour. It spoke, and in its mellow tones there rippled the mild of music of Lethean streams. 'Adventurer,' said the voice, 'you have come to see the Great Ones whom it is unlawful for men to see...Fain would the powers from Outside bring chaos and horror to you, Adventurer...Forget not this warning, lest horrors unthinkable suck you into the gulf of shrieking and ululant madness. Remember the Other Gods; they are great and mindless and terrible, and lurk in the Outer Voids. They are good gods to avoid...Pray to all space that you may never meet me in my thousand other forms. Farewell, Adventurer, and beware.

Tudor Ferariu

GEAS Secretary

Alignment: Loud Argumentative



Greetings Grand Adventurer, I study AI with Computer Science and am otherwise a nerd who watches anime and plays gets angry at random computer games, all while trying to pass through university with a decent grade and have some fun. Other hobbies include:

Cooking, Existential Dread and Jogging. Mostly friendly, but occasionally insufferable, I am the source of all those mails that you have been, or soon will be, receiving, but hey it's the easiest way to communicate our society activities so please read them. (◡‿◡)

I joined GEAS at the start of my first year of university, in 2014. Back then I really had no idea what roleplaying was like, since it's just not a thing in my home country, but I really wanted to try it. Having only tentatively interacted with rules-heavy systems like D&D 3.5, I was pleasantly surprised and instantly hooked by the more narrative and simple systems that were being run at GEAS (and I have since become a massive snob who scoffs at any system whose rules don't fit on a single double-sided sheet of paper). At the end of the year I somehow got roped into running for Secretary and because people didn't realise what they were doing until it was too late, I've been abusing my powers as a shadow cabal committee member ever since.

This year I plan to try my hand at GMing, which will hopefully not be too big of an unmitigated disaster, but if you find me as a player, in character I'm likely to be a valuable ally if our characters are on good terms, an annoying enemy if not, or occasionally an absolute waste of space and oxygen. Out of character I'm almost always there to help and will try to answer any questions to the best of my ability. As for systems, the ones I most enjoy end up being obscure unpublished nameless systems devised by some of our experienced GMs here at GEAS, but if I had to give some names, ones that I like include, but are not restricted to, Remember Tomorrow, Worlds of

Wordplay, 1001 Tales, Dungeon World and D&D 5e Curse of Straad run by Fergus.



Jason Ebbblewhite

GEAS Socials and Events Coordinator

Hi I'm Jason and writing is not my forte. I'm just a dumb Physics student with an unhealthy addiction to weird music and DotA 2. People have called me "pretentious" and "intimidating", but I'm really not as cool as I pretend to be; I just want everyone to have a good time playing some games 'n' stuff.

I joined the society in 2015, and my first campaign was set in the Mass Effect universe - shout out to ma boi Angus. It was a bit daunting at first, I didn't even use an accent like I so very often do now, but thanks to the people in the group I had a hell of a lot of fun and essentially became addicted to roleplaying/Subway. I then went on to join Alan's classic D&D game which introduced me to the more mechanical side of gaming - albeit a frustrating one. There's just something about watching arbitrary numbers increase that gets people going.

Anyway, by the end of the year, Committee elections were coming around and most of my friends were on the committee table, and it seemed like no one really wanted to run for Socials Coordinator. Fast-forward another year and no-one really wanted to run for Events Coordinator either. So here I am: the guy who books the pub socials and organises the weird events.

As far as systems go, I'm a big fan of narrative-focused roleplaying that has some sense of restriction and progression to ground the players - the less time it takes for the GM to 'consult the manual' the better. If I had a D&D alignment, I'd really like it to be True Neutral, probably just to pay homage to the planet from Futurama. In actuality, I'm probably more Chaotic as a roleplayer and more Lawful as a person; morality is a farce and I won't be commenting on it.

## Matthew Barrowcliffe

Geas Librarian

Chaotic Good

I am a life-member of the society, and a member since the very late 80's, I have the dubious distinction of being the longest serving member of the society. I run under a wide plethora of systems from the commercially available to homebrews, and I am happy to help people with learning to run games. Last year I finally published a system "1001 Tales" then had it sell out by the simple expedient of only printing fifty copies.

Pulled out of retirement, my role in the society is as Librarian, to get the library in order and follow the society's wishes with it. Unfortunately library storage is no longer available and has been variable for the last few years, in addition over the last decade accessing the library has reduced to the point where after two years of discussion the society is in the process of shutting down the library.



## Alan Jackson

Level 3 Webmaster

Chaotic Evil

Bio.txt ..... file not found ... retrying ...

I've been a gamer for a while, and involved in GEAS for the last decade or so. Whilst I mostly run crazy indie story games these days, I've played and run many different games between

GEAS and similar societies in New Zealand. This year I've been persuaded entirely across to the dark side and am running D&D 5 (I'll have to find some dice with numbers on them!). I can usually be spotted with purple hair and wearing a black leather trenchcoat like a refugee from the Matrix. I run the GEAS website & generally keep our minimal technology functioning, mostly due to my day job as a developer at a local tech startup. In what little spare



time remains I mostly do more gaming, though I have a semi-derilict motorbike and sometimes play computer games instead of real roleplaying games. If you want to know more than you could possibly want to about the theory of game design, why game mechanics do what they do and what makes games good for the things you want to play/run, hunt me down!

## Faye Sutherland

Welfare Officer

Chaotic Good

I've been a part of GEAS for the last 5 years after going to one taster session and then refusing to leave! I'm known for ending most of my sentences with exclamation marks, wearing a lot of black, hugging, and seeming incredibly bubbly and chipper even if I'm screaming internally!



I enjoy playing many different RPGs, my favourites being Dungeon World, Vampire the Masquerade, Monster Hearts and They Became Flesh. Occasionally I even manage to work up the courage to actually run some games, having so far used the World of Darkness system (both old and new) and Apocalypse World.

My role as the Welfare Officer (or Wellness Officer (Or Happiness Enforcer) depending on whom you ask) is about making sure that everyone in the society is being treated well, finding games for folks to play if they missed introductory sessions, and generally being the first point of call if there are any problems! I've also set up the GEAS Welfare e-mail ([geas.welfare@gmail.com](mailto:geas.welfare@gmail.com)) and Tumblr page ([geaswelfare.tumblr.com](https://geaswelfare.tumblr.com)) in case people would rather speak via text or even anonymously.

In general I want everyone to feel as welcome and happy at GEAS as I have over the years!

## NPC OF THE ISSUE!

*This is the section where we humble editors present to you, our dear readers, an interesting character that we have either experienced or created in the hopes that it will serve as inspiration for a PC or NPC for you in one of your games in the future. Or just for you to steal and copy-paste straight in. Whatever.*

### Dolores

*Gender:* Female.

*Race:* Appears Human.

*Class:* Any, although better suited to magic use.

*Age:* Appears as a teenage girl.

*Alignment:* Neutral Evil.

*Notable skills:* Persuasion.

Strength: ■■■■■□□□□□	Dexterity: ■■■■■□□□□□	Constitution: ■■■■■□□□□□
Perception: ■■■■■□□□□□	Knowledge: ■■■■■□□□□□	Charisma: ■■■■■□□□□□
Willpower: ■■■■■□□□□□	Appearance: ■■■■■□□□□□	Luck: ■■■■■□□□□□

*Physical description:* Average height, straight, lifeless brown hair, brown eyes and a long face, drawn longer by the utter lack of facial muscular movement (even scowling is usually too much effort). Always found wearing beige clothes.

*Character description:* Whether she is the avatar of beige, the angel of teenage suicide, a demon of monotony, the Elder God which heralds the heat death of the universe or really just a teenage girl, Dolores is a potentially

powerful villain, yet she is one that rarely inspires any fear. Being eternally absolutely average at everything she does, Dolores usually appears as a victim and often is. Her lack of actual power leads Dolores to pursue her goals passively, through persuasion or simply not at all. A constant voice of nihilism, Dolores has an ability to inexplicably be everywhere at once, monotonously (and, regardless of the setting, in a California valley girl whine) telling everyone who will listen that 'everything is pointless, you are pathetic, like, nobody will remember you, effort is futile, beauty fades, clever people, like, get dementia and stuff, strength is meaningless because there's always going to be something stronger than you and ultimately, like, life is pain'. When pursuing a more active course Dolores will set up complex psychological traps, aiming to use her persuasive nihilism to have heroes destroy themselves. Rumour has it that in the background of every scene of any proper performance of Romeo and Juliet, a beige figure can be seen setting up all of the miscommunications that eventually lead to two teenage lovers' suicides. This covert passivity defines Dolores' actions, although mostly she can be found as the constant voice at the back, absolutely uncaring as to the actions of others but still reminding them that whatever they choose ultimately won't matter anyway, because, "Life is meaningless and free will is like an illusion."

