

URESIA: Submissions Guide

Before proceeding, please check the Cumberland Games website and/or the Uresia Mailing List files section to make sure you're working with the most current version of these guidelines.

Cumberland Games & Diversions actively solicits proposal submissions from its **Uresia: Grave of Heaven** fans.

Project Scale

Proposals for the following types of project will be considered:

◆ **MINI-SUPPLEMENTS:** These are short, systemless books illuminating some aspect of Uresian adventuring life, characters, locales, challenges, items, or some combination, with an intimate emphasis (specifics rather than generalities – a book “detailing Orgalt” will almost certainly be rejected, while one “about the haunting of the Gunwar Deeps, the cult devoted to it and the unexpected ramifications for Dreed pastry chefs and the rats who love them” will be more seriously considered. When in doubt, take your concept a level more intimate and more specific than you think it should be). Mini-Supplements can range in size from 3,500 to 25,000 words (to be priced between \$4.95 and \$9.95 depending on total development cost). **Caravel** is an example of a mini-supplement of approximately 11,000 words.

◆ **ADVENTURE MODULES:** Systemless adventures, themed adventure collections, or short campaigns will be considered. These should be targeted for the same scale as the mini-supplements. Note, however, that these will be a harder sell, both to Cumberland and to the general audience, so it really needs to rock the house down, preferably while setting it on fire and decorating it for Christmas.

No other proposals are likely to be considered at this time. You can always try; something brilliant may catch my attention, but come in with diminished hopes if your proposal is outside the scope outlined above.

Proposal Format

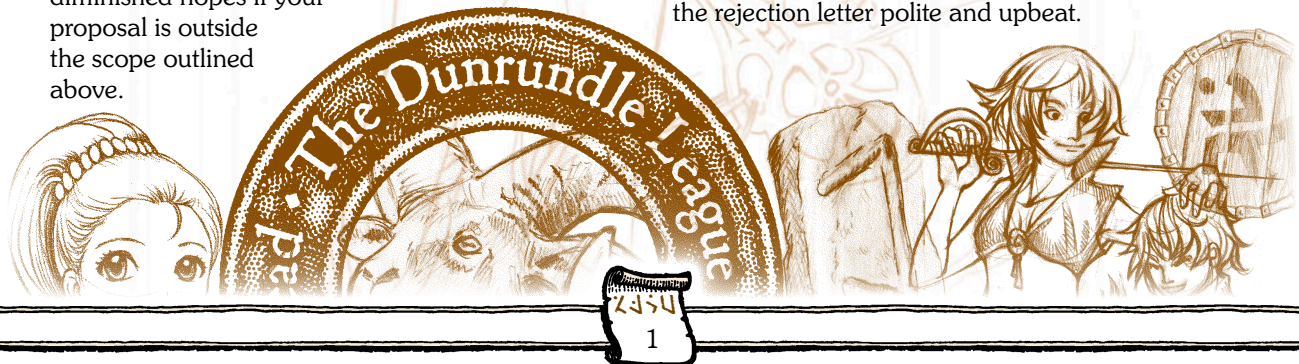
Proposals will be submitted by email to **sjohn@cumberlandgames.com**, or by post to **S. John Ross, 901 Sherman Street Apartment 424, Denver CO 80203**. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be accepted under any circumstances; always begin with a proposal. Initial proposals may not exceed 250 words in length, so make it good! All proposals sent by email should be clearly marked in the Subject header (for example: URESIA PROPOSAL: SATYR TATTOO MANUAL). Proposals ignoring these rules will be deleted, unread, guaranteed.

Please don't send pilot questions about *possible* proposals (“Hey S. John, how likely would a proposal about Satyr Tattoos be to get your attention?”).

Proposal Advice

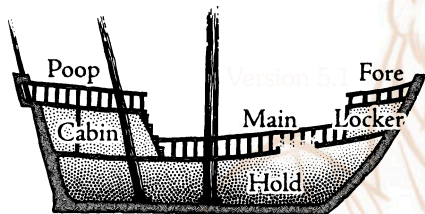
Make it Uresia. While in theory I like the idea that general fantasy-gamers may occasionally purchase Uresia items (I've sold a few **Caravels** and quite a few **Temphis Runes** to non-Uresia fans), the target audience really is the devoted Grave of Heaven fan, because while Uresia is “trad fantasy” without shame, it's also a very specific *style* of trad-fantasy, with its own philosophical and political slant, its own blend of mirth and misery, and its own set of inspirations and goals (most important among them: the shameless, leg-humping celebration of what's good about getting together with your friends and playing a fantasy game).

The more difficult goal of converting the entire planet to Uresia fandom is more important to me than diluting Uresia material to appeal to the fanbase for other fantasy worlds. So: *make it Uresia*. If you aren't sure what “making it Uresia” entails, well, it'll show, and I'll do my best to keep the rejection letter polite and upbeat.



Proposal Followup

If your initial proposal interests me I will either request a more detailed proposal, or ask you a lot of questions about what you have in mind, or both. I may also request writing samples from other work, if you've done any. Followup proposals can be much longer and more detailed than initial ones; at this point we're past the formalities and having a conversation that should be getting us both really jazzed about the possibilities.



Doing Business

Frankly, the pay sucks. On the one hand, you're likely to be paid *more* for Uresia writing than for many other kinds of RPG writing, but on the other: the pay for RPG writing *really really* sucks to begin with, so we're grading on a less-than-encouraging curve. Bottom line is: if you're looking to buy that yacht you've been eyeing (or, for that matter, that gallon of milk you've been eyeing) RPG writing is a tough road. Pursue this biz *only for the love of it*, for real. A pro freelancer contracted to write **Caravel** would have, at this point, earned around 4.5 cents per word ... that's not *terrible* (on the modern RPG scale it's quite good; there are publishers out there paying a penny a word without remorse), but it's not quite *there yet* (on the other hand, **Caravel** continues to sell, slow but steady, and as the line grows, every title in it will enjoy increased interest).

If everything goes well, I'll offer you a contract to develop your proposal for Cumberland. The basic contract for whole-book projects is for a quarterly royalty of 25% of net profit for new or untried writers, or up to 50% for established professional game-writers known to be an "easy edit" and presumed to have an excellent grasp of the Uresia design style. Writers I'm personally confident in from prior experience may be offered an advance against royalties. Cumberland buys all rights in perpetuity for contracted work. Contracts will include hard deadlines and royalty penalties for missing them, so please be realistic when estimating your work schedule.

Time to Rock and Roll

Once the contract terms are locked in and the papers are signed, the actual work process begins. In general, the process will include an *outline stage*, a *playtest draft stage*, a *blindtest draft stage*, and a *publication draft (proofing) stage*, each with editorial oversight and corrections.

It'll also include maps, because: Uresia, duh. Maps must be drafted clearly by the author in sketch form and submitted along with all drafts. Final maps are produced in-house at Cumberland Games for a consistent feel. Every commercial Uresia title must include maps, generally one map per 10,000 words or so (and at least one, no matter the draft length).

Cumberland has specific technical requirements for written documents, including style names for the text and headers, etc. All documents must be submitted in heavily backwards-compatible Microsoft Word or OpenOffice format, with details and templates to be provided when you're contracted. Specific requirements for the work process will be outlined in the contract, superseding the general descriptions in this document or elsewhere.

Some Closing Notes

We're still in early days on charting Uresia's course as a Cumberland line, and frankly doing this stuff for royalty is risky business. Not risky in the "S. John might not pay me" way ... Cumberland has been paying royalties on time, every time for several years now in its other (non-Uresia) lines, so that's never a worry (it helps that I'm married to an accountant, it also helps that I simply don't spend money that I owe to someone else).

Risky, though, in the "Honestly we don't know, yet, how big the audience is" way. Uresia fans are enthusiastic and generally very in-tune with the specific flavor and potential of the world, and I believe that new material done with honesty, passion and elbow-grease will build the audience and the audience's confidence in the line's endurance ... but I dunno. With just a couple of Cumberland titles so far to go on, there's nothing I can promise a writer beyond day-to-day abuse, lots of red ink and payment on time.

But early days also means wide-open possibilities, and the chance to become one of the core writers that defines Uresia's future. Right now, I'm very open-minded about *your* ideas. If you share any of my faith in Uresia's potential, you might get a kick out of exploiting that, and I hope you do.