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nights of the Dinner Table

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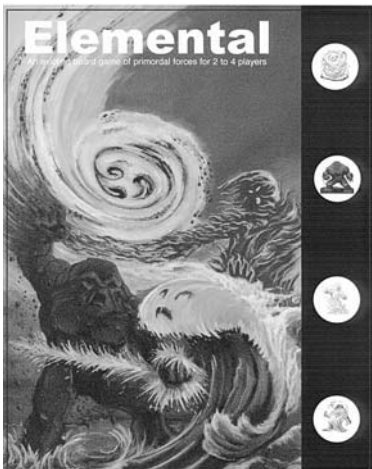
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KENZER AND COMPANY

Knights of the Dinner Table #29
Bad Moon Rising
March, 1999

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Periodicals Postage paid at (pending) Menlo Park, CA.

Postmaster: send address changes to: Kenzer & Company
2094 Camino a los Cerros
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Subscriptions: A one year subscription (12 issues) is only \$32.00 (US \$36.00 in Canada and US \$50.00 Overseas).

To subscribe, send a check or money order (made payable to Kenzer and Company) to:

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KODT Subscriptions,
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Submissions: We accept submissions for strip ideas, jokes, cartoons, etc. We are interested in running anything that other gamers and fans would enjoy. Send a S.A.S.E. for writer's guidelines to the address listed above or E-mail restin@aol.com.

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Knights of the Dinner Table™

“Bad Moon Rising”

The KODT Development Team is
Jolly R. Blackburn, Brian Jelke,
Steve Johansson and David S. Kenzer

Cover Art by George Vrbanic

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Although he won't admit it, Knights of the Dinner Table™ was created by Jolly R. Blackburn way back in 1990 as 'filler' for the small press magazine Shadis™ (which he was publishing out of a spare bedroom). Eight years later, as head writer and creative director for the KODT development team, he continues to draw and write strips for the monthly Knights of the Dinner Table™ magazine as well as for Dragon® magazine and The Rifter™ Sourcebook Series. Jolly now insists on going by the name, "Lord Vader" and spends his spare time carving Napoleonic miniatures out of potatoes.

Editorial of a Madman

"I watch everything. I read everything. In my opinion the characters on 'The Simpsons' are much more intelligent than those on 'Friends'."

Harlan Ellison

I was a bit surprised recently, when Harlan Ellison announced during an interview on the Tom Snyder Show that he was a Simpsons fan (well, at least he implied it). He went on to say, "the characters on 'The Simpsons' are much more intelligent than those on 'Friends'."

I was working on the issue you hold in your hands at the time, and when I heard his comment, I had to turn in my chair to make sure it was actually Mr. Ellison who had spoken the words. It wasn't the statement that surprised me. (At the risk of sparking a debate in our Letters Page, I happen to agree with it.) No, what surprised me was that Harlan Ellison had said it.

I mean this is the same guy who is infamous for trashing Star Trek from time to time and sending Trekkies and Trekers alike into convulsions? Don't get me wrong, that's one of the reasons I like Harlan Ellison. I love listening to or reading interviews he has given because he usually ends up upsetting someone. He's a fountain of opinions and it doesn't really seem to matter to him if anyone agrees with him or not. How kewl is that?

There's something admirable about a guy who's not afraid to voice his opinion - regardless of the consequences.

So why am I talking about Harlan Ellison? Because the subject of this editorial is opinions. Harlan Ellison always reminds me that opinions are just that - opinions. It doesn't make you a jerk for having one and sharing it. Likewise, it doesn't make you a bastard for disagreeing with someone else's opinion. We've been get-

ting a lot of opinions around here lately (we call it reader feedback here). It's something we've been asking our fans to do ever since the first issue and to be honest, you've been doing a great job at giving it to us. (Incidentally, if you don't always get a personal reply to your E-mail or letters, please don't be offended. Time constraints and deadlines often prevent us from answering every letter - though we strive to do so.)

Most of our mail are of the 'atta boy' or 'job well done' variety with a few story ideas or game anecdotes tagged on to it. We love reading these since they keep the creative juices flowing and help raise morale when we're feeling the grind of a monthly deadline. It's nice to know all the hard work is being appreciated.

It's the letter from someone who is unhappy with something we have done, however, that really gets our attention in a big way. These are usually passed around in-house for consideration and comment. Is it the opinion of one reader? Or is there a problem we need to address? To sum it all up, the only way we can gauge our work (other than distribution levels, of course) is reader feedback. Anything that makes us question the quality of our work is a potentially good thing for both us, the publisher, and you, the reader.

So if there's something you don't like about KODT, by all means, let us know. We promise not to take it personally.

Enjoy the issue and Good Gaming!

Jolly R. Blackburn
Jolly R. Blackburn

...AND THEN THE **TROLL** SAYS TO **BLACK LOTUS**, "YOU WANNA MAKE ME, LARD-HEAD?" SO I COME BACK AT HIM WITH, "I DON'T MAKE TRASH - I BURN IT." SO HE LAUGHS AND NUDGES HIS HALF-OGRE SIDEKICK AND SAYS, "HE SEEMS TO BE GOOD AT MOVING HIS LIPS AND YAPPIN' BUT I DON'T SEE HIM BACKIN' UP HIS WORDS." OF COURSE, THAT WAS THE **WRONG** THING FOR HIM TO SAY. SO I PULL OUT MY ***4 DAGGER OF RENDING** AND I HOLD THE BLADE UP TO HIS THROAT. THEN I SNEER AT HIM AND SAY, "MY PATIENCE IS GETTING THIN - **REAL THIN!**" AT THIS POINT I NOTICED THE **GM** FLINCHES AND I FIGURE HE'S WAVERING A BIT SO I **REALLY** START TO LAY IT ON THICK. SO I **SHOVE** THE TROLL WITH MY FREE HAND AND I YELL, "**YOU JUST GONNA STAND THERE OR ARE YOU GONNA THROW DOWN?**"



Our Readers Talk Back!

Dear KODT,

I wanted to thank you. Not because KODT is so damn funny (which it is) but because since I started reading it last summer you have turned me on to some great games which otherwise I never would have known existed. Because of Brian's Small Press Picks I was able to convince my gameshop to order Doctor Lucky, Formula De', Ebola Monkey Hunt and most recently, Aquarius. Big Brian is batting 100% as far as I'm concerned on his monthly picks. Keep up the good work.

Mike Paterson
Champaign, IL

Thanks Mike! We're surprised at how popular Brian's Picks has been. Because of limited space for the column we only feature games we think are kewl or that struck a chord with one or more of our staff.

Many retailers have taken to setting out anything reviewed in KODT on the same shelf as the comic book to help boost sales. (And apparently it is working. Several publishers who have had their product featured in Brian's Picks have written in to tell us the exposure resulted in new orders.)

We encourage our readers to help in our mission of 'turning gamers on to great games' by letting us know when they've found one.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

Every month I anxiously await my new issue of KODT. The new issue always gets passed around the table with everyone taking turns at laughing our asses off. Thank you for all the inside jokes that us as gamers all share. It's funny to step back and look at ourselves and giggle. I had to write in response to the person who criticized the parting shots of **90 Reasons it's Great to be a Guy**. I am a woman and I am a gamer and I cracked up reading it. I thought it was truly hilarious. It was NOT in the least bit offensive... in fact, I was looking forward to seeing "**90 Reasons Why it Rocks to be a Chic!**". For Mr. "PC", it's called a sense of humor — you might want to look into one. Love ya guys! Keep up the good work and keep on hacking! Hoody Hoo!

Lanic
via E-mail

Dear KODT,

As of January 9, 1999, the **Armory** retail store in Baltimore will have closed its doors forever, after nearly twenty years of loyal service to the area's gaming community.

My most recent discovery there was a small comic with the unlikely title of "**Knights of the Dinner Table**." But now the **Armory** is leaving for good. It survived at least one location change of which I'm aware, and even once survived having much of its inventory ruined when a set of shelves in the back warehouse collapsed, causing a domino effect which took out most of an entire wing, until it was stopped by the **White Wolf** shelf, but it would appear that something new has come up, which the **Armory** will not be able to survive.

I'm sure most gamers have gone through the experience of

losing a well-loved store. It hits you hard, because you know it's the end of an era. Sure, you'll be able to meet the people somewhere else, and there will be other places around that stock the same merchandise, but it's just not the same. It can never be the same. I'm going to miss the **Armory**, and I know that a lot of other people will also. It's been a great store, and a source of joy, comfort and dice for most of the gamers in the region. I just hope I can find someplace new to buy my copy of **Knights of the Dinner Table** every month.

Nathan Rosen
Baltimore, MD

Wow, I heard White Wolf had a 'strong' product line but I didn't realize they were imbued with a 'resist domino effect' spell. (What incredible foresight on their part.) Seriously, it's sad to see a local gameshop close its doors. That's why we always encourage our readers to support their local shops. As you pointed out, gamers will eventually find somewhere else to get together. But losing an old friend is like...uh...well, it's like losing an old friend.

*Many gameshops are as much a gathering place as they are retail establishments. Games are held in the back rooms while counter-side debates on the merits of latest episode of **Xena** or **Babylon 5** are held out front. And where else can you go to tell people about the death of your fifth level dwarven character without being tossed out on your ear?*

*I think it's telling that most of the game designers I know have told me that their ultimate dream has always been to open and run a dedicated gamestore. If our hobby has a heart, truly it's the local gameshop. I'm sure gaming would continue without them - but ordering **HackMaster 8th Edition** via mail order wouldn't be nearly as fulfilling as buying from your very own **Weird Pete**.*

Jolly

Dear KODT,

Just a quick note to say that, although I have not gamed in awhile, I really enjoy your comic book, **KODT!**

I was saddened to hear of the demise of **Iron Face Willie**. Since I myself have been an "active character" since 5/5/79, I'm worried at the possibility that I may share his fate. Why, oh why, did you pick that particular date??

Ken Gagne
kgagne@ziplink.net

*Sorry if we alarmed you Ken, but in return, your letter has alarmed me. By my reckoning, you were 3 months old when I played my first game of **AD&D**™. You just broke my 'suspend-reality' spell and made me feel old and bitter. Now I have to scrape up five gold and hobble down to **Mad Agar's** to get a re-cast.*

I hope you're happy!

Jolly

Dear KODT,

In issue #26, one B.A. Thorns mentioned that he thought you should pull fiction stories from **KODT**. I beg to differ. In fact, I found the fiction story to be the best part of that issue.

Also, I noticed on your **Monty Python and the Holy**

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UNIVERSAL MINIATURES SYSTEM

Grail ad with the knights, there appears to be an error on Brian's card. It says "If Sir Brian loses a battle of wits he become enraged and will immediately combat the adversary even if it has.." What is the finished card supposed to read as?

Lancelot Takeda
via E-mail

Glad you like the fiction, Lance. It seems a lot of readers share your views on the fiction and E-mailed us in defense of keeping it as part of the line up. The only stipulation seems to be, "as long it doesn't cut into the regular offering of comic strips - it's okay."

Brian Jelke, who designed the Monty Python cards was informed of the error on the Brian VanHoose card. He informed me the card should read, "...even if it has no combat value. Treat as combat 0."

Hope that helps.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

I can see how guys may have been fooled by the Russian Women ad. I had to read it a couple of times myself looking for the "just kidding" line.

Now, gamers, as a general rule, aren't stupid. But we generally are lonely and desperate enough to convince ourselves that an ad like that might, just might, be real.

The question I have is this: Where did you get the picture?!? She's hot!!! Did you clip it out of a magazine? Do you know her? (Probably not. You people are gamers, after all. I know from personal experience that we gamers generally don't know any hot women.) Tell us about her! Lie, but tell us something!

Thank you,

Brian A. Rogers
via E-mail

P.S.: I know I said this once before, but I still think Brian and Sara would make a cute couple. They seem a little sweet on each other.

Actually, Brian, the girl in the picture (Tasha) is just one of many gamer-groupies who hang out at the Kenzer&Co offices. At first it was kind of fun having her live in our supply closet. She kept the floors vacuumed. Watered the plants. Walked Squirrelly and cleaned out his cage. On occasion she would even wax and buff the dumpsters and detail Bitter Stevil's Honda Accord.

Eventually we had to ask her to go. She was constantly throwing herself at us and making us hyper-ventilate. Now for the truth.

Tasha was found on a Photo CD-ROM containing some public domain pictures

which was thrown in for free with a recent order I made from a computer warehouse.

Sorry, to disappoint you.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

"Say goodnight, Raz" in issue 26 was great. I particularly enjoy stories that remember prior continuity and play off of it. I loved Pete's reaction to Bob's giving away Pete's items and Newt's revenge was great. Next should be Pete's revenge on Bob for mishandling Pete's mage.

By the way, the comment about Disney cartoons at the back of the issue neglected to include **Sleeping Beauty** as a film in which both parents were alive at the start and made it to the end.

name withheld
via E-mail

Dear KODT,

We all know KODT. We all love KODT. So when are we going to see the Knights in a medium to which our close-minded friends might be more open. In short, are there plans for an animated cartoon or not? I realize the comic is an independent, but then again so is **Dilbert**, and he is going to the small screen. KODT's sales are probably already in the same ballpark as **The Maxx** was when deals were signed to take that title to **MTV**.

Here is how I see the television show. The KODT stories lend themselves naturally to the non-animated cartoon style like **Dr. Katz**. There isn't a lot of physical action, so the pictures are designed to merely compliment the spoken words.

There would be many quick POV changes and bright colors -- the complete *Squiggle-Vision* look as it's called. This is to disguise the fact that such a show isn't animated at all.

A *Squiggle-Vision* cartoon would even be practical, because (it seems to me) it has to be easier to create than more fluid animations. It took me longer to type than think through, but it's an opinion, and it's mine.

Scott Gastineau
O'Fallon, IL

With the surge in popularity of KODT there's been a lot of talk about animating the strip. It's surely something we'd like to experiment with - even if it was only to show at conventions. However, none of us here have the time or expertise to even think about tackling such a project. We are open, however, to licensing KODT out for such a project.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

I wanted you to know that when I read KODT#23 and saw the panels with Weird Pete wearing Groucho glasses I literally blew coke out my nose and all over the comic. (Forcing me to buy another issue since I am a collector). I wonder if any other readers have had a similar experience? One of the reasons the gag-glasses were so funny is because I've been playing an eccentric magic-user named, *Belgeron the Wise* for the past three years. When I first started playing Belgeron, it was shortly after Halloween and my kid-sister had left a pair of Groucho glasses laying out. On my way out the door to the game, I grabbed them and put them in my pocket.

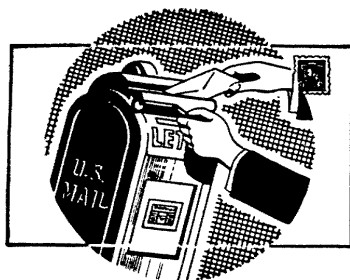
That night, Belgeron's character development took a sharp turn toward the bizarre. Donning the glasses and taking on a very bad yiddish accent, I refused to break out of character for the entire evening and eventually began to sound like the comedian Jackie Mason. The other players as well as the GM spent the entire evening holding their sides and laughing so hard it hurt. At one point they begged me to stop talking so they could recompose themselves.

The following week everyone showed up at the game with their own Groucho glasses and lame accents. It was great fun but it nearly wrecked the campaign. (Some of your readers may remember us walking around *GenCon 92* with our glasses on.)

So when I opened issue 23 and saw Pete looking out the window in those glasses, I lost it. I know you are tired of hearing it but thanks for being a gamer. I hate to think where your talents would have been diverted if you'd never picked up the dice.

Ben Harmon
Vincennes, IN

□



YOU CAN WRITE TO US VIA E-MAIL AT
JOLLYRB@AOL.COM!!
OR YOU CAN SEND YOUR SNAIL MAIL TO
KODT LETTERBOX,
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Workin' for the Man!

STORY BY JOLLY BLACKBURN
AND STEVE JOHANSSON

LAST ISSUE, **STEVI** STORMED AWAY FROM THE TABLE AFTER **NITRO** INFORMED HIM THAT HIS NEW CHARACTER (AND **WEIRD PETE'S**) WOULD HAVE TO ENTER THE **KRAAG WORLD CAMPAIGN** AS **HENCHMEN** TO **NEWT'S** AND **GORDO'S** CHARACTERS. AS **STEVI** SITS OUTSIDE IN HIS CAR, **SULKING**, THE **GAME** CONTINUES.

OKAY, AS YOU PULL BACK THE BRANCHES OF THE **BITTER-BERRY BUSHES** A LARGE **BRONZE DOOR** IS REVEALED. THE DOOR SITS IN A NEATLY HEWN NICHE IN THE BASE OF THE CLIFF. LARGE RAISED LETTERS SPELL OUT THE NAME '**LABYRINTH OF LOST SOULS**' IN THE **GRUNGE ELF** LANGUAGE.

WOW! WE FOUND THE LOST TOMB-CATACOMBS OF THE GRUNGE ELF LORDS? I KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING ODD ABOUT THE PLACEMENT OF THOSE **BITTER-BERRY BUSHES**!! THEY'RE NOT NORMALLY FOUND THIS FAR SOUTH OF THE **HAAYER DEPRESSION**.

GOOD JOB, NEWT! THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN ANYONE USE THE **BOTANICAL SECONDARY SKILL** WITH ANY APPRECIABLE RESULTS.

DAMN! **STEVI** SHOULD BE HERE.

THANKS!! I KNEW THAT **BITTER-BERRY BUSHES** GIVE A -5 PENALTY TOWARD **IMPEDING MOVEMENT OF BI-PEDALS**. **GRUNGE ELVES** ARE FOND OF THE PLANT AND LOVE TO PLACE THEM AROUND **SACRED SITES**.

REALLY? AND TO THINK WHENEVER I RUN INTO THEM I'VE ALWAYS ALTERED MY COURSE TO AVOID THEM.

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT **GRUNGE ELVES** COUNT ON.

OKAY KIDS, SO MUCH FOR THE **BOTANY LESSON**! LET'S OPEN THIS **WEALTH TROUGH** AND START MOPPING UP, WHAT SAY YE?

UH...EXCUSE ME, MISTER ASHTON, I DON'T MEAN TO BE RUDE BUT I THOUGHT WE MADE IT CLEAR THAT **HENCHMEN** ARE **NOT** TO OFFER THEIR ADVICE OR OPINIONS UNLESS THEY RAISE THEIR HANDS AND ARE ACKNOWLEDGED.

YOU WERE **SERIOUS** ABOUT THAT? WHEN YOU SAID THAT, I HAD A GOOD **BELLY LAUGH**. I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST A JOKE!

ARE YOU TALKING IN CHARACTER? COZ IF YOU ARE YOU SHOULD HAVE RAISED YOUR HAND FIRST.

RAISE MY HAND? FIRK DING BLAST!! I'M HAVING **FIRST-WIFE FLASHBACKS** DOWN HERE.

LITTLE **NEWS FLASH** FOR YOU TWO! THERE'S NO WAY IN **HELL** I'M GONNA SIT HERE AND **RAISE MY HAND** EVERY TIME I WANT TO SAY SOMETHING. I'M **FORTY-FIVE** FREAKIN' YEARS OLD FOR CRYING OUT LOUD.

SORRY, PETE, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO RULE IN THEIR FAVOR. YOUR **CHARACTER** IS A **HENCHMAN**! THAT MEANS YOU'RE SUBJECT TO THE **LOYALTY PARAMETERS** SET DOWN FOR HENCHMEN IN THE **GM'S GUIDE**!

THAT MEANS WHEN WE SAY '**JUMP**' - YOU ASK '**HOW HIGH**'?

WELL I DON'T WANNA BE YOUR HENCHMAN ANYMORE. HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT? I'M LEAVING THE PARTY. I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES ON MY OWN.

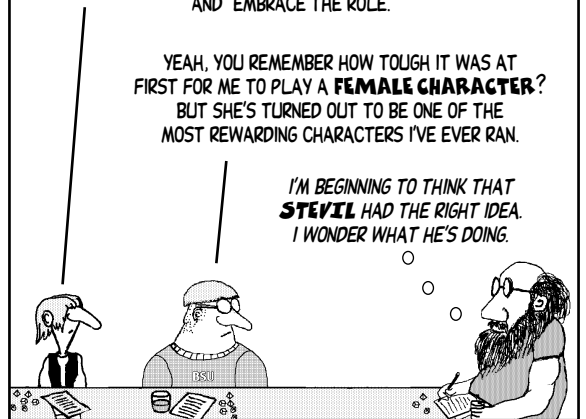
YOU CAN'T QUIT! THE **ONLY** WAY YOU CAN LOSE **HENCHMAN STATUS** IS IF YOU FAIL A **LOYALTY CHECK**.

GORDO IS CORRECT. WITH A HENCHMAN-MINDSET YOUR CHARACTER LACKS A CERTAIN DEGREE OF **FREE-WILL**. PETE. AT THIS TIME YOUR CHARACTER IS STILL GOING THROUGH HIS FORMATIVE-YEARS. HIS LIFE CENTERS AROUND **KRAGIN** AND **FIRE BLOSSOM**.



AS LONG AS THEY TREAT YOU WELL AND TAKE CARE OF YOUR EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL NEEDS, THE ODDS OF FAILING A **LOYALTY CHECK** ARE **SLIM TO NONE!**

JUST DON'T TAKE IT SO PERSONAL, PETE. WE'RE ROLE-PLAYING - REMEMBER? JUST CONSIDER IT A CHALLENGE. THAT'S WHAT I DO WHEN FACED WITH SOME TOUGH GAMING SITUATIONS. IT HELPS TO JUST JUMP IN WITH BOTH FEET AND EMBRACE THE ROLE.



YEAH, YOU REMEMBER HOW TOUGH IT WAS AT FIRST FOR ME TO PLAY A **FEMALE CHARACTER?** BUT SHE'S TURNED OUT TO BE ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING CHARACTERS I'VE EVER RAN.

I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THAT **STEVI** HAD THE RIGHT IDEA. I WONDER WHAT HE'S DOING.

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

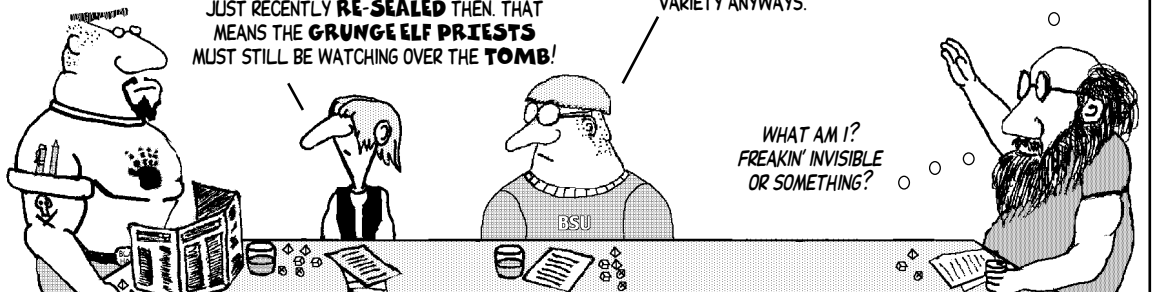
SIR, I'M GOING TO **VISUALLY INSPECT** THE **BRONZE DOOR!** ARE THERE ANY VISIBLE LOCKS?

NO BUT YOU DO SEE A LARGE **WAX SEAL** WHICH IS **UNBROKEN!** THE SEAL, HOWEVER, LOOKS **FRESH**. THERE ARE ALSO SOME **TORCH STUBS** ON THE GROUND.

HMMMM...LOOKS LIKE THESE DOORS WERE JUST RECENTLY **RE-SEALED** THEN. THAT MEANS THE **GRUNGE ELF PRIESTS** MUST STILL BE WATCHING OVER THE **TOMB!**

FIRE BLOSSOM TAKES THE **TORCH STUBS!** SHE CAN PROBABLY STILL USE THEM SINCE **PIXIE-FAERIE** TORCHES ARE MUCH SMALLER THAN THE STANDARD VARIETY ANYWAYS.

WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING? MY ARM IS GETTING TIRED.



WHAT AM I? FREAKIN' INVISIBLE OR SOMETHING?

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

OKAY AS YOU OPEN THE LARGE DOORS THEY **GROAN** ON THEIR **RUSTY HINGES**. A GUSH OF **STALE, DAMP AIR** FILLS YOUR NOSTRILS AS A SET OF ROUGH HEWN, UNEVEN STEPS STAGGER **DOWNWARD** AT A STEEP ANGLE. AT FIRST YOU THINK YOU HEAR A **MOURNFUL HOWL** FROM THE DARKNESS FAR BELOW BUT THEN YOU REALIZE IT'S THE WHINE OF THE MUSTY WIND ESCAPING FROM THE **TOMB**.

OKAY, SIR, WE'LL LEAVE **MEPHISTO JR.** OUTSIDE TO GUARD THE HORSES WHILE WE CHECK THINGS OUT. AND UH...BY THE WAY SIR, I'D LIKE TO COMPLIMENT YOU ON THE **DESCRIPTIVE NARRATION** TONIGHT! I CAN ALMOST **SMELL** THE MUSTY AROMA COMING UP THOSE STEPS.

UH...THANKS, NEWT. BUT I DON'T GIVE **EP'S** FOR SUCKIN' UP.

OH OF COURSE SIR. FAVORITISM IN ANY FORM WOULDN'T BE RIGHT. I WAS JUST SAYING, THAT'S ALL.



THAT DOES IT! I'M OUT OF HERE.

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

WHAT THE HELL DO **YOU** WANT? I ALREADY TOLD YA - I'M **NOT** COMING BACK IN UNTIL THEY AGREE TO DROP THE **HENCHMAN-CRAP**.

"YOU'RE LISTENING TO THE **E.I.B. NETWORK!** AND NOW BACK TO **RUSH!**"

THAT'S WHAT I CAME TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.

I HAD TO USE THE **JOHN** SO I PULLED THE **HACKMASTER UNDERLINGS MANUAL** OFF THE SHELF SO I'D HAVE SOMETHING TO READ. I LEARNED SOME VERY INTERESTING THINGS IN THIS HERE BOOK. SOME **VERY** INTERESTING THINGS INDEED.

YOU TAKE UNSOLD PRODUCT IN THE RESTROOM FOR READING MATERIAL?

OH, I ALWAYS PUT IT BACK. ONE OF THE PERKS OF THE JOB.

SICK.

CHECK THIS OUT. ACCORDING TO THE BOOK A **PLAYER CHARACTER** IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE **HEALTH** AND **WELFARE** OF HIS **HENCHMEN**. THE **PLAYER** MUST, AND I'M QUOTING HERE, "**ENSURE THAT HIS HENCHMEN ARE CLOTHED, EQUIPPED, FED AND GENERALLY CONTENT WITH THEIR LOT IN LIFE. FAILURE TO ADEQUATELY CARE FOR AND TEND TO THE NEEDS OF ONE'S HENCHMEN RESULTS IN NEGATIVE MODIFIERS TO ALL LOYALTY CHECKS.**"

SO WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH US? I AIN'T PLAYING NO FRICKIN' HENCHMAN.

DON'T YOU GET IT? WE'RE GONNA RIDE THE **NEWT GRAVY TRAIN**, SON. THERE'S LOTS MORE STUFF LIKE THAT IN THIS BOOK. AND IT'S **ALL** OFFICIAL. C'MON, LET'S GO BACK IN THERE AND PUSH SOME BUTTONS. WHAT DO YOU SAY?

GRAVY TRAIN HUH? THAT'S GOT SOME POSSIBILITY. HMMMMMM.... LET'S DISCUSS THIS A BIT MORE. I THINK I'M FORMULATING A PLAN.

OH, I CAN HEAR THE GEARS TURNING FROM HERE.

LATER THAT NIGHT...

I DON'T GET IT. AN HOUR AGO YOU WERE **DEAD SET** AGAINST PLAYING A HENCHMAN. **NOW** YOU'RE OKAY WITH IT?

WELL I DID DRIVE **FORTY** MILES TO GET TO THIS DUMP. I THOUGHT ON IT FOR A WHILE AND MAYBE IT WON'T BE SO BAD. WE JUST HAVE **ONE** STIPULATION. WE WANT TO REVISE OUR CHARACTERS. WHEN WE ROLLED THEM UP WE DIDN'T KNOW THEY'D BE **HENCHMEN**.

YEAH. WE'LL KEEP THE **SAME** STATS WE ROLLED. WE FEEL WE WOULD HAVE MADE DIFFERENT SELECTIONS ON THINGS LIKE **BACKGROUND, FLAWS, SKILL PACKAGES**, ETC. IF WE HAD KNOWN ABOUT THE **HENCHMAN** THING.

REVISE YOUR CHARACTERS?

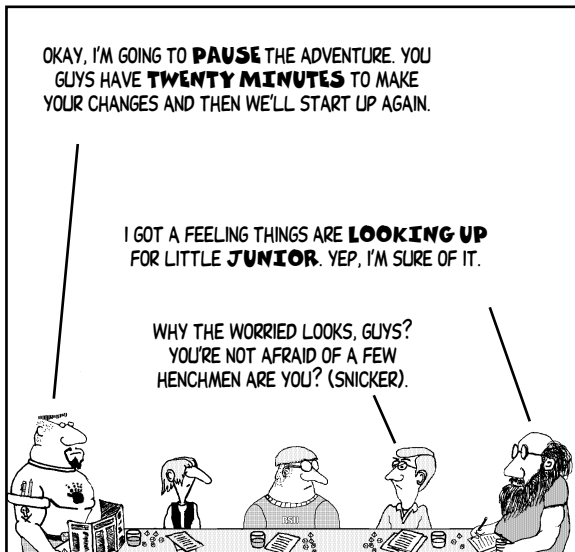
WHAT'S YOUR ANGLE, GUYS?

ANGLE? NO ANGLE. DO WE HAVE A GAME OR NOT?



SIR?! THEY'RE UP TO SOMETHING! DON'T ALLOW IT. NO GOOD WILL COME OF IT! I JUST KNOW IT!

SORRY, NEWT, BUT I THINK THEY MAKE A VALID POINT. I'M GOING TO ALLOW IT.



OKAY, I'M GOING TO **PAUSE** THE ADVENTURE. YOU GUYS HAVE **TWENTY MINUTES** TO MAKE YOUR CHANGES AND THEN WE'LL START UP AGAIN.

I GOT A FEELING THINGS ARE **LOOKING UP** FOR LITTLE **JUNIOR**. YEP, I'M SURE OF IT.

WHY THE WORRIED LOOKS, GUYS? YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF A FEW HENCHMEN ARE YOU? (SNICKER).

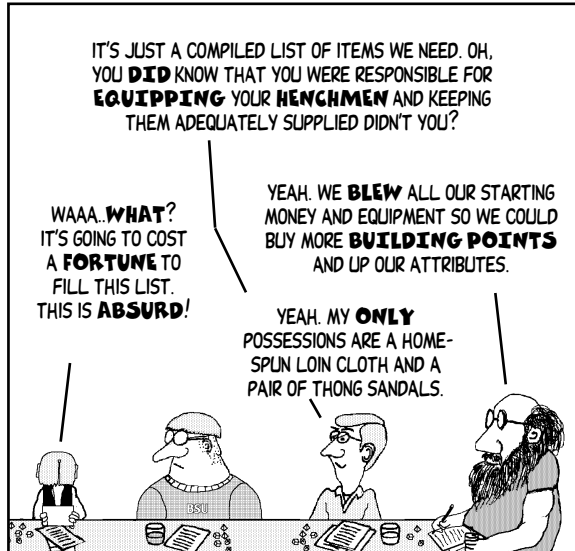
TWENTY MINUTES LATER...



OKAY FOLKS, WE'RE DONE WITH OUR CHARACTERS. UH, HERE'S OUR **NEEDS LIST**. I HIGHLIGHTED THE ITEMS WE WILL NEED **IMMEDIATELY**. THE REST OF IT CAN WAIT UNTIL WE REACH A **SIZEABLE TOWN**. I FIND THE QUALITY OF GOODS INCREASES PROPORTIONATELY WITH THE SIZE OF THE POPULATION. THE RESULTS OF **STIFFER COMPETITION** I SUPPOSE.

NEEDS LIST? WHAT'S THAT?

WHY ARE YOU GIVING IT TO US?

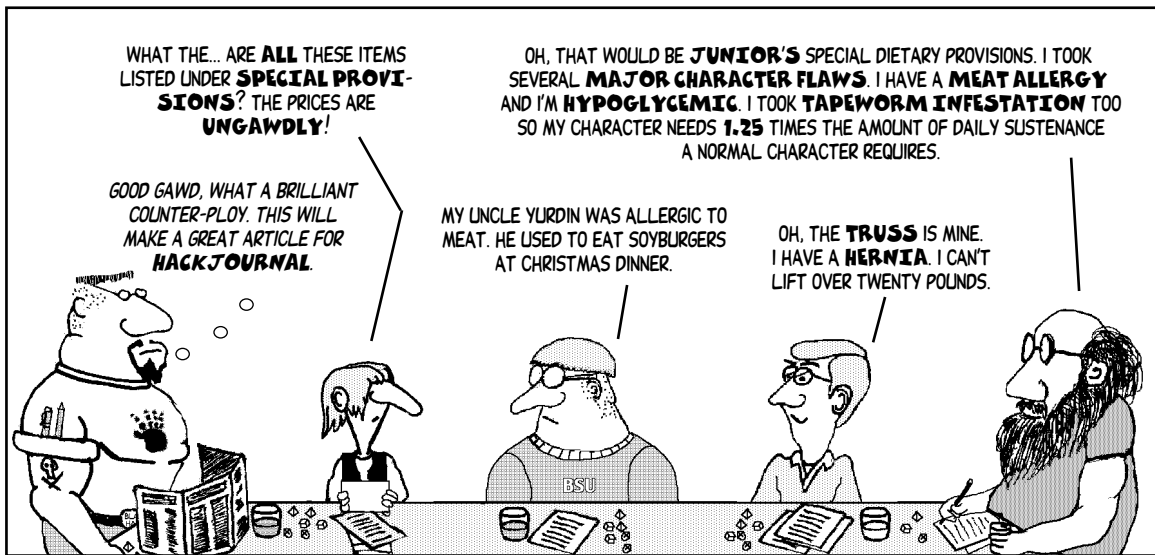


IT'S JUST A COMPILED LIST OF ITEMS WE NEED. OH, YOU **DID** KNOW THAT YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR **EQUIPPING YOUR HENCHMEN** AND KEEPING THEM ADEQUATELY SUPPLIED DIDN'T YOU?

WAAA. **WHAT?** IT'S GOING TO COST A **FORTUNE** TO FILL THIS LIST. THIS IS **ABSRD!**

YEAH. WE **BLEW** ALL OUR STARTING MONEY AND EQUIPMENT SO WE COULD BUY MORE **BUILDING POINTS** AND UP OUR ATTRIBUTES.

YEAH. MY **ONLY** POSSESSIONS ARE A HOME-SPUN LOIN CLOTH AND A PAIR OF THONG SANDALS.



WHAT THE... ARE **ALL** THESE ITEMS LISTED UNDER **SPECIAL PROVISIONS**? THE PRICES ARE **UNGAWDY!**

GOOD GAWD, WHAT A BRILLIANT COUNTER-PLOY. THIS WILL MAKE A GREAT ARTICLE FOR **HACKJOURNAL**.

OH, THAT WOULD BE **JUNIOR'S** SPECIAL DIETARY PROVISIONS. I TOOK SEVERAL **MAJOR CHARACTER FLAWS**. I HAVE A **MEAT ALLERGY** AND I'M **HYPOGLYCEMIC**. I TOOK **TAPEWORM INFESTATION** TOO SO MY CHARACTER NEEDS **1.25** TIMES THE AMOUNT OF DAILY SUSTENANCE A NORMAL CHARACTER REQUIRES.

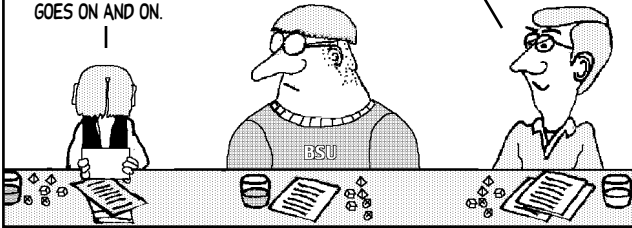
MY UNCLE YURDIN WAS ALLERGIC TO MEAT. HE USED TO EAT **SOYBURGERS** AT CHRISTMAS DINNER.

OH, THE **TRUSS** IS MINE. I HAVE A **HERNIA**. I CAN'T LIFT OVER TWENTY POUNDS.

BOOTS, FOUR KEGS OF FINE WINE?
A HORSE CARRIAGE (COVERED)...

MY CHARACTER IS AN **ALCOHOLIC**. HE GETS THE **D.T.'S** IF HE DOESN'T KEEP A GOOD ONE TIED ON. I'M AFRAID I WOULDN'T BE ANY GOOD IN A FIGHT WITHOUT MY WINE. OH AND I'LL NEED THE CARRIAGE IF YOU EXPECT ME TO TRAVEL WITH YOU. I'M **ALLERGIC TO SUNLIGHT**. BESIDES I CAN'T RIDE A HORSE ON ACCOUNT OF MY **HERNIA** ANYWAYS.

THE LIST JUST GOES ON AND ON.



WELL **I'M** NOT FOOTIN' THE BILL FOR THIS STUFF. YOU'RE THE ONES WHO TOOK THE **FLAWS** SO IT'S ON **YOU!** YOU'LL GET STANDARD DAILY RATIONS, A PLACE TO SLEEP AND A MODEST SHARE OF ANY TREASURE FOUND. BUT **THAT'S IT**.

OH SO YOU'RE REFUSING TO ACCOMMODATE OUR **MEDICAL NEEDS** HUH? I THINK THE PENALTY FOR THAT IS A WHOPPING **MINUS TWENTY** ON THE **LOYALTY CHECK TABLE**.

MINUS TWENTY?

I SEE **FREEDOM'S** FACE AND SHE'S SMILING ON US!! HAR HAR



THAT'S RIGHT. AND LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING, THERE'S **NOTHING** MORE DANGEROUS THAN A **DISGRUNTLED HENCHMAN** WHO HAS JUST FAILED HIS **LOYALTY CHECK**. ACCORDING TO THE **UNDERLINGS MANUAL** WE WOULD BE YOUR **SWORN ENEMIES** AND **BENT ON YOUR RUIN** FOR THE REMAINDER OF OUR DAYS.

WELL, (GULP) I LIKE BEING **GROUP LEADER** AND UH...WELL, I GUESS MOST OF THESE THINGS **ARE** ONE-TIME EXPENDITURES. I SUPPOSE WE COULD SEE FIT TO GET YOU WHAT YOU WANT.

WE? I NEVER REALLY WANTED HENCHMEN. DON'T YOU THINK THESE GUYS ARE **YOUR** RESPONSIBILITY?

OH, BY THE WAY, I WOULD FIND A POLICY OF "RAISING YER HAND" BEFORE SPEAKING TO BE DEMEANING AND HUMILIATING (MINUS 15 ON THE **LOYALTY CHECK TABLE**).



TEN MINUTES LATER...

AND WHAT'S THIS? A **PERSONAL TORCH BEARER** FOR **JUNIOR**? (WAGES 5 GOLD PER WEEK PLUS ROOM AND BOARDING). WHAT THE HELL IS THAT ALL ABOUT?

HE ALREADY EXPLAINED THAT, NEWT. HE HAS **PYROPHOBIA** — A DEATHLY FEAR OF BEING CLOSE TO OPEN FLAMES.

OKAY THAT BRINGS THE TALLY UP TO **7000 GP'S**.

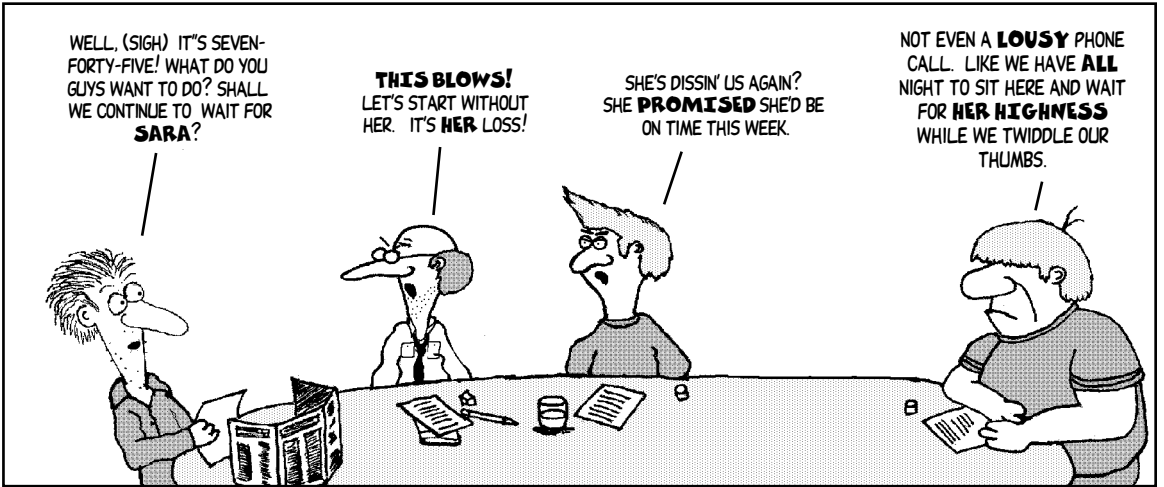
SWEET! WAIT TILL HE HEARS I'VE GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO AN **OPULENT LIFESTYLE** AND THAT I CAN'T BE **CONTENT** UNLESS I'M LIVING THAT WAY. (SNICKER)

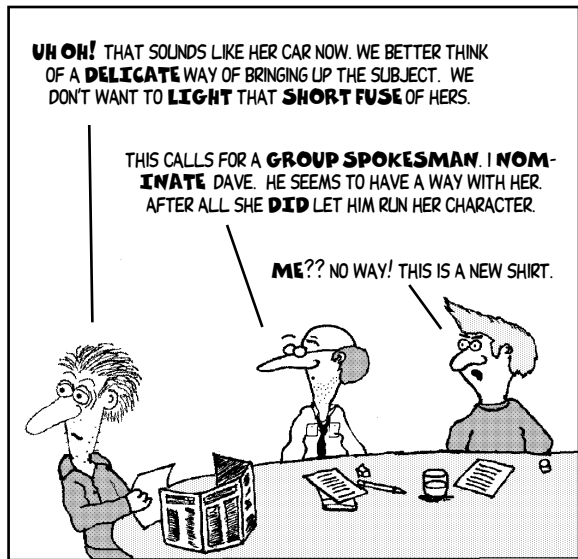
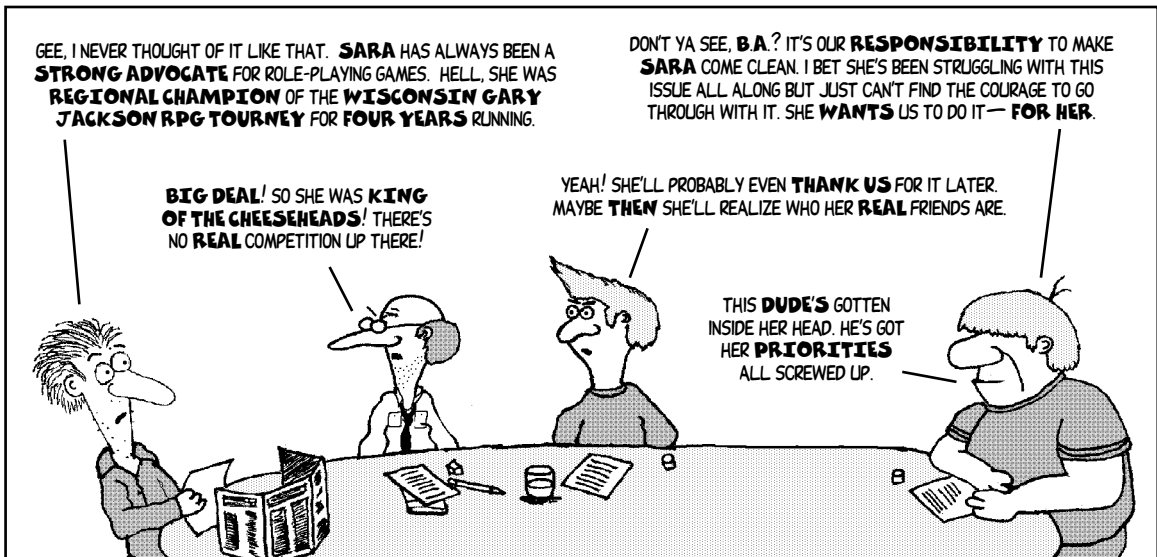
THIS IS GOING TO BE THE **BEST** CAMPAIGN EVER!



The Dirty Little Secret

STORY BY DAVID S. KENZER





* See KODT#6: The Great Intervention (The group intervenes and forces Brian to admit his 'girlfriend' isn't real.)

I **SECOND** THE NOMINATION. DAVE DOES HAVE A REAL GOOD **RAPPOR**T WITH **SARA**, HE SEEMS THE LOGICAL CHOICE.

LOGICAL CHOICE? **DAVE**? ARE YOU GUYS ARE FORGETTING I WAS KNOWN AS THE '**MASTER OF PERSUASION**' IN MY **PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASS** IN HIGH SCHOOL? I **WALTZED** THROUGH THAT COURSE **STANDING ON MY HEAD** AND STILL CAME OUT WITH A **B-MINUS!**

START THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GONNA SAY! WE'LL BACK YOU UP DUDE.

BUT...BUT...I...ER...UH... **SHOOT!** OKAY, I'LL DO IT BUT YOU GOTTA TRADE PLACES WITH ME. I WANNA PUT SOME **DISTANCE** BETWEEN **ME** AND **HER** WHEN I BRING UP THE SUBJECT!



THEY'RE STILL TALKING ABOUT MY GRIPPING **ORATION** OF '**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ARMOURD FIGHTING VEHICLES OF THE BLITZKRIEG ERA (1939-1941)**'

DON'T SWEAT IT, DAVE. IF YOU GET STUCK JUST PASS THE **BALL** TO SOMEONE ELSE. BETWEEN THE **FOUR** OF US, WE'LL GET IT ACROSS THE PLATE.

AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE PART ABOUT **DOCKING E.P.'S!** B.A. CAN DROP THAT LITTLE BOMB ON HER AFTERWARDS.

OKAY. BUT JUST BE READY IN CASE I **DO** PASS THAT BALL.



A FEW MINUTES LATER...

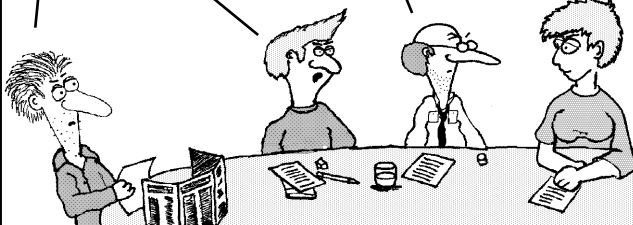
HI GUYS, I'M REALLY SORRY I'M LATE. HAVE YOU ALREADY STARTED?

UH...HI, SARA! GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT.

SORRY? WELL SORRY AIN'T GONNA CUT IT **THIS** TIME, **MISSY!!**

YOU HELD UP THE GAME. **AGAIN!**

LOOK, I **SAID** I WAS SORRY! UH...**BOB?** WHY ARE YOU SITTING THERE?



SORRY? WHAT'S THE EXCUSE THIS TIME? FLOWER PICKING? MONSTER TRUCK RALLY? A FREAKIN' STROLL IN THE PARK? GONDOLA RIDE ON LLIGAR CREEK? CARNIVAL? BOWLING? RIVER DANCING? TRACTOR PULL? WHAT WAS IT?

OKAY, YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO BE UPSET WITH ME. BUT CAN WE JUST GET ON WITH THE GAME?

OR WAS IT ONE OF THOSE STINKIN' **FRAT PARTIES?**

SO.... HAVE WE ARRIVED AT **MAZOO'S TOMB** YET?



WE JUST WANNA KNOW **ONE** THING, OUR LITTLE **RUN-AROUND SUE** — **DID YOU TELL HIM YET?**

DID I TELL WHO, WHAT?

YOU KNOW WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT. **DID YA?**

(GROAN) OH FOR THE LOVE OF... WE'RE **NOT** HAVING THIS CONVERSATION **AGAIN!** SO LET'S DROP IT. HAVE WE REACHED THE **TOMB OF MAZOO** OR NOT?



NOT SO FAST, **MISS SNUGGLES!** AS OUR **DULY APPOINTED SPOKESMAN**, DAVE'S GOT SOMETHING TO TELL YOU.

JUST KEEP IN MIND THAT THIS COMES FROM THE **HEART**. SARA. WE'RE CONCERNED ABOUT YOU. UH...GO AHEAD, DAVE.

MISS SNUGGLES?? HAR HAR! THAT'S A GOOD ONE, BOB!

SARA, WE FEEL YOU SHOULD TELL **JOHN** ABOUT THE **GAME!**



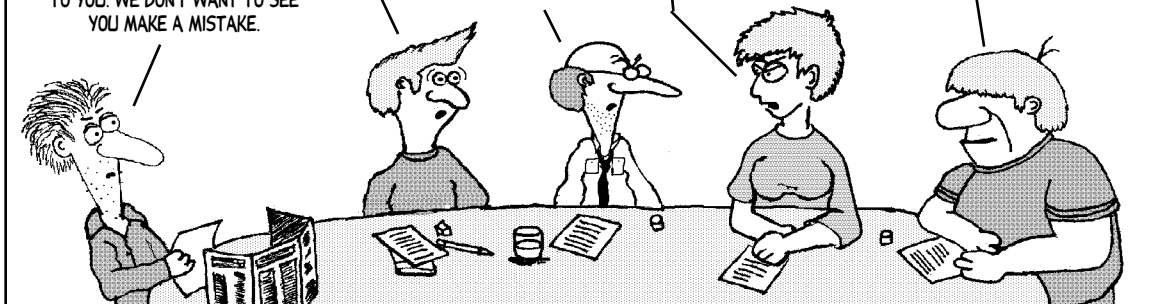
ALL THIS **SNEAKING** BACK AND FORTH IS **HURT-ING THE GAME!** IF YOU JUST TOLD HIM THE **TRUTH** YOU COULD...UH...ER...**UH OH!** I KNOW **THAT** LOOK. UH...I'M **PASSIN' THE BALL** HERE, GUYS.

SNEAKING? WHO'S SNEAKING? LOOK **HEROES**, IT'S **MY** RELATIONSHIP AND **I'LL** TELL. JOHN WHEN I THINK WE'RE READY. YOU GUYS ARE STEPPING **WAAAYY** ACROSS THAT LINE!

WE MEAN WELL, SARA! WE KNOW HOW IMPORTANT **HONESTY** IS TO YOU. WE DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU MAKE A MISTAKE.

I DIDN'T WANT TO MENTION THIS, BUT YOU COULD BE PUTTING **VALUABLE** EXPERIENCE POINTS AT RISK IF YOU'RE LATE AGAIN!

I'LL TAKE IT FROM THERE, DAVE. LOOK, SARA, ACCORDING TO PAGE 98 OF VOLUME III OF THE **HACKMASTER PLAYER'S COMPANION** "THE GAME'S BIGGER THAN ANY ONE PLAYER, EXCEPT GARY HIMSELF."



OF COURSE I WAS JUST QUOTING FROM THE **3RD EDITION**. THE FIRST TWO EDITIONS DIDN'T EXCLUDE GARY. IT WASN'T UNTIL GARY EMERGED AS VICTOR AFTER THE **FORSEY-JACKSON TAKE OVER** IN 1986 THAT THE AMENDMENT WAS...

BRIAN? YOU'RE IN ON THIS TOO? WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU BABBLING ABOUT?

UH...UH...ER... **PASSING THE BALL** HERE!

UNITED FRONT MY ASS!



LOOK SARA, WE DECIDED - AS A GROUP - THAT THIS **JOHN-DUDE** HAS TO KNOW! YOU GOT TWO CHOICES. YOU CAN TELL HIM, OR WE CAN TELL HIM FOR YOU. WHAT'S IT GOING TO BE?

YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO TELL HIM SOONER OR LATER, ANYWAY. **SO WHY NOT NOW?**

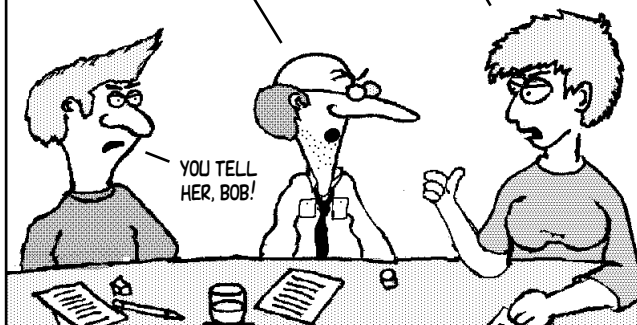
THIS **IS** A JOKE. **RIGHT?**



WELL, **I'LL** BE THE ONE, NOT **YOU FOUR**, TO DECIDE **WHEN** THE RIGHT TIME IS - **AND IT'S NOT NOW!** **DO I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?** END OF CONVERSATION.

NO IT'S **NOT** THE END OF THE CONVERSATION. WE'RE GONNA GET THIS OUT IN THE OPEN SO WE CAN GET BACK TO THE **GAME!**

YOU TELL HER, BOB!



WHY IS **SNEAKING** AROUND **DECEIVING** OTHERS OKAY FOR **YOU** TO DO, BUT WHEN **WE** TELL A **LITTLE** **FIB**, WAMMO IT'S AN **UNHOLY ALLIANCE** AND **NOTHING** **GOOD** WILL COME OF IT.*

DECEIVING OTHERS!! AND JUST **WHAT** DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?



* See KODT#15: The Tangled Web (After Bob's Dad forbids him to role-play anymore, the group creates a 'Book of Excuses' so Bob can get out of the house and play)



YOU WANNA KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT?
HUH? I'M TALKING ABOUT LIVING A **LIE!**

IT'S JUST LIKE WHAT **STURM PYRE**
TOLD THE **LIZARD-MAGE** IN **THIS**
SWORD'S RETIRED.
"A LIE, ALBEIT UNSPOKEN, DRIVETH
A WEDGE BETWEEN FRIENDS."

AMEN, BROTHER
BOB! LAY IT ON HER!

A LIE?? I'VE NEVER
LIED TO ANYONE!

PERHAPS THAT'S
STATING IT A LITTLE
TOO STRONGLY, BOB!



GAAAA!! UGGHHHH!!! BLURT-BING-GASP!!
I DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING BY IT. **WUUUUU-WHOAH!**
DAVE...TAKE THE BALL.

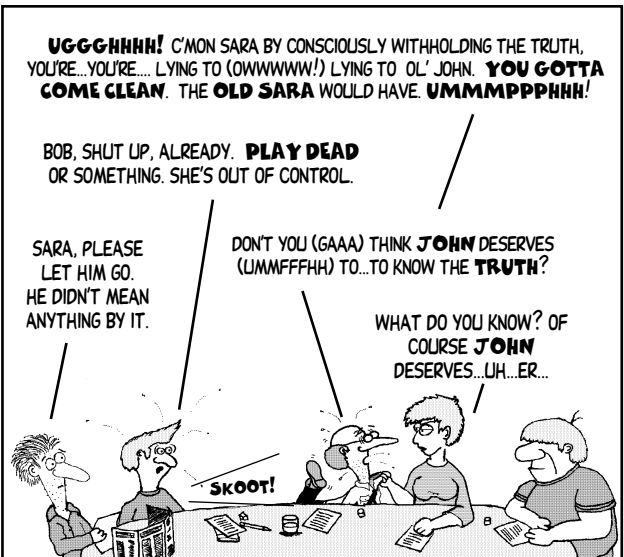
WHERE THE HELL DO **YOU** GET OFF CALLING **ME** A LIAR?
HUH, **CUE BALL?** I OUGHTTA BREAK YOUR LITTLE...

SARA!?!? C'MON, PUT HIM DOWN.
BOB DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING BY IT.

DAVE? **GAAAA!** TAKE THE BALL DAVE! DAVE?
BRIAN? **TAKE THE FREAKIN' BALL, BRIAN!**

YOU'RE DOING **GREAT**, BOB!
DON'T LET UP ON HER NOW!
KEEP IT COMING!

SORRY DUDE,
I, UH, ER...I THINK
I'M BEGINNING TO
SEE **SARA'S**
SIDE OF THINGS.



UGGGHHHH! C'MON SARA BY CONSCIOUSLY WITHHOLDING THE TRUTH,
YOU'RE...YOU'RE... LYING TO (OWWWWWW!) LYING TO OL' JOHN. **YOU GOTTA**
COME CLEAN. THE **OLD SARA** WOULD HAVE. **UMMMPPPHHH!**

BOB, SHUT UP, ALREADY. **PLAY DEAD**
OR SOMETHING. SHE'S OUT OF CONTROL.

SARA, PLEASE
LET HIM GO.
HE DIDN'T MEAN
ANYTHING BY IT.

DON'T YOU (GAAA) THINK **JOHN** DESERVES
(UMMFFHH) TO...TO KNOW THE **TRUTH?**

WHAT DO YOU KNOW? OF
COURSE **JOHN**
DESERVES...UH...ER...

SKOOT!



KER-PLUNK!



YOU'RE RIGHT! HE **DOES** DESERVE TO KNOW
THE TRUTH. WHAT WAS I THINKING?

DUDE, YOU DID IT! I THINK
YOU GOT THROUGH TO HER!



IT HAS BEEN WEIGHING ON ME THESE PAST FEW WEEKS. DO I TELL HIM? DO I NOT TELL HIM? WHEN DO I TELL HIM? WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HE FINDS OUT? BUT YOU GUYS PUT IT **ALL** IN THE PROPER RESPECTIVE. BOTTOM LINE - **JOHN** DESERVES TO KNOW THE TRUTH. **I'M GONNA DO IT!** WHEN I SEE JOHN TOMORROW, I'M GOING TO TELL HIM ALL ABOUT MY **FAVORITE HOBBY!** IT'LL BE GREAT.

THAT'S ALL WE WERE TRYING TO TELL YOU, SARA! WE KNEW YOU WERE BETTER THAN THAT.

YEAH, AND YOU WERE HOLDING UP THE GAME.

YEAH, IT'LL BE GREAT TIL HE BOUNCES YOU OUT ON YOUR EAR.

I'M SORRY I OVER REACTED, GUYS.

DON'T MENTION IT!



IT'S GREAT TO HAVE FRIENDS LIKE YOU GUYS! PLEASE, BY ALL MEANS, IN THE FUTURE, IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO TALK TO ME ABOUT - **FEEL FREE** TO LET ME KNOW. I PROMISE NOT TO FLY OFF THE HANDLE.

HEY BE SURE TO TELL **JOHN** ALL ABOUT **THORINA** AND HOW SHE BRAVELY LAID DOWN HER LIFE FOR HER COMRADES.

UH, YEAH. SURE, I'LL DO THAT DAVE!

HMMMM, THERE **IS** SOMETHING I NEED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT, SARA.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL - EH?

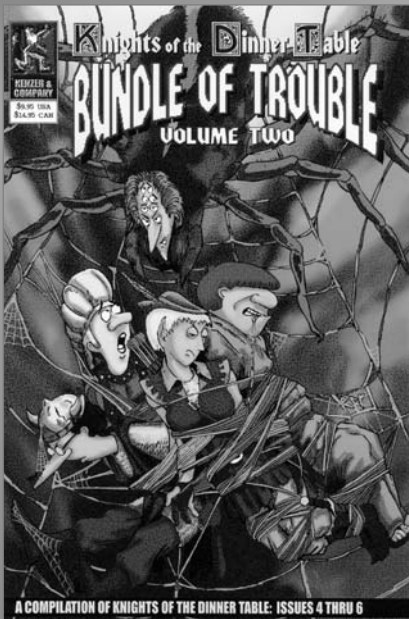


SURE BRIAN! WHAT IS IT?

YOU GOT THAT **FIFTEEN CENTS** YOU OWE ME FOR **JUSTINA'S** CHARACTER SHEET?

(GROAN) I'LL WRITE YOU A CHECK. **OKAY?**

I'D PREFER CASH BUT WHATEVER.



looking for trouble?

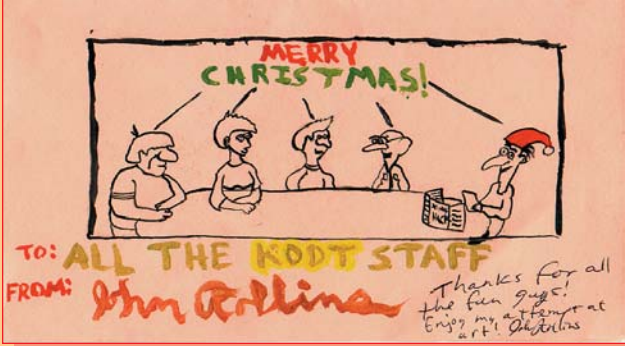
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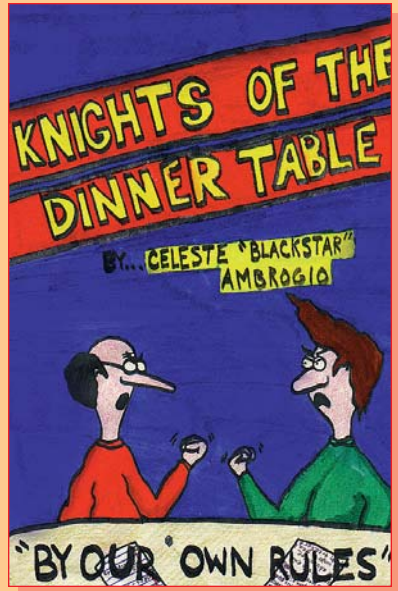
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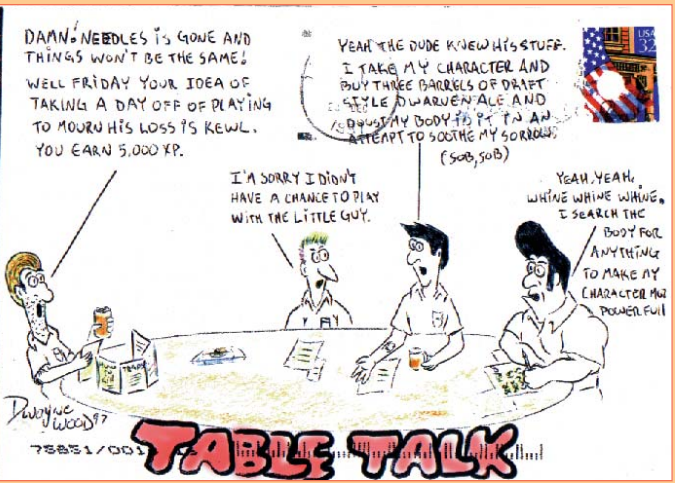
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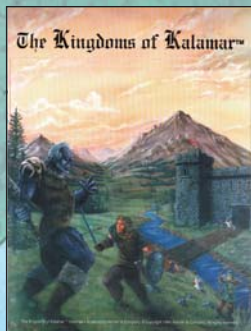


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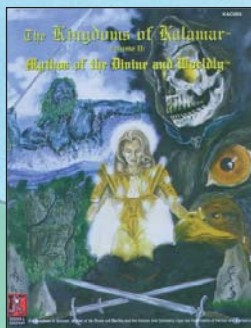


The Kingdoms of Kalamar Deluxe Boxed Set

Krono

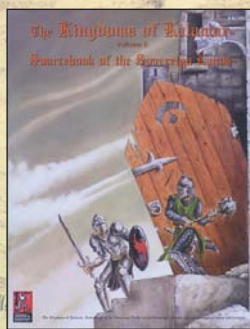
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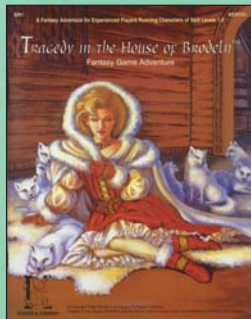
Mythos of the Divine and Worldly

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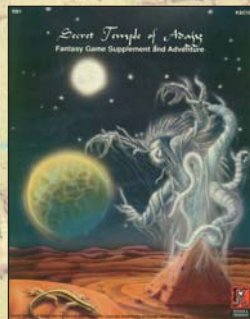
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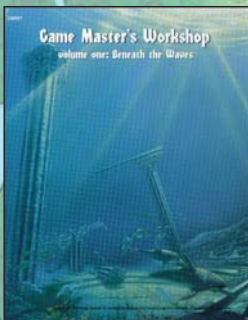
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A 1st-3rd level adventure set in Kalamar, this adventure supplement is made expressly for use with HackMaster, AD&D or any other fantasy RPG. This 56 page adventure contains: ImageQuest adventure illustrator, 5 player aids and handouts, NPC portraits and backgrounds, a flowchart for a difficult encounter, encounter tables, a full glossary, a complete village, a timeline of events, 8 3-Dimensional dungeon maps, and 5 sample player characters with complete backgrounds.

K&C201 GameMasters WorkShop volume one: Beneath the Waves

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K&C102 Secret Temple of Adajy

\$9.95

A mid to high level adventure set in Kalamar, this adventure supplement is made expressly for use with HackMaster, AD&D or any other fantasy RPG. Similar in style to Tragedy in the House of Brodeln, this exciting 72 page adventure contains *two* complete and distinct dungeon adventures in addition to the extras you expect from Kenzer & Company: the ImageQuest adventure illustrator, player aids and handouts, NPC portraits and backgrounds, encounter tables, a full glossary, a city and 10 maps.

Game Master's Workshop (GMW) is a series of source material designed for use with any role-playing system. This edition of GMW is set in the Kingdoms of Kalamar Fantasy Campaign setting in Whimdol Bay on the southern shores of the Elos Desert. Standard features of GMW include Close Encounters of a Random Kind (random encounter or event tables), Bait, Snare & Bag (brief plot lines for adventures presented in a simple format) and The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (detailed descriptions of NPC personalities, motivations and basic abilities). A multitude of new items (both normal and magic), spells, races and monsters are also included.

This volume describes a detailed society of Mermen including their lives, their interactions with surface dwellers, and both the mundane and extraordinary plights they face.

The Deck of Far Too Many Things

BRIAN "THE SIXTH KNIGHT" JELKE

AS YOU PRY OPEN THE DOORS TO THE **INNER CHAMBER OF MAZOO THE MAGNIFICENT'S TOMB**, YOU SEE AN **IVORY PEDESTAL**. SITTING ON TOP IS A PLAIN LOOKING **WOODEN BOX**.

PLAIN LOOKING BOX INDEED! I'M CHECKING THAT SUCKER FOR TRAPS.

I'LL BE WAITING OUTSIDE THE DOORWAY UNTIL KNUCKLES IS FINISHED SETTING OFF... ER, I MEAN SEARCHING FOR TRAPS.

A WOODEN BOX?

GOOD THINKING, BOB! THERE WERE NO MONSTERS GUARDING THIS ROOM, WHAT A **RED FLAG!** THAT BOX IS ALMOST GUARANTEED TO BE TRAPPED.



OK BOB, YOU GIVE THE BOX THE **ONCE OVER** AND YOU'RE PRETTY SURE THERE ARE NO TRAPS.

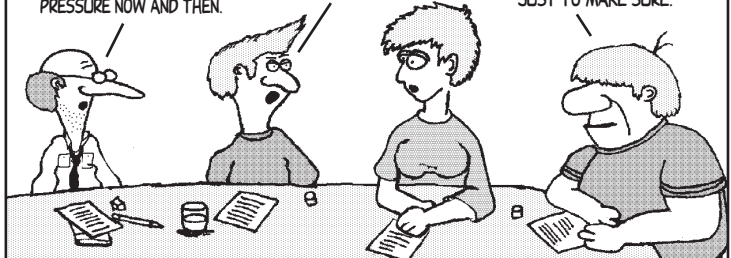
HA! YA HEAR THAT? NO TRAPS. YOU GUYS WERE WORRIED FOR NOTHING. LOOKS LIKE **EASY PICKINS** TO ME.

YEAH, WELL, YOU WERE **SURE** ABOUT THERE BEING NO **SPIKED PIT** IN THAT SIDE CORRIDOR TOO. YOU REMEMBER THAT DON'T YOU? THE **PIT** WE FELL INTO? AND YOU WERE **OH-SO-SURE** THAT THE **POISON TRAP** IN THE **PANTRY** WAS DISARMED.

HEY, CHECKIN' FOR TRAPS IS A **HIGH STRESS OCCUPATION**. ANYONE CAN CRACK UNDER THAT KIND OF PRESSURE NOW AND THEN.

HEY, LAY OFF THE GUY, HUH? HE SAID HE WAS SORRY.

GOOD POINT, SARA. **KNUCKLES** HAS BEEN WRONG BEFORE, MAYBE YOU SHOULD CHECK AGAIN, BOB! JUST TO MAKE SURE.



I TAKE THE BOX OFF THE STAND AND OPEN IT BUT I'M POINTING IT AT **MISTER AND MISS DOUBTING THOMAS** OVER THERE IN THE DOORWAY.

HEY! C'MON, BOB. DON'T BE FOOLIN' AROUND LIKE THAT WHEN WE'RE SO LOW ON **HIT POINTS!** I'M STANDING IN THE DOORWAY **TOO YA KNOW.**

IF THERE ARE INDEED **NO TRAPS** HERE, IT WOULD ALMOST SEEM LIKE **MAZOO** WANTED US TO TAKE THE BOX. THIS COULD BE A **VALUABLE CLUE** TO SOLVING **MAZOO'S RIDDLE!**

I'M STARTING TO THINK **MAZOO** HIMSELF WAS A RIDDLE. ACCORDING TO THAT SCROLL I FOUND BEHIND THAT TAPESTRY, **MAZOO** WAS A WHIMSICAL AND CHAOTIC KING. HE WOULD SOMETIMES GRANT COMMONERS LAND AND WEALTH ONLY TO THROW THEM IN JAIL DAYS LATER. **NO ONE** REALLY UNDERSTOOD HIS **BIZARRE BEHAVIOR.**



OKAY BOB, YOU FUMBLE WITH THE LATCH ON THE BOX AND IT SUDDENLY OPENS. THE BOX IS LINED WITH **RED VELVET** ON THE INSIDE. IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN **CUSTOM TAILORED** TO HOLD THE INTRICATELY CARVED DECK OF **IVORY CARDS** WHICH LIES INSIDE.

A DECK OF IVORY CARDS? HMMMMMM, IF THOSE TURN OUT TO BE WHAT I **THINK** THEY ARE, THEY COULD EXPLAIN **A LOT** OF THINGS ABOUT **MAZOO'S REIGN** AND THE **MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES** SURROUNDING HIS **DEATH**.

WAAA...WHAT? NOTHING BUT SOME **CRAPPY CARDS?** IT'S A GOOD THING THIS **MAZOO** IS DEAD, 'CUZ I'D WASTE HIS ASS FOR WASTIN' MY TIME ON HIS SORRY-ASS TOMB.

THEY SHOULD HAVE CALLED HIM **MAZOO THE INSIGNIFICANT** INSTEAD OF **THE MAGNIFICENT!**

EXCELLENT! THAT DECK COULD BE OUR TICKET TO **FAME AND FORTUNE**. READ THE INSTRUCTIONS BOBBY BOY. I THINK YOU'RE IN FOR A **PLEASANT SURPRISE**.



HUH? **PLEASANT SURPRISE?** WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

A LITTLE RUSTY ON OUR KNOWLEDGE OF **MAJOR ARTIFACTS** ARE WE? **DUH!** B.A. JUST QUOTED VERBATIM THE DESCRIPTIVE TEXT FOR A **DECK OF WONDROUS THINGS** FROM THE **HACKMASTER GM'S GUIDE!**

MAJOR ARTIFACT? HOT DAMN! I KNEW TONIGHT WAS GOING TO BE KINDA SPECIAL.

LET'S BE CAREFUL! THESE DECKS CAN BE **LETHAL!**

DIBBS! I CALLED.



OKAY, LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD. I READ THE **FIRST CARD**. WHAT DOES IT SAY?

AS YOU DRAW THE TOP CARD FROM THE DECK IT BEGINS TO GLOW WITH AN EERIE SHIMMER!! THE CARD TINGLES TO THE TOUCH.

I'M AVERTING MY EYES! IT MIGHT BE ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE **RUNES OF EYEBALL IMPLOSION!**



THE **FIRST CARD** REVEALS THAT THE **BEARER OF THE DECK** MAY CHOOSE TO RANDOMLY DRAW ANYWHERE FROM **ONE TO FOUR** ADDITIONAL CARDS. THE **BEARER OF THE DECK**, HOWEVER, MUST ANNOUNCE THE **TOTAL NUMBER** OF CARDS TO BE DRAWN **PRIOR** TO DRAWING ANY.

HEY THIS IS KINDA LIKE **LIARS DICE RUMBLE** WHERE YOU HAVE TO DECLARE HOW MANY DICE YOU'RE GOING TO ROLL.

WHY THE HELL WOULD WE WANT TO DRAW CARDS? WHAT DO THEY DO?



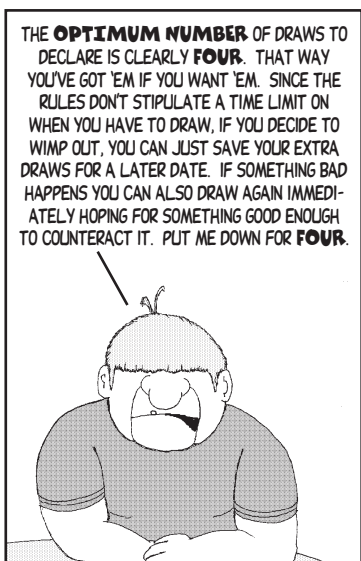
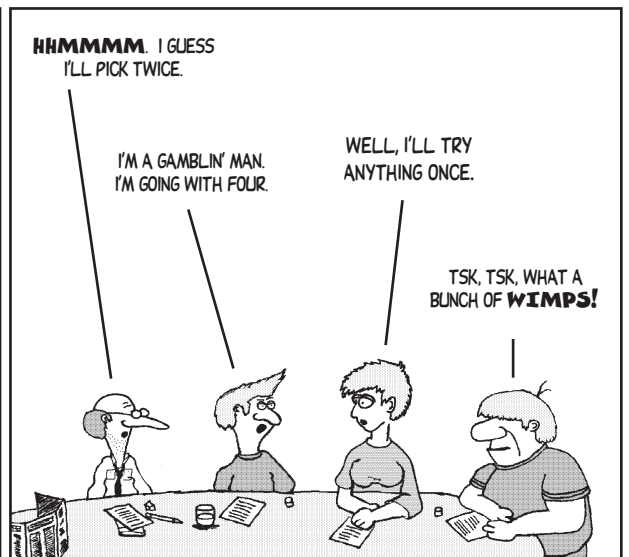
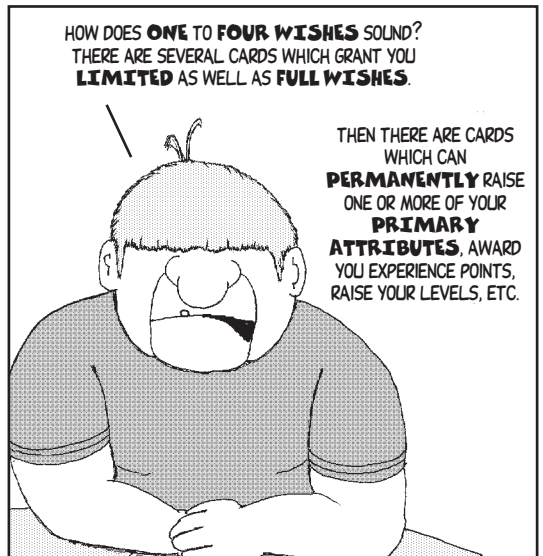
WHY? LOOK GUYS, THE CARDS ARE CAPABLE OF **POWERFUL MAGIC**. SOME BAD, SOME GOOD. YOU'RE BASICALLY **GAMBLING**, (POTENTIALLY WITH YOUR LIFE), THAT YOU'LL DRAW A **GOOD CARD**.

SOME CARDS ARE BAD HUH? HOW BAD CAN IT BE? IF I DIE, YOU'LL JUST GET ME RAISED RIGHT? WHAT A SCAM! **DEATH** CAN ALWAYS BE DENIED AND **TREASURE IS FOREVER!**

YEAH, WHAT'S THE **BIG DEAL!** EVERY DUNGEON CRAWL IS A **GAMBLE** FOR A **FIGHTER-TYPE** LIKE ME!

WELL I CAN SEE WHERE THIS IS GOING.





*See KODT #5: Agent of Evil

OH ALL RIGHT. DON'T GET YOUR DICE BAG ALL IN A WAD. I GUESS YOU GUYS ARE RIGHT. NEVER LET IT BE SAID THAT KNUCKLES ISN'T A TEAM PLAYER.

TEAM PLAYER? KNUCKLES? OH YEAH, I FORGOT THIS IS A **FANTASY** GAME ISN'T IT? (SNICKER)

OKAY, JUST TO REVIEW, I HAVE BOB DOWN FOR TWO DRAWS, DAVE FOR FOUR, SARA FOR ONE AND BRIAN FOR FOUR. **RIGHT?**

TWO DRAWS BOB? COME ON YOU WUSS! IT'S LIKE THE TIME WE WERE PLAYING **IN-BETWEEN-THE-SHEETS** AND YOU REFUSED TO BET ON THE **HIGH/LOW AGE SPLIT**. BESIDES, REMEMBER WHAT BRIAN SAID. YOU CAN **DELAY** YOUR FINAL PICKS INDEFINITELY.

SO I WAS WORRIED ABOUT MATCHING THE **POT** FOR THE **EIGHTH TIME!** WHAT ABOUT SARA? SHE'S ONLY PICKING ONCE. I GOT KIND OF A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS. IF YOU'RE SO LUCKY MR. JACKPOT, WHY DON'T YOU PICK FIRST?

IN-BETWEEN-THE-SHEETS?

C'MON GUYS, WE'RE BURNING GAME TIME HERE. ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE YOUR DRAWS OR NOT?

I'M THERE, **BA!** I STEP FORWARD AND DRAW A CARD FROM THE DECK.

HMMMMM...YOU KNOW, SINCE **BA** DIDN'T OVERRULE **BRIAN'S** SUGGESTION OF DELAYING ON SUBSEQUENT DRAWS, I MIGHT AS WELL GO WITH **FOUR DRAWS** AS WELL. GO AHEAD AND BUMP MINE UP, **BA**.

SEE YA IN HELL, **EL RAV!!** GOOD LUCK!

SIMMER DOWN QUICK DRAW **McGRAW!** GIVE ME A CHANCE TO GET SOME DEFENSIVE SPELLS READY. (SHEESH)

DAVE DRAWS AN IVORY CARD FROM THE DECK AND REVEALS AN IMAGE OF A **SKULL!** SUDDENLY, A SWIRLING PATCH OF MIST RISES UP FROM THE FLOOR OF THE CHAMBER. IT WHIRLS AROUND AND AROUND UNTIL IT FORMS A TALL COLUMN WHICH RISES FROM FLOOR TO CEILING. THERE IS A CRACK OF THUNDER AS A LARGE, **RED EYED SKELETON** CLOAKED IN A BLACK ROBE STEPS OUT OF THE MIST. YOU ARE SURPRISED AS HE SWINGS AT YOU WITH HIS **RUSTY SCYTHE** - STRIKING YOU FOR 16 POINTS OF DAMAGE.

HA! **THIS GUY'S TOAST!** IS HIS BACK TO ME? I'LL MANEUVER IN FOR A BACKSTAB.

OH MAN, I'M NOT BELIEVING THIS! **SCHLING!** I'M DRAWING MY **HACKMASTER +12** AND DEALING **MR. DEATH** SOME OF HIS OWN MEDICINE.

I'LL ALSO ENGAGE THE SKELETAL FIGURE.

CRIPES! I WAS AFRAID OF THIS.

OKAY DAVE, YOU HIT THE **SKELETAL FIGURE** DOING 20 **POINTS** OF DAMAGE. SARA MISSES AND **KNUCKLES** DELIVERS A DEVASTATING BACKSTAB TO TAKE IT OUT. THE **SKELETON** TURNS TO DUST AND BLOWS AWAY!

HOODY HOO! YOU DA MAN, DAVE. **YOU DA MAN!** ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL.

NO, NO, **YOU DA MAN!** YOU GAVE OL' **BAG-A-BONES** THE OL' WHAT-FOR.

WELL **THAT** CERTAINLY WASN'T TOO BAD. LET'S JUST HOPE OUR LUCK HOLDS OUT.

NOT BAD? WE'RE TOAST, I TELL YA. **DEAD MEAT!**



FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS, FOLKS. UNFORTUNATELY, AS YOU STAND AROUND HIGH FIVIN' EACH OTHER, **TWO MORE IDENTICAL SKELETONS** APPEAR. ONE ATTACKS **KNUCKLES** FOR 10 POINTS AND THE OTHER HITS **SARA'S** CLERIC FOR 12.

GAAA! WHAT THE SAM HILL? I'M IN DEEP KIMSHEE. CAN'T BACKSTAB HIS FACE AND IN HAND TO HAND MY CROSSBOW IS USELESS. AFTER THAT **SPIKED PIT** I'M HURTIN' ON HIT POINTS. **A LITTLE HELP HERE!**

SORRY BOB, I'VE GOT MY OWN **DEATH SKELETON** TO CONTEND WITH. (SIGH). I GUESS IT WASN'T AS EASY AS I THOUGHT.

SORRY DUDE! IF I ATTACK YOURS, I GET ANOTHER ONE ON MYSELF. BRIAN WAS THE ONLY ONE NOT TO ATTACK AND HE DIDN'T GET A **DEATH SKELETON**.

DAVE, I'M IMPRESSED. YOU FIGURED IT OUT ALL BY YOURSELF. YEAH, ATTACKIN' THESE DUDES IS BAD NEWS.



A FEW COMBAT ROUNDS LATER...

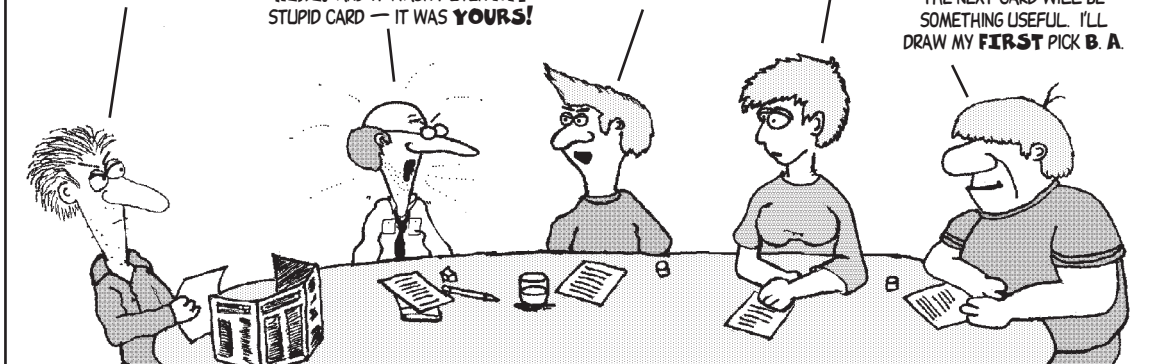
OKAY, THAT ROUND **KNUCKLES** TOOK 13 POINTS AND **JUSTINA** ONLY TAKES 3.

DAMMIT! I'M GETTIN' PISSED. THIS AIN'T FAIR! WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO THAT "ALL FOR ONE" CRAP WE WERE TALKIN' ABOUT? **I'M DYIN' HERE!** AND IT WASN'T EVEN MY STUPID CARD — IT WAS **YOURS!**

DUDE, RELAX. I PROMISE, I'LL USE ANY WISHES I GET TO BRING **KNUCKLES** BACK. **CHILL!**

(MOAN) I'LL KEEP FIGHTING **B. A.** I THINK I CAN HOLD ON A FEW MORE ROUNDS. MAYBE HE'S WEAKENING.

I'LL HELP YOU BOB. MAYBE THE NEXT CARD WILL BE SOMETHING USEFUL. I'LL DRAW MY **FIRST PICK B. A.**



HAWKWOOD FIEFS: IMPERIAL SURVEY VOL. 1

Emperor Alexius has sent his Questing Knights forth to bring back reports from all quarters of the Known Worlds on the state of his empire. The first volume surveys the Hawkwood fiefs - home to Alexius before his ascension and center of intrigue for one of the Known Worlds' major powers. From the marble palaces of Ravenna to the backwoods of barbaric Leminkainen, the Hawkwood way of life is revealed. Each survey volume is a report written by a Questing Knight in a unique voice, and is suitable for both players and gamemasters.

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OKAY, YOUR NEW **FADING SUN** CHARACTERS LOOK GREAT EXCEPT FOR BOB'S CHARACTER, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE THE MAKINGS OF A GOOD PARTY THERE.
BOB, AS SOON AS YOU CREATE A **NEW** CHARACTER WE CAN GET STARTED.

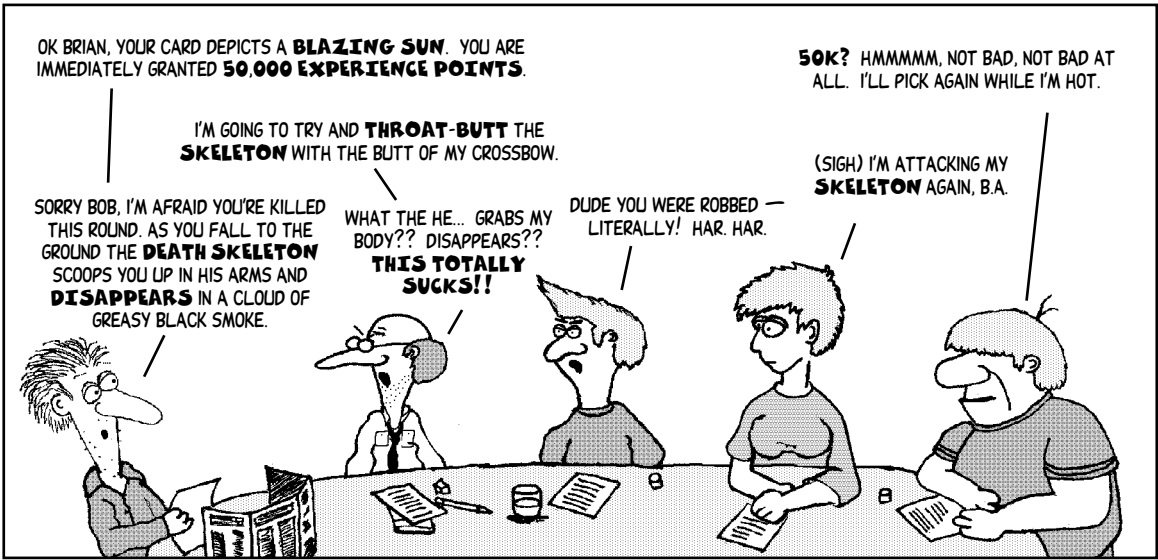
BUT BRIAN, **JUST** BECAUSE MY CHARACTER IS AN **AMALTHEAN PRIEST** DOESN'T MEAN SHE ISN'T PART OF THE **ORTHODOXY**.

WHY WON'T YOU LET ME PLAY MY **GANNOCK BROTHER BATTLE??** HE ROCKS!!
CHARACTER DISCRIMINATION — THAT'S WHAT **THIS** IS!

C'MON B.A., WE WERE GOING TO BE A TEAM. BOB'S **MONKEY-BOY** IS GONNA STAND ON MY **VOROX WARRIOR'S** SHOULDER AND COVER MY BACKSIDE! WITH HIS HOPPED UP **JET PISTOL** AND MY **BLASTER AXE** WE'RE GONNA BE **AWESOME**.

AS **ARCHBISHOP DOLMEN OF PYRE** ALWAYS SAYS, "**HERESY LURKS IN THE HEART OF EVERY MAN**". WE **AVESTITES** MUST ALWAYS BE ON OUR GUARD SO I'LL BE KEEPING MY EYE ON YOU.





OK BRIAN, YOUR CARD DEPICTS A **BLAZING SUN**. YOU ARE IMMEDIATELY GRANTED **50,000 EXPERIENCE POINTS**.

50K? HMMMMM, NOT BAD, NOT BAD AT ALL. I'LL PICK AGAIN WHILE I'M HOT.

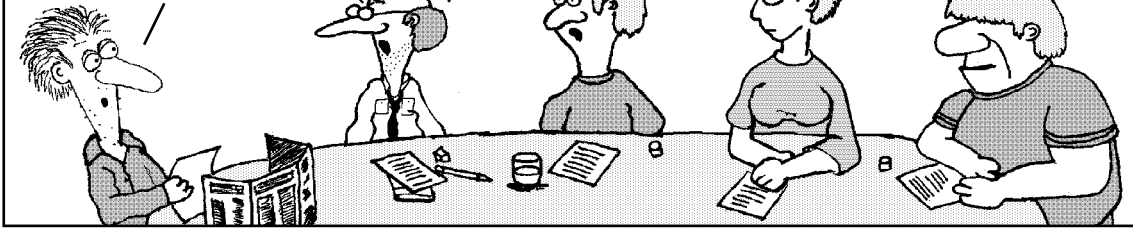
I'M GOING TO TRY AND **THROAT-BUTT** THE **SKELETON** WITH THE BUTT OF MY CROSSBOW.

(SIGH) I'M ATTACKING MY **SKELETON** AGAIN, B.A.

SORRY BOB, I'M AFRAID YOU'RE KILLED THIS ROUND. AS YOU FALL TO THE GROUND THE **DEATH SKELETON** SCOOPS YOU UP IN HIS ARMS AND **DISAPPEARS** IN A CLOUD OF GREASY BLACK SMOKE.

WHAT THE HE... GRABS MY BODY?? DISAPPEARS?? **THIS TOTALLY SUCKS!!**

DUDE YOU WERE ROBBED — LITERALLY! HAR. HAR.



OK, SARA. AFTER TAKING 5 MORE POINTS OF DAMAGE, YOU MANAGE TO KILL THE **DEATH SKELETON** ON YOU. BRIAN, YOUR NEXT CARD DEPICTS AN **ADVISOR**. YOU ARE GRANTED THE ABILITY TO **AUTOMATICALLY** KNOW THE ANSWER TO YOUR **NEXT DILEMMA**.

DID YOU HEAR THAT CRAP? THE **BASTARD** TOOK MY BODY? WHAT KIND OF **FIRK DING BLASTED NONSENSE** IS THAT? HUH? I DIDNT EVEN GET TO DRAW A **FRICKIN' CARD!**

THANK GOODNESS. I'M GOING TO HEAL UP A BIT BEFORE I MESS WITH THIS DECK ANYMORE.

WHOAH!! THAT'S TWO GOOD CARDS IN A ROW!! LOOKS LIKE THE DECK IS BEING GENEROUS. LET ME PICK AGAIN.

ONE DILEMMA SOLUTION HUH? DOUBT I'LL NEED IT BUT I GUESS IT'S WORTH NOTING ON THE OLD RECORD SHEET.

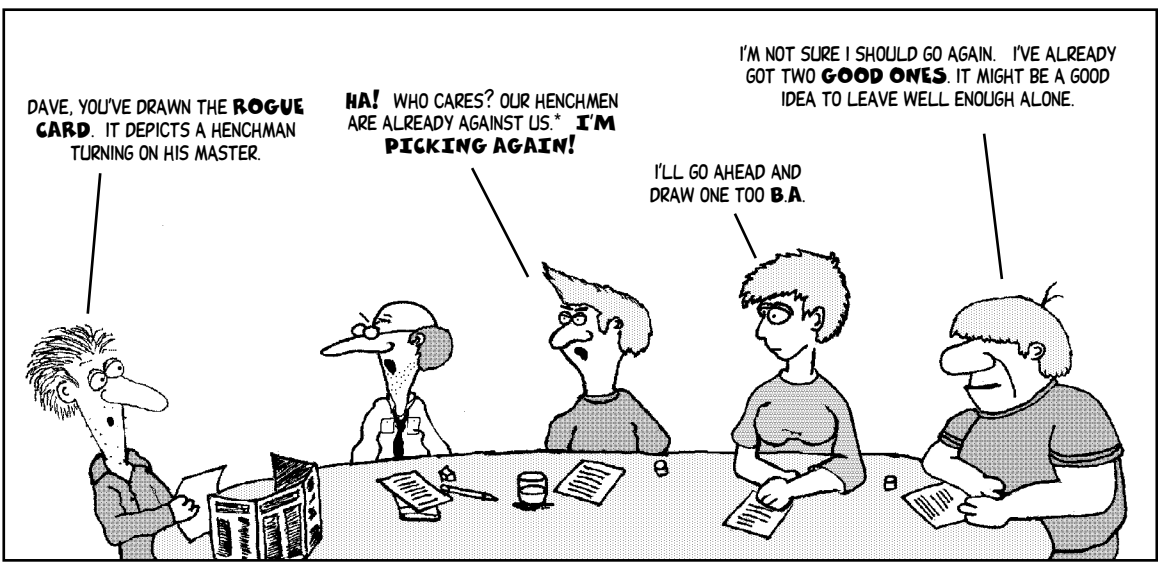


DAVE, YOU'VE DRAWN THE **ROGUE CARD**. IT DEPICTS A HENCHMAN TURNING ON HIS MASTER.

HA! WHO CARES? OUR HENCHMEN ARE ALREADY AGAINST US.* **I'M PICKING AGAIN!**

I'M NOT SURE I SHOULD GO AGAIN. I'VE ALREADY GOT TWO **GOOD ONES**. IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE.

I'LL GO AHEAD AND DRAW ONE TOO **B.A.**



*See KODT #14: The Barringer Rebellion

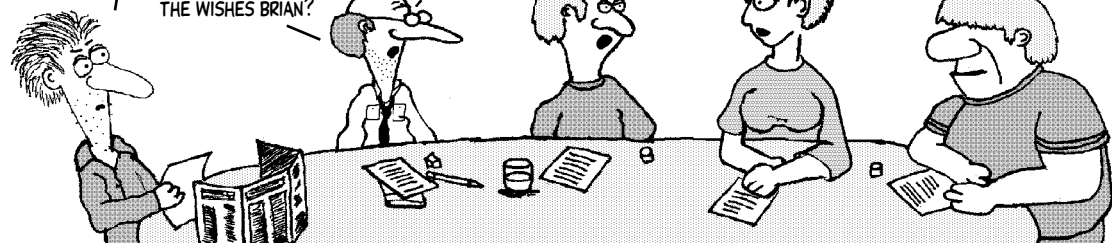
SARA, YOU FIND YOUR CARD DEPICTS A **THRONE**. YOUR **CHARISMA** INCREASES TO **18** AND A **DEED** TO A **SMALL KEEP** APPEARS IN YOUR **PALM**. DAVE, YOUR NEXT DRAW DEPICTS A **VILLAGE IDIOT**. YOU LOSE 4 POINTS OF **INTELLIGENCE**.

EXCELLENT! I'M ONE FOR ONE AND HAPPY TO STAY THAT WAY.

MAN, GOOD THING **EL RAVAGER** MAKES HIS LIVING BY THE SWORD. I'D HATE TO HAVE TO THINK MY WAY OUT OF A JAM WITH THAT KIND OF HANDICAP.

SIT TIGHT BOB. WE'VE ALL GOT MORE DRAWS COMING. DAVE'S BOUND TO GET LUCKY ON HIS **FINAL ONE**.

SURE WE'LL BRING KNUCKLES BACK THEY SAID. WHERE ARE ALL THE WISHES BRIAN?



OH MAN, THIS IS BRUTAL. I'M SORRY DAVE BUT UNFORTUNATELY YOUR FINAL DRAW DEPICTS A **FOOL**. YOU LOSE **10,000 EXPERIENCE POINTS** AND MAY **NO LONGER** DRAW FROM THE DECK.

BRIAN, I FEEL SO BAD FOR THE BOTH OF THEM. TELL YA WHAT - IF YOU DRAW ANOTHER CARD I WILL TOO. MAYBE WE'LL GET SOMETHING **GOOD** THAT WILL HELP THEM.

YEAH, I DON'T KNOW HOW **MAZOO** KEPT THINGS GOING ALL THOSE YEARS WITH THIS **STUPID** DECK LYING AROUND. I GOT **BONED** ON THIS DEAL.

SHEESH! THIS DECK IS **LOADED**. ARE YOU **SURE** I DIDN'T **DETECT A TRAP** BEFORE? 'CUZ FROM WHERE I'M SITTIN' IT LOOKS LIKE A TRAP.

OH...WELL...ALL RIGHT. IT'S **AGAINST** MY BETTER JUDGEMENT BUT I'LL DO IT.



A FEW MOMENTS LATER...

YOU SEE A **PLAIN BLACK CARD — THE VOID**. THE DECK DISAPPEARS AND TAKES YOUR **MIND** WITH IT. BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME BRIAN.

WHAT A **LOUSY ADVENTURE!!** ALL THAT DUNGEON CRAWLING JUST TO GET SCREWED BY A **DECK OF CARDS!**

HEY SARA, CAN I BE THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD AT YOUR KEEP? I NEED A NICE **NO-BRAINER** JOB UNTIL I CAN SORT THINGS OUT.

DON'T WORRY BRIAN. THE **SCARECROW** DIDN'T HAVE A **BRAIN** EITHER. WE'LL TAKE CARE OF YOUR NEEDS. YOU KNOW - ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL?

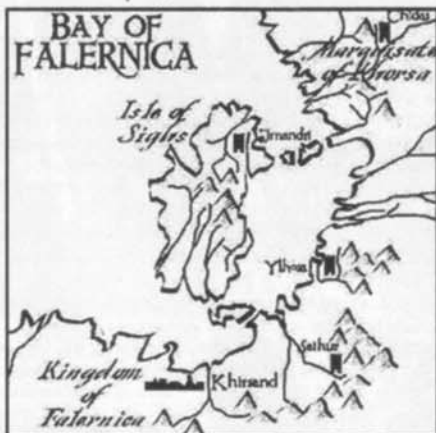


MAPMAKER

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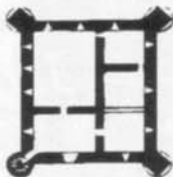
The *MapMaker* collection is a set of cartographic fonts and design tools which let you use your computer to make high-quality original maps and building plans with an antique, hand-drawn look.



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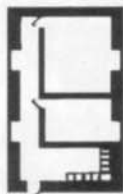
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As a special bonus the CD also features the *Oroborus* universal roleplaying rules.

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 A row of decorative letters: n h p i h j p d h m
 A row of decorative letters: C Q I Z E G I
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ANTARCTIC PRESS AND KENZER & COMPANY ANNOUNCE
"KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE" PVC FIGURES

Contact: David S. Kenzer, President
Kenzer & Company
(650) 233-8270

Menlo Park, CA - Kenzer and Company is proud to announce that it will soon be publishing the fantasy comic, Avelon.

Avelon was previously self-published by it's creators, series artist Manny Vega & writer Blaine Loyd under the Drawbridge Studios name, along with partners, letterer Jeff Janovetz and artist Ricardo Boronat. Beginning with issue #6, however, Avelon's cover will be graced with the Kenzer & Company logo. The comic series will continue as a creator-owned, bi-monthly, black & white comic starting in April.

"It's a perfect marriage!" says Jolly Blackburn of Kenzer and Company. "And I'm speaking from experience. This arrangement will allow the Drawbridge folks to concentrate on the creative aspects of Avelon while Kenzer and Company handles the business end. It also means we now qualify for the group-discount at Denny's when we have our next power-breakfast."

Manny Vega agrees. "After months of discussions and debates, as well as many sleepless nights, we finally decided that we prefer briefs over boxers!" (The issue of preference for briefs over boxers was a large stumbling block during negotiations between the two companies.) The announcement comes on the eve of the last Drawbridge issue (Avelon #5) a massive 112 page graphic novel featuring a cover by Poison Elves' creator Drew Hayes, which should arrive in stores in late January. Issue #5, featuring the entire "Way of the Wylden" story, retails at the ultra-low price of \$5.95.

When asked about the conditions of the Kenzer deal, Avelon co-creator Manny Vega said, "We'd been curious about contracting Drawbridge out to a new publisher, one that we felt could represent our best interests and one who really cared about helping us make Avelon connect beyond our core of obsessed readers. Kenzer & Company seemed a logical choice for a fantasy book to reach real fans of the genre." Drawbridge letterer/editor Jeff Janovetz adds, "Besides they got us liquored up and took some rather embarrassing pictures of certain Drawbridge partners involved in various stages of undress in a petting zoo. When faced with a disturbing set of Polaroids like that, how could we say no to their offer?"

Dave Kenzer, president of Kenzer & Company smiled with glee as the contracts were signed. "I got these guys in my back pocket! The idiots! They don't realize it but they just signed away their...hey? Is that microphone on?"

Avelon's new beginning with Kenzer & Company in April, will represent the beginning of a new story. A chapter in Avelon's ongoing tale of classic fantasy adventure, with Issue 6 being the first of a five part story entitled "The Legacy of Thrain". Co-creator and writer, Blaine Loyd, refers to it as, "sort of a Watchmen meets J.R.R. Tolkien kind of tale. It will be a great point for new readers to jump on the bandwagon, as well as continue to tell the overall story we've had in mind since we began. The only difference is now we're making someone else do all the business crap."

To catch a glimpse of what the future holds for Kenzer & Company's newest title, check out the Avelon homepage at <http://www.Avelon.com>



Antarctic Press in conjunction with Kenzer & Company is pleased to announce the upcoming production of PVC figures based on the hit gaming comic book KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE. The figures will be released exclusively to comic retail outlets and gaming stores in early summer of 1999.

Written by the makers of the classic Monty Python and the Holy Grail card game, KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE has been a growing cult smash in both gaming and comic circles, thanks to wit sharper than a Vorpall Sword and characters to whom ever gamer can relate. Now B.A., Bob, Dave, Sara and Brian will be available as highly detailed four-inch PVC figures, for display or to run amok as titans in any gamer's miniature set.

Each of these highly detailed figures will be offered on card from the company that brought you the popular action figures for WARRIOR NUN, SHOTGUN MARY and LILLITH, as well as the upcoming USAGI YOJIMBO toy. Antarctic Press Vice President Joe Dunn considers KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE a perfect choice for the company's first set of PVC figures. "We've been fans of the series right from the start," he says, "hooked since the first couple of issues. We know fans like ourselves would love to see the characters in PVC."

Plans are already underway to make sure the figures and packaging live up to the hilarious standards of the comic. According to Dunn, "Readers of the series are going to expect a lot, and we plan to give it to them. There will be a lot of funny stuff on the cards as a result. That way game and action figure fans who don't know the comic will pick up the figures and be entertained too."

While KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE had very humble beginnings, circulation has grown with almost every issue. The early issues are now almost impossible to find. As a result, the PVC figures should appeal to both fans and general collectors.

For further information, please contact:

Doug Dlin or Joe Dunn
Antarctic Press
7272 Wurzbach, Suite 204
San Antonio, TX 78240

(210)614-0396
fax: (210) 614-5029

For information on Knights of the Dinner Table or Kenzer & Company, please contact:

David Kenzer
2094 Camino a los Cerros
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Phone/fax: (650) 233-8270

Knights of the Dinner Table and KoDT are trademarks of Kenzer and Company. Monty Python and the Holy Grail is a trademark of Python (Monty) Pictures.

Hot off the
Wire...




SHARDAR

story & art
Manny Vega



I CAN'T LEAVE
THE KID LIKE THIS,
'E SAVED MY LIFE.



WE CANNOT CARRY
HIM. YOUR STUBBY
LEGS AND THE OLD
MAN WILL SLOW
US DOWN AS IT IS.

THEN YA MIGHT AS
WELL WALK TO TORAKK
ON YER OWN, YA
LINGRATEFUL BASTARD.



HAVE YA FERGOTTEN LAST
NIGHT'S LITTLE RITUAL?



LINGRATEFUL? YOU
HAVE SAVED NO ONE
YET, STEELVEIN!



I SEE SCORES OF FILTHY DWARVEN CARCASSES IN THE RUBBLE, AND I DO NOT WISH TO DIE AMONG THEM.

IF WE ARE CAPTURED HERE, WE WILL BE SLAIN ON SIGHT. LET THE BOY LIE, HE'S AS GOOD AS DEAD.



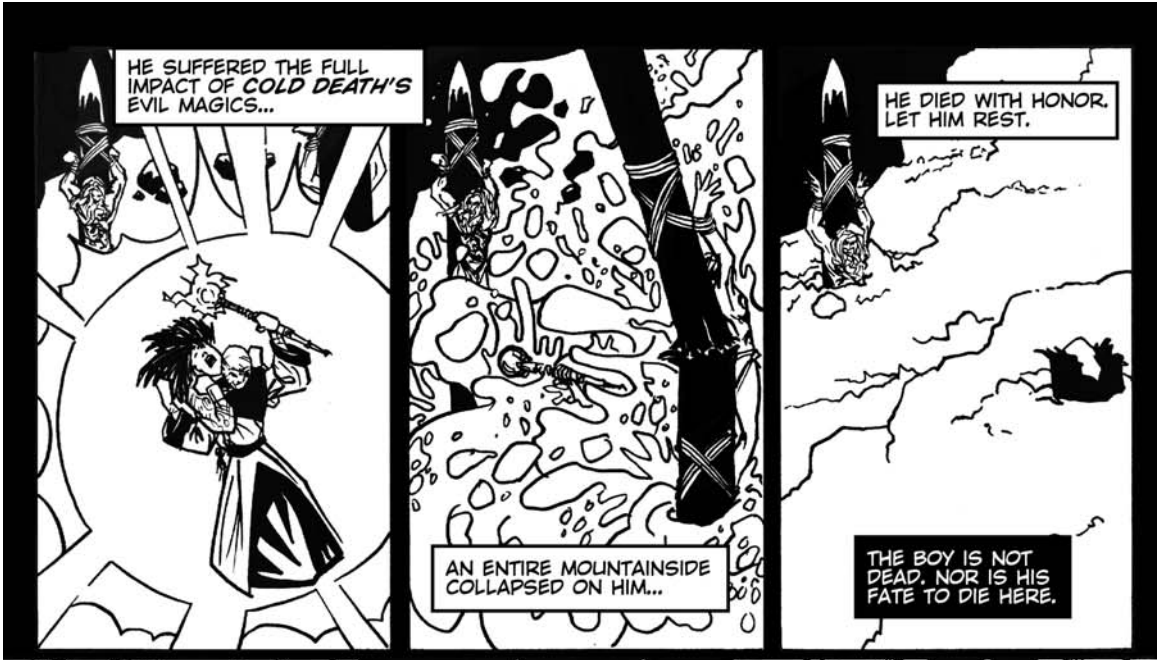
ANGWAR...I'D SUGGEST YA SHUT UP AND PICK UP THE KID. ELSE YER GONNA FIND THIS FILTHY DWARF'S PICK, IN YER FILTHY FHOKKI HOLE.



LOOK AT HIM...

THE BOY'S SCARRED AND BRANDED FROM NECK TO TOE.





KODT: IN YER FACE EVERY FREAKIN' MONTH!!



Issue 30: No Honor
Available April, 1999

I READ MINE WITH A
TRAFFIC CONE ON MY HEAD
AND MY FEET IN A PAN OF
WALL PAPER PASTE!



I CAN'T READ!
I JUST LOOK AT THE
PURTY PICTURES.



Issue 31: Don't Fear the Reaper
Available May, 1999

"WHAT DO YOU READ YOURS WITH??!!"

Are You Expendable?

Or would you like to be expendable?

Do you possess basic motor functions and a heartbeat?

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GATECRASHER
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In the *Gatecrasher* universe, High Tech and High Wizardry struggle for supremacy. Armored knights board space shuttles to pursue their chosen dragons across the solar system. Lycanthropes on Saturn's moons howl at the full planet overhead while cybernetic orcs inspect their power armor in preparation for storming a wizard's enclave....

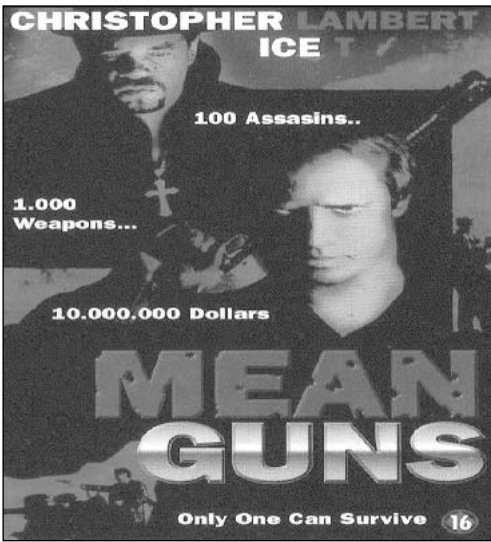
Welcome to *Gatecrasher*, where anything can happen – and often does! A complete role-playing game, *Gatecrasher* includes a magic system, spaceship design rules, Supernormal Powers for player characters, Random Icky Things (monsters), and more! #GGG3001, \$18.95.



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MEAN GUNS

A Straight-to-Video Hack-Fest you may have missed!

uninvited but willing participant in this bloodbath battle royal of a story. For those of you familiar with the **Highlander** Movie/Series the irony in the choice of using *Lambert* is that you could actually imagine that he is the **Highlander** just passing time until the

styles among the participants. Some prefer the speed and sureness of a good bat swing, while some fire their weapons indiscriminately at anything that moves. Some retreat right away while some prefer to mix it up in the open. *Lambert*, annoyed by everyone's lack of discipline, preferred to use open handed attacks and set out to find the prize on his own. Delighted by the chaos he created, *Ice T* couldn't resist partaking in the event by meeleing with a particular victim he personally didn't like. The remainder of the movie consists of isolated fight scenes and the forging of alliances. The choice of alliances is of particular interest to the viewer.

On a tip from one of our fans I decided to grab a bag of chips, lay down on the basement couch and watch a movie that boasted to give any adventure game master a host of new ideas for their *hack-n-slash* campaign. As the title would imply, there are not too many nice feelings portrayed in this movie. But that does not take away from the unique plot and interesting cast of characters which overall made for a very entertaining experience.

Gathering. This perspective plays laughingly well when I noticed that no sharp edged weapons were used during the movie thus ensuring his head would remain put.

I liked the two-man team the best. They worked well together and there was little chance of inter-party conflict. But then again there was the unlikely four-person alliance which was superior in firepower but you knew there could only be three winners. Intriguing.

I would first point out that the choice of main characters was superb. *Ice T* (the rap artist turned actor) played a vindictive organized crime operative and *Christopher Lambert* (a.k.a. **The Highlander**) played an

In addition to *Ice T* and *Lambert* there are other quality actors that you've seen before in various action shows that support the main characters well. The plot is very unique and surprisingly simple but at the same time intricate. *Ice T* invites an assortment of thugs, con-men and hustlers to an unoccupied prison complex for a meeting with an unknown agenda. The invitees at one time did work for his syndicate but cheated the mob in a small sort of way. Being the cold calculated evil character he plays, *Ice T* cannot forgive any disobedience to the mob no matter how insignificant. He informs the unarmed group that they are now captive and that the only way to redemption is to fight your way to the prize money located within the depths of the prison.

I also liked how the varying degrees of evilness and brashness are displayed by the participants. One improbable candidate for survival was a ditzy voluptuous vixen who at first appeared easy prey but strategically used her good looks and deceptive cunning (did I mention her good looks?) to infiltrate alliances. Eventually she permeated into the solid two-man alliance and assassinated one of the team members. Good stuff!



MEDIA HACKS

Video-Viewing Assignment

Each month in **Media Hacks** we will be taking a look at a movie or book and 'hacking' it apart in gamer terms. If the hero was one of your player characters what would YOU have done in the same situations? What plot devices or characters could be lifted and set into your own campaign? Next issue we will be looking at the flick, *No Escape*. □

Only three or less survivors will be allowed. After a few assorted questions from the victims about the rules (some with deadly consequences) it becomes apparent that *Lambert* is there voluntary and is quite confident in his abilities to secure the prize. With closing statements from *Ice T*, the carnage is allowed to begin.

One visual motif I could not quite rationalize was a little 7 or 8 year old blond girl who periodically appeared throughout the film. Perhaps it had something to do with the contrast between saintly innocence and the brutal murderous consequence of a life of crime. Later it is shown that the girl is *Lambert's* daughter. Like who would bring their daughter to a slaughter? Weird. After the movie I thought of many ideas for role-playing adventures using this plot. I would highly recommend watching '**Mean Guns**' prior to any adventure game utilizing modern weapons. I give this movie, *four hacks*.

First a variety of pistols and other small arms are dumped onto the floor where they are quickly snapped up but found to contain no ammo. Then the ammo is dumped to the floor along with aluminum bats and other bludgeoning weapons. At this point you can begin to see the choice of fighting

by Trey Aittaniemi □



News, Rumors and Industry Buzz plucked



HEY KIDS!!

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Reporter!!

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gamevine@aol.com



Microsoft acquires FASA Interactive!

Microsoft Corp. recently announced plans to acquire Chicago-based *FASA Interactive Technologies Inc.*, including its parent company *Virtual Worlds Entertainment Group Inc.*, from a group of shareholders including *FASA Corp.*, creators of the enormously popular *BattleTech*® universe of stories, games and characters. As a result of the acquisition, Microsoft gains exclusive and perpetual electronic rights to the *BattleTech* property, which includes one of the most successful franchises in the computer game industry, *MechWarrior*®, and its recent real-time strategy extension, *MechCommander*™. Financial terms of the acquisition were not disclosed.

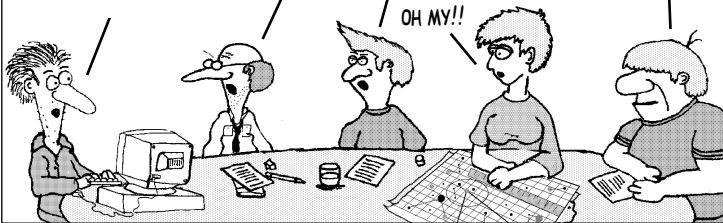
Microsoft is also exploring opportunities for *FASA Corp.*'s other properties, including the *Shadowrun*®, *EarthDawn*® and *Renegade Legion*® universes. □

I'M SORRY GUYS, THE DARK OVERLORD SHRILL GATES ORDERS YOU TO SHUT DOWN YOUR MECHS AND LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS!! PREPARE TO BE ASSIMILATED!!

ASSIMILATED MY ASS! THIS SUCKS! THAT FREAKIN' OVERLORD GATES IS TAKING OVER THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE!!

HOUSE FASARD HAS FALLEN? I CAN'T BELIEVE IT?

I WILL AVENGE THEM!!



LOOK WHO'S TALKIN'

"Don't try it! I've got more hit points than you can possibly imagine!"

Jayson Utz

"The new Yoda looks like crap! It's been twenty years since the original Star Wars and that's the BEST they can do? They should have let ME do it!"

FX wizard, Rick Baker commenting on the new Star Wars trailer.

"Saturday was such a bitchin' day to watch TV!! On one channel they were impeaching the president and on the other channel we were bombing Iraq. I'm ruined. I'll never be able to watch TV again. How can they top that?"

David Letterman

"Tell a man there are 300 billion stars in the universe and he'll believe you. Tell him a bench has wet paint on it and he'll have to touch it to be sure."

Jaeger

"Better to be a coward for a minute than to be a dead man forever."

Irish Proverb □

1999 COMIC & GAMING INDUSTRY DIRECTORY!

Here's a hot tip for all you would-be freelancers out there. The single best piece of resource material you can get your hands on is the January issue of *Comics Retailer* each year. That's the issue they include their annual Game and Comic Industry Directory.

You may have to scrounge around to get a copy. The magazine is normally distributed only to those working in the industry (*manufacturers, retailers, etc.*)

You're resourceful, though. Check with your local retailer to see if he has a copy or ask around at conventions. □



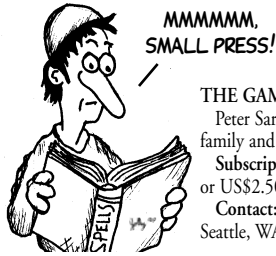
HEY YA DOOFUS! KENZER AND COMPANY WANTS YOU!!

That's right, we want you to join the on-going 'Celebration of Gaming' you are holding in your hands. **KODT Magazine** (and you thought it was just a comic) is expanding its page count so we can bring you even more fun and excitement each month. That means we'll need new material to fill those pages. Things like cartoons, articles on gaming, industry news, reviews — you name it!

Email KenzerCo@aol.com for our writer's guidelines.



from the vine for your reading enjoyment



ZINE SCENE

Small Press Game Magazines you may have missed!

THE GAME REPORT

Peter Sarrett's quarterly newsletter covers the family and beer 'n' pretzel game beat.

Subscriptions: are US\$8.00 for four issues, or US\$2.50 for a sample issue.

Contact: Peter Sarrett, 1920 N. 49th St., Seattle, WA 98103

GAMES, GAMES, GAMES

This zine covers the Eurogames and postal gaming beats.

G3 does an amazing job of keeping up with all the latest news from game publishers. If its up and coming you'll catch the word here first.

U.S. Subscriptions cost \$14.00 G3 accepts payment by Visa and Mastercard with a 5% surcharge to cover fees.

Contact: SFC Press, 42 Wynndale Rd, London, E18 1DX, UK
E-Mail: G3@sfcpc.co.uk

COUNTER

A games magazine founded by three stalwart Sumo contributors, Mike Clifford, Stuart Dagger, and Alan How, after Sumo was bought by Games Games magazine. A fan magazine produced for the sheer love of the hobby. Explore the nooks and crannies of the board gaming hobby.

Subscriptions are twelve pounds per annum (35DM, \$25), published quarterly.

Contact: Counter, c/o David Kuznick, 38 Lyme St., Apt 308, Malden, MA 02148

GAMES

A bi-monthly magazine that features pencil puzzles, word games, and brain teasers in addition to board game reviews.

Subscriptions are US \$15.00 from: PO Box 55483 Boulder, Colorado 80323-5483

GAMERS ALLIANCE REPORT

This is a quarterly newsletter from the Gamers Alliance. It covers current games and game conventions.

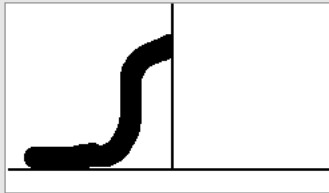
Subscriptions available only to members. Membership runs US\$20 per annum. Note that subscriptions are by calendar year; you receive all of the issues from the year you subscribe in - not a year of issues from the date you subscribe.

Contact: Gamers Alliance, PO Box 197, East Meadow, NY 11554

Editor's Note: Do you have a favorite small press gaming zine? Why not share it with the rest of us. Send us the information and we'll publish it.

WADIZITZ™

Wadizitzs are simple abstract drawings. The challenge is to guess what that drawing is. Some Wadizitz's may have more than one correct answer.



• ANSWER •

1. A cat with its tail stuck in an elevator door.

PICK OF THE WEB

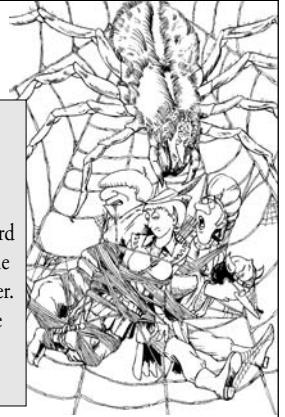
Our favorite website for the Month!

The Game Cabinet

www.gamecabinet.com

This website was recently featured in an article about board games in Reader's Digest. Maintained by Ken Tidwell, the Game Cabinet is a virtual treasure trove for the avid gamer.

Well worth spending some time to explore. Our favorite feature of the site? English translations to all those kewl German and Italian board games. Check it out!



A Moment in Gaming History #12

When John Dillinger was gunned down in front to the **Biograph Theatre** in 1934 a pair of twenty-siders was found in his vest pocket. Later that night, **FBI** agents discovered role-playing literature in the glove compartment of his *Pierce Arrow*. Most game historians agree that this was the catalyst that helped spark the great *Anti Role-Playing movement* of the 1930's and 40's. Role-playing became the whipping boy of the press and hardly a day went by when the papers didn't feature articles pinning the blame for the decay of society on the popular 'pencil-and-paper' games sold in dime stores.

Anti-Gaming legislation was passed in 24 states and soon local jails and juvenile detention centers were choked with gamers and gamemasters. Not everyone, however, saw the gamer as a common criminal. Visionaries like Devin Vrbanic and Jake Wallace maintained that gaming was an addiction and those afflicted should be looked upon, and dealt with, as victims.

Vrbanic, an ex-gamer himself, started a Gamer Deprogramming Clinic in Des Moines in 1946 financed with his G.I. Bill. Knowing he couldn't save every gamer he chose to go after the GameMasters. For it was they, he reasoned, who were the ones largely responsible for the spread of role-playing. Soon there was a Vrbanic Clinic in every major metropolitan center in the U.S. Devin became a popular hero and hinted that he may run for political office. However, Devin was found murdered in 1948. Although the crime was never solved, it was widely believed a disgruntled gamer was responsible. □



Devin Vrbanic and Jake Wallace deprogramming a GameMaster in 1947

FALLING

James Ernest Games/
Cheapass Games
2530 E. Miller St.
Seattle, WA 98112
www.cheapass.com.

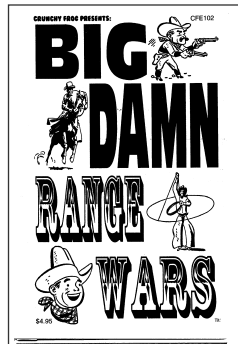


Okay, in this fast and furious card game you and your fellow players are falling to certain death. There's really nothing you can do about it. Eventually, you're going to become a grease spot on the pavement below.

For some reason, however, it seems really important to you that you hit the ground last. Unfortunately the other players have the same goal. During the game you grab, push, ride and attack your fellow players in an attempt make them hit the ground first.

What's not to love? It's simple to learn and plays fast. About the only possible drawback is that you need at least 4 to 8 people to play. (I wouldn't recommend less than 5). One person has to serve as the Dealer. (*The dealer doesn't play — he sets the pace for the game and oversees the action.*) So it can be tough to get a pick-up game going on the fly sometimes.

Brian's Rating: Deal me in!



BIG DAMN RANGE WARS

Crunchy Frog Enterprises
4800 San Mateo Ln
#218 NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
www.teamfrog.com

Remember when you were a kid and you could buy those bags of one-hundred plastic cowboy and Indian figures at the grocery store?

I used to spend hours in the sandbox in the backyard playing with them. (Usually, I got bored after a few hours and would end up decapitating them with a pair of wire cutters but I'll save that story for another day.)

Wouldn't it be nice if someone saw fit to write some quick-and-dirty miniature rules for those plastic toys? **Big Damn Range Wars** may be the game you've been looking for. Dedicated to, *"those who refuse to grow up."* BDRW comes in a ziplock bag (*Hoody Hoo!*) and includes an 8 page rules booklet, one 'official' Big Damn Range Wars measuring guide, and 100 card stock figures. (In case Mom no longer brings you home a bag of plastic cowboys when she goes grocery shopping.)

At \$4.95 you can't go wrong!!

Brian's Rating: Woo-woo-woo!!

SAILOR MOON ROLE-PLAYING GAME & RESOURCE BOOK

Guardians of Order
P.O. Box 25016
Stone Road Mall P.O.
435 Stone Road
Guelph, Ontario
Canada N1G 4TA
www.guardianorder.on.ca



When it comes to Japanese anime, people seem to fall into one of two categories; those who love anime with a passion and those who hate it with an equal passion. If anime isn't your cup of tea, you needn't read any further.

Okay, if you're still with me, I'm going to assume you're a fan. **Sailor Moon the RPG** is from the same folks who brought you, **Big Eyes, Small Mouth** (*See the Brian's Picks/KODT#13*) It's a beautiful book (208 pages) and other game manufacturers looking to do licensed products might want to look at designer, Marck C. MacKinnon's work and take some pointers.

SMRPG is everything a licensed product should be. The book serves not only as a rulesbook but as very thorough resource book. As a bonus the book is packed with artwork from the series (Including 16 pages of full color/full page art!!)

If you're a **Sailor Moon** fan - this book is for you.

Brian's Rating: Really Kewl.



SHERPA
A Role-Playing Game for
Outdoor Use
Two Tigers Games
P.O. Box 465
Plymouth, NH 03264
www.io.com/-sos

Sherpa was written by *Steffan O'Sullivan*, the same dude who brought us **FUDGE** as well as several **GURPS™** supplements.

The author describes **Sherpa** as a *"role-playing game to play while: hiking in the mountains, strolling in the park or along the beach, sitting by a pool or lake, rafting lazily down a river, waiting in a long line, as a passenger in a car, on a space station, etc."*

The core rules, once learned, can fit on a 3" by 5" card and shoved in your back pocket. The system allows you to play any genre. Instead of dice, the GM uses a digital stopwatch.

Although, **Sherpa** isn't a live-action rpg system it could easily be used as one. This one's going in my travel bag. I plan on giving it a try on my next trip.

Brian's Rating: For 8 bucks - How can you Lose?

dwarf:
to make seem small by comparison.

AVELON
the biggest small-press fantasy comic...ever.

Published by Kenzer & Company - <http://www.avelon.com>

Netscape: Kenzer and Company Home Page

Back Forward Reload Home Search Guide Images Print Security Stop

Location: <http://members.aol.com/felch/kenzer.html>

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CRONIE-BOY U DA MAN!!
Ten thin dimes and a pack of Rollos!!
Don't look back! Tomorrow we die!!
Voice in the Head

Algernon:
You initially did significant background research, ruminate on how places are named in a new world, inference and supposition lead to beasts' lair.

K'Oliver

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WANTED!!
The board games, "Escape from Colditz" and "The Great Escape".
Contact jollybgood@aol.com

LOVE STINKS!!
Marty, nobody said it would last forever.
I'm leaving you. Please return my twenty-sider and half-elf ranger fig.

Julie

ATTENTION GPA MEMBERS!!!
Place an ad in WEIRD PETE'S BULLETIN BOARD.
It's an inexpensive way to reach your target audience.
YOU'RE READIN' THIS AIN'T YA???
(contact Mr. Ashton at weirdpete@aol.com for an ad rate sheet)

WEIRD PETE'S BULLETIN BOARD
is a meeting place where readers may pass along information, barter, trade and gossip. Readers are invited to place classified ads, announce group meetings, seek out other players, etc. Subscribers of KODT may place classified ads free of charge with a limit of one ad per issue and a maximum of twenty-five words. Non-Subscribers may place ads at the rate of 50¢ per word with a limit of 25 words. Companies may place ads at the following rates: [5.5" x 2" - \$50], [2.75" x 2" - \$25], [1.5" x 1" - \$10]. Non-profit organizations (serving the gaming community) and Conventions or Seminars may place ads for free. All ads are placed on a first-come first-served basis with subscribers having priority.

KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE T-SHIRTS!!

Knights of the Dinner Table™

\$19.95 + \$3 s/h

CHARGE ME ONE OF THOSE BAD BOYS ON MY MOM'S CREDIT CARD!!!!

KODT T-Shirts are now available!! Classic black with the above strip in white. Size XL only. Available exclusively from Kenzer and Company. Our mail order address is Kenzer & Co, 2094 Camino a los Cerros, Menlo Park, CA 94025



YOU'VE GOT SUMPIN ON YER
MIND, BOY? BESS' SAY IT
AND JES' GET ON WID IT!

An Opinion Arena and Open Forum

Welcome to *Gamin' Dick's Back Room*. As the subheading indicates, this new addition to the KODT line-up is to be a sounding board where gamers can give their two-cents' worth on whatever seems to rile them. There are no rules here, except for one! No personal attacks can be made. If you disagree with someone tell us why - but no name calling.

Gamin' Dick was chosen to be the moderator/mascot for this column because we've always admired his say-what's-on-you're-remind, pull-no-punches attitude. We felt his presence would set to proper tone and make readers feel more comfortable about voicing their opinion.

The creation of a special forum for readers to voice their opinions was inspired by necessity. In last issue's *Table Talk*, we invited readers to respond to a letter by Alan Miller (in which, Alan voiced his concern over the brutal treatment of the character *Newt* by fellow players). When the responses started coming in it soon became apparent that a new forum was needed for this and other issues.

So pull back the curtain and come on in the *Back Room*. You can leave that thin-skin at the door but be sure to bring your opinions with you.

I'm a 50+ year old female gamer (since about 1968 with H.G. Well's "Little Wars" and with (A)D&D since 1978) and reader of your KODT comic. I would like to make a view known.

This is in reference to *Issue 27*, page 29, **A Surprising Situation**. In the story, Sara has a date, and so the "guys" decide to destroy her character and really make their immature views known. Very funny, I'm sure, to the little kiddies amongst your audience. Not at all funny to me though, nor to any other female gamer I would imagine.

We have mostly all had that sort of thing happen at least once. In my case it's the reason I GM instead of play.

B.A. Felton is a horrible example of a GM and the KODT group is an equally horrible example of players. They remind me of people like Roger Moore and Jake Jaques instead of Gary Gygax, Len Lakofka and the other adults the game was written for.

I'm sure you will find this letter quite funny, but the next time someone mentions how hard it is to find female players, remember your cute little story...

As for *Newt* and the "Black Hands"... Another gesture showing how bad gaming can get. You think it's funny of course, but you are shooting down gaming with each comic you produce. Good going there...

Irritated,

Ivy K. Ryan

Thank you for your letter, Ivy. Since I conceived and wrote the story that offends you (**A Surprising Situation**), I guess I should be the one to respond. While I agree that in the **Knights** and the **Black Hands** are not ideal players and GMs (excepting maybe Sara), I do not agree with your view that a story like that will drive away females from gaming. If you reread the story carefully, you will notice that Bob, Dave and Brian did NOT set out to destroy Thorina. In fact, Bob GENUINELY felt that Dave was doing a great job running her.

I was not intending to poke fun at Sara; this story line was intended to help give her more character development. The story actually poked fun at the stupidity of the 'guys' and also portrayed the common gaming theme of a no-show's character getting used as cannon fodder. (Our very own Brian Jelke killed off my elven bard that way about 15 years ago...I had to leave to go to work, at a pizza joint no less. My bard somehow managed to die saving the party in battle despite explicit instructions for him never to enter combat. Oh yes, Bri. I still remember...your dwarf, Bromide, is TOAST.)

I also feel you were a little hasty in your judgement since the story continues over many issues and you were merely seeing the first installment. As I'm sure our readers know by now after reading the last two issues, Sara handled herself just fine and didn't 'quit' playing just because of some poorly thought out actions by the 'guys'.

One thing that really bothers me about your letter is that you imply that the 'guys' behavior has something to do with Sara being female. That couldn't be farther from the truth (although it looked a bit like Brian's actions may have been driven by a little bit of jealousy). In fact, if you look at page 19 of *Tales From the Vault* you'll see that Dave's character, El Ravager, suffered a similar fate at the hands of Bob. What they did was wrong, but it had nothing to do with gender.

Nevertheless, we have not taken this matter lightly. Of all the gaming companies out there, we just might be the most sensitive to women's issues. We even expressed our sensitivity toward female gamers in print on our very first product, the **Kingdoms of Kalamar** (see the foreword in Volume I: "[a product we would like to buy] should not be degrading to women because of the exclusive use of male pronouns."). I, myself, the guy that dreamed up that little storyline, am a self-proclaimed feminist (the same guy that wrote the foreword for **Kalamar**). If we have, in any way, offended

women, whether gamers or non-gamers, I apologize on behalf of the KoDT staff and our whole company. I would encourage other female readers to opine on this issue and let us know whether or not they agree with Ivy so that we may improve in the future.

Dave
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In response to Alan Miller's complaint (in #27) that *Newt*, the newcomer to the **Black Hands** group, has been treated shamefully, and his suggestion that this shows a mean-spirited or hypocritical attitude on Jolly's part:

I doubt if Jolly ever thought that we, as readers, would look upon *Nitro Ferguson* as a *Positive Role Model* in how GMs should deal with their new (and old) players. *Nitro* may be brilliant at the technical side of things (at least, Brian thinks he is), but that's a different issue.

The distinction between brilliant technical innovation and brilliant handling of human relations problems has become very clear to me over the years, particularly in my forays into online RP sites (*MUSHes*, mainly) where elaborate systems of virtual rooms, coded commands, etc., are created by programmer types who then demonstrate virtually no understanding of how to manage their game so that newcomers feel welcome and linger to enjoy the benefits of all this programming.

The whole **Black Hands** gang strikes me as a highly nasty and dysfunctional group who, because of their mutual addiction to RPGs, somehow continue to tolerate one another's nasty habits (of course, some of this also applies to the *Knights*, but on them, it looks good! They don't take it so far, and they actually apologize to each other sometimes after realizing they pushed the wrong buttons, and so forth).

Let's be serious here - we are occasionally reminded that *Nitro* acquired that memorable nickname because of his determination to illegally blast his way into the steam tunnels beneath **Ball State** for some live-action roleplaying. This is not role model material here. I see the **Black Hands** as prime samples of what *not* to do. The way *Nitro* kept his mouth shut when *Stevil* and *Gordo* assured *Bob* that certain of *Pete's* magic items were actually theirs was not exactly great leadership. Nor was his keeping mum when *Stevil* and *Gordo* subsequently lied to *Pete* about the circumstances, claiming that *Bob* had stubbornly insisted on giving away all of *Pete's* possessions for some obscure reason.

B.A. Felton usually makes an effort to inject a bit of cool reason into heated arguments between his own players. It often doesn't work, but at least he keeps trying. *Nitro* appears to have given up (or never cared about the "truth" in the first place) and just watches his players butt their heads together over stupid misunderstandings, dishonest maneuvers, slanders, etc., without trying to straighten things out particularly. I think *B.A.*, at least, still has some of his youthful idealism showing.

Despite their various imperfections, *B.A.* and his established players (*Bob*, *Dave*, and *Brian*) did a fairly good job of integrating *Sara* into the group when she first appeared on the scene (in #2, of course).

Their behavior stands in sharp contrast to the way *Newt* was victimized with various scams in his early days with the **Black Hands**. Now, if *B.A.* ever gets around to apologizing to *Sara* for the way he let the boys slaughter her character, due to information they

did not have 'in character' about her, during their **Hacknoia** campaign in #13, I might actually concede that he's done better than *Nitro* in preventing - or trying to learn from the errors of - wanton slaughter of one player's character by another. But his overall score is still superior.

On the other hand, now that we've seen so much of their bad sides, it would be nice if the **Black Hands** called it quits on the internal feuding after *Newt's* recent (and well-deserved, under the circumstances) revenge, and finally developed some feeling of camaraderie for a change.

Then we could see them take on the **Knights** at the next convenient RPG Tournament and do surprising well, due to their having finally surpassed the **Knights** in the knotty area of working together as a team when faced with unexpected calamities.

To take it from another perspective, it's very hard to write interesting fiction without making some of your characters suffer along the way.

This should not be interpreted to mean that the author would favor inflicting such suffering upon one's acquaintances in real life.

Larry Homer
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I'm writing in response to a letter in KODT issue 27. First off, the letter was from Alan Miller. I'm Andy Miller. I'd have to disagree with Mr. Miller (if that is his real name) about the more recent issues.

The **Black Hand** gaming group is one of those dysfunctional groups that people (like *Newt*) join because they either a) can't find any other gamers in the area or b) can't stay with any gaming group in the area (due to inherit obnoxiousness, stupidity, or simply a conflict of personalities at the other groups). These groups are about the individual. "What can I do that is cool/gets experience/points/inconveniences everyone but me/(fill in your own)?"

It isn't about the group (which most role-playing games tend to lean towards). These groups can be interesting to play in but, in the long run, make for frustrating campaigns.

Another point about *Allan's* complaint is that he seems to overlook the fact that *Newt* did something incredibly stupid and deserved what he got. I'm sorry if this sounds a little harsh but I, personally, as a DM, have little or no sympathy for gamers who do that. I hate killing PCs - I despise it! But there are times when someone does something that is so incredibly stupid that you can't help but go - okay, you're dead.

My final point for *Mr. Miller* is for him to remember that this is a comic book. It is funny. It is light. It is not supposed to be taken as a statement about humanity. Anyone out there who has ever enjoyed the **Three Stooges** (or for that matter *Buster Keaton*) knows that watching someone being hurt or put in an uncomfortable or tragic situation is funny! *Newt Forager* is a character in a magazine, not a real person. Lighten up Alan.

Besides, *Newt* gets his revenge in issue 26 anyway.

Andy Miller
Edgertron, OH

□

more THINGS THAT MAKE YOU GO, "HMMMM!!"



Q: What occurs more often in December than any other month?

A: *Conception.*

Q: What separates "60 Minutes," on CBS from every other TV show?

A: *No theme song.*

Q: Half of all Americans live within 50 miles of what?

A: *Their birthplace.*

Q: Most boat owners name their boats. What is the most popular boat name requested?

A: *Obsession*

Q: More women do this in the bathroom than men.

A: *Wash their hands. Women - 80% Men - 55%*

Q: If you were to spell out numbers, how far would you have to go until you would find the letter "A"?

A: *One thousand*

Q: What do bullet proof vests, fire escapes, windshield wipers and laser printers all have in common?

A: *All invented by women.*

Q: This is the only food that doesn't spoil.

A: *Honey*

Q: There are more collect calls on this day than any other day of the year.

A: *Father's Day*

Q: What trivia fact about Mel Blanc (voice of Bugs Bunny) is most ironic?

A: *He was allergic to carrots.*

Q: 40% of all people who come to a party in your home do this?

A: *Snoop in your medicine cabinet.*

Q: 85% of the guys who die while having sex are doing this.

A: *Cheating on their spouse.*

Q: In his autobiography, Soviet Premier Krushchev claimed that of all the material the Allies lent to the Soviet Union during WWII, one saved more Russian lives than any other. What was it?

A: *Spam*

Q: According to the rules, who gets to go first in a game of Flying Buffalo's Nuclear War card game?

A: *Whoever owns the the game.*

- It was the accepted practice in Babylon that for a month a man would provide his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer, and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the "honey month" or what we know today as the "honeymoon."

- The tradition of toasting by slamming mugs together originated from the days when poisoning was a common practice to eliminate an enemy, even when done negotiating with them and sharing a drink. By sloshing a certain amount of your beer into their mug you could ensure yours wouldn't be poisoned.

- In Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes. when you pulled on the ropes the mattress tightened, making the bed firmer to sleep on. That's where the phrase, "good night, sleep tight" came from.

- It takes 3,000 cows to supply the NFL with enough leather for a year's supply of footballs.

- Thirty-five percent of the people who use personal ads for dating are already married.

- There are an average of 178 sesame seeds on a McDonald's Big Mac bun.

- The 3 most valuable brand names on earth: **Marlboro**, **Coca-Cola**, and **Budweiser**, in that order.

- Many years ago in England, pub frequenters had a whistle baked into the rim or handle of their ceramic cups. When they needed a refill, they used the whistle to get some service. "Wet your whistle," is the phrase inspired by this practice

- When Heinz ketchup leaves the bottle, it travels at a rate of 25 miles per year.

- Ten percent of the Russian government's income comes from the sale of vodka.

- On average, 100 people choke to death on ball-point pen caps every year.

- Every year nearly fifty Peruvian coffee farmers are gored by wild Llamas.

- In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts. So in old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them to mind their own pints and quarts and settle down. It's where we get the phrase "mind your Ps and Qs."



by David Dixon (David, where are you?)

"OH YEAH? WELL MY **FLESH GOLEM** CAN KICK YER **CLAY GOLEM'S ASS!**"

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BOB WILL YOU PLEASE PUT THAT HAMMER AWAY? I ALMOST GOT A PIECE OF 'HEPTAR' SHRAPNEL IN MY EYE. DON'T MAKE ME PULL OUT 'BENNIE THE BOUNCER' AGAIN.

FIRK DING BLAST! WILL YOU QUIT SMASHING MY ARMIES?
I'M NOT GONNA TELL YA AGAIN!

AWH, QUIT YER SNIVELING YA WUSS! THE NAME OF THE GAME IS CARNAGE! I'M JUST SIMULATING THE BRUTAL DISFIGUREMENT AND MUTILATION THAT MY BRIGANDISH BULL CAVALRY ARE DISHING OUT ON YER BUTT!

OKAY, I CHANGED MY MIND. MY DOOM GEGKOS WILL ALLY THEMSELVES WITH YOU IF YOU PROMISE WE ATTACK BOB FIRST.

SORRY SARA, YOU SHOULD HAVE TAKEN ME UP ON MY OFFER FOUR TURNS AGO! I DON'T NEED YOUR STINKIN' DOOM GEGKOS' FIREPOWER NOW. BESIDES, YOU LEFT A HOLE IN YOUR LEFT FLANK WHICH I PLAN TO EXPLOIT ON MY NEXT TURN.

