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EDITORS' NOTE

Welcome to the final issue of the year! So much has happened in the last twelve months, so much has changed, grown, shifted, and challenged all of us. From January's opening issue to Generation Analog 2024, from June's excellent essays to a special issue on Latin American RPG studies, the year has explored exciting ideas, intriguing games and mediums, interdisciplinary methods, and welcomed new voices and perspectives to the field and fold. In the same vein, this new issue focuses on the interaction and interplay between player, game mechanics, narrative mechanics, and the perils and possibilities of play.

Up first, Cathlena Martin and Benton Tyler's essay "Roll to Hit: Comparative Mathematical Probability in Tabletop Role-Playing Games" explicates the basics of probability and the ways that dice and randomness can affect play experience and narrative possibilities. Martin and Tyler offer a detailed breakdown and statistical analysis of combat rolls in *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Deadlands*, and *Sword Chronicle*.

Next, Meghan Flood's "Mechanical Storytelling in *D&D*: Strahd in Relation to the Gothic" offers a careful reading of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, *D&D*'s Strahd von Zarovich, and how the game's mechanics work "in tandem with the vampire tradition." Hewitt explores alignment, spells, combat mechanics, player agency, and the adaptation of the literary to gameplay.

Third, in "It's All Fun and Games 'Till Somebody Loses an I: Ethnomethods of Bleed," Sarah Klein and Gerald Voorhees analyze actual play, player choice and agency, bleed, and safety tools in *Far Verona*, a live-streamed cyberpunk-themed tabletop roleplaying game (TTRPG) featuring game master Adam Koebel. Klein and Voorhees theorize bleed, character, and player interaction, an "ethnomethod" that aims to locate these phenomena within a set of accountable play practices.

Finally, our very own Bea Livesey-Stephens offers a review of Jaakko Stenros and Markus Montola's *The Rule Book: The Building Blocks of Games* (MIT Press, 2024). The review offers insight into the book's introduction and five chapters and how Stenros and Montola define their five categories of rules: *formal rules*, *internal rules*, *social rules*, *external rules*, and *material rules*.

Everyone here at AGS wishes you and yours a restful winter, a bright holiday season, and a happy new year. As we face the uncertainties of 2025, we hope for hope, for kindness and compassion, for

empathy and reparative play, and for all of our AGS friends, critical successes. In the spirit of the season (and to give everyone something to try, read, play, or enjoy), here's a little "best of 2024" or "would recommend" list from the AGS gang:

- Evan recommends: *Thousand Year Old Vampire, or Old Morris Cave: A Continuous Use Campsite in Mammoth Cave National Park, an Excavation* by Tim Hutchings
- Shelly recommends: *Psychic Trash Detectives* by Brigitte Winter, a cozy GM-less mystery game perfect for a winter's eve with friends!
- Megan recommends: *Charcuterie: The Board Game* by Josh Camden and Whitney Loraine.
- Aaron recommends: *DroPolter* by Paul Shulz and Oink Games, a tiny game that is fun with friends and family of all ages.
- Ed recommends something to watch: *Agatha All Along* because it's campy, spooky, and moody, lesbi-honest, and basically plays out like gathering an adventuring party to go dungeon crawling.

But before we close the book on 2024, we want to give special thanks, appreciation, and heartfelt commendation to Dr. Aaron Trammell for his 10+ years of leadership, muscle, sweat, blood, tears, and time as Editor-in-Chief of AGS. Without his vision, inspiration, and unflagging dedication, the journal (and the field of analog game studies itself) would not be the success (and refuge) it is today. He will continue with AGS, of course, and we anticipate many more years of his wisdom, humor, generosity, and punk rock spirit. As previously announced, Dr. Edmond Chang is stepping into the role of EIC, and we welcome his expertise and stewardship. All in all, we look forward to new topics and special issues, to Generation Analog 2025 (information forthcoming), and to hopeful, helpful horizons.

–The Editors, December 16th, 2024

