

# FROSTGRAVE

SECOND EDITION

## THE RED KING



JOSEPH A. McCULLOUGH

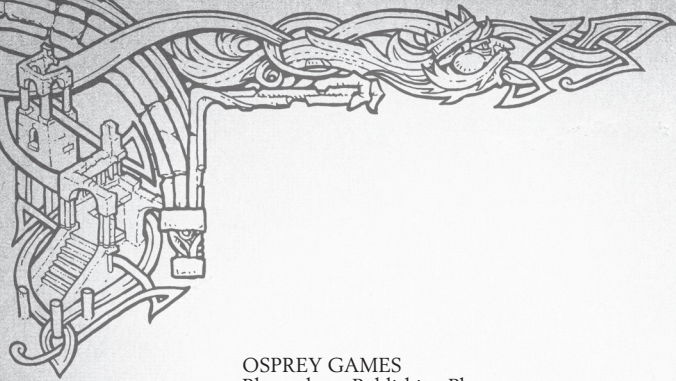
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**Joseph A. McCullough** is the author of several non-fiction books including *A Pocket History of Ireland*, *Zombies: A Hunter's Guide*, and *Dragonslayers: From Beowulf to St. George*. In addition, his fantasy short stories have appeared in various books and magazines such as *Black Gate*, *Lords of Swords*, and *Adventure Mystery Tales*. He is also the creator of *Frostgrave* and *Frostgrave: Ghost Archipelago*, and co-wrote *The Grey Mountains*, a supplement for the *Middle-Earth Role-Playing Game*.

His continued ramblings can be read at: [therenaissancetroll.blogspot.co.uk](http://therenaissancetroll.blogspot.co.uk)

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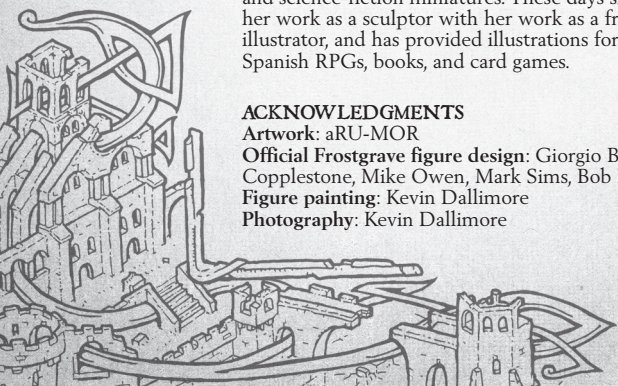
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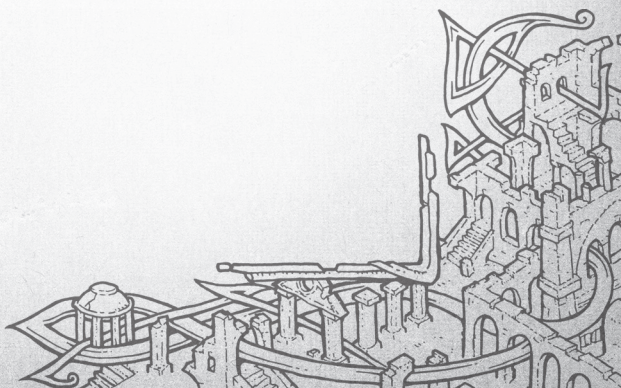
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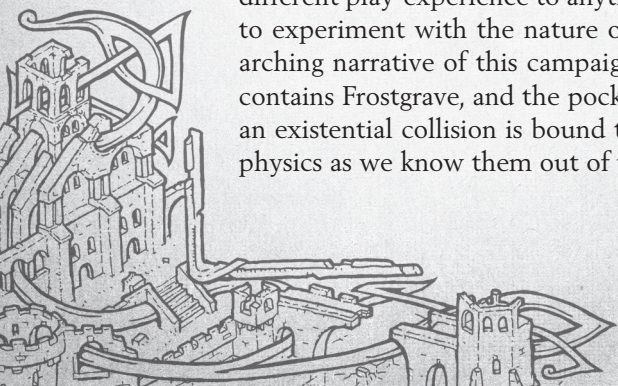


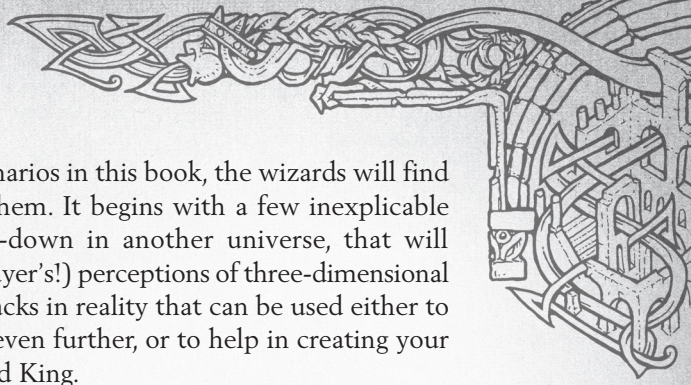
# INTRODUCTION

Welcome back to the Frozen City! *The Red King* is the first supplement for the second edition of *Frostgrave*, and as such, I wanted to write a book that both harkened back to the game's past, but also moved it forward both narratively and mechanically. In terms of looking back, I wanted to write another grand campaign in the style of the very first supplement, *Thaw of the Lich Lord*, where every scenario pushes the narrative ahead to an epic, final confrontation. I also drew inspiration from another of the first edition supplements: *Forgotten Pacts*. In that book, numerous barbarian tribes occupy the northern part of the Frozen City, forge pacts with demonic entities, and generally cause a lot of mischief. Although there are some fun showdowns in that book, none of them have quite the same sense of epic finale as fighting the Lich Lord. What if, I wondered, the barbarians made a pact with an entity that truly had the power to occupy the whole of Frostgrave in a very literal sense...

Both *Thaw of the Lich Lord* and *Forgotten Pacts* are still available and still useable with the new edition of the game; however, neither are necessary to use, or get full enjoyment out of *The Red King*. While some of the narrative elements tie back to those earlier books, and a few favourite monsters return, this book is a stand-alone story, with all the rules, stats, and scenarios needed. Over the course of the twelve scenarios presented in this book, the wizards and their warbands will investigate a strange new power that is arising in the Frozen City; something that is causing the plane of existence to fold and crack. As always, the wizards are in it for themselves, and there is plenty of treasure up for grabs, but there are times when the situation can get so desperate, or the stakes so high, that they might – just for a moment or two – decide that working together is the better option...or not.

As always, when I sit down to write one of these books, I ask myself: 'how am I going to make this one different from those that have gone before?' While I might want to capture some of the flavour of the previous books, I don't want to just re-write them with different monsters. I want to continually push my abilities as a game designer and push the bounds of what is possible in tabletop wargaming. I want to make sure that this supplement has a distinct flavour, and gives a different play-experience to anything that has gone before. In this case, I wanted to experiment with the nature of reality on the tabletop. Essentially, the overarching narrative of this campaign is the collision of two realities: the one that contains Frostgrave, and the pocket universe that imprisons the Red King. Such an existential collision is bound to fracture reality in ways that toss the laws of physics as we know them out of the window.





So, as they adventure through the scenarios in this book, the wizards will find that reality is slowly changing around them. It begins with a few inexplicable moments and ends with a final show-down in another universe, that will challenge the wizard's (and maybe the player's!) perceptions of three-dimensional space. There are also rules for smaller cracks in reality that can be used either to ramp up the weirdness in the scenarios even further, or to help in creating your own scenarios during the time of the Red King.

If all this sounds a little 'out there', don't be too concerned. We are still talking about playing with miniatures on the table, throwing dice, marking off damage, and making off with treasure; it is just that some of the later scenarios will feature more complicated, or more odd, special rules than have appeared in supplements in the past. As always, you are free to use whichever of these rules you want, discard those you don't like, and encouraged to make any changes that will make the whole gaming experience more fun for you and your gaming buddies.

Also included in this book is an extra-large chapter on new treasure. The advent of the new edition of the game 'stirred the pot' as it were, creating new ripples in the rules that could be exploited in the creation of new magic treasures to break, bend, or modify those rules! Also, for the first time, I have added a new level of treasure to the game, that of artefacts. These rare and unique treasures are slightly more powerful than the 'average' magic treasures usually recovered from the frozen ruins. While such treasures tend to give the wizards greater capabilities, they also extract a price for such power. The wizards will have to decide for themselves what such power is worth.

I want to finish up by thanking everyone that has supported me in my creative endeavours. Whether you have played *Frostgrave* since the beginning and followed it through all the supplements, and even to a different setting, or you are new to this edition, it is largely due to your support that I have been able to devote so much time and creative energy to working in and on this world. It is greatly appreciated.

So, grab your staff, cast your Out of Game spells, and see if you can survive the incursion of the Red King!





# CHAPTER ONE

# THE INVASION

The cataclysmic demise of ancient Felstad happened in an instant, and for most inhabitants of the city, the moment of recognition was also the moment of destruction. There was no time to prepare or try to escape. A few wizards, though, mostly the soothsayers and chronomancers who had access to the city council chambers, learned of the catastrophe a few moments before it happened. It is unlikely that these wizards could have done anything to prevent the destruction, but, in the event, they didn't even try. Instead, they took the only path they could see to ensure their own survival: they made a deal with the powerful, yet imprisoned, demonic entity known as the Red King. In exchange for saving their lives, they granted the Red King the 'Keys to the City'. In this case, however, the keys were no mere ceremonial artefact, but actual magic formulas that defined the city's precise location within the infinite dimensions. With this information, and enough time, the Red King would be able to break the shackles that bound him...

Of course the story of those council members and their treachery would only be discovered over a millennium later, after the invasion had begun. In fact, by the time of the great thaw that revealed Frostgrave, even the name of the Red King had been forgotten.

## THE HERALD

It was several years into the exploration of Frostgrave that all the spellcasters in and around the city awoke from a similar dream. They all dreamed of a robed figure, its head encased in a bronze helmet with hideous tusks, both of its hands clutching strange staves. Although the figure had no mouth, a metallic voice instructed the wizards to prepare, for the new master of the city, the Red King, was coming...

While the wizards of Frostgrave are not famous for working together, several of the wealthier, more powerful mages offered a collective bounty for anyone who discovered more information about this dream, the herald, or the Red King.



## THE BLOOD-MARKED AND THE HRUT

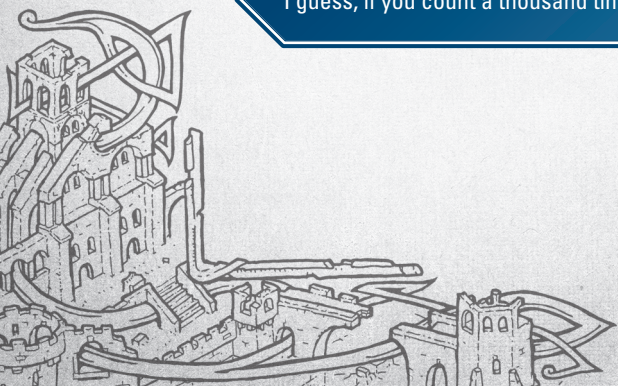
At first, nothing came of the strange dream message, but then reports came of renewed activity by the barbarians occupying the Hallows in the northern part of the city. These barbarians had become more aggressive, attacking any wizards they could find, and many of them bore a strange, crimson brand upon their faces. They fought with such fury that a few had spontaneously combusted, but continued to fight as their bodies burned away.

Even as the barbarians created more questions than answers, a new threat arose. Soldiers told stories about strange disks of light that formed out of nothingness. Out of these portals stepped demonic warriors, encased in black armour, and carrying, heavy, wicked blades. As soon as these creatures set eyes on an explorer, they shouted 'Hrut' and charged. They never attempted to communicate and they never showed mercy. After several days, new varieties of these demons started appearing, including ones with great wings that could be seen gliding between the dead towers of the city.

## EXISTENTIAL COLLISION

As dangerous as the Blood-marked and the Hrut prove to everyone living in and around Frostgrave, they are a mere distraction in the plans of the Red King. The demon lord has no desire to conquer and occupy the Frozen City in the classic sense; instead, his 'invasion' is an attempt to merge his own pocket dimension with the physical space occupied by the Frozen City, allowing him to exist in both realities at once. As the battles against the demons grow in intensity, reality begins to warp and crack all over the city, resulting in moments when the laws of physics, and even magic, no longer apply. As the Red King's plans grow closer to completion, these pockets of unreality grow more widespread and more intense, forcing the wizards to react and take the battle directly to the demon lord...

I guess, if you count a thousand tiny vials, each holding one dead ant as treasure...



# WARPING REALITY

In game terms, the larger warps in reality created by the invasion are represented by the special rules given in specific scenarios. However, the invasion also includes innumerable moments when reality seems to skip a beat and reset slightly differently than before. The wizards refer to these events as 'Reality Cracks'. If players would like to bring even more weirdness to their games, or to play their own scenarios set during the time of the Red King, they can use the reality cracks rules given below.

## *Reality Cracks*

Every game set during the time of the Red King potentially features a crack in reality, and, the longer the game continues, the more likely it is to occur. The **Reality Cracks Occurrence Table** below gives the likelihood of a crack appearing in each game turn. At the beginning of each turn, check the chart below. If any player's priority roll is higher than the occurrence number for the turn, then a reality crack has occurred. One player should immediately roll another die and compare the result to the **Reality Cracks List** given below. The effects given in the appropriate entry on the list should be immediately applied before any figures are activated. Since games featuring more than two players are likely to feature more high priority rolls (since more priority rolls are being made) the table includes a second column for games with three or more players.

Only one reality crack will occur per scenario, but many have ongoing effects.

