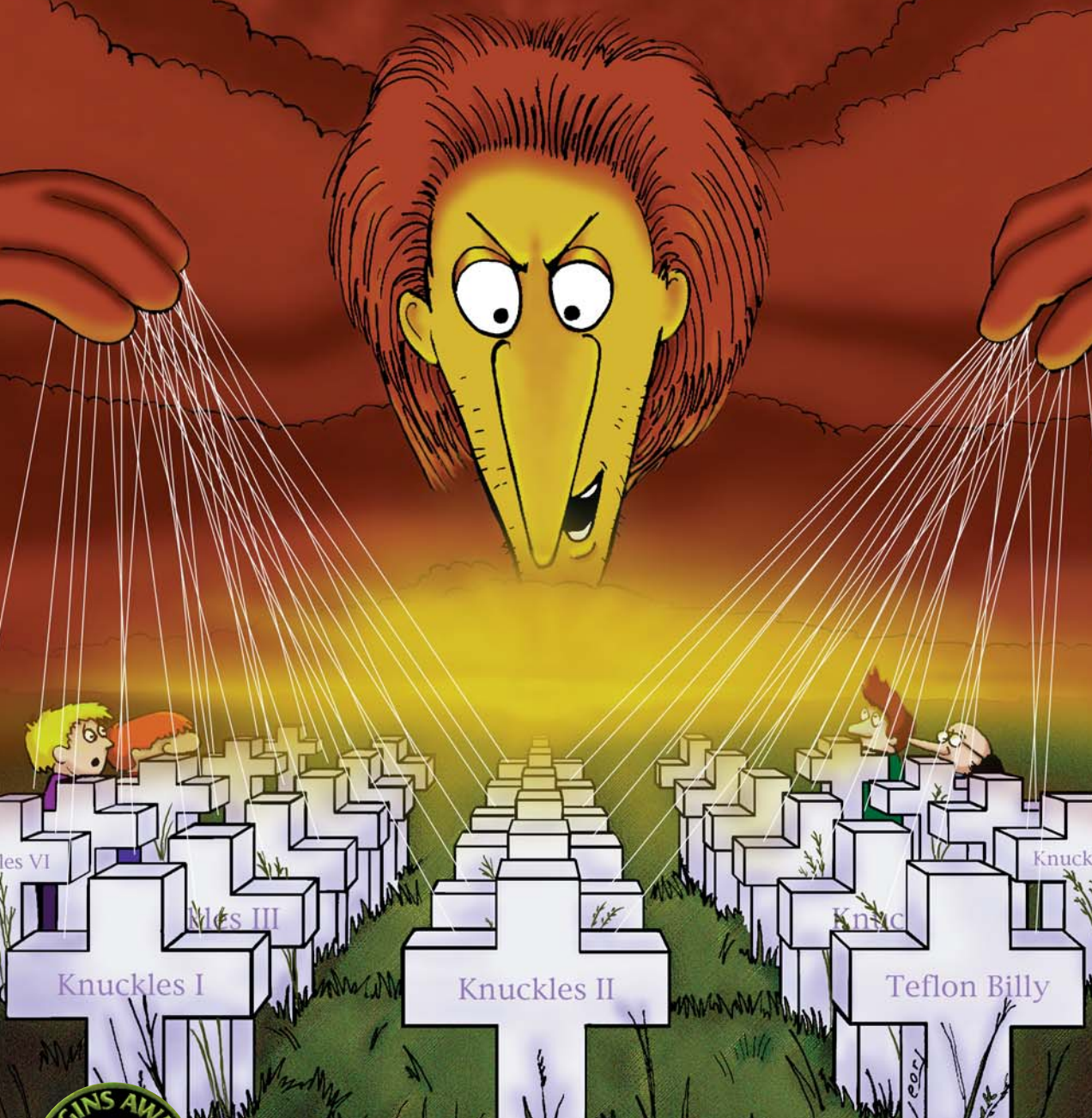




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KENZER AND COMPANY

Knights of the Dinner Table #36
HackMaster of Puppets
October, 1999

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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 jollyrb@aol.com.

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Knights of the Dinner Table™ MAGAZINE

“HackMaster of Puppets”

The KODT Development Team is
Jolly R. Blackburn, Brian Jelke,
Steve Johansson and David S. Kenzer
Cover Art by George and Jackie 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). Nine years later, 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. Writing KODT strips isn't nearly the lonely job as it was in the past. Since joining the ranks of Kenzer and Company and the formation of the KODT Development Team, the Knights have gone far beyond anything Jolly or the other developers ever imagined. Along the way, he's made some incredible friends and considers himself truly blessed.

Editorial of a Madman

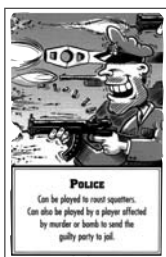
"Stump me if you can, Mister Game-Stumper!"

A few years ago, I was cleaning out a closet when I discovered a stray cardboard counter which had apparently fallen out of one of the many games in my collection. Trouble was, I was stumped! Although the counter looked vaguely familiar, I just couldn't figure out which game it was from. Eventually, (after going through a half-dozen wargames from my collection, I identified the beast as a *Fire-for-Effect* marker from my *Squad Leader*™ set. (a game which, sadly, I hadn't found the time to play in fifteen years)

At the time, it occurred to me that a semi-regular feature in KODT could be based on such a dilemma. Present the reader with various game components and challenge him or her to identify which games they had come from. The idea was jotted on a piece of paper, tucked away, and forgotten.

Well, a few days ago I stumbled across that same piece of paper with the words, "Game Stumper" scrawled on it and a brief description of how it worked. So here's a preview. Pictured on this page are fifteen images of counters, cards and other images taken from various games. Can you identify them? You'll find the answers at the bottom of page 8. If you aren't familiar with some of the games represented here — maybe you should consider going down to your local gameshop and checking them out (*er...the ones still in print that is.*) Good luck!

Jolly R. Blackburn
Jolly R. Blackburn



9



10



11



12



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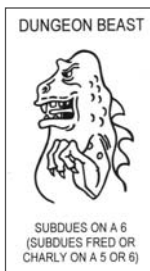
15



1



2



3



4

SORRY BOB, AS SOON AS YOU BEND DOWN TO PICK UP THE COPPER PIECE, THE SWACK IRON DRAGON SWALLOWS YOU WHOLE! YOU'RE TOTALLY CAUGHT OFF GUARD!

AWH DUDE, HE SET YOU UP WITH THE OL' 'DROPPED COIN' TRICK. THAT'S BOGUS!!

SWALLOWS ME???! DAMMIT! WELL, I AIN'T GOING DOWN WITH OUT A FIGHT. I PULL OUT MY MATCHED DAGGERS AND PERFORM A LITTLE TRACHEOTOMY FROM THE INSIDE!

I KNEW WE WERE IN TROUBLE WHEN WEIRD PETE TOLD ME B.A. PICKED UP A USED COPY OF SPROCKET TOOTH'S BOOK OF TRAPS THE OTHER DAY.

I'LL MAKE A NICE PAIR OF CUFF LINKS OUT OF HIS GUT STONES





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Our Readers Talk Back!

Dear KODT,

You've captured exactly what it is about gaming that is fun. Me and a group of friends have been roleplaying together for along time. We mainly played D&D, but every once in a while would stray to GURPS, HoI (which is a hilarious book to read), and one other one that I can't remember the name because we always called it **Cowpone**, which was a western kind of game where a friend of mine had a four barrel shotgun.

Our group was much like the group of KODT, we had the GM and one of my friends always arguing about rules, neither one would ever admit the other was right. One of my friends would almost always be late when we were playing, and then he would proceed to fall asleep at the table, we would wake him up when he needed to roll, and it seemed like he rolled twenties all the time. Also our GM had a die that we all grew to fear, we called it the **KURPLE DIE**, it would roll the worst numbers when we needed it to help us, and then against us it always rolled exactly what we didn't want. It seemed as if all our adventures would start out "OK, you are in a bar." From there we would begin with the pick pocketing our own party, picking a fight with the biggest guy in the room, burning down the bar, and one time dropping an anvil on the bartenders head. We had a lot of crazy adventures and did some crazy things too, one time we made up a table to see how well endowed our characters were.

Its great to read about stuff like that, stuff we can relate to. Keep up the good work.

Randy
via E-mail

Kurple Die?!! Named after the infamous Rex Kurple of El Paso fame no doubt - a killer GM if there ever was one. But then again, there was a Ruby Kurple out of Des Moines who used to throw a mean twenty-sider.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

Issue #34 was a great issue! I am so glad to see Sara rejoin the Knights. On the other hand, who would have guessed that *Troy's Boys* would be such slugs? Hopefully, both the Knights and the Black Hands will beat them at the big tournament.

With regard to the Black Hands, I enjoy reading about their exploits, even if I have no desire to join Nitro's campaign.

Stevil is, of course, a human hyena. All talk. Perfectly willing to attack the weak but afraid of anything near his size.

Weird Pete, of course, is inconsistent. Sometimes a target for Stevil, sometimes a follower, sometimes an instigator.

Newt is a relatively new player who is going to end up like Stevil, if he is not careful. I remember when he was first introduced to the Knights and used a flurry of charm spells to grab magic items from the team. The Black Hands will never win a tournament because they are too busy cutting (figuratively) each other up. In short, I want to keep seeing the adventures of the Black Hands, but the Knights are still better.

A major difference between the Knights and the Black Hands is that you get the impression that the Knights basically like each other. The Black Hands have Stevil, who basically dislikes everyone.

I hope that some day you will publish B.A.'s oath of loyalty and let's see more magic items from **Garweeze's World**.

It would be interesting if you showed all three groups going through the same dungeon module and their different reactions.

Keep up the good work.

David Rak
via E-mail

Rest assured, we'll be running more magic items from Garweeze World in a future issue. Including the HackMaster +12 (revision four). As for B.A.'s "Oath of Loyalty" (which he forced his players to re-take in KODT# 9) we've been trying to get a copy of it but nobody here knows the combination to the lock on Brian's briefcase.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

Just wanted to say thanks, you guys have put out the best products for gaming (whether it is the comic or your **Kalamar** stuff) that I have seen in . . . well, the last decade really.

I was starting to get a little depressed for the gaming industry these last few years, but you guys are a breath of fresh air . . . keep on going!

Emperor Dave
via E-mail

Dear KODT,

Well, KODT #34 was one of the all time best issues. Not a bad story in the lot, all well above average.

Of Dice and Men cries out for a sequel. The **Knights of the Dinner Table** and the **Black Hands Gaming Society** must unite and destroy **Troy's Boys**. Preferably at the **HackMaster Tournament**. (Show that Lanky is not a woman for starters.)

By the way, I met way too many of the "**Top 35 Signs That You Are A KODT Fanatic**." Oh well, at least my girlfriend understands, even if she is not a gamer.

Sean A. Veira
via E-mail

Dear KODT,

Just thought I would write in and give you my thoughts on your latest issue. It rocked! I was laughing out loud as Sara went berserk, with the Knights in eager tow, and destroyed an entire campaign setting. Not that I blame her, not one bit. "Troy's Boy's" would get a five second head start from me before I'd kick their asses every which way but loose. (To quote an earlier issue I believe.) I strongly suggest you plan a story for Sara (Or the Knights in her name) to take revenge on those jerks. (Start should be reporting their activities to the Gaming Board so they can't even get close to that prize. Second, have Dave offer to gamemaster when Vince gets mysteriously ill... oh boy, that's cruel.)

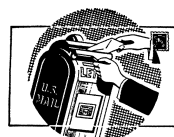
Crutch's love of gaming is hilarious too, I was hoping we'd see him join the Black Hands! Might have to scrunch him in there a bit, I think it would be cool if you could somehow fit all the members in there, but I'm guessing you have to drop one to do it. (Monty probably gets called back into service.)

Finally, I hope you'll take the new canvas of stories coming up and introduce more female gamers, such as Shelia Horowitz and Patty Gauzweller. I think we're about to the point where we'd all like to see gaming from a different perspective again, perhaps an all girl gaming group? Or, perhaps one could join the Knights. Obviously some caution is called for, don't want to fix what's not broken and all, and character balance is important, but wherever they go, I think more women in the comic would be greatly welcomed.

Keep up the good work!

Adam Haase
via E-mail

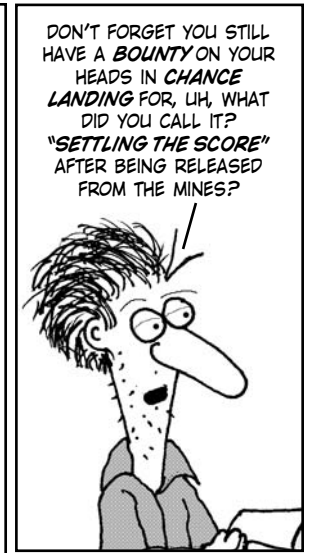
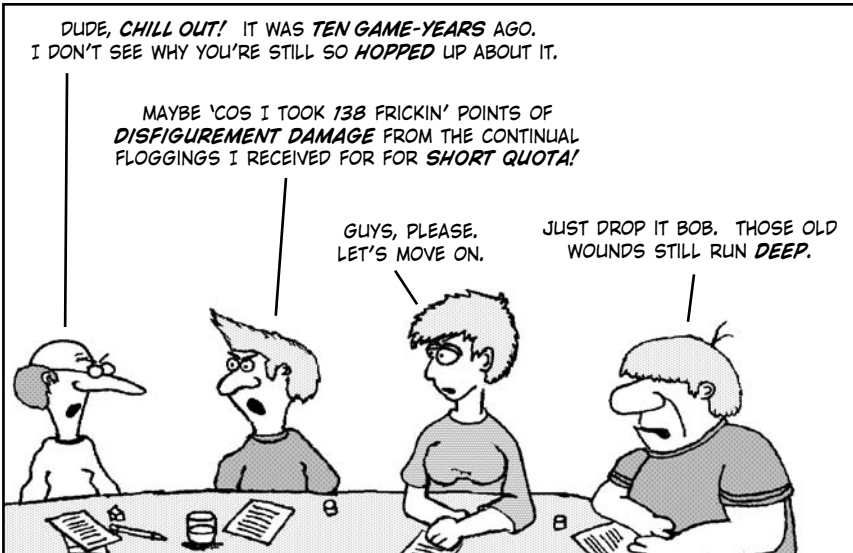
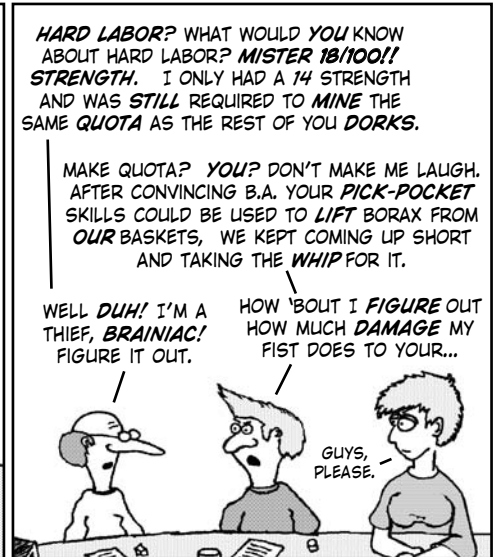
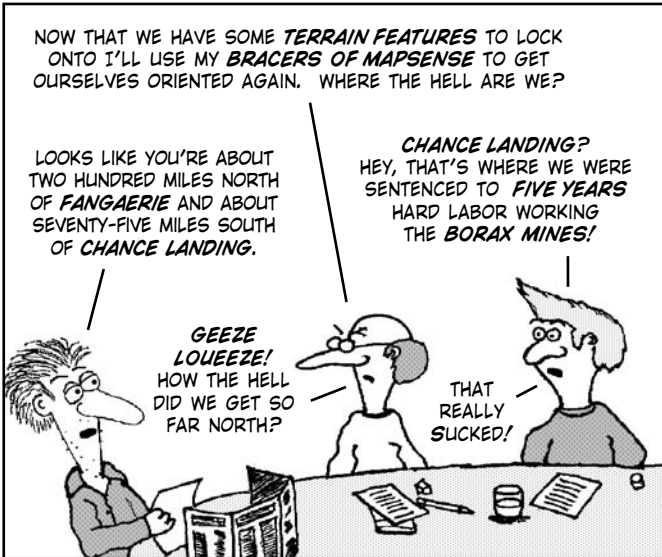
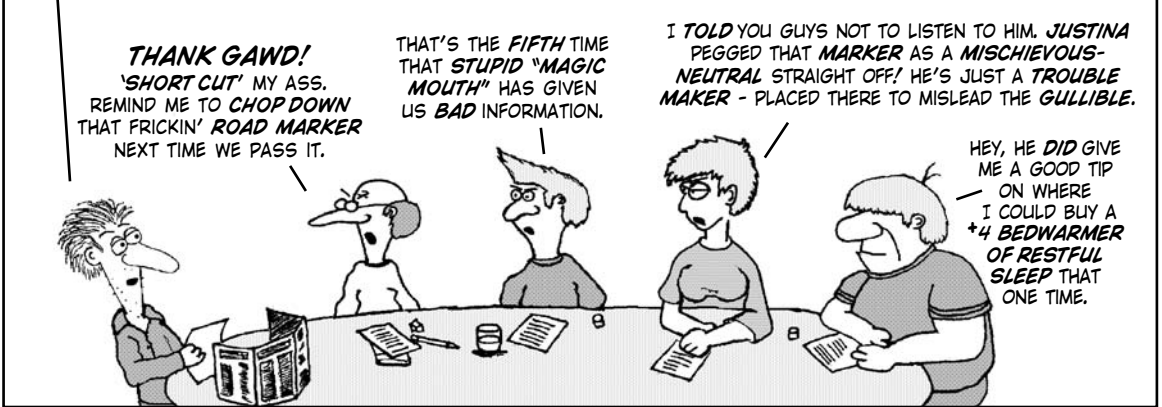
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Hammer Time

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

AS YOU BREAK OUT OF *THE THICKET* YOU FIND YOURSELVES BACK ON THE MAIN ROAD. THE *WERE GOAT* GROWLS IN PROTEST AND BREAKS OFF THE CHASE. AS YOU STAND ON THE ROADSIDE, CATCHING YOUR BREATH, THE WARMTH OF THE *SUN* FEELS GOOD ON YOUR FACES AGAIN THOUGH IT TAKES SEVERAL MINUTES FOR YOUR EYES TO READJUST TO THE LIGHT.



BOUNTY? CRIPES, I FORGOT ABOUT THAT. MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST BYPASS **CHANCE LANDING** AND AVOID IT ALL TOGETHER. HOW 'BOUT WE HEAD NORTH TO **LAKE TAGNOMI**? WE MIGHT ACTUALLY FIND SOME **HORSES** UP THERE.

GOOD IDEA, BOB. IF MY HUNCH IS RIGHT, THE **HORSE PLAGUE*** SPREAD ALONG THE MAIN TRADE ROUTES. THE **TAGNOMI SETTLEMENTS** ARE RELATIVELY **REMOTE!** THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE **HORSES** IN THAT AREA WEREN'T AFFECTED.

I DON'T NEED A HORSE. I THINK **RUDY†** IS GOING TO WORK OUT FINE.

BYPASS THE CITY? **NO WAY!** I GOTTA STOP IN **CHANCE LANDING** AND SELL MY **MATTOCK OF OGRE KIND!** IT'LL GO FOR A HIGHER PRICE THERE.

I HOPE YOU'RE NOT FORGETTING THAT **MATTOCK** IS CONSIDERED **PARTY TREASURE!**

THAT'S RIGHT! ANYTHING YOU GET FOR IT WILL BE SPLIT **FOUR WAYS!**

PARTY TREASURE? SPLIT FOUR WAYS? SHYA' RIGHT. **YOU WISH!**

LITTLE FLASH BACK FOR YA. THAT **FLAT-FOOTED OGRE** WAS AN **'UNASSISTED KILL'** YOU GUYS WERE **LOLLYGAGGIN'** WHEN YOU SHOULD'VE BEEN **HACKIN'.** THAT MEANS I EARNED **SOLE LOOTING-RIGHTS** OVER ANY ITEMS TAKEN FROM HIS BODY.

AND YOU GUYS EARNED THE RIGHT TO CALL YOURSELF **LOSERS.**

I'M AFRAID HE'S RIGHT GUYS. AFTER ALL, HE DID **SACRIFICE** A LEVEL CASTING THE SPELL WHICH KILLED THE **OGRE.** IT'S ONLY FAIR THAT HE...

FAIR MY ASS! THE **GLORY-HOUND** POINT-WHORED US. HE RAKED IN ENOUGH **E.P.'S** NOT ONLY TO GAIN BACK THAT LOST LEVEL BUT TO GAIN AN **ADDITIONAL LEVEL** ON TOP OF THAT.

HE DIDN'T EVEN **CUE** US THAT HE WAS GOING TO ATTACK. THE **BIG OAF** ROBBED US OF THOSE **E.P.'S.**

TOUGH KITTY TOENAILS! YOU SNOOZE - YOU LOSE.

HOLD ON GUYS. I'LL SETTLE THIS LITTLE ARGUMENT **RIGHT NOW.** I **NEVER** SAID THAT WAS A **"MATTOCK OF OGRE KIND"** THE **FLAT-FOOTER** WAS BRANDING. YOU JUST **ASSUMED** IT WAS. BRIAN WAS SO **QUICK** TO **SQUIRREL** IT AWAY, HE DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER ASKING ME TO DESCRIBE IT.

IF HE **HAD** HE WOULD HAVE LEARNED THAT IT WAS AN ORDINARY, ALBEIT **OGRE-SIZED,** MINING TOOL!

IT REALLY **SADDENS** ME TO SEE THAT YOU GUYS **STILL HAVEN'T** LEARNED **NOT TO ASSUME!** AND WITH THE **HACKMASTER REGIONALS** ONLY A **WEEK AWAY?** -SIGH- WE DON'T STAND A CHANCE.

ORDINARY, EH? WHAT'S THE BOOK PRICE ON THAT? ABOUT **FIVE SILVER?? HA HA!! SNORT!!** I GUESS THE **BIG OAF** CAN HAVE HIS **CHUMP CHANGE!**

YEAH! HE CAN USE IT TO BUY A **BEER** SO HE CAN **CRY** IN IT.

UH...EXCUSE ME, BUT...

* See KODT#35: A Horse is a Horse [The group discovers that all the horses within 500 miles of Hagley Town were wiped out by a plague.]
 † See same issue: [After being losing their horses in a wager, Dave hires the centaur, Rudy, to serve as his mount.]

I HATE TO QUESTION YOUR *CALL*, B.A., BUT I FIND IT VERY STRANGE THAT THE SUPREME GAWD, *LUVIA* WOULD *BESTOW* THE *LAST LIVING* FLATFOOTER WITH HIS PERSONAL PROTECTION ONLY TO ALLOW THE POOR THING TO WANDER THE FACE OF *GARWEEZE WURLD* WITH NOTHING BUT AN *ORDINARY* TOOL AS A WEAPON TO DEFEND HIMSELF WITH. AND CONSIDER THE FACT THAT WHEN WE ENCOUNTERED THIS CREATURE HE WAS APPARENTLY LAYING CLAIM TO A *MAJOR* ROAD AND BULLYING *TOLLS* AND *TRIBUTE* OUT OF ANYONE HE CAUGHT TRAVELLING ON IT. *SURELY* SUCH A ROLE WOULD REQUIRE *MORE* THAN AN *ORDINARY* WEAPON TO BACK UP HIS THREATS. I MEAN IT JUST SEEMS *SILLY* REALLY. DON'T YOU THINK?

HEY THAT *MATTOCK* CAN DO 204 DAMAGE *EASY!* NOTHING TO SNEEZE AT. AND WITH HIS *OGRE STRENGTH* MODIFIERS THAT WOULD PUT IT UP AT...

GIVE IT UP, B.A./ SHE'S RIGHT



TWENTY MINUTES LATER...

C'MON, B.A.! QUIT STALLIN'. THE VERY *LEAST* YOU CAN DO IS RE-ROLL ON THE *FLAT-FOOTER* *OGRE* TREASURE TABLE. IT'S THE ONLY *FAIR* WAY TO SETTLE THE MATTER. DO *THAT* AND WE'LL PROMISE TO AGREE TO LIVE BY THE RESULTS. YOU GOT OUR *NO-FLAK* PROMISE.

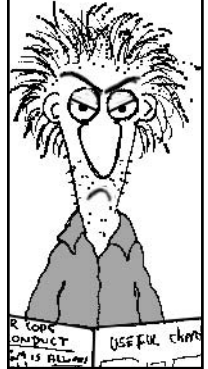
A *NO-FLAK?* REALLY? I GOT YOUR WORD ON THAT? *EVEN BRIAN'S?*

JUST DO IT ALREADY! SHEESH! I'D LIKE TO ACTUALLY *GAME* TONIGHT

YOU AGREE TO RE-ROLL AND YOU HAVE MY *SOLEMN* WORD.



FINE!



A FEW SECONDS LATER...

SOOOOO, YOU WANT ME TO RE-ROLL? SURE, I'LL RE-ROLL. BUT *ONLY* ON THE *SERIES "J" WEAPON* CATEGORY. THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL I'M ROLLING ON THOSE *SERIES "E" GEM* TABLES. THAT *FLAT-FOOTER* WAS *STRAPPED* FOR CASH AND DOWN ON HIS LUCK.

YOU GONNA SHAKE THOSE DICE ALL NIGHT? C'MON! ROLL 'EM. AND DON'T BE *SHY* ABOUT SHOWING THE RESULTS.

THIS IS *SO* KEWL. YOU KNOW LAST FALL *EDDIE RAMIREZ* KILLED A *VENT-SQUAWLER* AND GOT TO ROLL ON THE *"J"* TABLES. THE LUCKY STIFF WALKED AWAY WITH AN *AXE OF RAPID-WHACKS*. CAN YOU IMAGINE?

I'LL ROLL 'EM WHEN I'M READY.

SHOOKA SHOOKA



ONE DIE RESULT LATER...

WELL, WELL, SO IT LOOKS LIKE I ROLLED AN *88!* SEEMS OUR POOR DEAD *OGRE-FRIEND* WAS CARRYING A *BIRCH LIMB* AS A *MAKESHIFT CLUB!* WORTH JUST ABOUT THE SAME AS 'FAIR TO MIDDLING' GRADE *KINDLING* ON THE PRICE CHARTS.

GEEZE LOUEEZE! THAT WAS CERTAINLY A *WASH!*

NOW CAN WE GAME?



ANSWER TO GAME STUMPERS FROM PAGE 2

1. *Acquire*™ (Avalon Hill)
2. *Axis and Allies*™ (Milton Bradley)
3. *Heroes of Asfar*™ (Artistically Inclined)
4. *Dragonmaster*™ (Lowe/Milton Bradley)
5. *Talisman*™ (Games Workshop)
6. *Government Funded Robot Assassins from Hell*™ (Propaganda Press)
7. *Starship Troopers*™ (Avalon Hill)
8. *Wiz War*™ (Tom Jolly Games)
9. *Landlords*™ (Abacus Spiele)
10. *Kill Doctor Lucky*™ (Cheapass Games)
11. *Spammers*™ (Atlas Games)
12. *Wizard*™ (Metagaming)
13. *Settlers of Catan*™ (Mayfair Games)
14. *Monopoly*™ (Parker Brothers)
15. *Plague & Pestilence*™ (Hillary's Toy Box)

NOT SO FAST, B.A. I DO BELIEVE THE **MODIFIED** RESULT IS A SWEET **NINETY-EIGHT!** YOU'RE GONNA HAVE MOVE DOWN THAT **WEAPON TABLE** A FEW MORE ROWS.

NINETY-EIGHT? BRIAN, YOU'RE WHACKED! I SAW THE RESULT MYSELF. HE ROLLED AN **88**.

???!

YOU DID YOUR BEST, BIG GUY. AT LEAST YOU FORCED HIM TO RE-ROLL. THAT, IN ITSELF, WAS **TOTALLY AWESOME**.

YOU'RE NOT LISTENING. I SAID "**MODIFIED**" RESULT.

THAT **FLAT-FOOTER** SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN A ***10 MODIFIER** TO HIS **WEAPON ROLL**.

YOU CAN JUST TAKE MY WORD FOR IT OR YOU CAN LOOK IT UP. PAGE **96**, COLUMN TWO, PARAGRAPH SIX.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO **CITE RULES TO ME**, BRIAN. I HAPPEN TO **KNOW** THE RULES - THANK YOU, VERY MUCH. AND I'M FAMILIAR WITH THE **MODIFIER** YOU'RE REFERRING TO. UNFORTUNATELY, YOU'VE **MISINTERPRETED** IT. THAT MODIFIER IS FOR **ROGUE-OGRES** ONLY. WHICH DOESN'T APPLY TO THIS SITUATION.

DAMN! FOR A SECOND I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO DO SOME **BRIAN-MAGIC** AGAIN AND PULL IT OFF. TOO BAD.

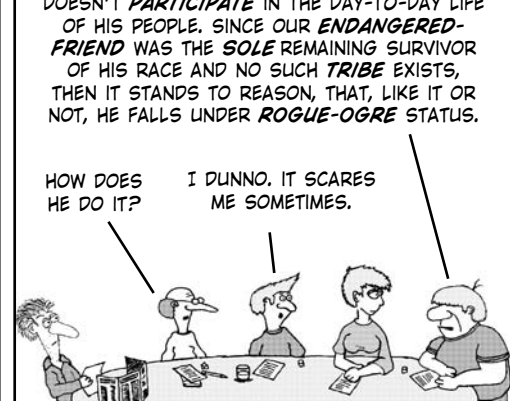
LET IT GO, BRIAN. LIKE, I SAID. YOU DID YOUR BEST.

A **VALIANT EFFORT**, BRIAN.

OH BUT IT **DOES** APPLY HERE. IF YOU CHECK THE **HACKLOPEDIA OF BEASTS** YOU'LL FIND THAT "**ROGUE**" STATUS APPLIES TO **ANY FLAT-FOOTED OGRE** WHO OPERATES **OUTSIDE** THE **SOCIAL STRUCTURE** OF THE **TRIBE** AND DOESN'T **PARTICIPATE** IN THE **DAY-TO-DAY** LIFE OF HIS PEOPLE. SINCE OUR **ENDANGERED-FRIEND** WAS THE **SOLE** REMAINING SURVIVOR OF HIS RACE AND NO SUCH **TRIBE** EXISTS, THEN IT STANDS TO REASON, THAT, LIKE IT OR NOT, HE FALLS UNDER **ROGUE-OGRE** STATUS.

HOW DOES HE DO IT?

I DUNNO. IT SCARES ME SOMETIMES.



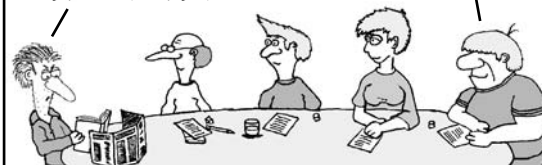
A FEW SECONDS LATER...

OKAY, I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT. HE WAS **TECHNICALLY** A **ROGUE-OGRE**. IT GOES AGAINST MY **GRAIN** BUT I'M GOING TO ALLOW THE MODIFIER. SO THE NEW RESULT IS A **NINETY-EIGHT**. JUST LET ME CHECK THE **TREASURE TABLE** AGAIN FOR THE.....

CHECK IT OUT YOU GUYS. YOU'RE GOING TO **LOVE** THIS.

OKAY, LOOKS LIKE...LIKE **ROLL ON MAJOR RELIC TABLE A5???**

SWEET!



AFTER THE GAME...

THIS **ROCKS ASS!** I'VE ALWAYS WANTED "**GUDRUN'S HAMMER OF THE CRIPPLED MAGE**." BESIDES HAVING **SPELL AMPLIFICATION** AND **STORAGE** CAPABILITIES, IT CAN LEARN TO **MIMIC-CASTER** SO EVENTUALLY I CAN **SIMULCAST** MY SPELLS. SHOOT, IF **THIS** DOESN'T EXPEDITE MY **INITIATION PACKET** WITH THE **CIRCLE OF THE SEQUESTERED MAGICKS**, I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL.

WERE YOU SERIOUS ABOUT GIVING UP THE GAME, B.A.? CAN I HAVE YOUR DICE?

BRIAN, YOU **KNOW** THAT RELIC IS **RENOUNDED** FOR UNBALANCING CAMPAIGNS.

AND THEY SAY THERE ARE NO WINNERS IN **RPGS!**

WHIMPER



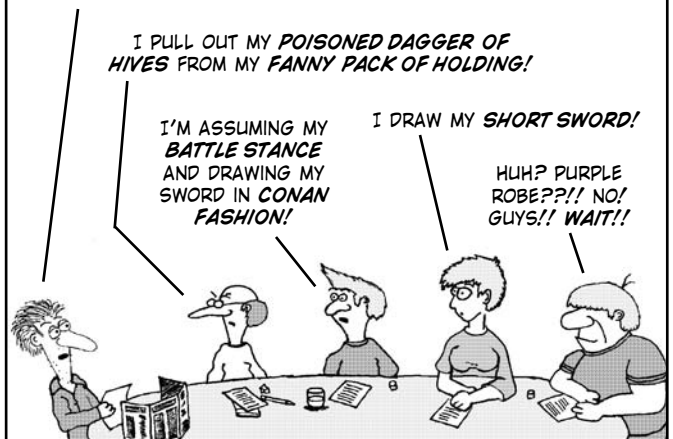
AS **KNUCKLES** THROWS ANOTHER LOG ON THE CAMPFIRE, A **HUGE** SHOWER OF SPARKS RISES UP FROM THE FLAMES FOLLOWED BY A SMALL CLOUD OF BILLOWING PURPLE SMOKE. AN EERIE SILENCE SWEEPS OVER THE **CAMP SITE**.



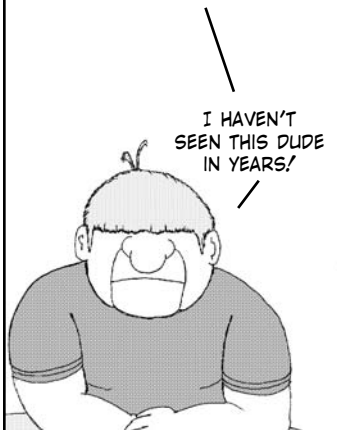
BEFORE **EL RAVAGER** CAN DOUSE THE FLAMES, A **FLURRY** OF SOUNDS WHICH RESEMBLE A CRESCENDO OF CRACKLING PAPER FILLS THE NIGHT AIR. **SUDDENLY** A PORTAL APPEARS JUST OVER THE FLICKERING FLAMES - LIKE A GREAT YAWNING MOUTH, IT STRETCHES WIDE, PUSHING BACK THE SMOKE, REVEALING A TAPESTRY OF STARS AND SWIRLING LIGHTS FROM WITHIN.



A TALL PURPLE-ROBED INDIVIDUAL WITH A FLOWING LONG GREY BEARD STEPS OUT. EVEN THOUGH HE WEARS A HOOD AND HIS FACE IS OBSCURED, **TEFLON BILLY** IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZES HIM FOR WHO HE IS.



IT'S MY MENTOR, **DRAX!** HE'S MY CONTACT WITH THE **CIRCLE OF SEQUESTERED MAGICK**.

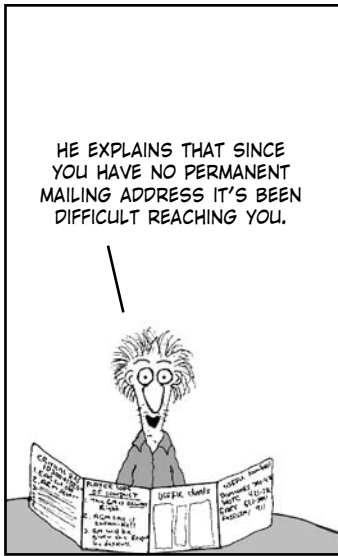


DRAX GREETES YOU WITH A WARM EMBRACE. HE REPORTS THAT **COSM*** HAS REVIEWED **TEFLON BILLY'S** APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP AND HAS CHECKED ALL THE RINGS HE SUBMITTED.† "CONGRATULATIONS!" HE SAYS. HE THEN HANDS YOU YOUR **PLEDGE RING** AND GIVES YOU A PAT ON THE BACK AND DEMONSTRATES HOW TO DO THE **SECRET HANDSHAKE**.

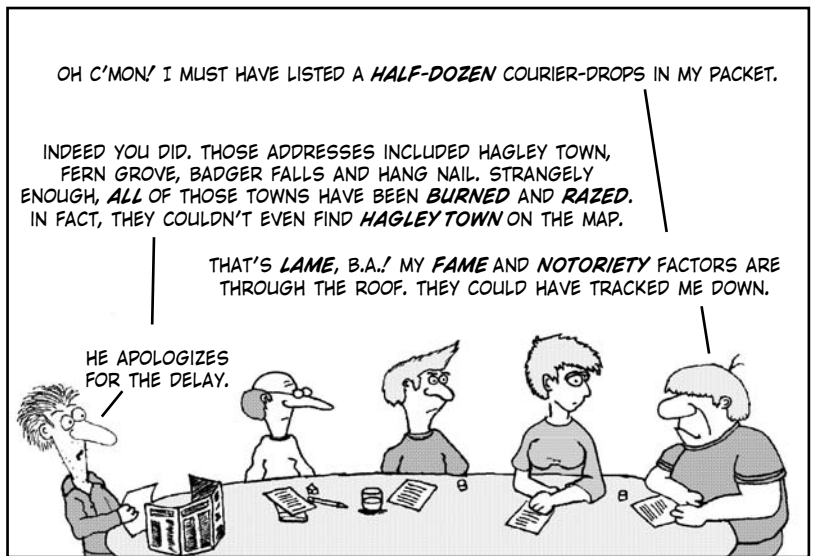


* COSM: Acronym for 'Circle of Sequestered Magick'. Pronounced kaus-sum.

† See KODT#4: **Temptation of the Ring**. One of the prerequisites for applying for membership to COSM is an offering consisting of items collected by the wanna-be member. COSM assigns a list of specific items that must be collected. In Teflon Billy's case the list included EVERY magic ring listed in the 1st Edition HackMaster Tome of Magic. It took Brian years of game time to complete his collection.



HE EXPLAINS THAT SINCE YOU HAVE NO PERMANENT MAILING ADDRESS IT'S BEEN DIFFICULT REACHING YOU.

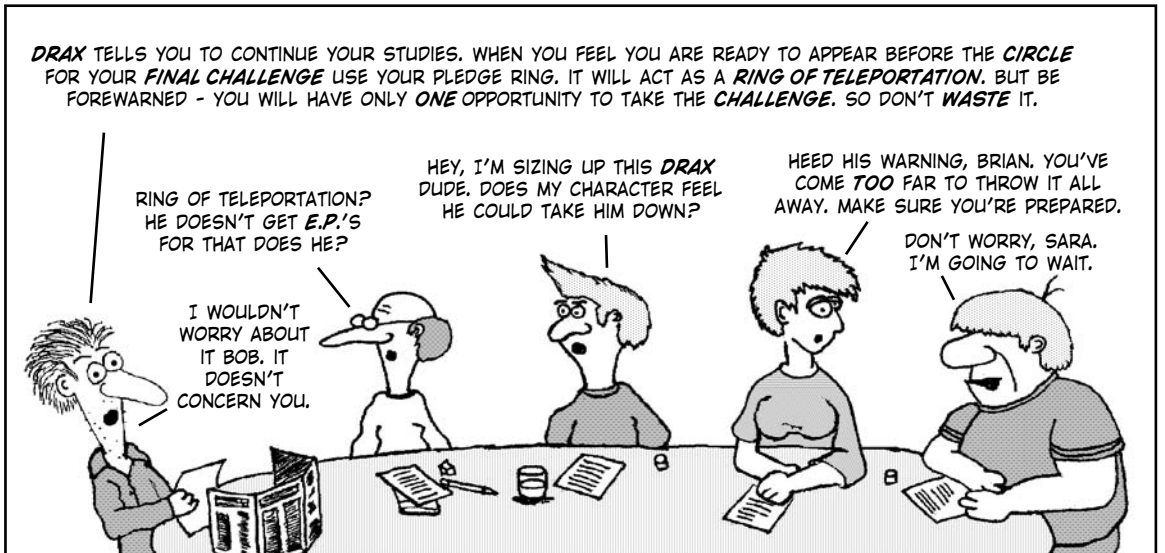


OH C'MON! I MUST HAVE LISTED A **HALF-DOZEN** COURIER-DROPS IN MY PACKET.

INDEED YOU DID. THOSE ADDRESSES INCLUDED HAGLEY TOWN, FERN GROVE, BADGER FALLS AND HANG NAIL. STRANGELY ENOUGH, **ALL** OF THOSE TOWNS HAVE BEEN **BURNED AND RAZED**. IN FACT, THEY COULDN'T EVEN FIND **HAGLEY TOWN** ON THE MAP.

THAT'S **LAME, B.A.**! MY **FAME** AND **NOTORIETY** FACTORS ARE THROUGH THE ROOF. THEY COULD HAVE TRACKED ME DOWN.

HE APOLOGIZES FOR THE DELAY.



DRAX TELLS YOU TO CONTINUE YOUR STUDIES. WHEN YOU FEEL YOU ARE READY TO APPEAR BEFORE THE **CIRCLE** FOR YOUR **FINAL CHALLENGE** USE YOUR PLEDGE RING. IT WILL ACT AS A **RING OF TELEPORTATION**. BUT BE FOREWARNED - YOU WILL HAVE ONLY **ONE** OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE THE **CHALLENGE**. SO DON'T WASTE IT.

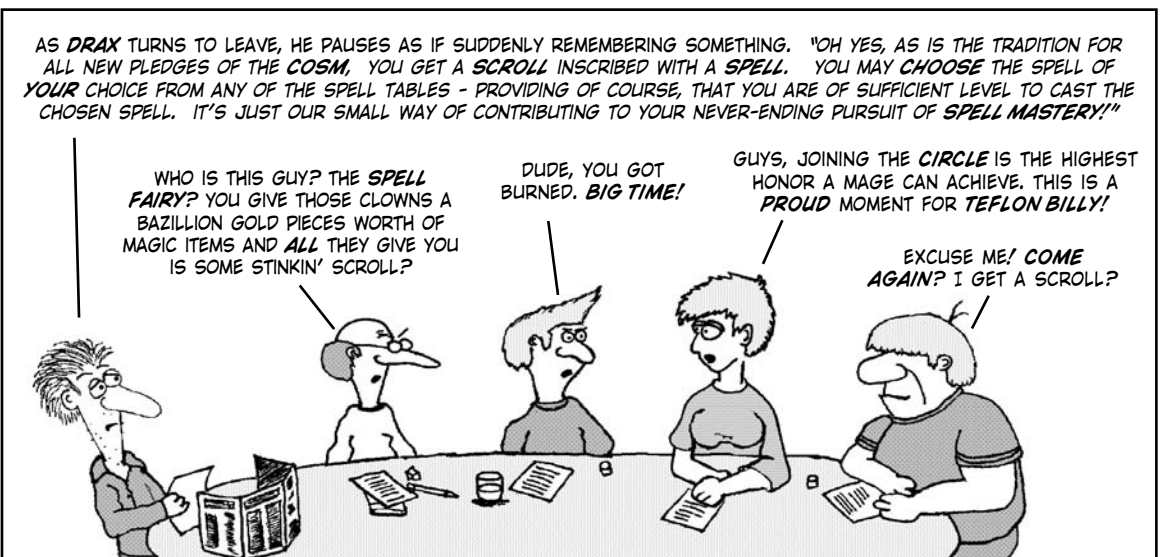
RING OF TELEPORTATION? HE DOESN'T GET **E.P.'S** FOR THAT DOES HE?

I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT BOB. IT DOESN'T CONCERN YOU.

HEY, I'M SIZING UP THIS **DRAX** DUDE. DOES MY CHARACTER FEEL HE COULD TAKE HIM DOWN?

HEED HIS WARNING, BRIAN. YOU'VE COME **TOO FAR** TO THROW IT ALL AWAY. MAKE SURE YOU'RE PREPARED.

DON'T WORRY, SARA. I'M GOING TO WAIT.



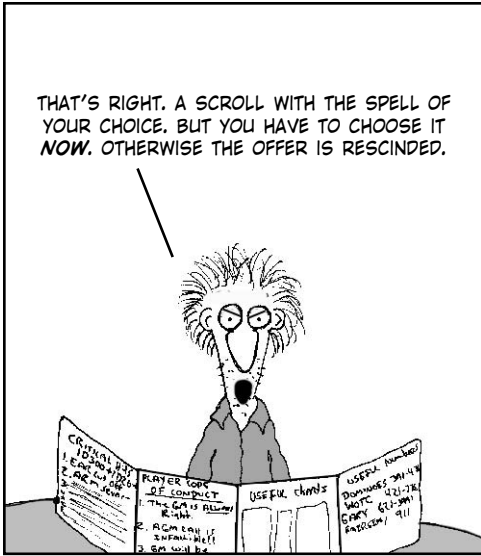
AS **DRAX** TURNS TO LEAVE, HE PAUSES AS IF SUDDENLY REMEMBERING SOMETHING. "OH YES, AS IS THE TRADITION FOR ALL NEW PLEDGES OF THE **COSM**, YOU GET A **SCROLL** INSCRIBED WITH A **SPELL**. YOU MAY **CHOOSE** THE **SPELL** OF YOUR CHOICE FROM ANY OF THE **SPELL TABLES** - PROVIDING OF COURSE, THAT YOU ARE OF SUFFICIENT LEVEL TO CAST THE CHOSEN **SPELL**. IT'S JUST OUR SMALL WAY OF CONTRIBUTING TO YOUR NEVER-ENDING PURSUIT OF **SPELL MASTERY!**"

WHO IS THIS GUY? THE **SPELL FAIRY**? YOU GIVE THOSE CLOWNS A BAZILLION GOLD PIECES WORTH OF MAGIC ITEMS AND **ALL** THEY GIVE YOU IS SOME STINKIN' SCROLL?

DUDE, YOU GOT BURNED. **BIG TIME!**

GUYS, JOINING THE **CIRCLE** IS THE HIGHEST HONOR A MAGE CAN ACHIEVE. THIS IS A **PROUD** MOMENT FOR **TEFLON BILLY!**

EXCUSE ME! **COME AGAIN?** I GET A SCROLL?



THAT'S RIGHT. A SCROLL WITH THE SPELL OF YOUR CHOICE. BUT YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE IT **NOW**. OTHERWISE THE OFFER IS RESCINDED.



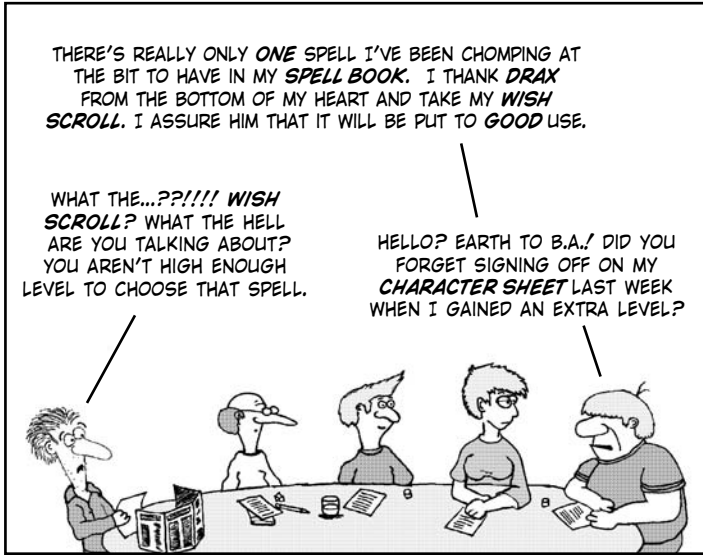
AND YOU SAY I CAN CHOOSE **ANY** SPELL FROM THE **SPELL TABLES??** SO LONG AS I'M ABLE TO CAST IT? **THAT ROCKS!!**

CORRECT. BUT YOU'D BETTER HURRY. **DRAX** SAYS HE HAS A PRESSING ENGAGEMENT ELSEWHERE. YOU MUST DECIDE WHICH SPELL YOU WANT.

EASY BRIAN! HE'S TRYING TO RUSH YOU SO YOU'LL MESS UP.

CHOOSE A **TACTICAL SPELL!** THOSE ALWAYS COME IN HANDY.

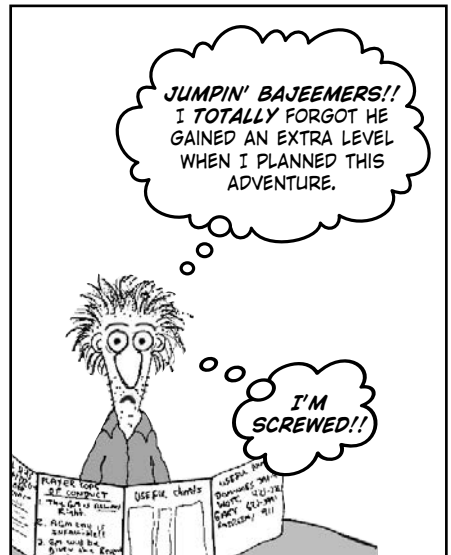
I'VE ALREADY DECIDED. IT'S **NO CONTEST**.



THERE'S REALLY ONLY **ONE** SPELL I'VE BEEN CHOMPING AT THE BIT TO HAVE IN MY **SPELL BOOK**. I THANK **DRAX** FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART AND TAKE MY **WISH SCROLL**. I ASSURE HIM THAT IT WILL BE PUT TO **GOOD USE**.

WHAT THE...??!!!! **WISH SCROLL?** WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOU AREN'T HIGH ENOUGH LEVEL TO CHOOSE THAT SPELL.

HELLO? EARTH TO B.A.! DID YOU FORGET SIGNING OFF ON MY **CHARACTER SHEET** LAST WEEK WHEN I GAINED AN EXTRA LEVEL?



JUMPIN' BAJEEMERS!! I TOTALLY FORGOT HE GAINED AN EXTRA LEVEL WHEN I PLANNED THIS ADVENTURE.

I'M SCREWED!!

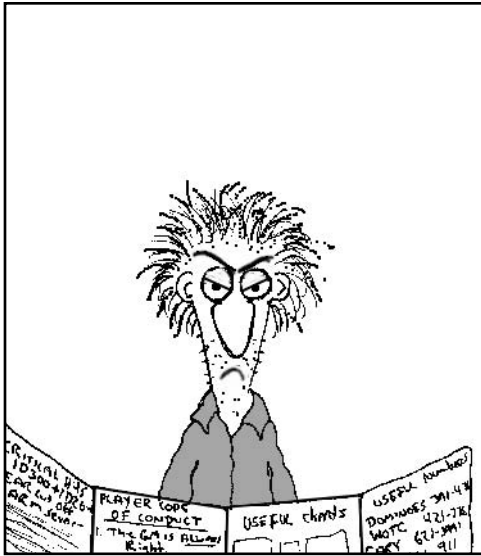


NOW HOLD ON, BRIAN. I DON'T THINK **DRAX** WOULD JUST **HAND YOU** A **WISH SPELL**. HIS OFFER WAS PROBABLY BASED ON THE **LEVEL OF MASTERY** YOU INDICATED ON YOUR **MEMBERSHIP PACKET** - **NOT YOUR CURRENT LEVEL**.

SO HE **SCREWED UP!** I DON'T THINK HE'D **RENEGE** ON A **DEAL** WITH A **PLEDGE** - ESPECIALLY SINCE IT'S **TRADITION**. THAT **WISH SPELL** IS MINE! AND BY THE WAY, WHEN I CAST THE **WISH** ONTO **GUDRUN'S HAMMER** IT IS **AMPLIFIED!** **104 WISHES** ARE GRANTED. **OUTSTANDING!** LOOKS LIKE I ROLLED A FOUR. **WISHES FOR EVERYBODY!**

HOODY HOO!

ROLL



ALRIGHT **BRIAN**, YOU GOT ME ON THAT ONE. I FORGOT TO UPDATE MY ADVENTURE TO REFLECT YOUR **NEW** LEVEL. I'LL BITE THE BULLET **THIS** TIME. I'M NOT EVEN GOING TO BOTHER TO ARGUE IT OUT. BESIDES, YOU GUYS ALWAYS SCREW UP YOUR WISHES ANYWAY. JUST REMEMBER - NO TAPBACKS.

WELL THERE'S CERTAINLY NO NEED TO GET **UGLY** ABOUT IT. SHEESH!

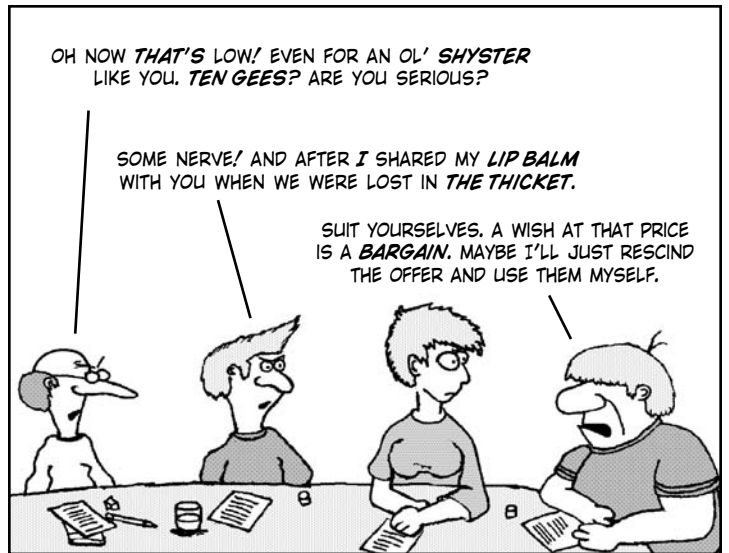
YEAH, B.A. YOU SHOULDN'T TAKE THE GAME SO **PERSONALLY**.

OKAY GUYS, LISTEN UP. HERE'S THE DEAL.



I'M FEELING GENEROUS TODAY SO I'M ONLY GOING TO CHARGE **10,000 GOLD PIECES** PER WISH.

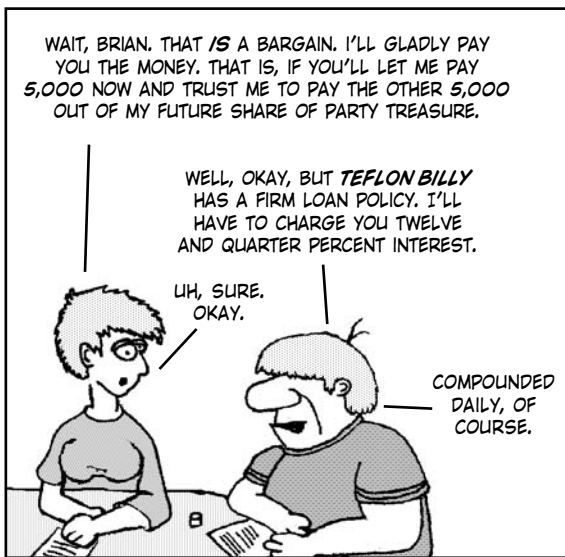
ANY TAKERS?



OH NOW **THAT'S** LOW! EVEN FOR AN OL' **SHYSTER** LIKE YOU. **TEN GEES?** ARE YOU SERIOUS?

SOME NERVE! AND AFTER I SHARED MY **LIP BALM** WITH YOU WHEN WE WERE LOST IN **THE THICKET**.

SUIT YOURSELVES. A WISH AT THAT PRICE IS A **BARGAIN**. MAYBE I'LL JUST RESCIND THE OFFER AND USE THEM MYSELF.



WAIT, **BRIAN**. THAT **IS** A BARGAIN. I'LL GLADLY PAY YOU THE MONEY. THAT IS, IF YOU'LL LET ME PAY **5,000** NOW AND TRUST ME TO PAY THE OTHER **5,000** OUT OF MY FUTURE SHARE OF PARTY TREASURE.

WELL, OKAY, BUT **TEFLON BILLY** HAS A FIRM LOAN POLICY. I'LL HAVE TO CHARGE YOU **TWELVE AND QUARTER PERCENT** INTEREST.

UH, SURE. OKAY.

COMPOUNDED DAILY, OF COURSE.



C'MON GUYS. WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO BE ABLE TO **BUY** A WISH? EVEN AT **TEN GRAND**, IT'S A DEAL. I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE YOU COULDN'T **WISH** FOR **TWENTY GRAND** AND WALK AWAY WITH A HANDSOME PROFIT.

OKAY, I'M IN. BUT I'M PAYING IN WITH THE **EQUIVALENT** AMOUNT IN **SILVER PIECES**. IF HE'S MAKING **THAT** MUCH MONEY OFF ME I WANT TO AT **LEAST** SCREW UP HIS **ENCUMBRANCE RATIOS**.

OKAY, I GUESS I'M IN.

GOOD, THIS WILL BE FUN.

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

OKAY, I THINK I'M READY. WHO WANTS TO STATE THEIR *WISH* FIRST? BOB???!

DAMN! HE'S GOT A FREAKIN *LIBRARY* BACK THERE BEHIND THE SCREEN. A *THESAURUS*, A *DICTIONARY*, EVEN JO JO ZEKE'S "*LAYMAN'S GUIDE TO INTERPRETING WISHES*".

OH, I SEE. SO *THAT'S* YOUR GAME, EH? GONNA TRY TO SCREW US OVER ON THE *WORDING* OF OUR WISHES, HUH?

GIVE 'EM HELL, BOBBY BOY! YOU CAN DO IT!

YOU GOT *THAT* RIGHT.

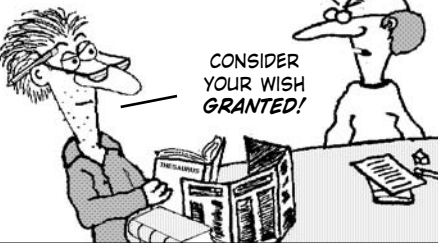


HA! WELL I'M NOT PLAYING *THAT* GAME. I'M GOING TO PLAY IT SAFE AND *WISH* FOR SOMETHING SIMPLE WHICH YOU CAN'T *USE* AGAINST ME. I WISH FOR *ONE MILLION EXPERIENCE POINTS!*

A MILLION E.P.S? IS THAT YOUR *WISH*? ARE YOU SURE?

THAT'S MY *WISH* AND I'M STICKING TO IT.

CONSIDER YOUR *WISH GRANTED!*



BOB!! WAIT!! UH...ER.... -SIGH- NEVER MIND.

YOU CAN *WISH* FOR *EXPERIENCE POINTS*? ISN'T THAT KIND OF DANGEROUS?

DANGEROUS? OF COURSE NOT YOU *DOOFUS!* THESE ARE *UNLIMITED WISHES*.



WELL THIS SHOULD BE *ENTERTAINING!*

GIVING BOB A *WISH* IS LIKE GIVING A *LOADED GUN* TO A *MONKEY*.

HMMMM...THAT MIGHT BE ENTERTAINING AS WELL.

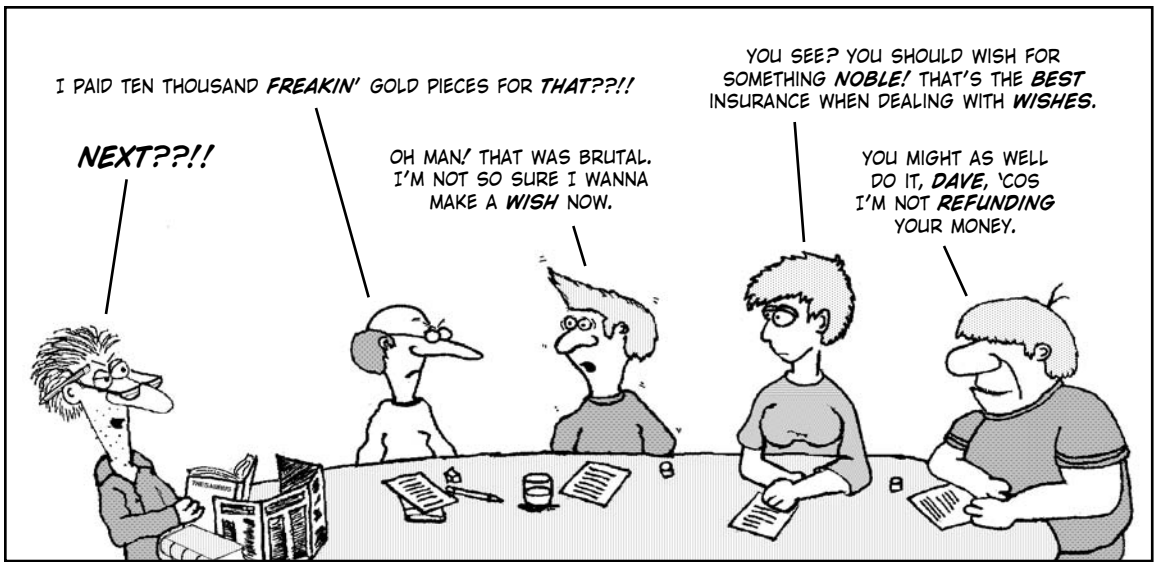


OKAY BOB, *GUDRUN'S HAMMER* GLOWS AN EERIE BLUE AS AN ARC OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY STRIKES YOU SQUARE IN THE *FOREHEAD*. YOU HAVE JUST GAINED A MILLION POINTS WORTH OF LIFE EXPERIENCES. THAT UNFORTUNATELY RESULTS IN YOUR AGING *273 YEARS* INSTANTANEOUSLY.

ON THE PLUS SIDE, YOU CAN ADD PLUS ONE TO YOUR WISDOM AND INTELLIGENCE. PLUS, OF COURSE, FOND MEMORIES OF YOUR MISSPENT YOUTH.

DAMN!





I PAID TEN THOUSAND **FREAKIN'** GOLD PIECES FOR **THAT???!!**

NEXT???!!

OH MAN! THAT WAS BRUTAL. I'M NOT SO SURE I WANNA MAKE A **WISH** NOW.

YOU SEEP YOU SHOULD WISH FOR SOMETHING **NOBLE!** THAT'S THE **BEST** INSURANCE WHEN DEALING WITH **WISHES.**

YOU MIGHT AS WELL DO IT, **DAVE,** 'COS I'M NOT **REFUNDING** YOUR MONEY.

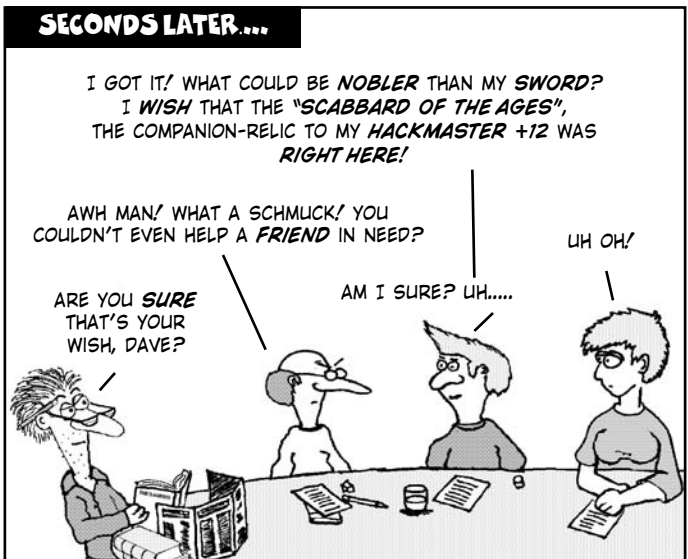


SOMETHING **NOBLE.....**SOMETHING **NOBLE.** LET'S SEE NOW.....**HMMMMMMM.....**

HERE'S SOMETHING **NOBLE** FOR YA. **WISH** THAT **MY WISH** NEVER HAPPENED. **ERASE IT!**

WHAT'S IT GONNA BE, **DAVE?**

SSSSHHH! I'M TRYING TO THINK.



SECONDS LATER...

I GOT IT! WHAT COULD BE **NOBLER** THAN MY **SWORD?** I **WISH** THAT THE "**SCABBARD OF THE AGES**", THE COMPANION-RELIC TO MY **HACKMASTER +12** WAS **RIGHT HERE!**

AWH MAN! WHAT A **SCHMUCK!** YOU COULDN'T EVEN HELP A **FRIEND** IN NEED?

UH OH!

ARE YOU **SURE** THAT'S YOUR **WISH, DAVE?**

AM I **SURE?** UH.....



WHAT DO YOU THINK, GUYS? AM I ASKING FOR **TOO MUCH?** HOW WAS MY **WORDING?**

ACTUALLY, **DAVE,** I THINK YOU SHOULD...

YOU DID **GREAT, DAVE!** DIRECT AND TO THE POINT. NOT A BAD CHOICE EITHER. THAT **SCABBARD** GIVES YOUR **SWORD** TWO ADDITIONAL **LANGUAGES** AND THE **WIELDER** GETS **REGENERATION** AND **VAMPIRE DRAIN** WITH EVERY **HIT.**



DON'T FORGET, THAT **SELF-POLISHING** FEATURE! IT WILL KEEP MY **HACKMASTER** BRIGHTLY **POLISHED** AND FINELY **HONED** AT ALL TIMES, EVEN IN **INCLEMENT** WEATHER.

OH, I CAN SEE WHY YOU SIMPLY **MUST** HAVE IT.

RUN WITH IT, **DAVE.** I THINK YOU'VE GOT A **GOOD CHANCE.**



OKAY B.A., THAT'S MY WISH AND I'M STICKING TO IT!

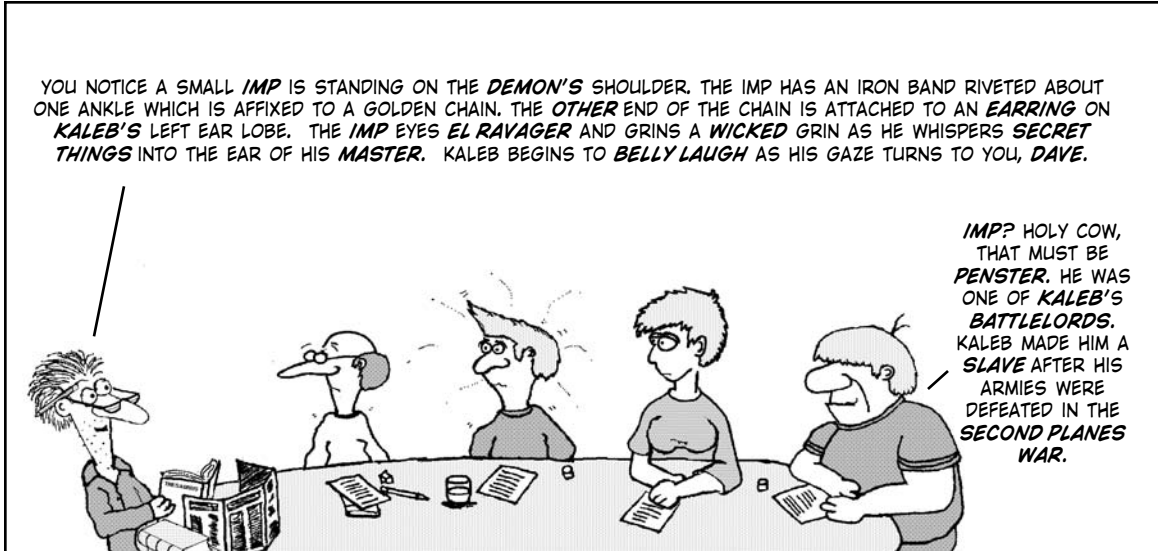


YOUR WISH IS GRANTED!!



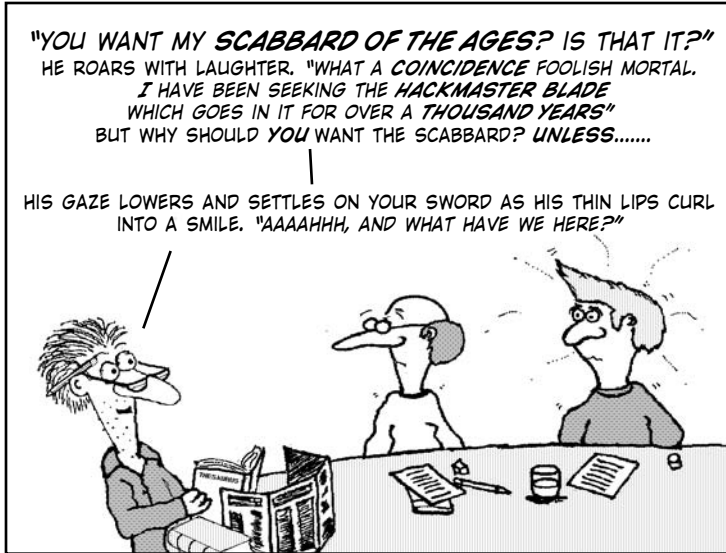
THE ARCH DEMON, **KALEB** BURSTS OUT OF THE GROUND WITH THE SCABBARD AROUND HIS WAIST. HE LOOKS VERY ANNOYED. APPARENTLY, HE'S THE **CURRENT OWNER** OF THE RELIC.

HE **SNEERS** AT YOU AND ROARS, "**WHO DARES TO SUMMON ME FROM THE PLANE OF INFERNAL FLAMES?**"



YOU NOTICE A SMALL **IMP** IS STANDING ON THE **DEMON'S** SHOULDER. THE **IMP** HAS AN IRON BAND RIVETED ABOUT ONE ANKLE WHICH IS AFFIXED TO A GOLDEN CHAIN. THE **OTHER** END OF THE CHAIN IS ATTACHED TO AN **EARRING** ON **KALEB'S** LEFT EAR LOBE. THE **IMP** EYES **EL RAVAGER** AND GRINS A **WICKED** GRIN AS HE WHISPERS **SECRET THINGS** INTO THE EAR OF HIS **MASTER**. **KALEB** BEGINS TO **BELLY LAUGH** AS HIS GAZE TURNS TO YOU, **DAVE**.

IMP?? HOLY COW, THAT MUST BE **PENSTER**. HE WAS ONE OF **KALEB'S BATTLELORDS**. **KALEB** MADE HIM A **SLAVE** AFTER HIS ARMIES WERE DEFEATED IN THE **SECOND PLANES WAR**.



"YOU WANT MY **SCABBARD OF THE AGES?** IS THAT IT?" HE ROARS WITH LAUGHTER. "WHAT A **COINCIDENCE** FOOLISH MORTAL. I HAVE BEEN SEEKING THE **HACKMASTER BLADE** WHICH GOES IN IT FOR OVER A **THOUSAND YEARS**" BUT WHY SHOULD YOU WANT THE SCABBARD? **UNLESS.....**

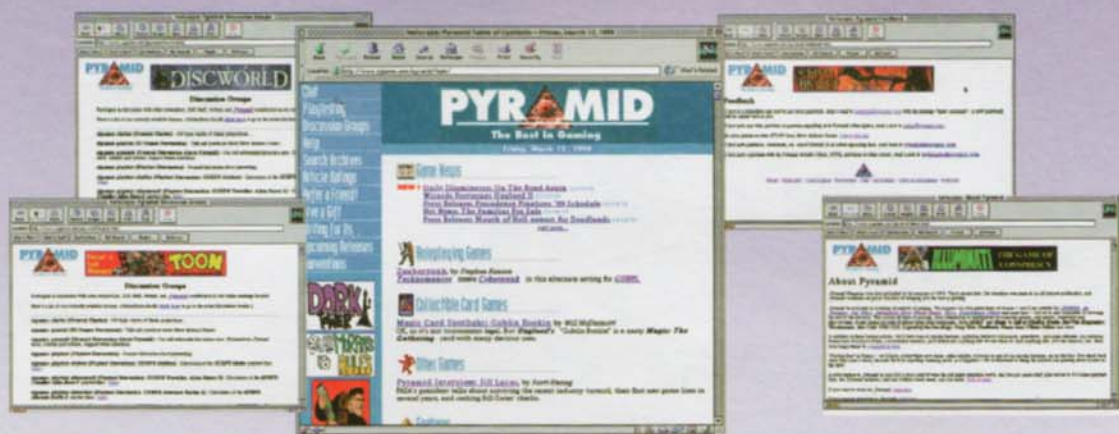
HIS GAZE LOWERS AND SETTLES ON YOUR SWORD AS HIS THIN LIPS CURL INTO A SMILE. "AAAAHHH, AND WHAT HAVE WE HERE?"



KALEB GASPS WITH ASTONISHMENT TO LEARN THAT THE **SWORD** HE'S BEEN SEARCHING SO DESPERATELY FOR IS **FINALLY** WITHIN **ARMS** REACH.

"LET'S RUMBLE!!!"

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Wishful Thinking

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN & STEVE JOHANSSON
WITH MICHAEL R. PATANUDE

KALEB PULLS OUT HIS **FLAMING SWORD OF SOUL DEVOURING**. YOU WANT MY SCABBARD, **PUNK**? COME GET IT!

DON'T WORRY, DUDE. I'LL BACK YOU UP. I READING MY CROSS BOW WITH A BOLT OF DEMON SLAYING

SOUL DEVOURING? BUT...BUT...UH...ER.. FIRP....SPUTTER..

OH **BAD NEWS**, MAN. HE EVEN TOUCHES YOU WITH THAT THING AND YOU HAVE **ZERO CHANCE OF EVER** BEING RAISED.



I'M SORRY BOB, YOUR **STAGE THREE ARTHRITIS** PREVENTS YOU FROM COCKING YOUR **CROSSBOW**. THE PAIN IS **EXCRUCIATING** AND I'M AFRAID **OLD AGE** HAS DIMINISHED YOUR **THRESHOLD** FOR PAIN.

TO HELL WITH THE PAIN. I CHOKE IT DOWN LIKE **CHUNKY PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICH** AND RACE TO MY **COMRADE'S** AID.

RACE? SORRY, IT'S MORE LIKE A SLOW BUT DETERMINED, **SHUFFLE**.



A FEW MINUTES LATER...

DAVE, **KALEB** CONCLUDES YOU ARE **RELUCTANT** TO FIGHT HIM SINCE YOU KEEP RUNNING IN CIRCLES AND REFUSE TO **ENGAGE** HIM. HE OFFERS YOU AN **ALTERNATIVE**. TOSS HIM YOUR **HACKMASTER +12** AND HE'LL LET YOU LIVE AND RETURN TO HIS **HOME PLANE**.

WHO'S RELUCTANT? I'M NOT RUNNING IN CIRCLES. I'M JUST TRYING TO EARN THOSE **-4 MODIFIERS** FOR BEING A **MOVING TARGET**. THAT'S ALL.

I'M PUTTING SOME **HORSE LINIMENT** ON MY WRISTS. DOES IT HELP ALLEVIATE THE PAIN?

DAVE, TRY A **TUCK AND TUMBLE!** THAT'S WORTH ANOTHER **-1** ON HIS TO-HIT.



TWENTY MINUTES LATER...

KALEB WAVES THE **HACKMASTER +12** OVER HIS HEAD AND LAUGHS WITH **GLEE** AS HE KICKS **EL RAVAGER'S** HEAD AROUND LIKE A **SOCCER BALL**. MEANWHILE, **PENSTER** THE IMP HAS FINISHED STRINGING THE SLAIN FIGHTER'S **EARS** ON A PIECE OF STRING AND IS PLACING THE **TROPHY** AROUND HIS MASTER'S NECK.

HMMRRFFF! IF I WAS **FIFTY YEARS** YOUNGER, I'D GIVE HIM SOMETHING TO **LAUGH** ABOUT. YOU CAN BE **SURE** OF THAT.

I...UH...ER... I DISBELIEVE?

BRACE YOURSELF, DAVE. **KALEB** HAS BEEN KNOWN TO RITUALISTICALLY **DISEMBOWEL** HIS VICTIMS.



WELL, SHOULD WE USE ONE OF THE REMAINING *WISHES* TO CANCEL OUT *DAVE'S*?

HEY, I DON'T CARE *WHAT* YOU DO WITH YOURS. IT'S *YOUR* MONEY - YOU'RE PAYIN' FOR IT. BUT I GOT *PLANS* FOR MINE.

GREAT.

ONE WISH LATER...

SINCE *SARA* BURNED HER *WISH* IN AN ATTEMPT TO SAVE THE *LIFE* OF A *FALLEN* FRIEND HER *WISH* IS *GRANTED* WITHOUT ANY ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF THE *FATES* TO TWIST THE OUTCOME. *KALEB* IS RIPPED FROM THE *PRIME WORLD* AND SENT BACK TO HIS HOME PLANE. THE *HACKMASTER SWORD* LIES ON THE GROUND WHERE HE HAD BEEN STANDING AND *EL RAVAGER'S* HEAD HAS BEEN RE-ATTACHED TO HIS BODY. HE'S *STILL* DEAD, HOWEVER. YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE HIS BODY AND MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO HAVE HIM RAISED LATER.

WHAT A WASTE OF A WISH. IF SHE HAD *WISHED* FOR MY YOUTH BACK, I COULD'VE *DEALT* WITH THAT GUY.

THIS AIN'T OVER. I'M TELLIN' YA. THAT *KALEB'S ASS* IS *MINE!* *5 *BOOTS* OF *GROIN KICKING*? THAT AIN'T RIGHT! I THOUGHT IT WAS GOING TO BE A FAIR FIGHT.

WHAT ARE *YOU* WHINING ABOUT? AT LEAST *YOU* HAVE YOUR *HEALTH!*

NOW *KALEB* WILL KNOW WHY HE'S AFRAID OF THE *DARK!* I'M GONNA BE ON HIS ASS LIKE *STINK* ON A *MONKEY!*

I'D LET IT GO, *DAVE.*

I'D LIKE TO *THANK* YOU, *SARA*. IT'S NICE TO KNOW WHO YOUR *REAL* FRIENDS ARE WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN. IF THERE'S ANY WAY I CAN REPAY YOU, JUST LET ME KNOW.

ACTUALLY, MAYBE YOU'D BE WILLING TO PAY *BRIAN* THE BALANCE OF 5,000 *G.P.S* I STILL OWE HIM FOR THAT *WISH*.

HUH? PAY *BRIAN*? I'M A LITTLE *COIN-SHY* AT THE MOMENT.

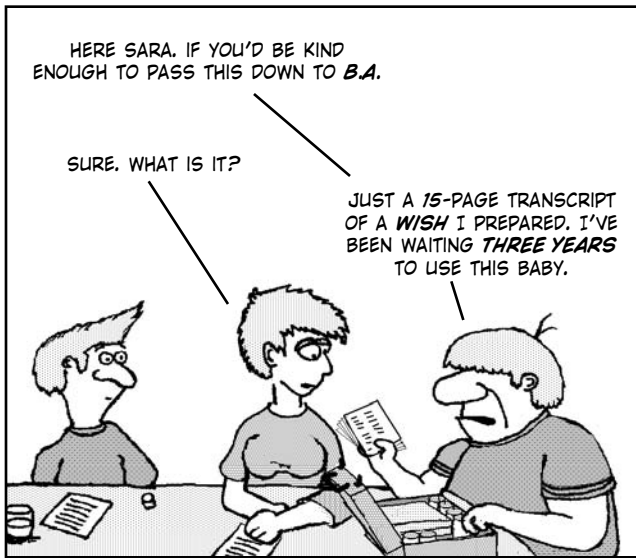
LOOKS LIKE I'M UP TO BAT.

OKAY, *BRIAN*. YOU CARE TO GIVE IT A TRY?

JUST GIVE ME A SECOND TO FIND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR. MAN O' MAN! I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT SINCE I CAN'T REMEMBER. LET'S SEE - I KNOW IT'S IN HERE SOMEWHERE.

??!!

AHHHH, THERE SHE BE.



HERE SARA, IF YOU'D BE KIND ENOUGH TO PASS THIS DOWN TO B.A.

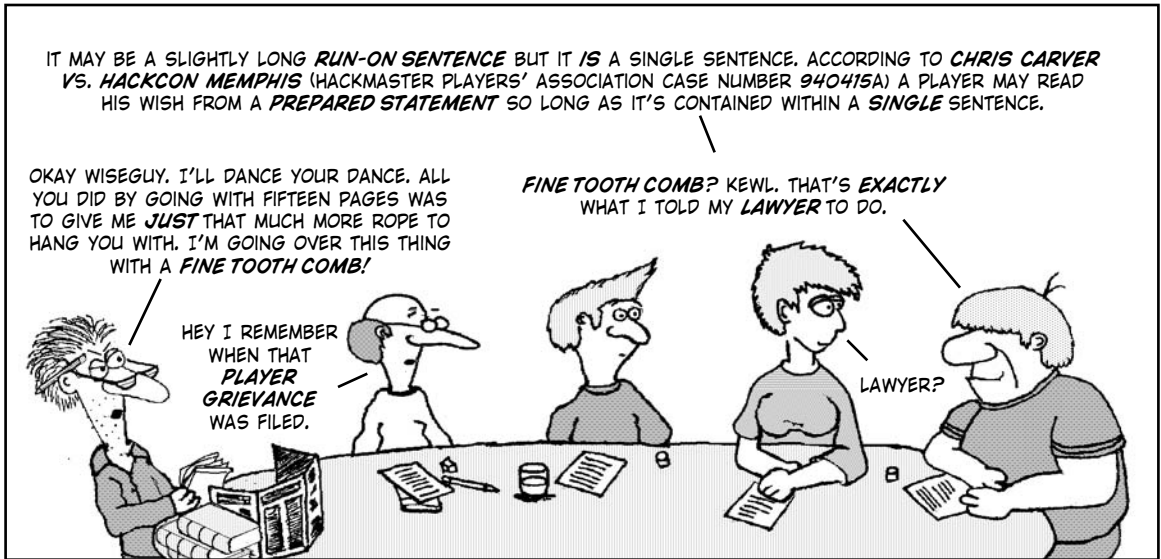
SURE. WHAT IS IT?

JUST A 15-PAGE TRANSCRIPT OF A WISH I PREPARED. I'VE BEEN WAITING THREE YEARS TO USE THIS BABY.



WHA...WHAT THE HELL? A FIFTEEN PAGE WISH? YOU GOT TO BE KIDDING. THERE'S NO WAY I'M LETTING THIS FLY. YOU CAN'T PREPARE A WISH BEFOREHAND.

GEEZE LOUEEZE! LOOK AT THIS THING. IT'S GOT MORE LEGALESE THAN AN NFL CONTRACT.



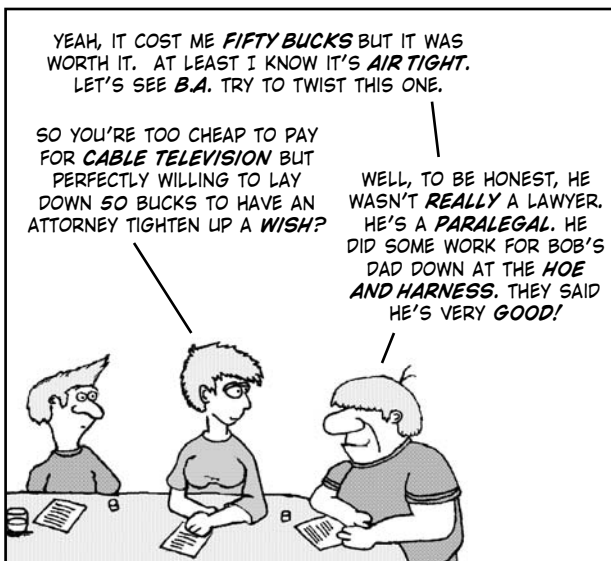
IT MAY BE A SLIGHTLY LONG RUN-ON SENTENCE BUT IT IS A SINGLE SENTENCE. ACCORDING TO CHRIS CARYER VS. HACKCON MEMPHIS (HACKMASTER PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION CASE NUMBER 940415A) A PLAYER MAY READ HIS WISH FROM A PREPARED STATEMENT SO LONG AS IT'S CONTAINED WITHIN A SINGLE SENTENCE.

OKAY WISEGUY, I'LL DANCE YOUR DANCE. ALL YOU DID BY GOING WITH FIFTEEN PAGES WAS TO GIVE ME JUST THAT MUCH MORE ROPE TO HANG YOU WITH. I'M GOING OVER THIS THING WITH A FINE TOOTH COMB!

FINE TOOTH COMB? KEWL. THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I TOLD MY LAWYER TO DO.

HEY I REMEMBER WHEN THAT PLAYER GRIEVANCE WAS FILED.

LAWYER?



YEAH, IT COST ME FIFTY BUCKS BUT IT WAS WORTH IT. AT LEAST I KNOW IT'S AIR TIGHT. LET'S SEE B.A. TRY TO TWIST THIS ONE.

SO YOU'RE TOO CHEAP TO PAY FOR CABLE TELEVISION BUT PERFECTLY WILLING TO LAY DOWN 50 BUCKS TO HAVE AN ATTORNEY TIGHTEN UP A WISH?

WELL, TO BE HONEST, HE WASN'T REALLY A LAWYER. HE'S A PARALEGAL. HE DID SOME WORK FOR BOB'S DAD DOWN AT THE HOE AND HARNESS. THEY SAID HE'S VERY GOOD!



WHOA! HOLD ON PERRY MASON! I DIDN'T SAY HE WAS GOOD - I SAID HE WAS CHEAP! HE'S FLUNKED THE BAR EXAM FOUR TIMES. I TOLD YOU THAT.

HEY, THE GUY DID ALRIGHT BY ME. HE WROTE A NASTY LETTER TO THAT RENT-2-OWN OUTFIT AND GOT ME OUT OF THAT CONTRACT I SIGNED LAST FALL. SAVED ME FROM HAVING TO PAY 39 BUCKS A MONTH FOR THAT DVD PLAYER THAT BROKE A WEEK AFTER I GOT IT.

WHAT I FORGOT TO MENTION IS THAT THE GUY USED TO GAME IN LAW SCHOOL.

THAT EXPLAINS A LOT.

OKAY BRIAN, I'M READY TO BEGIN WHEN YOU ARE. AFTER YOU'VE READ...ER...STATED YOUR WISH, I'M GOING TO CALL A **RECESS** SO I CAN PROPERLY INTERPRET YOUR **WISH**. AND SINCE YOU SOUGHT **OUTSIDE COUNCIL** ON THE PREPARATION OF YOUR **WISH**, I'M GOING TO DO THE SAME WHILE TRYING TO **CRACK** IT. UNDERSTOOD?

SAR'RIGHT BY ME. BUT DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP. YOU AIN'T GONNA **CRACK** THIS BABY. IT'S **ROCK SOLID!**

TAKE YOUR TIME.
READ SLOW!

UH HUH. WELL, THAT
REMAINS TO BE SEEN.
PROCEED!

GOOD LUCK,
BRIAN!

YOU CAN
DO IT,
BRIAN.



TWENTY MINUTES LATER....

...BLAH BLAH BLAH IN THE EVENT THAT BLAH BLAH THE **WISHEE** WILL BE GRANTED BLAH BLAH BLAH UNLESS THE **WISHOR** DETERMINES THAT BLAH BLAH BLAH IN WHICH CASE THE **FATES** SHALL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR BLAH BLAH BLAH INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO ACTS OF GAWDS, RANDOM EVENTS OUTSIDE THE CONTROL OF THE **WISHEE** BLAH BLAH BLAH AND SHOULD BLAH BLAH THE RESULTING OUTCOME ENDANGER BLAH BLAH BLAH THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF THE **WISHEE** BLAH BLAH...

HELD ACCOUNTABLE? WHAT
DOES THAT MEAN? OUTSIDE
THE CONTROL OF THE **WISHEE**?

WHAT THE HELL IS
HE WISHING FOR?



FIVE MINUTES LATER....

...BLAH BLAH UNLESS IT IS ASCERTAINED THAT THE **WISHOR** WAS...BLAH BLAH THE **WISHEE** SHALL BE NOTIFIED BY **DIVINE AGENT** OR **SPECIAL COURIER** OF THE RESULTS OF ANY SUCH BLAH BLAH BLAH...



AND FINALLY....

AND THAT CONCLUDES THE **STATING** OF MY WISH. THE BALL IS BACK IN YOUR COURT, B.A. THAT'S MY WISH AND I'M STICKING TO IT!

OKAY, WHY DON'T YOU GUYS
GRAB A SODA AND SOME FRESH
AIR. THIS MAY TAKE A WHILE.

WHAT THE HELL DID YOU WISH FOR
BRIAN? IT WENT CLEAN OVER MY HEAD.

MINE TOO!

OH, NOTHING MUCH. JUST A
HEAPING-HELPING OF
IMMORTALITY! **TEFLON BILLY**
JUST WISHED TO BE **DEIFIED!**



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FADING SUNS



AH HA!! I KNEW YOUR *SNEAKY-ASSES* WERE UP TO *SOMETHING!* WHAT *BUSINESS* DO YOU HAVE WITH THE *MERCHANT LEAGUE* THAT CAN'T BE CONDUCTED AT THE TABLE? HUH?

BRIAN, SARA - I'LL GRAB A SODA AND MEET YOU ON THE BACK PORCH AND WE CAN GO OVER YOUR PROPOSALS.

I *DEMAND* TO KNOW WHAT YOU TWO ARE UP TO!

Y'KNOW, YOU TWO ARE THE MOST *IGNOBLE* ROYALTY I'VE EVER COME ACROSS!

I TIRE OF YOUR INCES-SANT BARKING. YOU'RE LIKE A DOG WITHOUT TEETH. YOU MAKE A LOT OF NOISE BUT YOU NEVER GET THE BONE!



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A Clause for Celebration

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN & STEVE JOHANSSON
WITH MICHAEL R. PATANUDE

AFTER A *FRANTIC* PHONE CALL FROM *B.A.* FOR ASSISTANCE, *WEIRD PETE* CALLS AN *EMERGENCY MEETING* OF ALL AVAILABLE *GAMEMASTERS* IN THE AREA. *EARL SLACKMOZER* AND *NITRO FUERGESON* ARE THE ONLY ONES TO ANSWER THE *SUMMONS*.



BUT THIS SITUATION IS *UNIQUE*. APPARENTLY THE PLAYER HAD *PREPARED* HIS *WISH* AHEAD OF TIME AND HAD A *LAWYER* GO OVER IT TO CHECK FOR *LOOPHOLES* AND SUCH. SO FAR WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO *CRACK* IT.

I JUST DON'T GET IT. FIRST *B.A.* LETS HIM GET HOLD OF *GUDRUN'S HAMMER*. AND THEN HE LETS *FOUR WISHES* SLIP INTO THE GAME? THE GUY NEEDS TO GET CONTROL OF HIS *GAME* BACK.

I JUST HOPE I DRAW THE *KNIGHTS* IN THE *TOURNAMENT* AND GET TO A CHANCE TO RUN THEM THROUGH THEIR PACES.

QUICK! SOMEBODY LOOK UP *AGGLUTINATE* IN THE *DICTIONARY*. AND *TOSS* ME THAT COPY OF "*THORPE'S LEGAL LEXICON*"

AGGLUTINATE YOU SAID? THAT'S A MASS OR GROUP FORMED BY THE *UNION* OF *SEPARATE* ELEMENTS.

AN HOUR LATER....

UH HUH, I'M STILL HERE. WHAT'S THAT? ARE THERE ANY *DEITY GRIEVANCES* AGAINST *BRIAN*? WELL *HELL* YES. WHY *JUST* LAST WEEK HE....

WHAT'S THAT? OH..... YOU KNOW I DIDN'T THINK OF THAT. I THINK IT *JUST* MIGHT WORK. I'LL GIVE IT A SHOT.

OH DON'T WORRY. I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS. HEY, *THANK* THE GUYS FOR ME. I *OWE* THEM - *BIG TIME!*

IT'S SHOW TIME!

I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THE LOOK ON *BRIAN'S* FACE. -SNICKER- IT'LL ALMOST BE WORTH THE *HELL* HE'S PUT ME THROUGH TONIGHT.

A FEW MINUTES LATER....

WELL, *BRIAN*, CONGRATULATIONS. I *CRY UNCLE*. WE GAVE IT OUR *BEST* SHOT AND IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR *WISH* WAS *IRON CLAD*. QUITE AN ACCOMPLISHMENT. CONSIDER YOUR *WISH GRANTED!* IT LOOKS LIKE *TEFLON BILLY* IS NOW OFFICIALLY *IMMORTAL*.

IMMORTAL? YOU MEAN YOU'RE *ACTUALLY* GOING TO LET HIM GET AWAY WITH IT?

DAMN! I'M GOING TO HAVE TO GET A COPY OF THAT *CONTRACT*. MAYBE I CAN USE IT AS A *BOILER PLATE*.

SURE YOU CAN *DAVE*. FOR A *SMALL* FEE OF COURSE, I CAN GIVE IT TO YOU IN *PDF* FORMAT.

DON'T WORRY, GUYS. **TEFLON** KNOWS WHO HIS FRIENDS ARE - EVEN IF THEY **ARE** MERE MORTALS. I'D LIKE TO THINK THAT HE'LL REMEMBER HIS **ROOTS** AND KEEP IN TOUCH.

OKAY **BRIAN**, SINCE THIS IS LIKELY TO AFFECT THE ENTIRE SCOPE OF THE **CAMPAIGN**, HOW 'BOUT GIVING ME SOME KIND OF IDEA ON YOUR PLANS.

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE HE PULLED IT OFF.

YES, TELL US **BRIAN**. WHAT **ARE** YOUR PLANS?

OH, I THINK I'LL START BY SPREADING THE WORD AMONG THE **OTHER** IMMORTALS THAT THERE'S A **NEW** KID AMONG THE RANKS.

WE SHOULD CALL **GARY** AND TELL HIM ABOUT THIS.



THEN I'LL BE CHECKING TO SEE IF ANY OF THE **GAWDS** ARE IN NEED OF A **NEW** AGENT TO HELP PERPETUATE THEIR WILL ON **GARWEEZE WURLD**.

OF COURSE I'LL BE PLAYING THEM **AGAINST** EACH OTHER TO **LEVERAGE** THE **BEST** POSSIBLE DEAL FOR MYSELF.



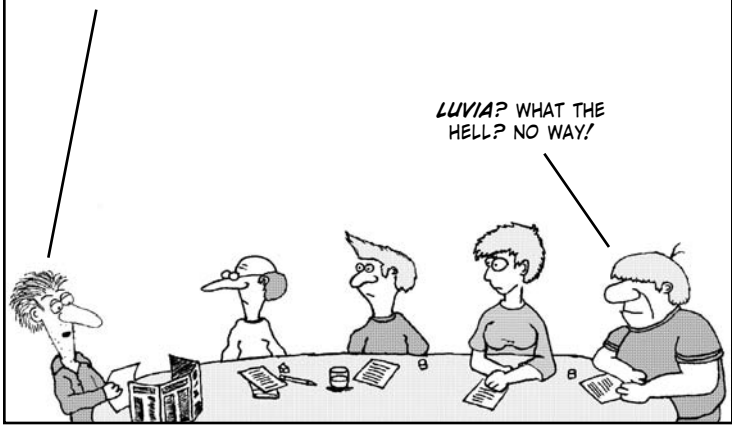
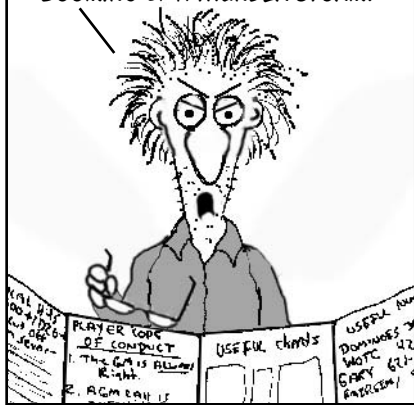
THIS ROCKS! ACCORDING TO THE RULES FOR **EVERY** MAJOR RELIC AN **IMMORTAL** HOLDS IN HIS POSSESSION HE GETS TO TO **ROLL** ON THE **DIVINE ATTRIBUTE TABLE**. BY **LAST** COUNT I HAVE 32 MAJOR RELICS AND 15 MINOR ONES. THAT MEANS I STAND TO GAIN OVER **THIRTY** DIVINE POWERS. **HAR HAR!!** THAT'S **TWELVE** MORE THAN EVEN **ODIN** HAS. COURSE I CAN ONLY ROLL ONCE PER MONTH ON THE TABLE SO IT'LL TAKE A FEW YEARS OF GAME TIME BEFORE I MAKE MY **MOVE** AGAINST HIM.



AS YOU ARE ALL **STANDING** AROUND **BASKING** IN THE GLORY OF **TEFLON BILLY'S** NEW **STATUS** AS AN **IMMORTAL** YOU HEAR THE **DISTANT** CRACK OF **LIGHTNING** FOLLOWED BY THE **BOOMING** OF A **THUNDER** STORM.

UPON HEARING OF YOUR '**IMMORTAL STATUS**' THE **GAWD LUVIA** CANT COME DOWN FROM THE HEAVENS FAST ENOUGH. IN FACT, HE TRANSCENDS THE LAWS OF THE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE AND ARRIVES **FASTER** THAN THE **SPEED OF LIGHT**.

LUVIA? WHAT THE HELL? NO WAY!



SORRY BRIAN, "THE WUSS GAWD", AS YOU ARE FOND OF CALLING HIM, STRIKES YOU DOWN IN A FURIOUS BARRAGE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE!! WHILE HE CAN'T INTERFERE IN THE AFFAIRS OF MORTALS, HE HAS NO PROBLEM DEALING WITH IMMORTALS. FOR YOUR ROLE IN THE BURNING OF HIS TEMPLE IN HAGLEY TOWN, AND FOR SLAYING THE LAST FLAT FOOT OGRE, A CREATURE UNDER HIS PERSONAL PROTECTION, LUVIA LETS LOOSE HIS VENGEANCE UPON YOU AND LITERALLY WIPES YOU OUT OF EXISTENCE! TEFLON BILLY IS NO MORE!!

DAAAAMMMMMNNNN!!!

TALK ABOUT SWIFT JUSTICE.

EASY BIG GUY! IF YOU'RE GONNA GO FLIPPIN' TABLES AND SO FORTH LET ME GET OUT OF HARM'S WAY!

SHOOT! DEAD HUH? OH WELL. ONE WISH DOWN THE DRAIN. THAT REALLY BLOWS.

BRIAN? YOU OKAY?

OH, SURE. I'LL SURVIVE.

UH, BRIAN. MAYBE YOU DIDN'T HEAR WHAT I SAID. YOU DO REALIZE THAT TEFLON BILLY IS DEAD? RIGHT? AS IN FOREVER DEAD?

ACTUALLY B.A., IF YOU CHECK PAGE 12 OF MY WISH STATEMENT YOU'LL SEE THAT IT CLEARLY STATES THAT IF ANY HARM COMES TO MY CHARACTER AS A DIRECT OR INDIRECT RESULT OF MY WISH THE SAID 'WISH' IS IMMEDIATELY RESCINDED AND TIME IS SHIFTED BACK TO JUST PRIOR TO THE ACTUAL STATING OF THE WISH. OF COURSE, AS STATED ON PAGE 14, PARAGRAPH FOUR, EVOKING THAT CLAUSE MEANS I MUST FORFEIT MY WISH. BUT AT LEAST I'M ALIVE AND HAPPY.

OH I AIN'T BELIEVIN' THIS.

NOTHIN' STICKS TO TEFLON.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? PAGE 12 YOU SAY? WE'LL JUST SEE WHAT IT HAS TO SAY ABOUT....

...AND IN THE EVENT THAT ANY HARM COMES TO THE...WHAT??!! HOW THE HELL DID WE MISS THAT??

DON'T TAKE IT SO HARD, B.A. AT LEAST YOU FOILED HIS PLANS ON BECOMING THE HEAD GAWD OF GARWEEZE WURLD.

YOU GOT GREEDY BRIAN. YOU WASTED A WISH. SHOULD'VE AIMED LOWER. YOU MIGHT HAVE WALKED AWAY WITH SOMETHING.

GROOAAAN!

CAN YOU RUN ME ON A SOLO ADVENTURE THIS WEEKEND, B.A.? I WANNA GO AFTER THAT DRAX-DUDE AND GET THAT SCABBARD.

I DID WALK AWAY WITH SOMETHING. ACCORDING TO PAGE 15, PARAGRAPH 3, I GET A 15,000 GOLD PIECE CONSOLATION PRIZE IN THE EVENT MY WISH IS FORFEITED.

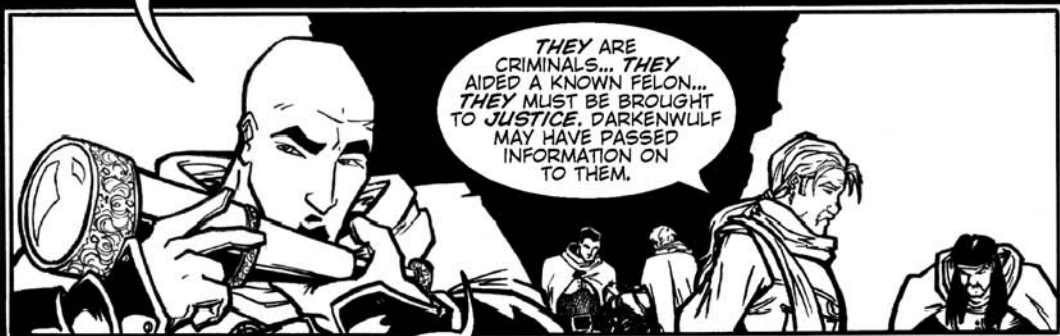
SHARDAR

art & story by Manny Vega



THE DWARF AND THE BOY HAVE REACHED A CAVE IN THE MOUNTAIN, UNDOUBTEDLY HEADING FOR SAFETY WITHIN THE DWARVEN KINGDOM.

THEY ARE BEYOND OUR JURISDICTION.



THEY ARE CRIMINALS... THEY AIDED A KNOWN FELON... THEY MUST BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE. DARKENWULF MAY HAVE PASSED INFORMATION ON TO THEM.

SIR?

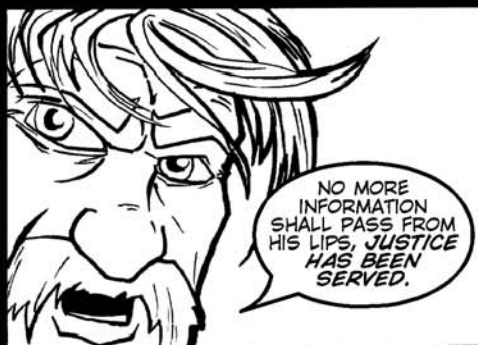


DARKENWULF HAS BEEN CAPTURED, WORTHLESS AS THIS LIFELESS HUSK MAY BE.

I HAVE SEEN THIS BEFORE MY BOY...



...HE HAS CONDEMNED HIS SOUL TO DAMNATION IN RETURN FOR SOME POWERFUL FAVOR FROM HIS FOUL DIETY.



NO MORE INFORMATION SHALL PASS FROM HIS LIPS, JUSTICE HAS BEEN SERVED.



IT APPEARS THAT HE GAVE HIS LIFE IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE OTHERS TO ESCAPE FROM...SOMETHING.

THAT DOES NOT SEEM TO BE THE ACTION OF A SLEN. NO SLEN WOULD SACRIFICE HIMSELF FOR THE LIFE OF ANYONE, MUCH LESS THAT OF A SLAVE BOY AND A DWARF.

IT WOULD SEEM THAT THIS BARBARIAN WAS A NECESSARY SACRIFICE TO COMPLETE THE SPELL.



NECESSARY!?!

DID I HEAR YOU CORRECTLY? DID YOU SAY THAT THIS MAN'S DEATH WAS **NECESSARY**? DESERVED PERHAPS, BUT **NECESSARY**?



SIR... I-I ONLY MEANT IN REGARDS TO THE SPELL.



AND **WHAT** DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE **BLACK ARTS** MY BOY?



YOU KNOW NOTHING! YOU ARE AN ENFORCER OF JUSTICE, THAT IS ALL...

I, AM JUSTICE!



GATHER THE MEN, WE WILL PERSUE THE TARGETS UNTIL ALL THE CRIMINALS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.

ROLAND...
«sigh» GATHER THE MEN.



BUT SIR, WE'VE RIDDEN THROUGH THE ENTIRE NIGHT, THE HORSES... THE MEN, NEED REST. THE DWARVEN KINGDOMS AREN'T EVEN IN OUR JURIS...



I KNOW THE SITUATION. THE JUSTIFIER HAS SPOKEN...JUSTICE WILL BE DONE.

YES SIR.



JUSTICE... AT ANY COST. MAY THE GODS HAVE MERCY ON US ALL.

END PART ONE
SHARDAR
Kingdoms of Kalamar



Rick's Rants

By Rick Moscatello

Nowadays, every game has an online component. But, I know for a fact there are still a great number of gamers out there that are afraid to play online, or just don't know what's worth the trouble. Let's take a look at three good choices for online amusement for the novice computer gamer:

My first recommendation is **Quake 3: The Arena**. Now, there's nothing wrong with **Quake 2**; it's a solid game, but too many people are grandmasters at it, and **Quake 3** has features that make it more attractive to the new player.

First, when you die in **Quake 2**, you are reborn (*rather, "respauned"*) all soft and squishy, with no armor, and a feeble weapon. This just sets you up to get killed again, very quickly, while desperately running around looking for a decent weapon. While blasting squishies is fun for veterans, it's no fun for the squishy. In **Quake 3**, you start with a half-decent weapon, and a short term life boost, which greatly increases your chances of living long enough to get armor and superior weaponry. As an added bonus, the timing and damage of the weapons of **Quake 3** are somewhat different than in the predecessor. This gives a bit of an edge to the new player, who doesn't have the refined reflexes to know exactly when to click the mouse to get the maximum firepower out of the "older" weapons.

Another nice thing about **Quake 3** is the most popular deathmatch level, "*The Edge*", has weapons spread all over the place, and very few walls. New players spend almost no time finding a better weapon, and there's none of the "*is anybody else playing?*" feeling that you can get when wandering empty hallways, looking for something to kill. On the bad side, *The Edge* lacks floors as well as walls, making it a bit too easy to fall off and die; again, veterans are just as susceptible as newbies. There are other deathmatch levels, and they are also rather small and loaded with fun and interesting ways to kill your opponents.

When you do get to play, here's the ultimate tip for survival: **JUMP!** While it may not be realistic to hop around like a bunny on crack, it is an excellent way to avoid getting blasted at regular intervals. Even when not jumping, it's a good idea to avoid running in straight lines--take it from a vet, there's nothing more enjoyable than nailing a target who runs a predictable path. About the only other trick to the game involves the rocket launcher: fire at the feet. Since rockets damage everything nearby when they hit, it makes sense to aim at the ground near your target, and hurt him with collateral damage.

Quake 3 is a great, mindless, bloodbath that you can literally play 8 hours at a stretch. If you're looking for online gaming, with less "*twitch*" and more strategy, **Total Annihilation: Kingdoms (TAK)** is a great choice.

Much like **Quake 3**, **TAK** is a new game, so there aren't

that many players who know all the cool secrets. While some strategy games have complicated build trees, odd technologies to research, or special ways to use units that can take time to learn, most of what goes on in **TAK** is fairly intuitive.

Your king (*the big guy you start the game with*) has three spells: *little blast-the-crap*, *medium blast-the-crap*, and *big blast-the-crap*. That's the rule for almost all pieces with special abilities. Building units is a snap--in a matter of seconds, you can give orders to build as much of any type of unit you can build (*even "infinite" is possible with one stroke*). And what a unit or building can build is onscreen in big boxes, instantly. All told, **TAK** is a simple strategy game to learn in a matter of minutes. There's even a standard option to have the map revealed, so that a new player doesn't have to contend with the disadvantage of not even knowing what the map looks like.

All this simplicity doesn't mean you'll get bored quickly. There are four unique sides (*each loosely associated with Earth, Air, Fire, and Water*), and each side can build a host of different units.

Aramon units are mostly of the "*medieval knight*" theme, and they have really cool cavalry, great archers, and nice siege weapons. While their wizards are weak, and they have no air power beyond the dragon (*yep, everybody can build a dragon*), these guys are easiest for a beginner to learn.

Veruna plays much like Aramon, except with much more naval power. They are bit more theologically inclined, with fanatical berserkers (*as fast as cavalry*) frothing around the battlefield, and they have the ability to construct sacred fires, which heal friendly units in a large radius. Veruna also has a Dirigible, a flying unit that looks like a blimp, but with no tendency whatsoever to explode.

Zhon forces are comprised of mythical beasts, from Goblins to Harpies to Griffons to Stone Giants. The "*wild animal*" theme means Zhon doesn't have much in the way of buildings, but they do have a lot of flying units, and watching a pack of Basilisks turn an invading army into a collection of statuary is a world of fun! Zhon do have some vulnerabilities, since they have to use animal "*trainers*" to create units (*instead of the typical buildings that are common to most games*), so might not be a good race for a beginner to start with.

The final race is Taros, the master of the demonic and underworld forces. Their army rates very high on the "cool" scale, with firebreathing demons, skeletal archers, mounted Black Knights, four different kinds of wizards, and dragon riders. Most Taros units are rather expensive, and are much more powerful after they've gained experience (*yep, there's an actual experience point system, making units with more kills more valuable on the battlefield*). Play

as Taros requires a bit more micromanagement than the other races, as you must preserve the lives of your more valuable units.

The big tip for success in TAK is control of the sacred stones (*the source of mana, the only resource in the game*). No matter what race you start with, capture a site, then put up your first building, and then send your monarch out to capture a fair number of the remaining sites. Constantly raid your opponent's sites, and focus on keeping control of your own, and eventually you can hope to outproduce your way to victory, or at least honorable defeat.

TAK might have a few minor flaws, but Cavedog (*the makers of the game*) gives their game much support, even releasing, for free, new units on their website. Most recently, they gave out a Pegasus to the Aramon forces, and a better "anti-air" unit for Taros. This constant changing of the game is another advantage to new players, since veteran players are less likely to use the "new toys" that might well offer an advantage on the battlefield.

Now, you might be reluctant to play Quake 3 or TAK because you don't know anything about "the game world," but, just about every gamer on the planet knows about Battletech. MechWarrior3 has a bit less strategy than TAK, but way more than Quake 3. It also has less of a twitch factor than Quake 3 (and, again, more than in TAK). It also has one thing that the other two games can't even touch: eye candy.

Dudes, I'm telling you, this game just SO looks great. I mean, you get this big honkin' mech, load it up with the ridiculously short-ranged, comically underpowered and psychedelically inaccurate weapons of the Battletech universe, and slug it out in the wasteland of your choice against a bunch of other oversized clodhopping robots. It has all the grace of the WWF, with more explosions. How can that not look good?

One aspect of this game that comes across just a bit stronger than in the other games is teamwork. While you can have

alliances and teams in the other two games, somehow it just isn't on the same level as in MechWarrior3, where organizing the entire team into systematically smashing one enemy mech at a time is a load of fun. And, even when you get blown up, most games last but 10 minutes or so, giving you a chance to re-earn your teammates' respect in no time at all.

If you are familiar with the tabletop system, you'll find that MechWarrior 3 has all the joys of customizing your mech that you've come to love, with a lot less erasing of pencil marks. Changing mech configurations is one of the best parts of the whole system, and you can even use the higher tech (*and interior space using*) stuff that the Clan mechs are famous for.

Naturally, victory in MechWarrior 3 is about not becoming the center of attention. The first mech seen is usually the first mech blasted. Never be the center of attention, and you can at least avoid being the first robot sent to the big recycling center in the sky.

If you're looking to become a good player, there's only one trick that really helps: seek out better players. There's nothing like enduring the frustration of trying to hit a Quake 3 master for learning how to avoid being hit (*I've had them just jump around in front of me until I ran out of shots...*). Sit back and watch how a TAK overlord sets up his forces and organizes an assault to get a feel for what it takes to control an enemy mana site. After you get melted by an opposing mech, ask the guy who blasted you how he piled on the firepower so quickly without overheating.

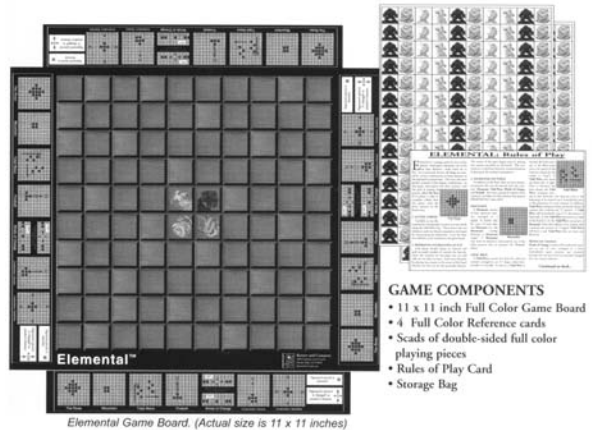
And, of course, the best way to be an online gaming god is to practice. So stop reading and start playing! ☐



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Elemental™ is an exciting new strategy board game that will have you and up to three of your friends at each other's throats for hours.

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Elemental has no set up time and you can teach a friend the rules of play in just 10 minutes (in fact, all the moves are printed right on the board). Like all great games, the rules are simple but the complex strategies are limited only by your creativity and resourcefulness.

Available now at better game and hobby shops or directly from Kenzer and Company.

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News, Rumors and Industry Buzz plucked

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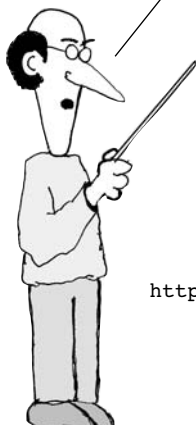
THINK BIG! BE PART OF THE ADVENTURE



You think it's all fun and games around here? Shya' Right! It ain't easy getting any REAL work done around here. And now that KODT Magazine is expanding its page count so we can bring you even more fun and excitement each month, we're SWAMPED! That means we need new material to fill those pages. You can write can't you? Got ideas for things like cartoons, articles on gaming, adventures, industry news, reviews, etc.?

Well, quit playing with those dice and drop an e-mail for our guidelines to :

KenzerCo@aol.com. □



IRON CROWN ENTERPRISES FILES FOR CHAPTER 11 BANKRUPTCY PROTECTION

Iron Crown Enterprises ("ICE") has filed for Chapter 11. According to a press release, the action was "a prelude to the revitalization of the company". ICE has been in business since 1980 and has produced some critically acclaimed games including the Middle Earth series.

According to Pete Fenlon, president of ICE, the company bears a very large debt load attributed to a bad licensing deal and the recent failures of several top domestic and international distributors. "Our overall restructuring will take some time. ICE will not be healthy until this reorganization is complete," says Mr. Fenlon in a company statement. "This filing is therefore in the best interests of both ICE and its creditors, for it affords us the time and protection necessary for us to stabilize and develop a long-term plan that will address both our debts and our future. It is undoubtedly the best course of action."

The staff of KODT joins the countless fans who have been entertained by the creative staff of ICE for almost a decade in sending our best wishes. We hope you'll be around for a long time to come. □

NEED A KODT-FIX? CHECK OUT THESE KODT FAN SITES

"A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE KODT SITES"

<http://safcol.com/kc/kodt/>

The official KODT homepage.

<http://www.hoodyhoo.com>

Here, you'll find some kewl animated KODT cartoons.

<http://pages.infinit.net/kodt/kodt.htm>

A KODT web site with lot of stuff to see

http://members.tripod.com/~mythical_ventures/kodt

A Dedicated Weird Pete Fan Page

<http://safcol.com/kc/kodt/jo1777.htm>

"Orcs at the Gates" RPG from JollyRGames

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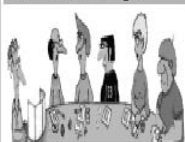
Knights of the Dinner Table

The KODT Unofficial Fan Club

Category: Role Playing Games
Club Type: Listed

Hello, Jolly_Blackburn, you are a founder of this club

Founder's Message



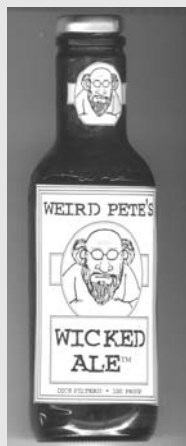
Ultimate Unofficial Fan Club

Overview

Online Now (0 members) [view all online](#)
Recent Messages [post](#) | [view all](#)
Aug 29 Re: Weekly chat! azermaine
It went alright. There were about a dozen of us there.
Unfortunately
Aug 29 Check this site! -BAERIK
http://members.tripod.com/Di&dancer/index_kodt.html It's the sit
of
Aug 29 Weekly chat! -BAERIK
So can anyone tell me if the second weekly chat as gone well? I
have not

Several KODT fans took the initiative to launch an 'unofficial' fan club on Yahoo! Clubs. The site features a photo gallery, chat room, message board, links to other KODT-sites, etc. It's a great place to start your search. Go to; <http://www.clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/knightsofthedinnertable>

from the vine for your reading enjoyment



WEIRD PETE FACES LAWSUIT!

The owner of a game shop in Muncie, Indiana was recently slapped with a five million dollar lawsuit after a loyal customer nearly choked to death on a four sided die which had apparently been introduced into the bottle during the brewing process.

"Weird" Pete Ashton, who has been home-brewing his own beer for years, began selling his 'surplus' under the label "Weird Pete's Wicked Ale" last summer to friends and associates in the gaming industry. According to Mr. Ashton, he chose a 'wide-mouth' bottle for his ale so that he could randomly place various types of FREE polyhedrons into the bottles as a marketing gimmick.

The ale-stained dice have been popular in gaming circles for their distinctive and desirable patinas.

A judge has ordered that Mr. Ashton cease distributing the ale along with its sister product, Hack Daniel's Whiskey, which also includes a free die in every bottle. □



A Seventh Knight?

Brian 'the Sixth Knight' Jelke and his wife, Alissa recently announced the birth of their new son. (and there was much rejoicing!)

On 8/19/99 at 2:31 am, Brandon Otto Jelke (wt: 8 lbs 13 oz. ht: 20.5 inches) finished the character generation process and was granted zero-level status by the KenzerCo board of directors.

After delivery, the doctor said, "This kid's got the potential for some great stats. I'd say a couple of 16s at least. Probably even a 17 or an 18." No word yet on what class he'll choose.

Despite rumors to the contrary, Brandon was NOT named after Brian van Hoose's fifth level gnome magic user, Otto the Wise. □

KICKIN' ORC BUTT!

The winner of the 1999 Orcs at the Gates Tourney (which ran both at Origins and GenCon) was the incredible Sir Jonathan Gillett.

Jim Dietz of Jolly Roger Games was heard to say, "Geeze-Loueeze! This dude was unstoppable! He kicked some mega orc butt!"



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FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE RECOVERY OF KENZERCO DISPLAY BANNERS

After GENCON '99 the Kenzer and Company banners pictured above mysteriously vanished. Okay, so they're kewl as all get out, but c'mon! We need them. Besides they cost hundreds of dollars and are original pieces of artwork. If any of our readers know where they ended up - please let us know.

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SPACE WAR!
Inner City Games Designs

No, this isn't a game about starships bristling with energy weapons pounding it out in the vacuum of space. This game is about trying to drive your car in Los Angeles, finding a parking spot close to your apartment and managing to SURVIVE the process.

Space War™ is a game for two to six players and brings all the thrills and chills of Urban Road Rage right into your living room. I knew I was going to love this game as soon as I read the phrase, "Ram or Attack" in the rules.

That's basically what this game is about ramming and attacking your fellow players with your vehicle. Not only do you have to worry about being attacked, but you must keep track of your fuel, worry about law suits from other players, collecting your salary from your office, stocking up on ammo and fire arms at the gun shop. And that's not all. With all that damage piling up on your jalopy you'll quickly find you need to visit the auto repair shop. And speaking of lawsuits, if a player sues you and you can't make it to court in time to argue your side - he automatically wins a judgement against you. Need I say more? This game rocks!

Brian's Rating: Ask for it now!



BEER: the card game
Stupendous Games

www.stupendousgames.com

A card game about drinking beer? Several people at Origins, recently told me about this new game and urged me to go check it out. A game about beer?

Eventually I made it over to the Stupendous Games booth and asked for a demo. Three minutes into the game I was pulling out my wallet. I had to own a copy of this game.

Basically you and your friends are trying to see who can buy the most beers before running out of money (and more important before the 'Last Call' card is turned up.) There are two kinds of cards. Bar Cards and Action Cards. Bar cards are laid out in front of all the players (5 cards face up in a line). These represent various micro-brewed beers and challenges to games of pool or darts. You can buy up to two beers per from the bar each turn (Unless you have a special action card like Chug-A-Lug). You can also challenge another player to a game of pool and force him to buy you a beer if you win. (To determine if you've won a game of pool/darts you flip a coin). If you're looking for a good beer-n-pretzel game (literally) this may be for you.

Brian's Rating: I love you man! Buy me a beer?



ZOON

West End Games

RR3 Box 2345, Honesdale, PA 18431

Cost: \$5 a deck

With tribes like Boarix, characters like Kombo Bongo, and special Trump cards like Coco Boom and Binary Shock, you could say Zoon is more fun than a barrel full of Monkus. Each box of cards comes with two mutant tribes inside ready to do battle, and the nice thing about Zoon is even the kids can join in and have a blast.

The object of any Zoon game is to be the first player to eliminate his or her opponent's Emblem. You do this by moving your tribe members across a battlefield and engaging in combat. Uniquely, the strength of any one warrior can change from turn to turn, literally, with just the touch of a finger, as a player selects his combat power with a turn of his card. And, each tribe has special trump cards and special effects to make the game more interesting. All in all, the game is easy to learn and it looks good too. **Brian's Rating:** That's classified mister! Just buy the game.

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Style KODT #1
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(white on black)
Size: XL
Price: \$19.⁹⁵



Style BHANDS #2
KODT Shirt
(black on grey)
Size: XL
Price: \$19.⁹⁵

Aaron's Out of Print Games

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I'm looking for copies of the card game "King's Court."
Please let me know if you have a copy for sale. Contact
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60047 or inquire at (847) 540-1970.

*restrictions apply



D -

One plus one is one and two,
gilt circles bind them together.
As cords to rope their strength increases,
the end is the beginning.

- P

Matrix,

When you cast off ridiculous technology & embrace
Nature, I'll accept you as my ignorant pupil.
Meanwhile, enjoy Gandhi Mouse waves.

Your rival,
Druid

FIREBREATHER

Play-by-Mail/Play-by-E-Mail
game of heroic fantasy.

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www.firebreather.org

To the gang at Palladium Books,

Thanks for the wedding present! It's being put to good use.

Jolly & Barb

-CHOMP- -CHOMP- HEY,
THIS **BREADMAKER**
ROCKS ASS! THIS IS
THE **BEST PIZZA DOUGH**
I'VE EVER EATEN!

YEAH, THAT **LEMON-POPPY MIX**
AIN'T TOO SHABBY. -MUNCH-

MMMMM, SO MOIST
AND TASTY!



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.



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

An Opinion Arena and Open Forum

As the subheading indicates, this is a sound-
ing board where gamers can give their two-
cents' worth on whatever seems to rile them.
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've been playing since 1987, in every imaginable
setting with every imaginable set of game
mechanics (*and for my money the best set of game
mechanics ever is a homebrewed system out of
Oklahoma City, hands down, bar none*), and I've
seen a heck of a lot go on in the gaming commu-
nity. In addition, I am a history and philosophy
buff, with a serious focus on politics. I hope you
and your readers can see that I just might know
what I'm talking about when I make the following
statements in answer to the individual who insulted
you and every other honest capitalist so dread-
fully in issue #33.

You deserve every single dollar (and then some!)
that you can squeeze out of KODT. You are under
no obligation to produce a superior product, just
as we are under no obligation to buy crap. There
is no shame whatsoever in being a capitalist who
produces a product for a willing, paying customer.
Without capitalists, in fact, there would be no
gaming industry. That capitalism has made possi-
ble a society in which not only roleplaying games
but comics about roleplaying games are possible
should be self evident to anyone with two brain
cells to rub together. Seriously, lets compare pre-
capitalism days and capitalism days for roleplaying
potential.

Pre-capitalism: Sixteen to eighteen hour work-
days, enforced labor (*what do roleplayers think serfs
and peasants were?*), absolutely crummy food,
(*would you like maggots with your gruel, serf?*) very
poor housing conditions, and the opportunity to
eat meat, what, four times a year? Lets not forget
the joys of the yearly bath, farm animals living in
the houses with the owners, roofs with holes so
bad that someone invented the four poster bed
with canopy just so they could sleep, and of
course, the marvelous life expectancy of about 45
years, if you weren't lucky enough to die off in a
war, famine, or plague, as most did every sixty
years or so. And someone wants to do what?
Roleplay? When do they think they'll have the
time?

Capitalism: Eight to ten, maybe twelve hour

workdays. Freedom to choose your livelihood.
Freedom to choose which restaurant you'll eat at.
Best Western, La Quinta, your own house, etc.
Daily baths. Four poster beds for, ahem, other
purposes. Life expectancy of 75+ years. More role-
playing games than you could get to in ten life-
times. And of course, the final nail in the coffin of
bad logic: KODT.

Seriously guys, you must never pass up a chance
to vigorously defend what you do. I'm proud as
hell of you, I enjoy your strip immensely, and I'm
proud as hell to be a Capitalist Swine in a
Capitalist Country!

Sincerely oinking yours,

John Bowen
via E-mail

Okay, I've decided I do have one beef with
KODT. How come there are no married
gamers in the strips?

It just doesn't seem realistic based on the per-
centage of gamers who are married and game, and
just ignores the problems of us married gamers.

Now, you may think that being a married gamer
wouldn't cause any problems, especially when
you're married to another gamer, but trust me, any
married person will be more than happy to inform
you of the problems their mate causes.

I play in 2 games, and the majority of gamers in
both games are married, some even with children.
Yet, in KODT none of the characters is married, it
makes me wonder how the population of Muncie
grows at all.

Oh well, us married guys are used to suffering
in silence...so, I'll shut up, but know this, Jolly,
someday your time will come, and you'll see just
how weird being a married gamer can be.

Mike
KODT Forum/AOL

*Actually, Mike, I recently remarried my high
school sweetheart, Barbara. We gamed together for
many years as a married couple. (In fact, Barb was
largely the inspiration for Sara).*

*As far as characters in the strip, it's interesting to
note that both Weird Pete, Stevil and Gary Jackson
have mentioned ex-wives. On the bright side, Nitro
Ferguson is rumored to be happily married to a
non-gamer who seems to tolerate his hobby.*

*As far as children, have you forgotten Timmy
Jackson and Ty Ferfel?*

Jolly
☐

THEIR
TACTICAL
BATTLES:

Dwarves
vs. Orcs,
Humans
vs. Elves,
Orcs vs.
Lizards

OUR
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Clowns vs.
Romans,
Platypi vs.
WWI
Troops,
Giant Bugs
vs. Knights,
Turtles vs.
Aztecs,
Suburban
Demons
vs.
Napoleon,
Robots vs.
Classical
Monsters,
Cowboys
vs. Arab
Mystics,
Native
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vs.
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Freaks, etc.,
etc., etc. . .

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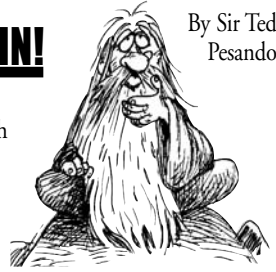
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SPELLS NOT WORTH MEMORIZING? THINK AGAIN!

By Sir Ted
Pesando



A while ago I encountered an anonymous list of *'Spells Not Worth Memorizing'* which was being passed around on the usenet. This list included such favorites as:

Detect Self	Charm Undead	Charm	
Friends	Clear Audience	Serten's	
Smell Immunity	Turn Dead	Turn Friends	
Turn Friends Into Dead	Turn Friends Into Enemies	Protection From Friends	Protection From Self
Charm Self	Magic Missal	Protection From Normal Missals	Deny Reality
Anger Deity	Silence (<i>15' Radius, Centered On Self</i>)	Detect Lightning Bolts (<i>5' Radius</i>)	Know Own Alignment

Maybe you've encountered this list. Anyway, I was bored one day and thought of some ways in which these spells might actually be *worth* memorizing.

Detect Self: Useful when you suspect that you've been possessed by something, like maybe another player.

Charm Undead: Assuming it works, it could get you out of some tight spots, and it is also useful to all you VAMPIRE™ fans who are real nec'romancers'....

Charm Friends: When you're hanging around Chaotic Neutral characters who you just can't trust.

Magic Missal: Throw a fire glyph or something into an evil cleric's prayer book.

Impress Plants: When trying to gain the help of smart plants like *Treants* or *Quickwoods*.

Detect Lightning Bolts, (5' Radius): Say you were shrunk down REEEEEEEEEEEAALLLLLLLY small.

Protection From Normal Missals: Again, say you were shrunk down REEEEEEEEEEEAALLLLLLLY small.

Clear Audience: The Spice Girls have left the building. You can all go home....NOW!!

Protection From Self: For those battles in your character's subconscious between their good and evil sides that every GM (*okay, maybe just me*) always makes you have.

Charm Self: Why can't you just get along? (*See above*)

Turn Dead: For battles so big that the corpses slow your movement rate.

Serten's Smell Immunity: Helps protect you from *Sinking Clouds*. Also useful in the above case.

Silence, (15' Radius, Centered On Self): Wait 'til it's the last spell you have left, cast it, then engage enemy spellcasters in melee.

Deny Reality: Cast it when you're sure something is an illusion but when you're also sure that your character will fail their saving throw against it (*no more 'I jump out of the way while attempting to disbelieve' calls!*).

Know Own Alignment: When your character's in a campaign with a very opinionated GM (*such as myself*), and needs to know when they've changed alignment before it becomes potentially lethal.

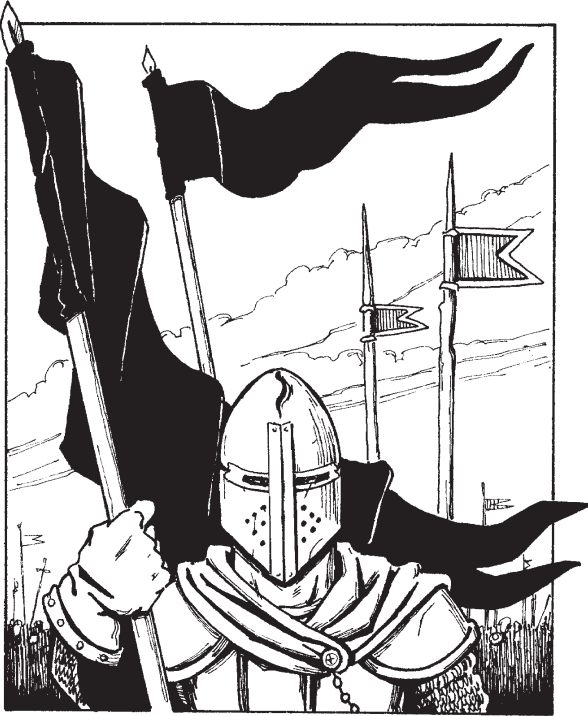
Turn Friends, Turn Friends Into Enemies, Protection From Friends, Turn Friends Into Dead: Quick experience points for evil player characters..

Anger Deity: Quick experience points for really high-level player characters.

OKAY, OKAY, SO YOU WANNA PLAY GAMES? WE CAN DO THAT. GIVE ME A FEW MINUTES AND I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO MY LITTLE FRIEND - TOMMY BLADE THE MAGE KILLER! I'M PUTTING THIS 18 I ROLLED TOWARD DEXTERITY. THAT SHOULD FIX YOUR ASS. YEAH, WE CAN PLAY GAMES. THE "MY CHARACTER IS DEAD COS I SCREWED WITH THE WRONG GUY" GAME!!



from the writers of *Knights of the Dinner Table*



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FADING SUNS

SO CHECK *THIS* OUT. THEN THIS *QUESTING KNIGHT* DUDE GETS AN ATTITUDE. I MEAN THIS DUDE *REALLY* GETS ALL BENT OUT OF SHAPE AND YELLS, "I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO *STAND FAST!*" COURSE, MY CHARACTER IS A *GANNOCK BROTHER BATTLE* - HE AIN'T ABOUT TO TAKE THAT KIND OF LIP FROM *ANYBODY*. SO HE YELLS BACK:

"YOU WANT A PIECE OF ME?!" NOW THIS IS THE PART WHERE IT *REALLY* GETS INTERESTING....

NOW KEEP IN MIND THIS *ALL* TOOK PLACE IN THE VACUUM OF SPACE. IT TOTALLY ROCKED!

AND *ME* WITH MY LEFT LEG TORN OUT OF IT'S SOCKET AND *STILL* TRYING TO MAINTAIN MY GRASP ON THE *DETONATOR*.

(GROAN) I WISH THEY WOULD LEAVE SO I COULD GET READY FOR OUR *FADING SUNS* GAME TONIGHT. I CAN'T WAIT TO PLAY A *REAL* MERCENARY!

