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15 Orcs on a Dead Dwarf's Chest



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KENZER AND COMPANY

Knights of the Dinner Table #37
15 Orcs on a
Dead Dwarf's Chest
November, 1999

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Knights of the Dinner Table™ MAGAZINE

"15 Orcs on a Dead Dwarf's Chest"

The KODT Development Team is
Jolly R. Blackburn, Brian Jelke,
Steve Johansson and David S. Kenzer
Cover Art by George and Jackie Vrbanic

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEPARTMENTS:

Cries from the Attic	2
Table Talk	5
Heard it on the GameVine™	50
Weird Pete's Bulletin Board™	52
Back Room at the Games Pit™	53

COLUMNS:

Home Brewed KoDT	39
Brian's Small Press Picks™	46
Disks of Wondrous Power™	47
Parting Shots™	56

THE STRIPS:

Gary, Gary, Quite Contrary	7
Room to Improve	11
The Pep Talk	14
The Lame Master	15
Not On My Watch!	19
Child's Play	22
The Prize Fighters	26
The Shields of Bandran™	35

FEATURES:

Chop Til You Drop	41
Rumble for the Dinner Table	43



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

"We're going to have FUN on this island!"

The 'Beast' to Simon
in the book *LORD OF THE FLIES*TM



*Pulau Tiga island
off the Borneo coast*

It's being billed as a *'Fight to the Finish!*' Sixteen people stranded on a deserted island in the South China Sea and "pitted against each other in a rigorous contest of physical and mental endurance." In the end, the sole-survivor walks away with a million dollars.

Sounds like the flavor text off the back of a new Role-playing supplement. Does it come with dice?

Welcome to *reality adventure*, the latest buzzword in network television. Slated for the summer line up in the year 2000, *Survivor* is just one of many new television shows venturing beyond traditional series to try to stem the loss of viewers to cable TV and the Internet. (Other examples include UPN's primetime wrestling show *WWF Smackdown!* and ABC's hit summertime game show *Who Wants To Be a Millionaire.*)

This show sounds frighteningly similar to *Lord of the Flies* (and CBS openly admits the book partly inspired the idea). The producers will strand 16 Americans on an uninhabited island, Pulau Tiga island off the Borneo coast, for an expected six weeks of round-the-clock taping.

Contestants will be selected through a nationwide search. Then they will be placed on the island and the 'fun' begins. The 16 contestants will have to forage for food and shelter (although having outdoor specialists and medical teams available for emergencies certainly takes some of the 'fun' out of it.)

At the end of each episode (once every three days on the island), the participants will cast secret ballots to expel "losers". The last seven who are expelled choose the winner from the remaining two contestants.

The CBS press release proudly points out that, "The novel *Lord of the Flies* is about a group of boys who survive the crash-landing of an airplane and try to survive on an uninhabited island. They descend into barbarism, splitting into different tribes and fighting one another."

Of course the characters in the book only had Piggy's spectacles and a conch shell to fight over. Makes you wonder what will happen when a million dollars is thrown into the mix. (Sigh.) I'm sure the whole thing will turn out being very silly and the 'danger' aspect will be over-played but still - it's an interesting idea.

After telling a friend about the press release he laughed and responded, "What the hell is going on? Did they put a bunch of gamers in charge of programming at CBS?"

Although I'm fairly certain the contestants won't be finishing each other off with sharpened sticks, it does make me wonder if 'reality adventure' will lead to television shows resembling the book *Dream Park*TM by Larry Niven in which live-action role-playing games are filmed for use in movies/television shows.

I wonder if they'd allow me to bring my *AD&D Wilderness Survival Guide* with me to the island? Hmmm....

Jolly R. Blackburn
Jolly R. Blackburn

C'MON, PETE! MY CHARACTER HAS AN 18 DEXTERITY! YOU CAN'T TELL ME HE DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO REACT BEFORE THIS GOAT HERDER RAN ME THROUGH WITH A SHARPENED STICK.

OH YOU DEFINITELY HAD TIME TO REACT SON. YOU HAD TIME TO DROP YOUR JAW AND THINK TO YOURSELF, "I'M A FRICKIN DEAD MAN" BEFORE YOU FELT THE STICK PIERCE YOUR SPLEEN!

AND YOU SAY THIS GLY IS A TENTH LEVEL MONK-FIGHTER?

I REALLY DON'T THINK I'M GOING TO LIKE THE HACKMASTER 4TH EDITION RULES.

LOOKS LIKE THEY FOUND A WAY TO TIGHTEN UP THOSE EASY E.P.'S FOR GOAT RUSTLING.



ADVERTISER INDEX

The Cabil	4	Palladium Books	3
Holistic Design	38, Outside Back Cover	Reaper Miniatures	55
Imagine Role Playing	49	Steve Jackson Games	18
Inner City Games	30	War Dogs Game Center	28
Knuckleduster	54	War Games West	10
NBOS software	34	Wizards of the Coast	17, 40



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Our Readers Talk Back!

Dear KODT,

I've just recently gotten heavily into KODT (*I'd heard of them for a long time but only read them casually*). In the last few weeks I've been on a binge to buy every issue I could get my hands on. Within less than a month I've a proud collection of about 20 issues and all three **Bundles of Trouble**. (*if ya want my vote for best strip... no doubt, Gamemaster for a day! No matter how many times I read that strip, I never get tired of it.*)

When issue #34 came out I hurriedly snatched it up from my local gameshop and read it on the train home. I'd been following the whole Sara-John Lee drama and was waiting to see what would come of this whole thing, and I wanted to see how the Hawgwaller's fiasco would turn out. I was not disappointed on either account.

In fact, and I know this sounds really cheesy, it had to be one of the most dramatic and emotional issues you guys ever wrote. To see the kind of person John Lee really was, and to see Brian's powerful reaction to Bob and Dave's ideas of "re-initiation" really allowed a lot of insight into the kind of gentle person Brian really is.

I even found myself staring at the comic and muttering "Damn," when Switch lost his best drinkin' buddy. The last panel where he and Hawg converse (*"Pour you another one, Switch?" "Please."*) really hit home in its subtlety. The single issue gave life to a lot of characters. AND--I almost forgot this... Bitter Stevil (*I hate the man*) finally got his! ROYALLY! GO NEWT!

Just wanted to say thanks for the great strip and keep up the good work. You guys rock!

Mike Gallagher
via E-mail

Dear KODT,

Jolly, thanks much for the suggestion to go check out the **Mummy**. My wife (*a gamer of 6 years*) and myself (*a gamer of almost 20 years*) went and caught it at the theater, and truly enjoyed it from a gamer's perspective.

Perhaps your suggestions colored our perceptions, but through the whole movie, we could see it as a RPG adventure (*maybe the Indiana Jones game?*), and loved it.

I wanted to recommend another gamer movie to everyone. For everyone who's ever played a Superhero RPG, or even big comic book fans, go see

Mystery Men. We're currently in a **Champions** campaign, and almost our entire group went to see it together. This was great fun, and afterwards we had dinner, and pointed fingers as to who resembled which character, and how much our heroes resembled the "Other Superheroes." I recommend everyone seeing it with your whole RPG group.

DruidDuo@doitnow.com

Dear KODT,

I picked up issue 34 of the Knights, and "Hell Hath no Fury" had me laughing so hard I couldn't even breathe. HHNF just might be destined to be a classic along with **Orcs At The Gates** and **Dances With Pitbulls**.

On August 21st I went to the location of the TSR Silver Anniversary Tour in Detroit, and when they called for questions about D&D™ I asked them straight up:

"Who would win a one on one fight between Drizzt Do'Urden and El Ravager?"

They gave me a pretty good answer: *"Depends on whether Jolly or Bob writes the story."*

I have to hand it to TSR for being so honest. Keep up the great work!

Tim Knight
Detroit Michigan

Dear KODT,

I hadn't been to my local comic book store in quite some time, so it was great to see issues #33 and #34 waiting for me. I must say, each issue has been getting substantially better. The strips are getting better, the extra material is getting better, you name it! It's all improving. It looks like you guys are definitely moving towards a "real" Role-Playing Game magazine format, which is great.

I particularly liked the added gaming material, articles like the **Halfling Slinger** article are great. I enjoyed it because it not only provided background info on the subject, but also exact stats and information, usable with a number of rules systems; it was also great to see some material for **Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay™** as it's a relatively unknown game. I'd love to see more articles of this type. Another section I particularly enjoy is **The Game Mechanic™**. Although I don't play most of the games mentioned, I'm eager to try out the **Risk-setup rules for Axis & Allies (Issue #33)**.

The old standbys, like **Brain's Small Press Picks** and **Parting Shots** are still great fun to read, as well as the **Homebrewed KODT strips** and the **Gamevine** section.

With the good must also come the bad,

nothing is really perfect. Honestly I don't find much interest in the non-KODT strips (*i.e. Shardar and the Shields of Bandran*), I don't find much interest in Fantasy comics (*or novels for that matter*), so those go unread. As does the fiction, once again, fantasy isn't my cup of tea when served like that. Any chance of publishing some sci-fi (*or other genre*) comics or fiction? That might add a better balance to the mix.

To sum it up, you guys are doing a great job, and I look forward to every issue. I must say I was quite impressed when I opened up issue #34, it's great to see a 72-page book for so cheap. It's a sign that **Kenzer & Co** is dedicated to the industry, and as a result people will (*hopefully*) continue to support you guys, I know I will.

Sean O'Mara
via E-mail

Dear KODT,

I love 'Knights of the Dinner Table!' I see a lot of my gaming group in the players and a disturbing similarity to B.A. in myself oftentimes. As a weekly ref (*& a female ref*) since '73, I've seen lots of players come to the table.

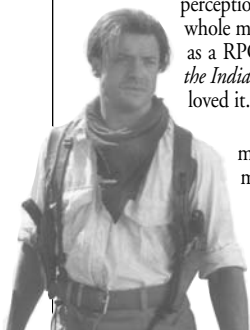
However, I write in to take issue with **Dave Arneson's** article, 'Dice Story' in #34. Now while he got a lot of it right, he did omit one die in the old original packages of dice (*circa 1973*).

In addition to the yellow d4, the pink d6 (*that everyone I knew tossed into a bush and substituted with dice from other games*), the green d8, the blue d12 and the white d20 - there was also a RED d20 in those packs. (*And while the other dice were of cheesier plastic, both d20s were made of high-impact plastic.*) The polyhedral dice that were sold in the dealer's room at the Easter '73 Con at which I got into gaming (*at Equicon*) were imported from the Midwest along with the boxed rules. These were the same ones sold at my local hobby shop in Gargen Grove, CA, so I believe the sets were universal.

Thankfully, other dice were soon produced to replace the cheesy dice, but I still have them squirreled away (*dice hoarder, I*) - and use the d20s to this day. Crayon to difference the numbers and nail polish to hold the crayon in worked well then (*& now*). Those red d20s are justly feared by my players to this very day. (*& I roll my dice out where everyone can see 'em, just cuz I roll well with -any- dice.* :)

Barbara Johnson-Haddad
via E-mail

Thanks for the letter, Barbara. I wonder if any other readers have 'dice stories'? Incidentally, Bob Herzog is tapping me on the shoulder mumbling something about, "The Lady knows her Dice!" He wants to



know if you are married.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

Just wanted to let you know that I've found a really good use for KODT live readings. I just started up a new group of gamers. For the most part we're an established core group with a new experienced player and a wife who's watched but finally participating.

I wanted to start off our first gaming session with a lot of creativity. After writing out scripts for **Lair of the Gazebo** and **Bleating to Death**, I set up the camera and we got the session started.

It was a blast. We plan on doing at least one reading before each gaming session. The most important question is how did the gaming go? Was it truly effected by the reading?

I'd have to say yes. As the new DM I had planned on them getting their characters equipped, meeting to form a group, apply for an adventuring license, and get to their patron's tower. Well, the roleplaying was incredible. Sure a lot of it was their own talent but I couldn't help but think the warm-up of reading some KODT got their creative juices flowing.

The characters did finally get their adventuring license but we had to quit before they could get out of town. Everybody at the table was sad to stop but had one of the best experiences and adventures for a long time.

Just wanted you to know.

On another note -- where I work (*the multi-smaller corporates under a big corporate umbrella*) I was one of the employees picked to be featured in this month's newsletter. They asked the usual questions of what my favorite food is (*Chicken Fried Steak, hold the gravy*) and my favorite movie (*Hate to admit it, but it's The Warriors*). They also wanted me to write a question and answer unique to me. I asked "What's one of the more unusual things to happen to you?" My answer was "finding a character in a comic book that not only looked like me but also voiced similar opinions."

They put a picture of **Weird Pete** opposite my picture to prove it to other employees. Hope this increases sales in the Wichita area a little bit!

Just thought you should know...

Marvin
via E-mail

Dear KODT Gawds,

I have been collecting KODT since issue #2 (*unfortunately, I cannot find a copy of issue 1 to round out my collection.*) I think the stories and characters are great. I have been gaming since I was 12 years old (*17 years*) and can relate to just about every story line you have published.

I would like to make a request. We have seen everyone sit in the BIG chair except Brian, the professed GOD of rule knowledge. I would greatly enjoy seeing the group pit themselves against Brian's knowledge, as well as how Brian would cope with the power...remember "Power corrupts, but absolute

power corrupts absolutely!"

I would like to take the time to commend you specifically on the Sarah & John story line. I can't wait for Sarah's revenge.

I leave you with the thought that myself, and our entire gaming group worship your books. We will be submitting some suggestions for strips in the near future.

Best regards,
Nicolas Cosmatos
Ottawa, ON Canada

Most readers know that Brian hung up his GM screen after some terrible 'incident' and swore never to sit behind the screen again. Brian will probably pop up as a GM in a future Retro-KODT, prior to the incident. Some of the developers feel that the 'incident' itself was so traumatic for Brian we shouldn't reveal the full story. As for Brian, he's been known to flip the table at the mere mention of it.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

First let me get the customary praise out of the way. KODT has to be my favorite magazine ever. I've been reading it for years, and the laughs keep coming. Keep it up!

Anyway, the other day I was playing a video game called "Shadow Madness™", an RPG for Playstation™. I happened to stumble across a room completely stuffed with swords, shields, armor and gold. It was then that one of my characters uttered: "Hoody Hoo!"

It seems that nowadays, everyone is a KODT fan! If this gets posted in the magazine, I just wanna say that it would be kewl if everyone wrote in KODT references that they have seen here and there and they got posted in "Parting Shots" one day.

Dan Levinson
FlareMog@aol.com

Wow! How kewl is that? I agree, it would be great if everyone sent in any KODT references as well as any "Hoody Hoos" they stumble across in other mediums. (Check out this issue's GameVine for another interesting "Hoody Hoo" sighting.)

Now, if we can just persuade one of the presidential candidates to use the phrase as a campaign slogan next year - that would truly put gamers on the map.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

I have never been compelled to write to a comic or magazine before. Then one day I was at my local comic shop (*Dragonfire Comics in Clive, IA*) and noticed a magazine entitled **Knights of the Dinner Table**. I picked it up and read a little of it.

Wow!! I've never read anything as hilarious and true as this. It has been quite some time since I have gamed but I recognize a lot of my friends in these very pages. I've known several Bob and Daves, a few Brians (*as a matter of fact they even had the same names some of them anyway*). I've also known a few Saras (*I consider myself to be in the Sara category*). As for

B.A. Felton, he is like a mirror image of the DM we had.

Needless to say (*but I will anyway*) I purchased what issues my retailer had and have added the book to my must-have list. It is the best gaming magazine I have ever read (*bet you hear that a lot*).

Well before I start really rambling on about how great this book is I'll just say keep up the good work and I'm looking forward to the next issue.

I've included a song parody that may not be printable but it was fun to do and I thought you might like it.

Derek Parmentier
via E-mail

Thanks for the song, Derek. We're just aching to force...er...to ask some poor fan to sing it aloud at the next KODT live-reading.

Jolly

Knights of the Dinner Table Song

by Derek Parmentier

(To the tune of the Camelot Song from Monty Python and the Holy Grail)

*We're Knights of the Dinner Table
We game when e'er we're able
We hack n' slash and steal the cash
with dicework impeccable*

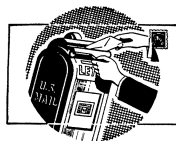
*We dine on chips and dip a lot
We fark ding blast and damn a lot*

*We're Knights of the Dinner Table
Our swords are formidable
But many times we're doing crimes
That are quite unspeakable*

*We're Power mad and Slay a lot
We like to bend the rules a looooot*

*For play we're tough and able
Quite indefatigable
Between our quests
We take a rest
And dream of treasure tables*

*We really like to game a lot
B.A.: I must rethink the rules a lot*

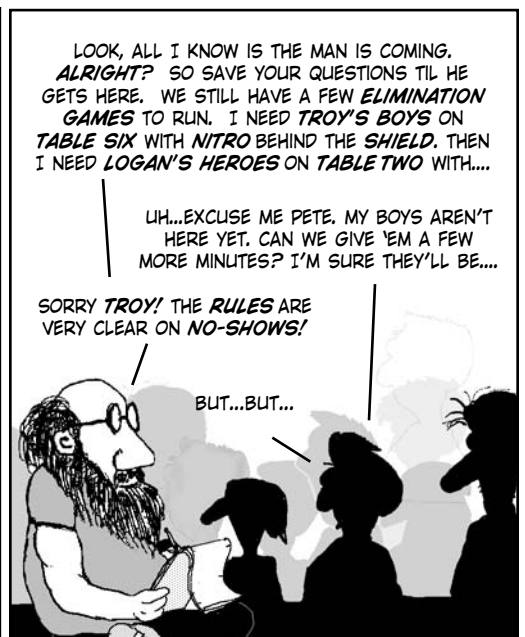


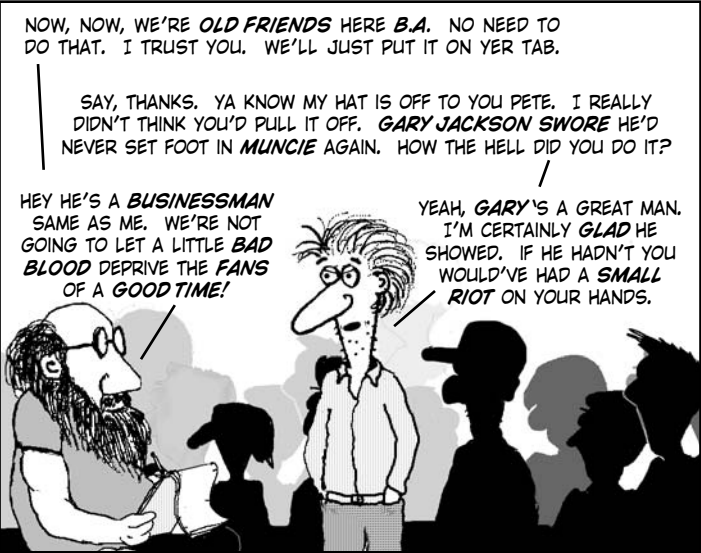
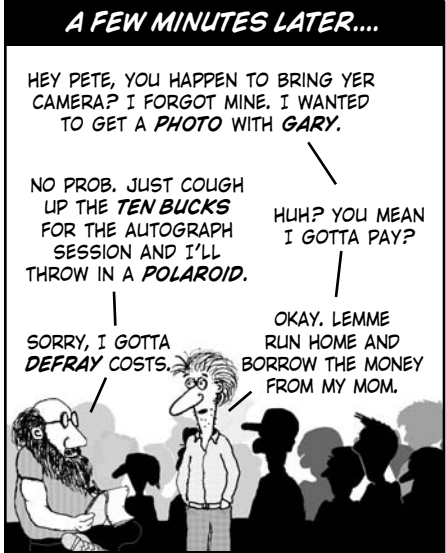
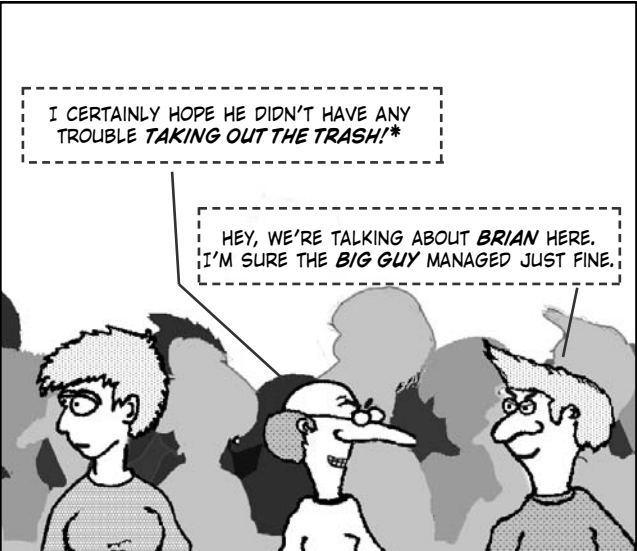
YOU CAN WRITE TO US VIA E-MAIL AT
JOLLYRB@AOL.COM!!
OR YOU CAN SEND YOUR SNAIL
MAIL TO
KODT LETTERBOX,
1003 MONROE PIKE, MARION, IN 46953

Gary, Gary, Quite Contrary

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

IT'S DAY FOUR OF THE HACKMASTER REGIONAL TOURNAMENT AND THE FIELD HAS BEEN GREATLY NARROWED WITH THE MEN BEING SEPARATED FROM THE BOYS. ONLY THE BEST REMAIN. AS THE FINAL ROUNDS DRAW NEAR, THE CROWDS ARE ANXIOUS - FOR NEWS HAS JUST ARRIVED THAT HARD EIGHT ENTERPRISES IS SENDING "MISTER JACKSON" TO RUN THE FINAL ROUNDS AND PRESENT THE WINNERS WITH A CHECK FOR \$1,500 DOLLARS.





* Bob is using a Player Advantage Code. (See *Tales From the Vault Volume 1*: Page 17 and *Bundle of Trouble Volume 4*: Page 89)
"Taking out the trash" is a form of gamer-style justice reserved for those who have brought harm or dishonor to a group or one of its members.

HEY, TELL YOUR **BOYS** THEY'RE UP ON **TABLE FOUR** IN **TWO HOURS!** IT'S THE ONE SET UP IN THE **BASEMENT.** **GARY'S** GOING TO BE RUNNING THEM SO FOR **GAWD'S SAKE** TELL THEM TO BE ON THEIR **BEST** BEHAVIOR.

OH DON'T WORRY. THE GUYS ARE SO EXCITED THEY'RE BESIDE THEMSELVES. **WOW!** THIS IS GOING TO BE THE **BEST HACK-TOURNEY EVER!!**

IT **BETTER** BE. IT COST ME A **SMALL FORTUNE** TO BRING MISTER '**GAWD ALMIGHTY**' JACKSON DOWN HERE.

I'D SAY IT'S THE **BEST INVESTMENT** YOU EVER MADE.



MEANWHILE AT THE AIRPORT....

OKAY, PUT THE **BOARD GAME** UP AND I'LL GET OUR **LUGGAGE.** AND MAKE SURE YOU **SEPARATE** THE **GERMAN ORDNANCE** FROM THE **BRITISH** PIECES THIS TIME.

I WON **DAT** GAME. YOU OWE ME **TWENNY DOLLWARS!** GIMME!!

I'LL PAY YA WHEN WE GET TO THE **HOTEL.**

NO!! TWENNY DOLLWARS **NOW!!**



MINUTES LATER....

HEY **JO JO!!** WELCOME TO **MUNCIE!**

WELL, HEY THERE **SMOKIN' EARL!** GOOD TO SEE YA AGAIN. YOU'RE SURE LOOKIN' GOOD.

ER, LIKEWISE. CAN I HELP YOU WITH YOUR **BAGS?**

GARY JACKSON



NO THANKS. THESE BAGS DON'T LEAVE MY SIGHT. I GOT THE **FINAL DRAFTS** FOR **HACKMASTER 4TH EDITION** IN 'EM. SO YOU'RE THE POOR VICTIM WHO GOT STUCK WITH **BABYSITTING** THE TWO OF US, EH?

ACTUALLY, I VOLUNTEERED. I WAS HOPING TO RUN SOME OF MY IDEAS BY YOU AND **GAR...**

UH...WHERE'S **MR. JACKSON?**

GARY JACKSON



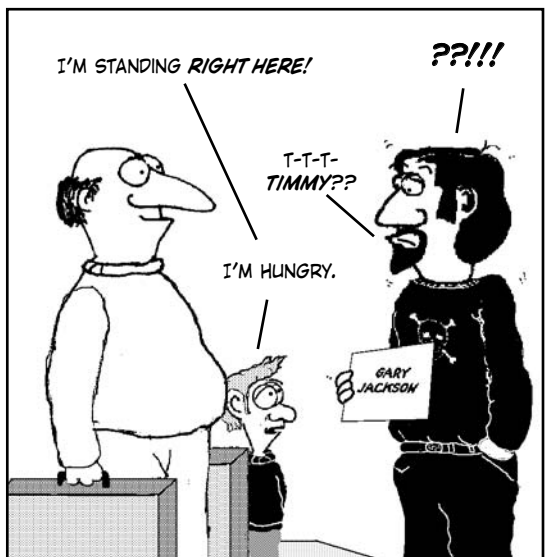
I'M STANDING **RIGHT HERE!**

??!!

T-T-T-**TIMMY??**

I'M HUNGRY.

GARY JACKSON

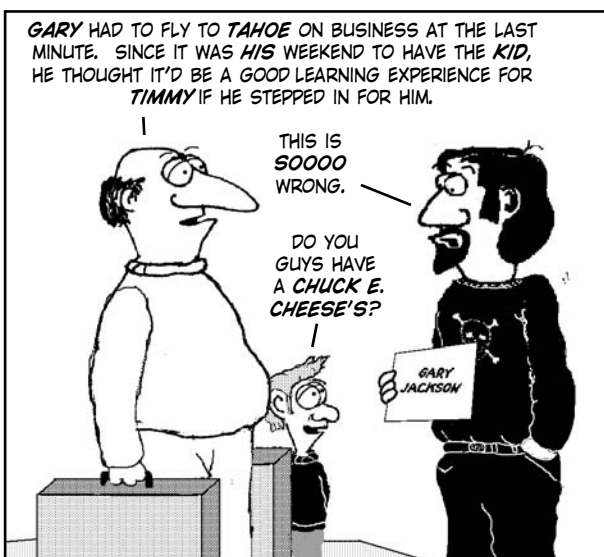


GARY HAD TO FLY TO **TAHOE** ON BUSINESS AT THE LAST MINUTE. SINCE IT WAS **HIS** WEEKEND TO HAVE THE **KID,** HE THOUGHT IT'D BE A GOOD LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR **TIMMY** IF HE STEPPED IN FOR HIM.

THIS IS **SOOOO** WRONG.

DO YOU GUYS HAVE A **CHUCK E. CHEESE'S?**

GARY JACKSON



Next Time You
Change
Distributors...

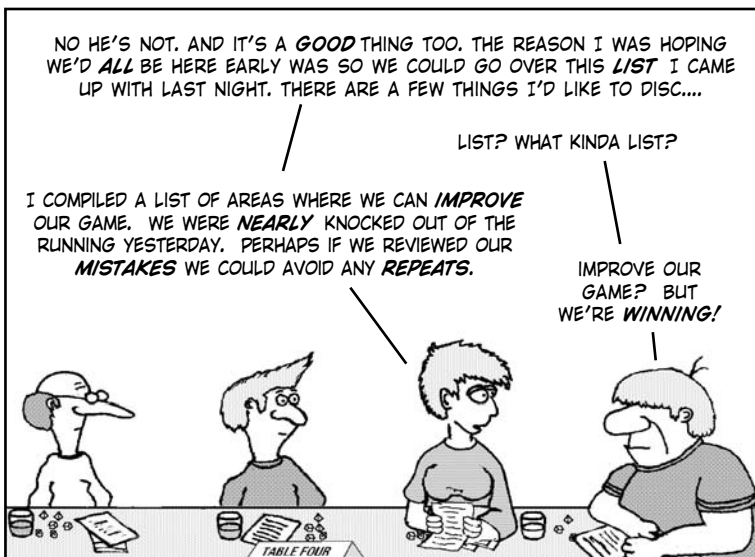
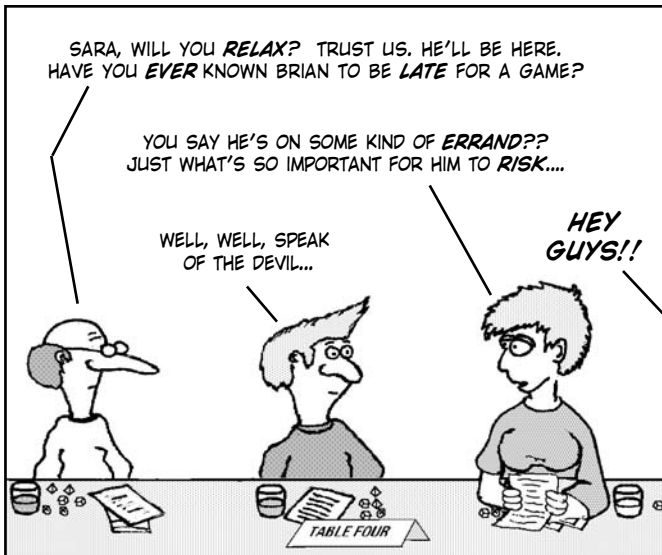
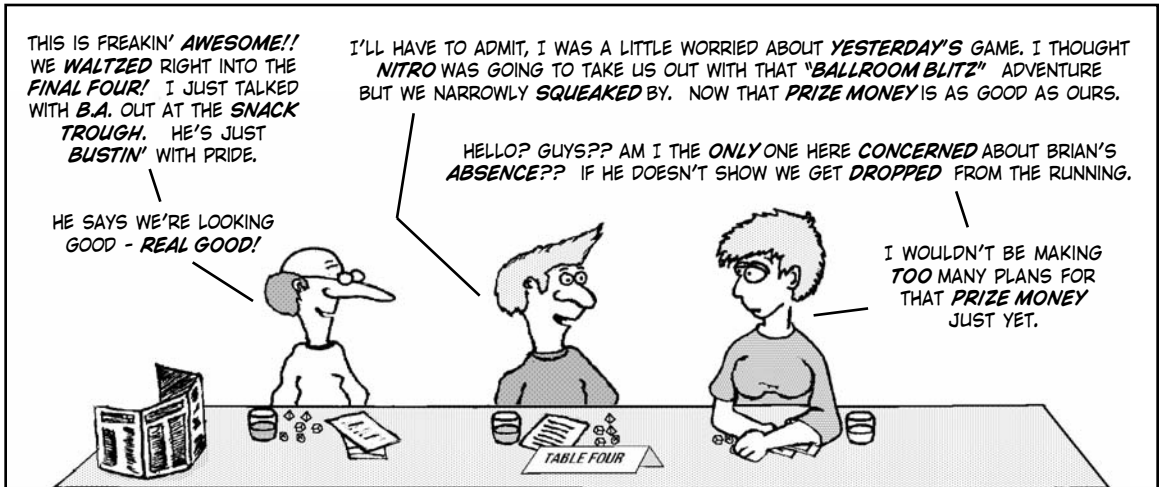
Shouldn't It Be
Your Choice?

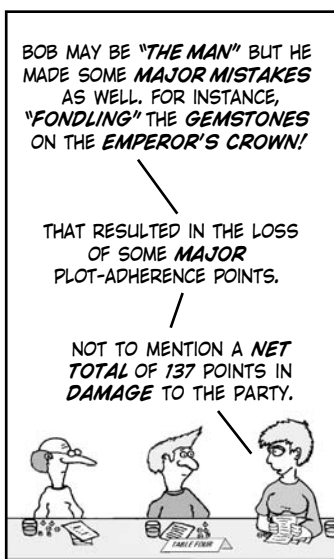
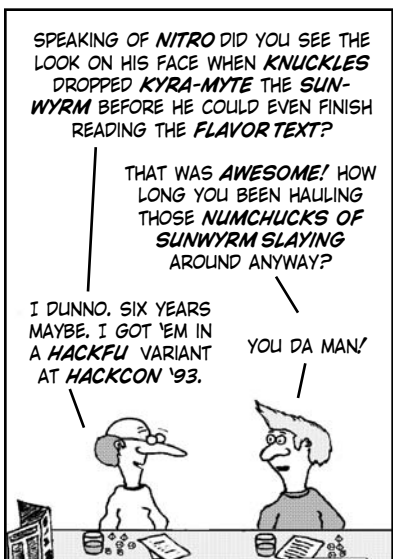
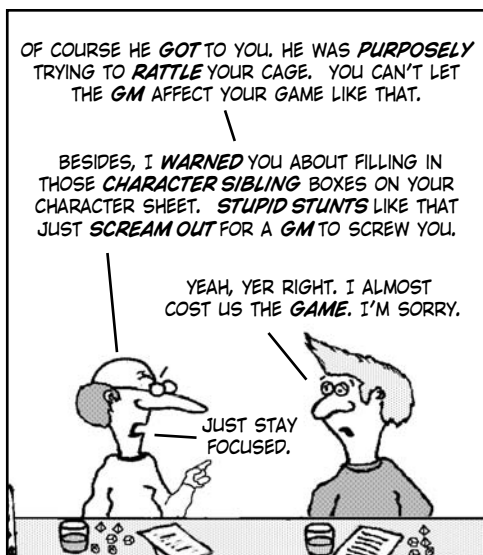
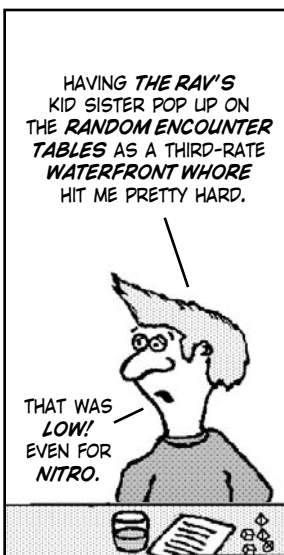
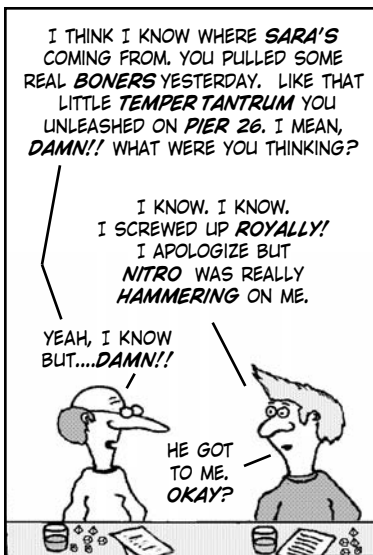
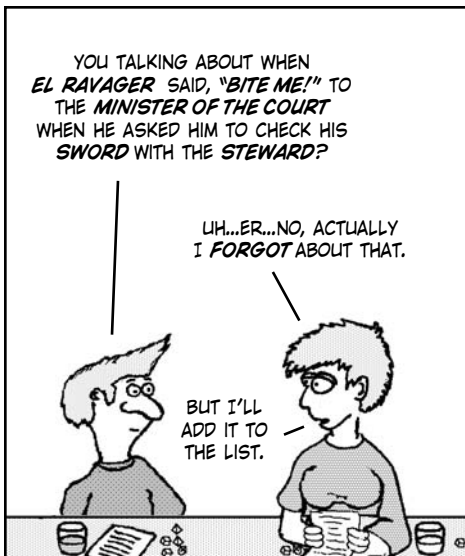
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Room to Improve

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN





* **ROUND HOUSE GROIN KICK:** [also called a "Meat Tenderizer"] This is a special attack in HackMaster™ rules which Dwarves can make on Human-sized targets who are not wearing protection in the appropriate area. Success renders the target incapacitated for 1d4 combat rounds. This rule was pulled from later editions of HackMaster but is still allowed in some regional tournaments.



YOU ATTEMPT TO LIFT THE **GEMS** AND **POCKET** THEM IN FRONT OF **TWO HUNDRED WITNESSES**?

BOB, WHEN **NITRO** ASKED IF YOU WERE, "**ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY, SURE**" YOU WANTED TO DO "**SOMETHING SO BLATANTLY STUPID!**" - YOU SHOULD HAVE TAKEN THAT AS A **BIG CLUE** THAT IT WAS THE **WRONG** THING TO DO.

WHY YOU GOTTA ANALYZE EVERYTHING? IT RUINS ALL THE FUN.

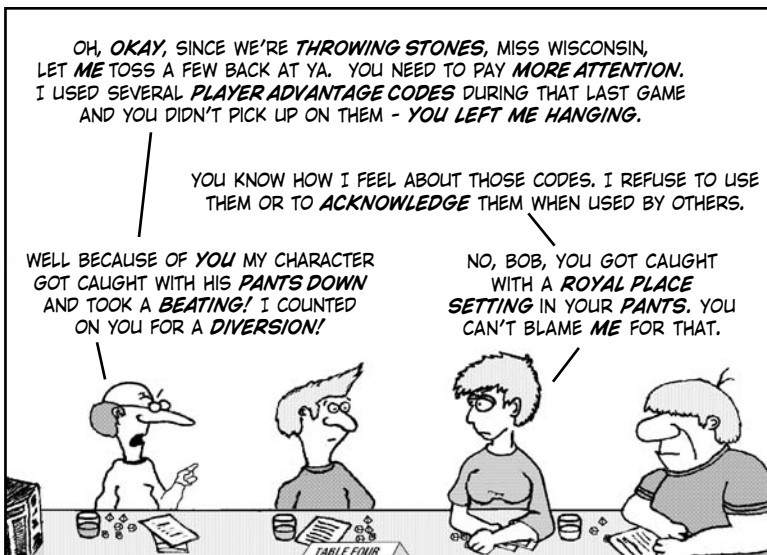
HMMRRRRFFF! THERE WAS SOME DEFINITE **GM BIAS** AT WORK THERE. **NITRO** SCREWED US OVER. THEY NEVER SHOULD HAVE GIVEN HIM HIS CREDENTIALS BACK. *



NO, BRIAN. IT'S **TOO EASY** BLAMING IT ALL ON THE **GAMEMASTER**. **NITRO** HAD **EVERY** RIGHT TO **REAM** US ON TOURNAMENT POINTS.

FOR EXAMPLE, HOW ABOUT THAT **SHOCKING GRASP** SPELL YOU CAST ON THE **MAITRE D'S** TIP TRAY?

WHAT ABOUT IT?

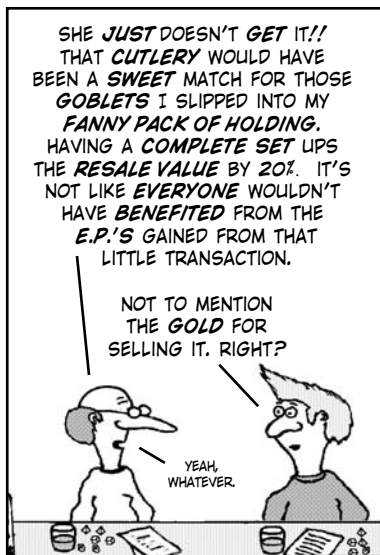


OH, **OKAY**, SINCE WE'RE **THROWING STONES**, MISS WISCONSIN, LET **ME** TOSS A FEW BACK AT YA. YOU NEED TO PAY **MORE ATTENTION**. I USED SEVERAL **PLAYER ADVANTAGE CODES** DURING THAT LAST GAME AND YOU DIDN'T PICK UP ON THEM - **YOU LEFT ME HANGING**.

YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT THOSE CODES. I REFUSE TO USE THEM OR TO **ACKNOWLEDGE** THEM WHEN USED BY OTHERS.

WELL BECAUSE OF **YOU** MY CHARACTER GOT CAUGHT WITH HIS **PANTS DOWN** AND TOOK A **BEATING!** I COUNTED ON YOU FOR A **DIVERSION!**

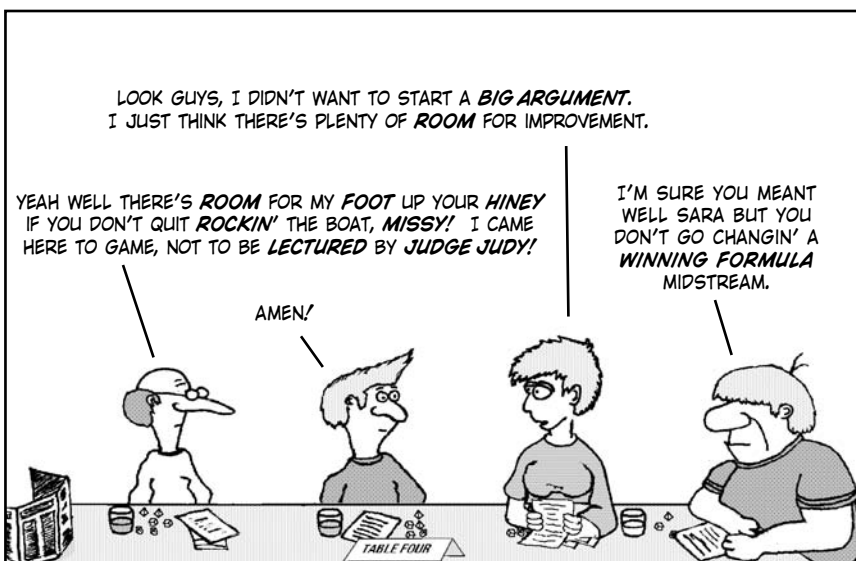
NO, BOB, YOU GOT CAUGHT WITH A **ROYAL PLACE SETTING** IN YOUR **PANTS**. YOU CAN'T BLAME **ME** FOR THAT.



SHE **JUST** DOESN'T **GET** IT!! THAT **CUTLERY** WOULD HAVE BEEN A **SWEET** MATCH FOR THOSE **GOBLETS** I SLIPPED INTO MY **FANNY PACK OF HOLDING**. HAVING A **COMPLETE SET** UPS THE **RESALE VALUE** BY 20%. IT'S NOT LIKE **EVERYONE** WOULDN'T HAVE **BENEFITED** FROM THE **E.P.'S** GAINED FROM THAT **LITTLE TRANSACTION**.

NOT TO MENTION THE **GOLD** FOR SELLING IT. RIGHT?

YEAH, WHATEVER.

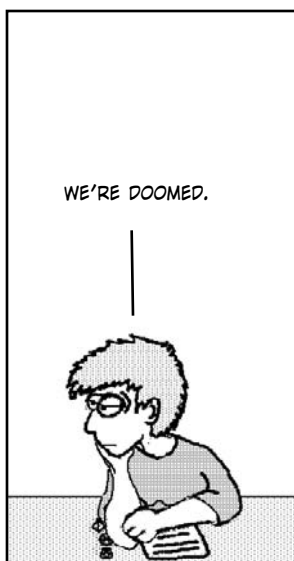


LOOK GUYS, I DIDN'T WANT TO START A **BIG ARGUMENT**. I JUST THINK THERE'S PLENTY OF **ROOM** FOR IMPROVEMENT.

YEAH WELL THERE'S **ROOM** FOR MY **FOOT** UP YOUR **HINEY** IF YOU DON'T QUIT **ROCKIN'** THE BOAT, **MISSY!** I CAME HERE TO GAME, NOT TO BE **LECTURED** BY **JUDGE JUDY!**

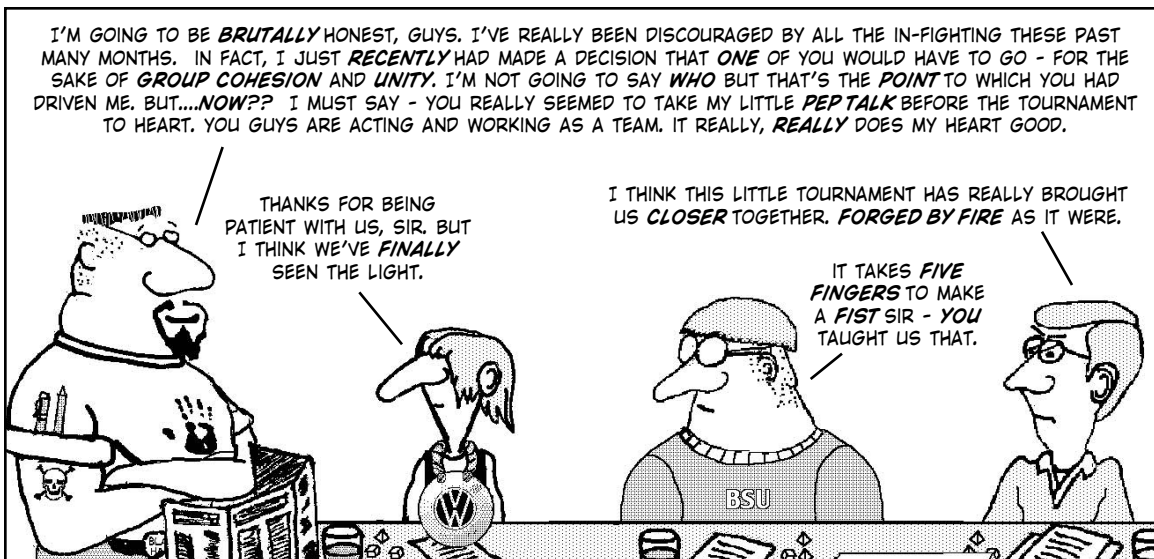
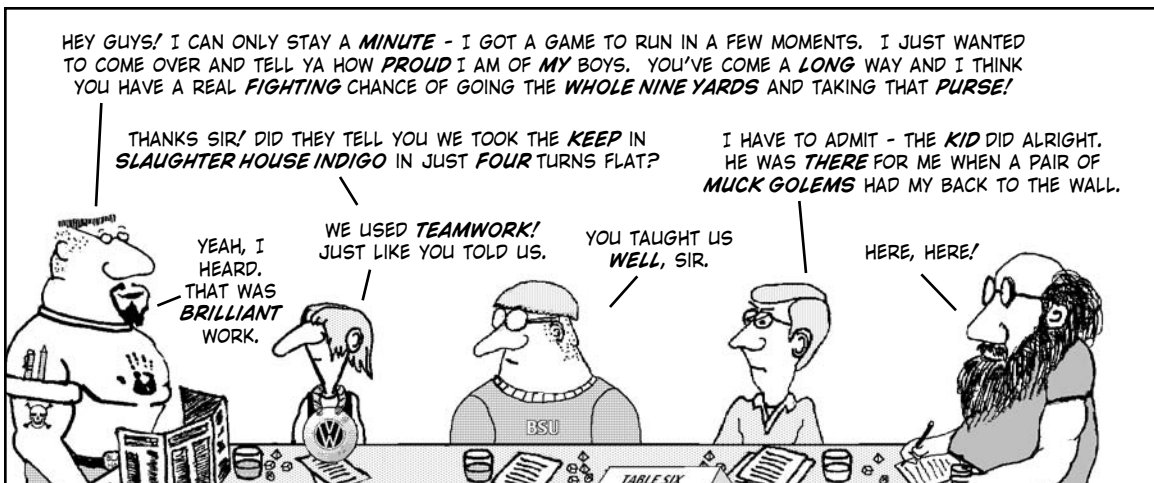
AMEN!

I'M SURE YOU MEANT WELL SARA BUT YOU DON'T GO CHANGIN' A **WINNING FORMULA** MIDSTREAM.



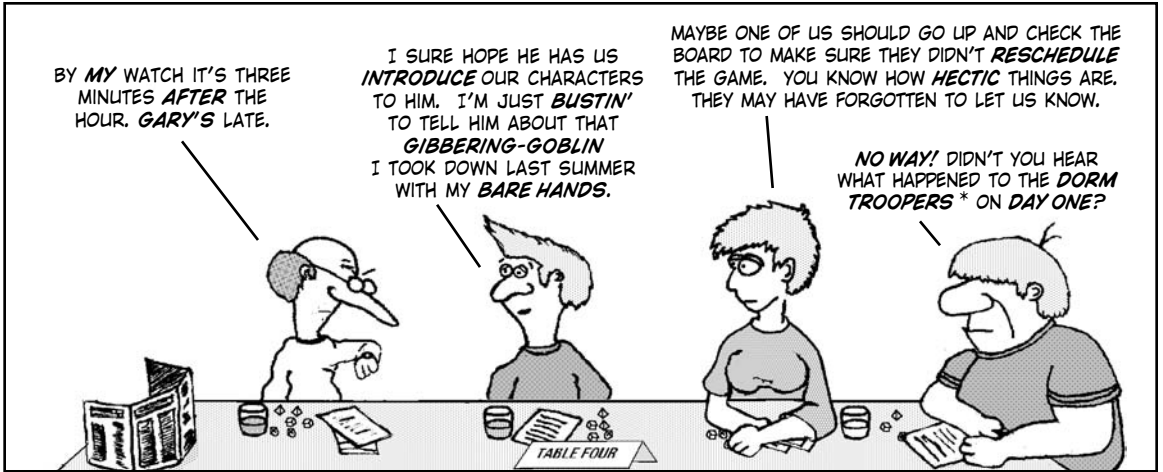
WE'RE DOOMED.

* See [Tales from the Vault Volume 1](#) (page 44): Nitro was banned from tournament play after his live-action event, Trial By Ordeal, nearly shut down GaryCon '95 when participants took the game to the streets and into surrounding hotels and eateries. After three years, the HackMaster Player's Association (Midwestern Chapter 49) lifted the ban and placed him on probationary status.



The ~~LAME~~ Game Master

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

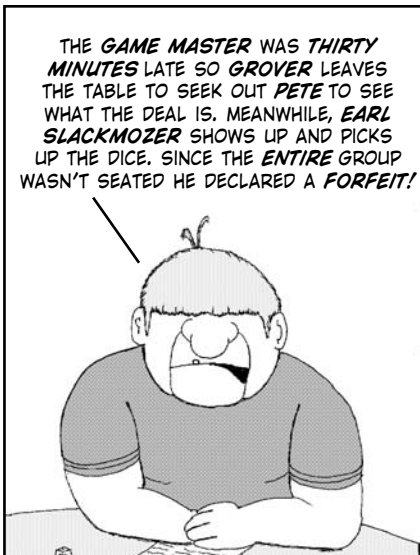


BY MY WATCH IT'S THREE MINUTES AFTER THE HOUR. GARY'S LATE.

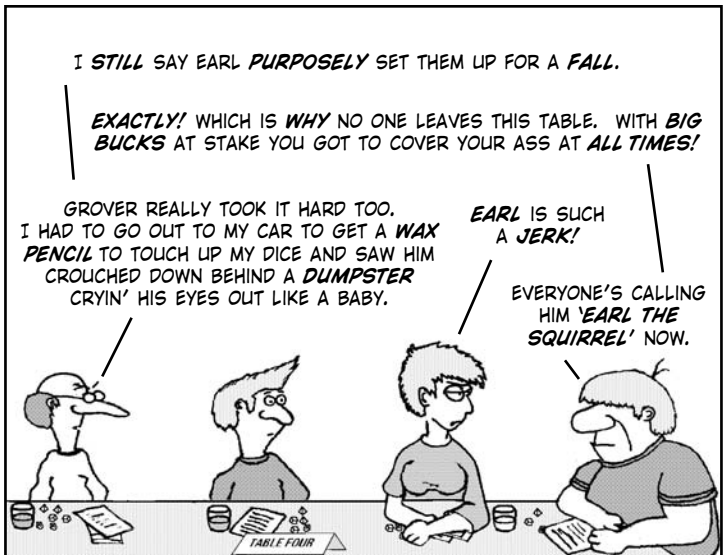
I SURE HOPE HE HAS US *INTRODUCE* OUR CHARACTERS TO HIM. I'M JUST *BUSTIN'* TO TELL HIM ABOUT THAT *GIBBERING-GOBLIN* I TOOK DOWN LAST SUMMER WITH MY *BARE HANDS*.

MAYBE ONE OF US SHOULD GO UP AND CHECK THE BOARD TO MAKE SURE THEY DIDN'T *RESCHEDULE* THE GAME. YOU KNOW HOW *HECTIC* THINGS ARE. THEY MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN TO LET US KNOW.

NO WAY! DIDN'T YOU HEAR WHAT HAPPENED TO THE *DORM TROOPERS* * ON DAY ONE?



THE *GAME MASTER* WAS THIRTY MINUTES LATE SO GROVER LEAVES THE TABLE TO SEEK OUT *PETE* TO SEE WHAT THE DEAL IS. MEANWHILE, *EARL SLACKMOZER* SHOWS UP AND PICKS UP THE DICE. SINCE THE *ENTIRE GROUP* WASN'T SEATED HE DECLARED A *FORFEIT!*



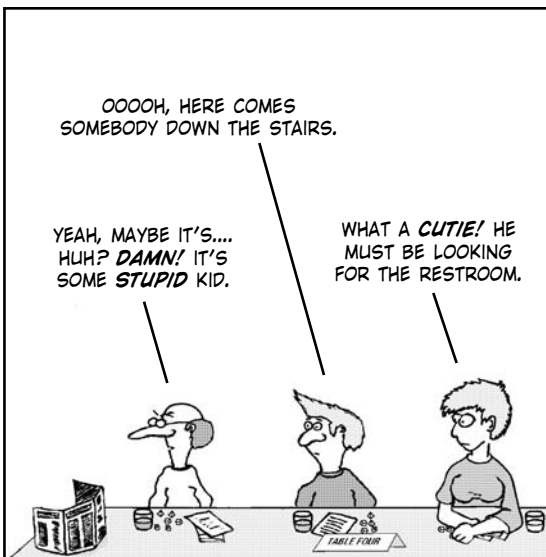
I *STILL* SAY *EARL PURPOSELY* SET THEM UP FOR A *FALL*.

EXACTLY! WHICH IS *WHY* NO ONE LEAVES THIS TABLE. WITH *BIG BUCKS* AT STAKE YOU GOT TO COVER YOUR ASS AT *ALL TIMES!*

GROVER REALLY TOOK IT HARD TOO. I HAD TO GO OUT TO MY CAR TO GET A *WAX PENCIL* TO TOUCH UP MY DICE AND SAW HIM CROUCHED DOWN BEHIND A *DUMPSTER* CRYIN' HIS EYES OUT LIKE A BABY.

EARL IS SUCH A JERK!

EVERYONE'S CALLING HIM '*EARL THE SQUIRREL*' NOW.



OOOOH, HERE COMES SOMEBODY DOWN THE STAIRS.

YEAH, MAYBE IT'S.... HUH? *DAMN!* IT'S SOME *STUPID* KID.

WHAT A *CUTIE!* HE MUST BE LOOKING FOR THE RESTROOM.



HEY GUYS! *EVERBUDDY* WEADY TO PLAY?

I THINK YOU'RE LOST *JUNIOR!* AIN'T NO GAMES OF *POKER'MAN* GOIN' ON DOWN HERE. THIS IS WHERE THE '*BIG BOYS*' PLAY.

DIS IS TABLE FOUR AIN'T IT? *HACKMASTER FINALS?*

C'MON KID, *SCRAM!!*

WELL YEAH, BUT...

* DORM TROOPERS. (See *KODT# 26* - A Hero's Demise): One of the longest running groups in Muncie founded and run by Whitey Moran. Members include Grover "da hitman" Grundig and Sheila Horowitz. Years ago, Brian briefly left the Knights to GM for the Dorm Troopers.

HA HA!!! HEY CHECK OUT **DOOGIE HOWZER** OVER HERE. HE WANTS TO RUN A GAME OF **HACKMASTER** FOR US. **HAR HAR!!!** FRICKIN' HILARIOUS!

HEH, HEH, WHAT RULES WILL HE USE? THE **SEE-N-SAY** EDITION?? -SNICKER-

NO, NO, **HAR HAR**, HE'S GOING TO USE **-SNORT-THE CANDYLAND** CROSSOVER RULES.

I BET HE USES A **POP-O-MATIC** TO ROLL HIS DICE. **HA HA!!**

AWWWWWW, I THINK HE'S **SWEET**. PRETENDING TO BE A **GAME MASTER**.

QUICK! SOMEBODY PUT SOME TRAINING WHEELS ON THAT **GM SCREEN**.

MOVE IT, KID! WE'RE WAITIN' FOR **GARY JACKSON**. THE NAME PROBABLY DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU BUT HE'S A VERY IMPORTANT MAN. HE AIN'T GONNA **COTTON** TO SOME SNOT-NOSED TYKE SITTIN' IN HIS SEAT.

MISTER, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. **DADDY** COULDN'T MAKE IT. HE SENT **ME** INSTEAD.

DADDY??

THIS IS SOME KIND OF JOKE - **RIGHT?** NO WAY THEY SENT SOME **KID** TO RUN A **TOURNAMENT LEVEL GAME**. WHO PUT YOU UP TO THIS? WAS IT **PATTY GAUZEWEILER??**

NO, MISTER. I **AM** YOUR GAMEMASTER. MY NAME IS **TIMMY**. **TIMMY JACKSON!**

T..T...T....**TIMMY?** YOU MEAN AS IN **TIMMY 'TABLE HAPPY' JACKSON??**

MY DADDY SAYS YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO CALL ME THAT.

TIMMY THE RULES MANGLER??

ARE YOU GUYS **BELIEVIN'** THIS? THEY SENT A **BOY** DOWN HERE TO DO A **MAN'S** WORK?

LET'S GO GET **WEIRD PETE** AND DEMAND A **COMPETENT GM!**

MAYBE WE SHOULD. NO OFFENSE TO **TIMMY**, BUT I **REALLY DON'T** LIKE THE IDEA OF PLAYING UNDER AN **EIGHT YEAR** OLD KID.

CHANGE **GM'S?** WHOAH! HOLD ON GUYS. LET'S CONSIDER SOMETHING FOR A MOMENT.

WE HAVEN'T MADE IT TO THE **FINAL FOUR** IN OVER **SIX YEARS!** BUT LOOK AT US **NOW!!** WE'RE SITTIN' HERE WITH THAT **PRIZE MONEY** SO CLOSE WE CAN **SMELL** IT! THIS TOURNAMENT IS ALL ABOUT THE **PLAYERS** BEING **PITTED** AGAINST THE **GM**. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE BEEN **SCREWED OVER** BY SOME **GM** WHO HAD SOME OLD **GRUDGE** AGAINST US OR WHO WANTED TO **SABOTAGE US** SO **HIS** GROUP COULD MOVE UP THE **LADDER??**

BUT **NOW** THEY'VE SENT A **CHILD** TO MATCH WITS WITH US.

HEY, THE **BIG GUY'S** RIGHT. THIS IS A **GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY**. A **FREEBIE!** ALL WE GOTTA DO IS SIT HERE AND **ENDURE** FOUR HOURS OF THE **KID'S** CRAP AND WE MOVE A STEP CLOSER TO THAT **PURSE!!**

CAN YOU BELIEVE OUR LUCK? PROBABLY THE **WORST** THING THIS KID WILL THROW AT US IS **PAPA SMURF** OR SOMETHING.

-SIGH- WELL I HARDLY SEE ANY SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT IN **THIS!** I'M BEGINNING TO **ENVY** THE **BLACK HANDS** FOR DRAWING **JO JO ZEKE** AS THEIR **GM**.

YOU'LL FEEL DIFFERENT WHEN YOU'RE HOLDING THAT **MONEY** IN YOUR HANDS.

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OKAY, YOU MANAGE TO PRY THE LOCK OFF THE *IRON GRATE*. IT SCREECHES ON ITS HINGES AS IT SLOWLY SWINGS OPEN. YOU SEE A NARROW PASSAGeway WITH A LOW CEILING SLOWLY ANGLING AWAY TOWARD THE RIGHT. THE WALLS OF THE CORRIDOR ARE SHROUDED IN A TYPE OF *HANGING MOSS* WHICH...UH...ER...

LOOK, I *APOLOGIZE* IF THIS COMES OFF SOUNDING A BIT *RUDE*, BUT I JUST *HAVE* TO ASK. WHAT'S WITH THE *MERCEDES HUBCAP* AROUND YOUR NECK, *NEWT*?

IT'S *NOTHING*! NOW, YOU WERE SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT SOME *HANGING MOSS*?

UH, UH, UH - *NEWT*!! HE ASKED A QUESTION. YOU KNOW THE DRILL! *SAY THE WORDS*!!

MERCEDES?? I BELIEVE YOU NEED A REFRESHER COURSE IN *GERMANIC AUTOMOTIVE HERALDRY*. THAT HUBCAP CAME OFF A VINTAGE 1963 *VOLKSWAGEN MICRO-BUS*!!



AWH, C'MON *STEVI*! NOT *HERE*! NOT *NOW*! DON'T *EMBARRASS* ME LIKE THIS.

WE'VE BEEN OVER IT A *HUNDRED TIMES*! IF SOMEONE ASKS - YOU *SAY THE WORDS*!! *PERIOD*!!

BUT I THOUGHT WE'D COME TO SOME KIND OF *UNDERSTANDING*! I SAVED YOUR BUTT FROM THOSE *GLAMOUR TROLLS* - *REMEMBER*?

LOOK, GUYS! I'M SORRY IF I CAUSED ANY...

DON'T THINK I'M NOT *GRATEFUL* BUT ONE DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE OTHER. YOU WEAR THE HUBCAP YOU *SAY THE WORDS*.

SORRY *NEWT*...



LATER, AFTER RESIGNING HIMSELF TO HIS FATE...

-MOAN- "I AM THE *KEEPER OF THE HUBCAP OF SHAME*. I WEAR THIS *TOKEN OF DEGRADATION* BECAUSE MY..."

LOUDER *GOth BOY*!! AND DON'T SAY IT TO US! SAY IT TO *JO JO*!!

AND YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO *STAND UP* AND DO THE *HAND GESTURES*.



"I AM THE *KEEPER OF THE HUBCAP OF SHAME*!! I WEAR THIS *TOKEN OF DEGRADATION* BECAUSE *MY ACTIONS* BROUGHT DISGRACE AND DISHONOR TO MYSELF, THE *BLACK HANDS GAMING SOCIETY* AND TO THE *GAMING COMMUNITY* AT LARGE! *BEHOLD MY SHAME*!! *LOOK DOWN UPON ME*!!"

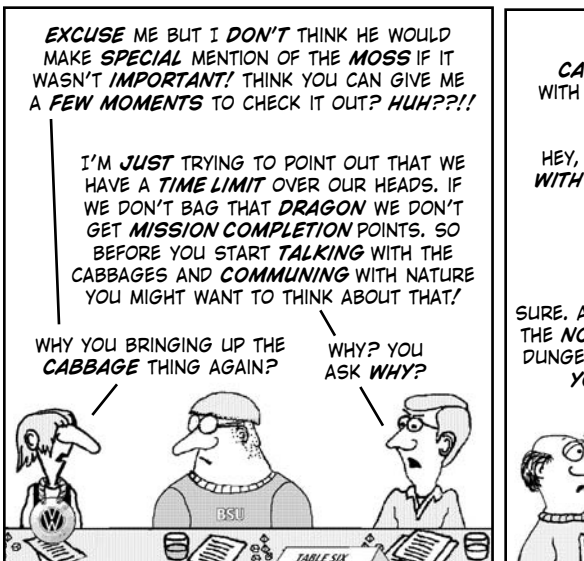
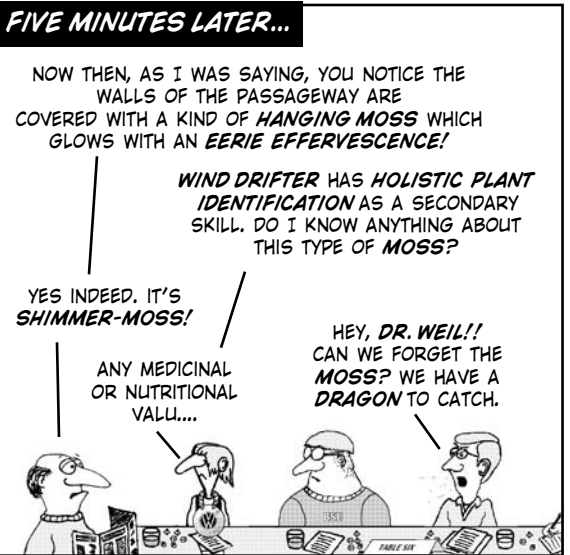
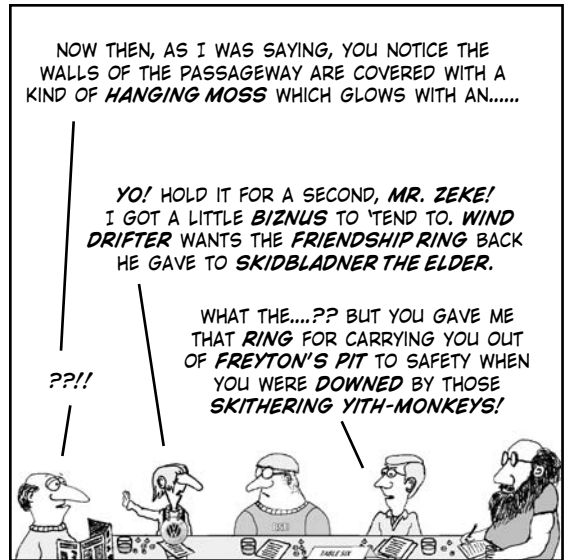
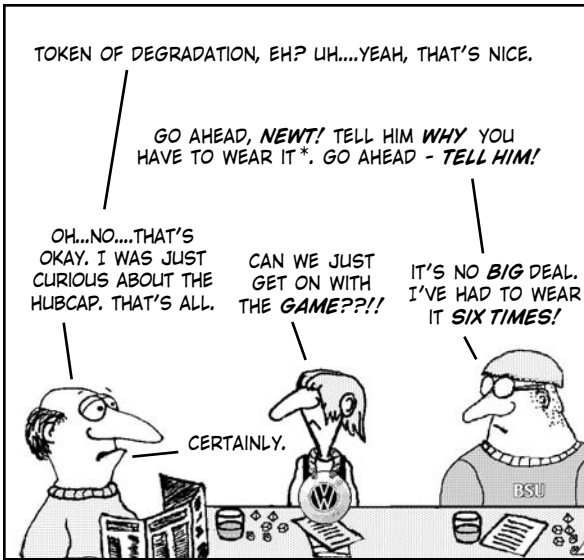
C'MON *NEWT*! YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT? *PROJECT YOURSELF*! I'M NOT FEELING ANY *REAL SENSE OF REMORSE*!! PUT YOURSELF INTO IT!!

??!!

TURN A LITTLE MORE TOWARD *JO JO* SO HE CAN SEE THE *HUBCAP*!

HAR HAR!! LOOK AT 'IM *DANCE*!!





* See **KODT #35 A Mute Point** [Newt sentenced to the wearing of the 'Hubcap of Shame' for the second time for opting to bail out Crutch - leaving Stevil to fend for himself in Holding Cell#4. The first time Newt had to wear the hubcap was for staging the hoax that he was 'lost' in the steam tunnels beneath Ball State which prompted a search and rescue effort.]

OH, YOU'RE GONNA TAKE ME OUTTA THE GAME???! YOU AND WHOSE ARMY MISTER EIGHT-STRENGTH???!

UH...GUYS? YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE TRACKING THE SLACK IRON DRAGON??

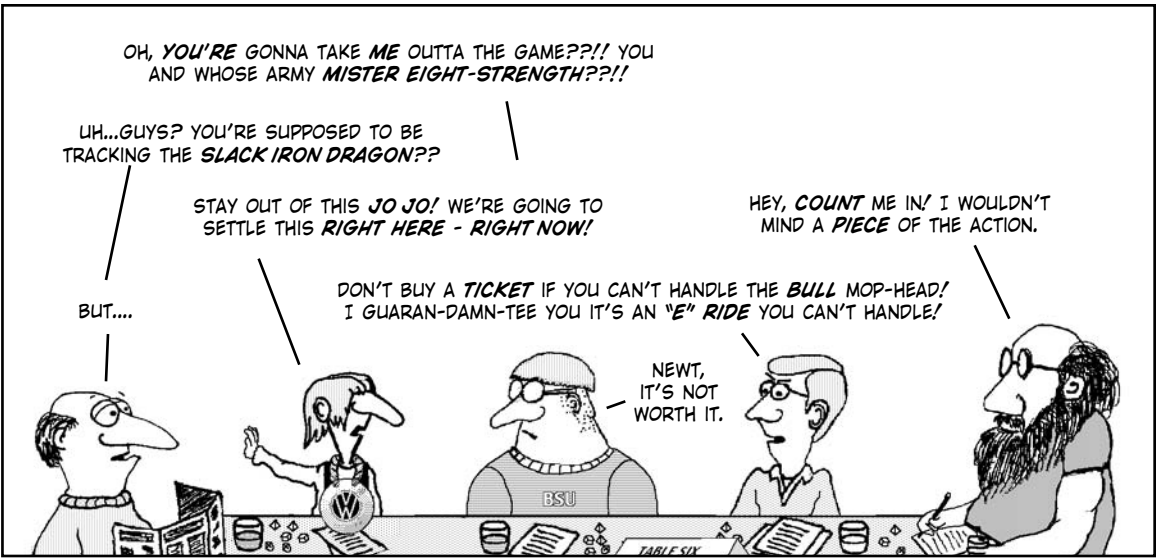
STAY OUT OF THIS JO JO! WE'RE GOING TO SETTLE THIS RIGHT HERE - RIGHT NOW!

HEY, COUNT ME IN! I WOULDN'T MIND A PIECE OF THE ACTION.

BUT....

DON'T BUY A TICKET IF YOU CAN'T HANDLE THE BULL MOP-HEAD! I GUARAN-DAMN-TEE YOU IT'S AN "E" RIDE YOU CAN'T HANDLE!

NEWT, IT'S NOT WORTH IT.

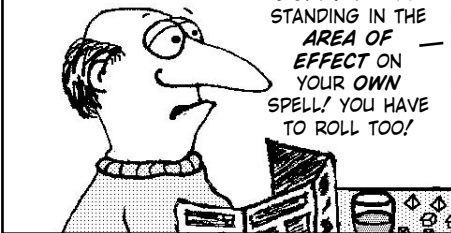


LATER STILL....

OH YEAH???! WELL I SHRUG OFF YOUR MACE ATTACK LIKE AN ICE CREAM HEADACHE! I COME BACK AT YOU WITH MY HYPTOR'S PRONGED RING OF EYE GOUGING!

FINE! BUT FIRST YOU'LL HAVE TO CONTEND WITH MY WALL OF ACID SPELL!!

DORK! YOU'RE STANDING IN THE AREA OF EFFECT ON YOUR OWN SPELL! YOU HAVE TO ROLL TOO!



OKAY. WE CAN END THE GAME RIGHT HERE. I'LL TALLY YOUR POINTS AND GIVE THEM TO WEIRD PETE. HE'LL LET YOU KNOW WHAT THE RESULTS WERE.

HUH? BUT WE'VE ONLY BEEN PLAYING FOR TWENTY MINUTES!

OH TRUST ME, I'VE SEEN MORE THAN ENOUGH TO JUDGE THE CALIBRE OF YOUR PLAYING. I'D ONLY BE WASTING YOUR TIME GOING ANY FURTHER.

HEY, AN EXPERIENCED EYE LIKE JO JO KNOWS A WINNER WHEN HE SEES ONE - EH??

THAT GOOD HUHP HOODY HOO! THANKS JO JO!!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT! WE MADE IT?

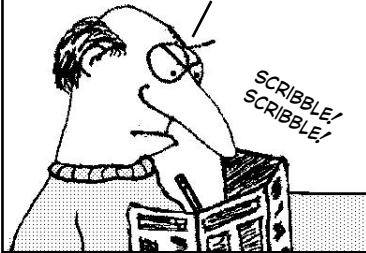
SOB!! WHIMPER



WINNER?? THAT'S A LAUGH! I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GUYS PROGRESSED THIS FAR IN A HARD EIGHT SANCTIONED TOURNAMENT BUT YOU JUST HIT THE PROVERBIAL "BRICK WALL"!

I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET A GROUP OF 'ME-ME-ME GAMERS' SLIP BY. NOT ON MY WATCH!

SCRIBBLE! SCRIBBLE!



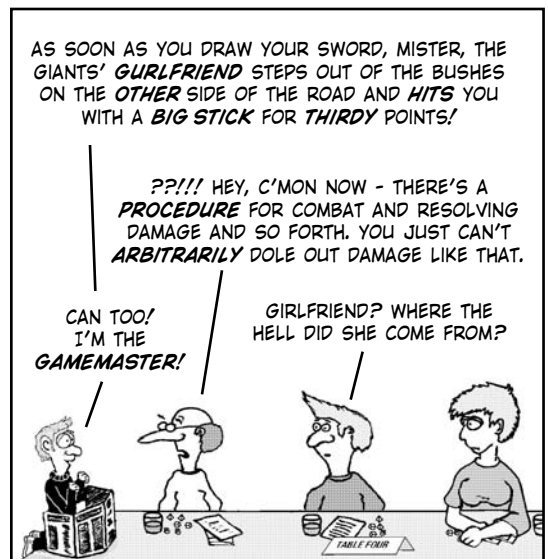
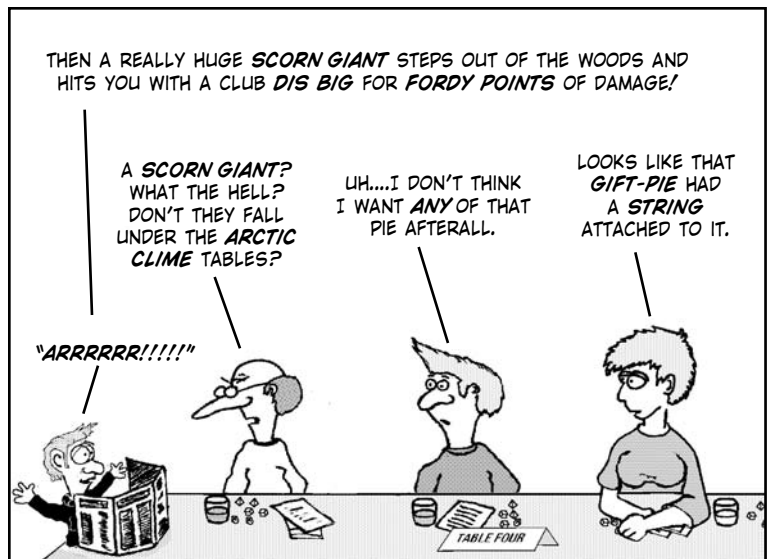
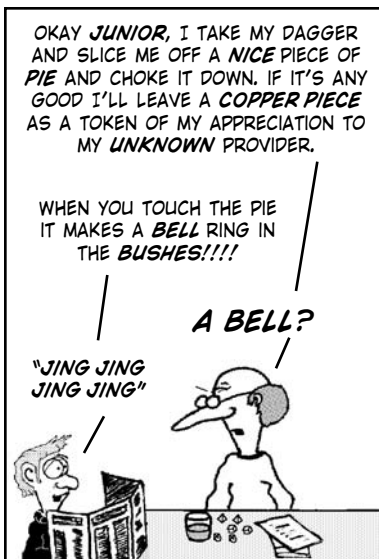
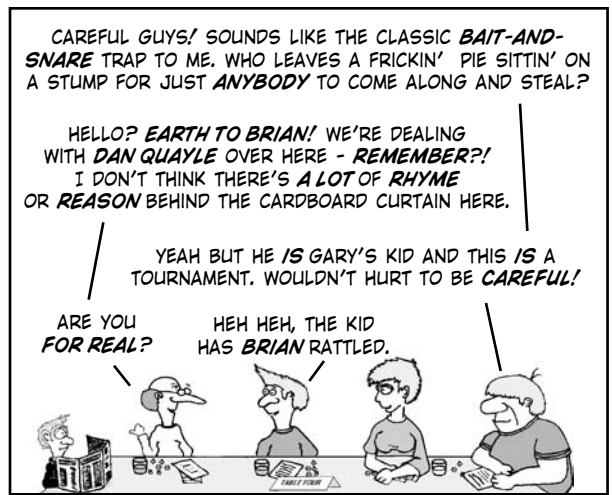
A FEW SECONDS LATER...

I GOT A FEELING NITRO WON'T BE BUYING US THAT BEER AFTERRALL.

WHO PUT A BURR UP HIS DICEBAG?

SNORT!! SOB!! GURP!





THIRTY MINUTES LATER....

WHEN YOU OPEN THE DOOR YOU SEE **BAALZEBUL THE ARCH DEVIL** STANDING BEFORE YOU. BEHIND HIM TWENNY-FOUR **PIT FIENDS** AWAIT HIS COMMAND TO.....

WE'RE **TOAST!!** I'M DOWN TO **THREE** HITPOINTS AND NOW THIS? I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. THIS **FREAKIN'** LITTLE KID IS GOING TO TAKE US OUT OF THE **TOURNAMENT!**

YEAH, I'M DOWN TO SIX HITPOINTS MYSELF. DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.

-SIGH- TOO BAD. WE **REALLY** HAD A CHANCE THIS YEAR.

HOLD UP, GUYS! ACCORDING TO THE **TOURNAMENT RULES** WE ARE ENTITLED TO THREE FIVE-MINUTE **TIME OUTS** PER SESSION. LET'S **HUDDLE!!** I THINK I HAVE AN IDEA.



BAALZEBUL TELLS YOU TO LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS AND....

WHOAH, WHOAH, **WHOAH** CHIEF! WE'RE CALLIN' A **TIME OUT** HERE. WE NEED TO **HUDDLE!**

DADDY SEZ HUDDLING IS FOR GIRLS!

TAKE A **HIKE** KID. GIVE US **FIVE!**

WE'RE TAKIN' A **TIME OUT - ALRIGHT!!**

I DON'T KNOW WHY WE'RE EVEN **BOTHERING** - WE'RE **DEAD MEAT!**

OKAY, OKAY.



A FEW MINUTES LATER....

OKAY, **TALK TO ME**, BIG GUY. WHAT'S YER **PLAN?**

LOOK, I DON'T THINK THE KID KNOWS THE **FIRST THING** ABOUT **HACKMASTER!** HE DOESN'T ROLL **DICE** HALF THE TIME AND WHEN HE **DOES**, HE ROLLS THE **WRONG** ONES. AND THE WAY HE JUST **THROWS** OUT DAMAGE AND HAS THINGS COMING OUT OF THE **WOODWORK...** WELL, I THINK HE'S JUST MAKING IT ALL UP ON THE **FLY!**

YEAH, YOU'RE **RIGHT!!**

I GOT THE **SAME** IMPRESSION.



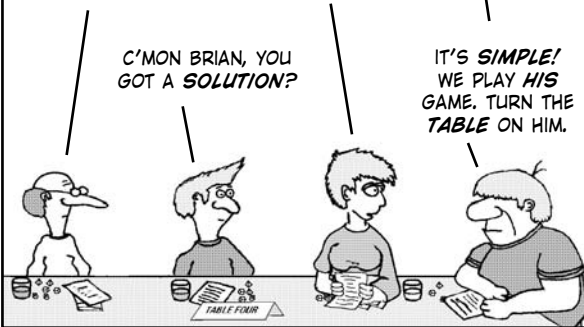
SO WE'RE GETTING **REAMED** BECAUSE WE'RE PLAYING BY THE **RULES** AND HE **ISN'T!!**

DUH! TELL US SOMETHING WE **DON'T** KNOW.

YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT A **PLAN?**

C'MON BRIAN, YOU GOT A **SOLUTION?**

IT'S **SIMPLE!** WE PLAY **HIS** GAME. TURN THE **TABLE** ON HIM.



PLAY HIS GAME? BUT HE JUST **MAKES** THINGS UP AS HE GOES ALONG WITH NO REGARD FOR THE **RULES.**

EXACTLY!! SOMEBODY CALL THE KID BACK IN HERE. JUST FOLLOW **MY** CUE!

HMMMMMM, I THINK I SEE YOUR ANGLE. IT **JUST** MIGHT WORK.

IT'S **GOTTA** WORK.



A WEE BIT LATER....

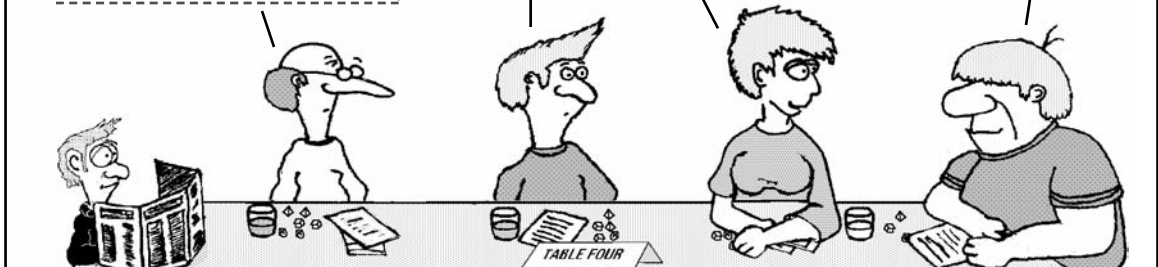
OKAY **TIMMY** HERE'S THE DEAL. UH....**KNUCKLES** LOANS ME HIS **RING OF BAALZEBUL SLAYING** AND I USE IT TO DO **SIX HUNDRED POINTS** OF DAMAGE TO **MISTER ARCH DEVIL**. THEN I USE MY **ROD OF DEMON TURNING** TO SEND THOSE **PIT FIENDS** BACK TO THEIR **NATIVE PLANE!** OH, AND UH, I PICK UP **BAALZEBUL'S SCEPTER OF DEMON CONTROL** AND TUCK IT AWAY FOR SAFE KEEPING.

SIX HUNDRED POINTS? EASY THERE BRIAN - LET'S NOT **TIP** OUR HAND. KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

???!

VERY NICE, BRIAN. VERY NICE INDEED.

WHY THANK YOU.



HEY!! WHERE THE HELL DID YOU GET A **RING OF BAALZEBUL SLAYING?** HUH? DID YOU GET **EXPERIENCE POINTS** FOR THAT?

DUDE, I'VE HAD IT FOR **YEARS**. REMEMBER? I GOT IT IN THE "AYPLAY LONGAY OUYAY DIOTIAY" COMPRENDE?

I THINK I MISSED THAT ADVENTURE.



OH, UH, I USE MY **DUST OF FAERIE KIN** TO HEAL **EVERYBODY** IN THE GROUP BACK TO THEIR **FULL HITPOINTS**. THEN I SCOOP UP SOME **DIRT** FROM THE FLOOR OF THE **DUNGEON** AND PUT IT IN THE BAG. IT WILL **AUTOMATICALLY** BE ENCHANTED IN **706** TURNS TO **REPLENISH** THE **FAERIE KIN DUST** I JUST USED.

WHOOAH! THAT'S SWEET! HOW COME YOU'VE NEVER USED IT BEFORE?

GOOD WORK, SARA!

OH I'VE BEEN SAVING IT FOR A **RAINY DAY**.



LATER STILL...

IS THAT **ALL** YOU GOT? **HUH?** GET THAT **WEAK ASS** DRAGON OUTTA MY SIGHT BEFORE I USE MY **WARHAMMER OF DRAGON SMITING** ON HIS **SORRY BUTT!**

BUT..BUT..

GIVE ME SOMETHING **WORTHY** OF MY TIME!

WARHAMMER OF DRAG.... WHERE THE HELL DID HE GET THAT?



AND EVEN LATER.....

I **TUNNEL** THROUGH THE **STONE WALL** AT THE RATE OF **FIFTY FEET** PER **COMBAT ROUND** USING MY "**GNARLY GLOVES OF TRANSMUTE STONE TO MUD**" I GOT THOSE FROM A MAN IN **POINDEXTER FALLS**. TRADED A **GOOD HORSE** FOR 'EM.

OH YES! I REMEMBER THAT. LATER THAT **ARABIAN** FETCHED A RECORD PRICE AT **AUCTION**. I THINK **EVERYBODY** WAS HAPPY IN THE END.

WHERE THE HELL WAS I?

OH, I **PREFER** TO DO BUSINESS THAT WAY.



A WEE BIT LATER....

WHAAAHH!!

I WANNA GO HOME!!

OH PA-LEEZE!! THERE'S NO CRYING IN HACKMASTER!!
ESPECIALLY BEHIND THE GAMEMASTER'S SHIELD!!

AWH, C'MON KIDDO! I DIDN'T
MEAN ANYTHING BY IT.

DAMN, BOB! WHATTA YA DOIN' TO THE
POOR KID? EASE UP WHY DON'T YA.

NAAAAA, LET HIM CRY. B.A.
USED TO DO THE SAME
THING. HE'LL GET OVER IT.

**BRAAAHH
WAAA-HAAA!!**

HE'S IN
HYSTERIC!!



A FEW MINUTES LATER....

OH BOO HOO! RUN AWAY! AND TAKE THAT
WEAK-ASS EXCUSE FOR AN ADVENTURE WITH YOU!

POOR THING! MAYBE ONE OF
US SHOULD GO AFTER HIM.

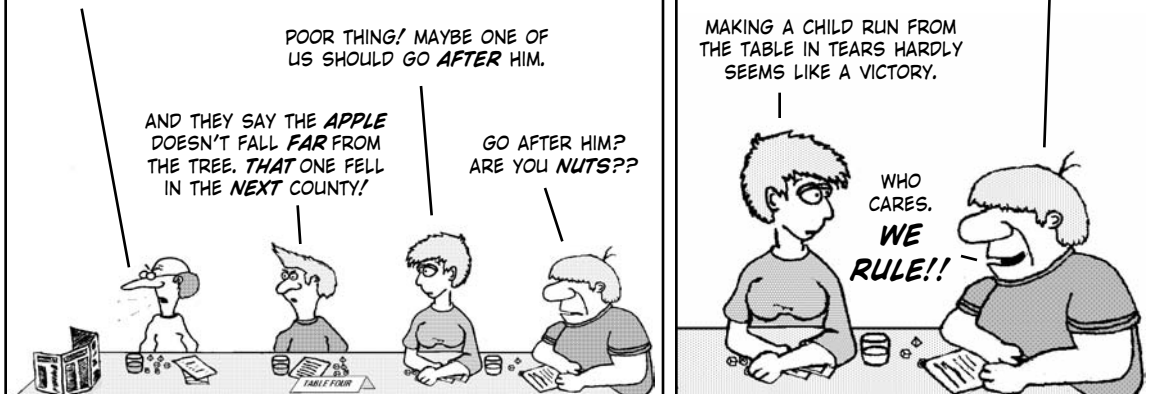
AND THEY SAY THE APPLE
DOESN'T FALL FAR FROM
THE TREE. THAT ONE FELL
IN THE NEXT COUNTY!

GO AFTER HIM?
ARE YOU NUTS??

ACCORDING TO THE TOURNEY RULES IF A GM
LEAVES A GAME-IN-PROGRESS THE PLAYERS
AUTOMATICALLY ADVANCE. ONE MORE WIN
AND WE ARE THE CHAMP-PEENS BABY!

MAKING A CHILD RUN FROM
THE TABLE IN TEARS HARDLY
SEEMS LIKE A VICTORY.

WHO
CARES.
**WE
RULE!!**



DAVE? WHAT'S WRONG?
IS THERE A PROBLEM?

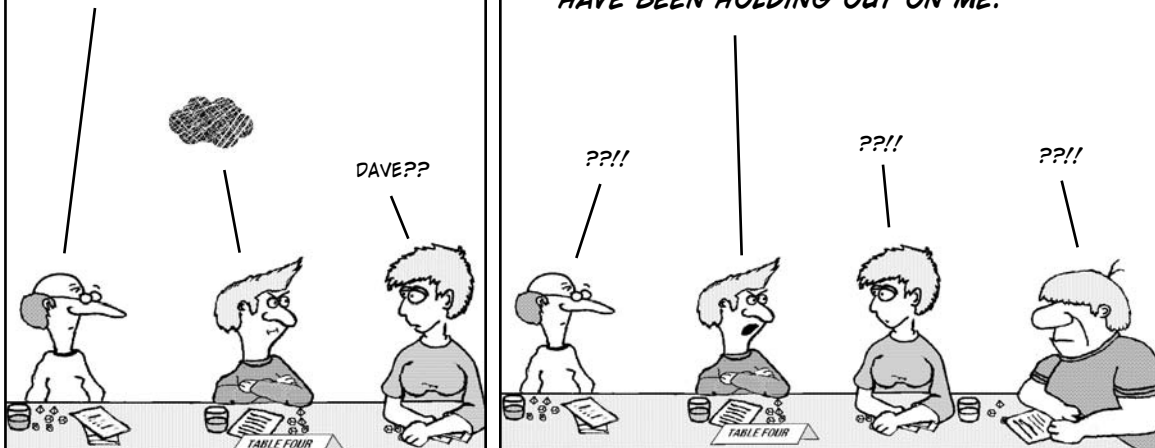
DAVE??

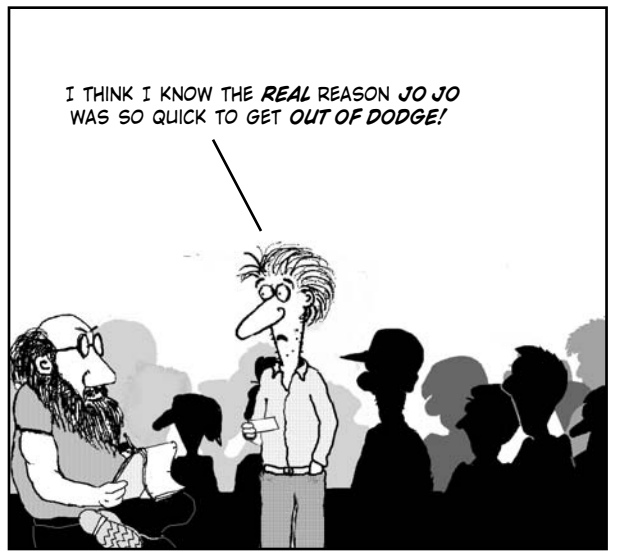
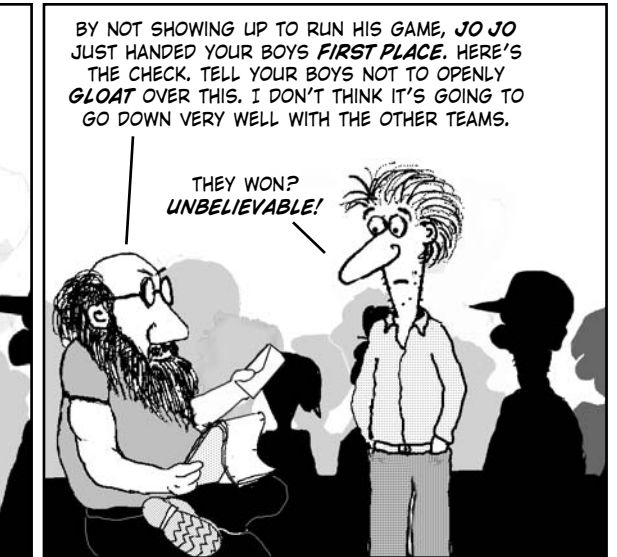
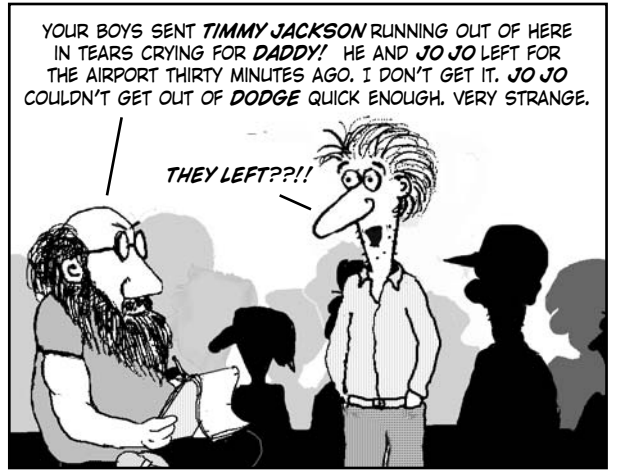
**I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU LOUSY JERKS
HAVE BEEN HOLDING OUT ON ME.**

??!!

??!!

??!!







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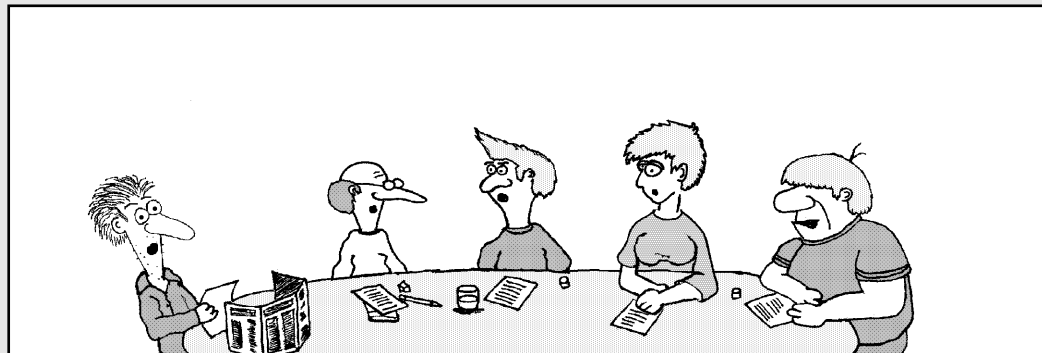
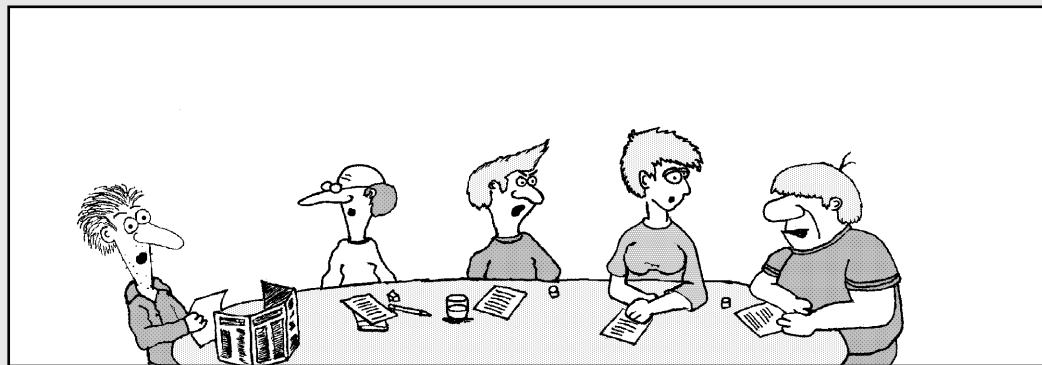
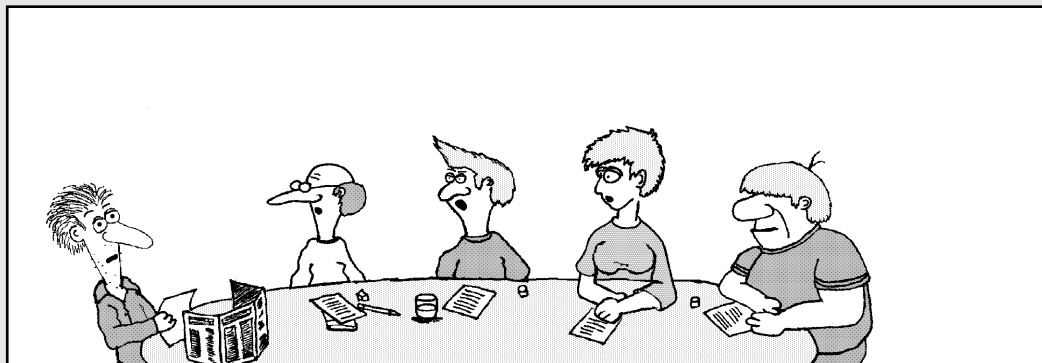
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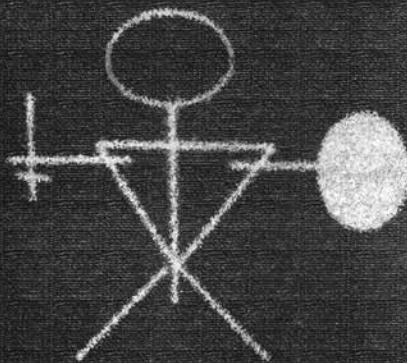


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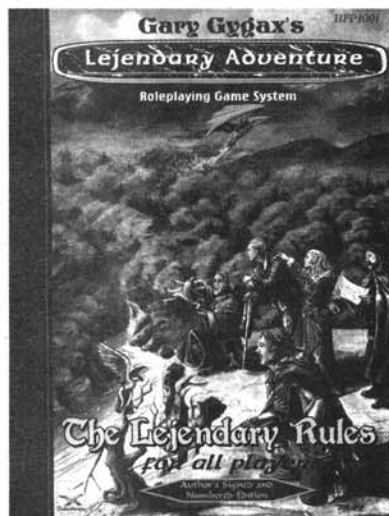
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MAGICAL SWORDS

By Lloyd Brown

Illustrated by George Vrbanic



Magic swords in fiction and literature often become as important as the personalities who wield them. We humanize these weapons: we name them, we sing songs about them, and we love them or hate them. The sword might have the ability to talk, mimic magical spells, or bestow great powers on their wielders. While the powers by themselves might be fascinating, the combination of powers, shape, and use of the sword by the owner combine to make unique weapons that we remember as long as (*or longer*) than the owners.

These magic swords presented here hold a variety of powers, great and small. Each sword's description includes magical powers, but leaves open the subject of sword types so that GMs can change them to fit their campaign. A few of the weapons, however, do have definite types that are defined by their use (*the Sword of Champions, for example, is a modern fencing foil*). Some descriptions also have a short owner's characterization, so that GMs can introduce these weapons through new opponents, allies, or rivals of the player characters.

In these descriptions, "low level" means magical items or spells that generally fall within the weakest third of the GM's game system, "medium level" falls within the middle third, and "high level" magics are the most powerful third of whatever system the GM uses. Since the exact weapon's effects might be low-level in one world and high-level in another, depending on the combat rules, levels of magic generally apply only to the combat bonuses of the weapon in question.

1. **Warder.** The sword's owner doesn't bleed. The character may ignore certain critical hit effects (those that indicate continuing damage from bleeding). The character suffers reduced damage (as low as half) damage from cutting or piercing weapons.

2. **Ymar's Sanctuary.** The owner is immune to unenchanted weapons as long as he holds the sword. Simply carrying the sword on his body or in a sheath confers no special resistance. The character is still susceptible to a wide variety of attack forms, including acid, fire, cold, drowning, and others.

Xomal Falthorn, owner of this weapon, is a decorated soldier in the Imperial Army of Sothalia. While he realizes that he has a potent magical item in his possession, he knows his own limits and knows that he would not survive if he were to strike out on his own and become a warlord or great hero. He has the unanimous respect of the considerable army of Sothalia, a chest full of medals, and a comfortable post in which he sees frequent action.

Xomal's peers, however, often try to find ways to exploit his seeming invulnerability and include themselves in their plans. After years of dealing with this blatant exploitation, Xomal has become cynical of any strangers who attempt to befriend him. He has lost many friends in the four campaigns in which he has fought and yearns for the close friendships he made when he was younger.

Weapon	Combat Ability
1. Warder	Medium
2. Ymar's Sanctuary	High
3. Blade of Solitude	Low
4. Sword of Weighty Thought	Low
5. Mage-bane	Medium
6. Velvet touch	Low
7. Touch of the Plague	Medium
8. Final Fate	Medium
9. Eternal blade	Low
10. Soul-forged	Varies
11. Blood-born	Low
12. Defiler	Medium
13. Protean blade	Varies
14. Dominator	High
15. Bone crusher	Low
16. Faithful Squire	Medium
17. Sword of Champions	Low
18. Ghost blade	Low
19. Thunderer	Low
20. Asp	Low
21. Sword of Timelessness	Medium
22. Invisible Blade	Low
23. Peace blade	High
24. Thorn of the Vine	Low
25. Orator	Low
26. Glass Shard	Low
27. Mindkiller	Medium
28. The Comet's Tail	Low
29. Oakenblade	Low

3. **Blade of Solitude.** All others within 20 feet lose all skill with weapons, using them as if they had never picked up a weapon before. The debilitation affects both friends and enemies, which often forces the character to fight alone as his allies are forced to scampers to safer territory.

4. **Sword of Weighty Thought.** This blade weighs next to nothing. While extremely fast on the strike, it does not gain additional attacks, although it might gain an offensive bonus for speed, depending on the game system.

5. **Mage-bane.** This weapon cuts through purely magical defenses as if they don't exist. Magical improvements to armor still protect the character, but magical shields, which don't actually create a physical barrier, do not hinder the sword's blows.

6. **Velvet Touch.** The sword's cuts cause no pain. Wounds are otherwise normal. Enemies are not likely to flee from taking damage and might not even realize that they are in mortal danger until it is too late. It also makes it possible to attack those who are asleep or otherwise unaware of the wielder's presence.

7. **Touch of the Plague.** Wounds the sword inflicts don't heal naturally and are likely to fester and rot. The sword's cuts can be healed by magic as easily as other wounds.

Kijiro Kiyitake, yamabushi and militant ninja foe, holds the dreaded sword Heijo-ken, passed down through four generations and once used to cut down a renegade daimyo that dared build a castle without the shogun's permission. At the cost of several hundred samurai and o-yoroi (suits of armor), he persuaded a notoriously impious shugenja to grant his ancestral blade with this terrible enchantment.

Kiyitake has learned to use the ninja's skills in order to fight them. He is especially fond of escape tools, like catrops and flash powder. He often sneaks into a guarded place, cuts his enemy a few times with his sword and retreats into the shadows. He has started a virtual plague among those who use ninja in the southern part of the island, starting rumors about curses from the gods and instigating treachery among the ninjas and their employers.

8. **Final Fate.** Any who fall victim to this weapon are permanently dead. They cannot be resurrected or otherwise brought back to life, except by direct divine intervention. If a deity does intercede directly and restore any character to life, the intervention shatters this weapon immediately. It cannot be re-forged or re-enchanted.

9. **Eternal Blade.** The weapon's main usefulness is in its immunity to rot, decay, aging, acid, etc. and other destructive forces. Extreme force may break it, but it is far stronger than normal swords. It resists disenchantment directed solely at it (but not targeted on an area), disintegration, and transformation to other materials.

10. **Soul-forged.** The blade's magical properties only function for a certain person. The properties might include only a standard bonus to attacks or might extend to other exceptional abilities like the ones described in this article.

11. **Blood-born.** A blood-born weapons receives its final cooling in a mixture that includes the blood of a certain species or individual. It causes double normal damage when used against that type of creature.

12. **Defiler.** The defiler rots vegetable life and makes animals sick with its rotten smell. The foul odor is unnoticeable when the weapon is sheathed, pungent when drawn, and becomes intolerably potent when the sword is used in battle. Any plant life within 10 feet of the drawn blade begins to turn brown and dry, dying within an hour or so. Plant or vegetable creatures take additional damage (as a medium-level weapon). Characters within 10 feet (including the user) might suffer minor penalties to one aspect of combat unless they can't smell (undead, for example, wouldn't even notice). The character might find himself more easily followed by hounds or other creatures and often sees his friends begin to distance themselves. Some bards call this weapon "the skunk blade."

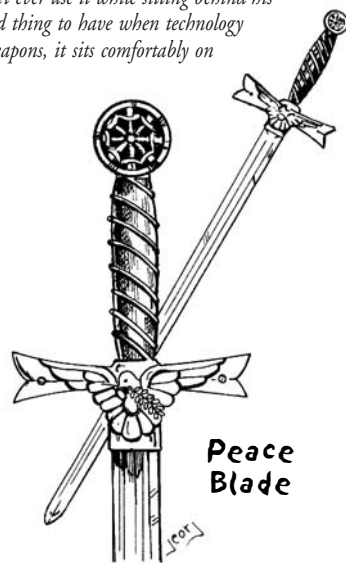
13. **Protean Blade.** This unusual weapon becomes stronger with its user. The GM might use levels, combat dice, weapon skill, experience points, wisdom, age, or some other factor as a guideline in determining the sword's power. In general, a low-level character has a low-power magical item. A well-experienced warrior of heroic past and skill might gain a one-of-a-kind magical weapon that complements his abilities to create a single deadly fighting force.

Ferina Toorla is a hotshot smuggler and blockade runner, flying one of the fastest light traders in the galaxy. Aside from reckless flying and big talk,

she has few real skills. She does have a knack for trouble, though, that leads to an exciting, if not downright dangerous life.

She inherited her sword from her grandfather, who gave it to her because he knew her own father wouldn't ever use it while sitting behind his desk. While it seems like an odd thing to have when technology has given her so many other weapons, it sits comfortably on her side and she likes the rogue image it gives her. The saber is light and quick, and the surprise factor has helped her out before. Nobody expects a drawn sword, after all.

It doesn't seem to be the awesome relic of power her grandfather described, though. He was obviously lying about it cutting through a frigate's hull, but it can certainly go through a person easily enough. Just a week ago, in fact, it severed a cable that she would have sworn was too thick for the blade to cut. Maybe it was her desperation or the adrenaline rush, but she plans to ask her grandfather to tell her a little more about it.



14. **Dominator.** When the Dominator "hits" an enemy, it passes through the victim, causing no damage. The GM records damage inflicted by this weapon separately. In reality, the weapon is affecting the character's willpower and identity rather than his physical form. When the victim would have died under normal combat rules, he becomes subject to the will of the sword user as if under the influence of a medium power mind-affecting magic. The lost statistics return gradually over a few hours. The stronger will the victim has, the sooner he breaks the magic.

15. **Bone crusher.** The bone crusher is a cutting weapon that deanimates skeletal creatures. Creatures of this type are automatically destroyed by a solid hit (half damage or better), although they can resist the weapon's magic.

16. **Faithful Squire.** When drawn, pieces of plate armor appear on user, if the user is currently unarmored. The armor is normal, non-magical iron or steel plate armor only and provides no magical bonuses. The sword's main advantages are surprise and a reduction in the weight a traveling warrior must carry. The armor appears at the rate of a piece or two each combat turn, so the character's armor rating climbs slowly until it reaches maximum protection in about 6 or 7 turns.

17. **Sword of Champions.** The enemy's dexterity slowly reduces with each touch. The loss of precision causes reduced chances to hit the Champion and the lowered dodging ability might result in a reduced chance to avoid the sword's blows as well.

The Sword of Champions belongs to Martin Van DeVeer, head instructor of the Manhattan Fencing School. Despite the sword's talents, he has still not won a national title in the last seven years of trying. He is beginning to think that maybe he is not a fantastic swordsman (which is true) and fears what that might mean for his enrollment if others should realize it, too. He needs his current high enrollment to feed the lifestyle to which he has become accustomed and would do anything to keep paying students in his class.

18. **Ghost blade.** Can hurt immaterial creatures as if they were material. When used against corporeal creatures, the blade passes right through them, causing no harm. Mortals feel a momentary chill from the blade and might think they were subjected to some mysterious effect and break off combat. Generally, enemies with a high morale shake off the weird feeling and continue fighting, but religious beliefs, superstition, or knowledge of magic might affect any such decision.

19. **Thunderer.** When the Thunderer strikes an enemy, he is stunned and deafened for 1-8 combat turns and all fragile items on his person must resist or crack.

20. **Asp.** The Asp has a poisonous touch, inflicting a low-level toxin on the enemy, in addition to cutting or stabbing damage. The enemy has a chance to resist the sword's special attack, but it must do so with each hit.

21. **Sword of Timelessness.** The owner of this special sword doesn't age. The sword ages instead. When the owner no longer carries the sword, he ages normally. If the sword is destroyed, the current owner and each previous owner ages three days for every day he held the sword. This weapon can be a great liability which clever enemies might exploit; conversely, the PCs might learn about a long-lived enemy. The sword might be the enemy's only weakness, requiring them to destroy the sword in order to defeat the enemy.

22. **Invisible Blade.** This unseen weapon might gain a low bonus on attacks, depending on the system and the enemy's sense. When used against an invisible opponent, however, the blade automatically hits with each attempt. If the user wishes, the sword can force the target to become visible, but then it no longer automatically hits. The enemy might be easier for others to hit with blade or spell, however.

23. **Peace Blade.** When drawn, all other swords within 30 feet are affected. None of these affected swords may come within five feet of another sword within the area of effect. This magic makes fighting extremely difficult. Other weapons are not affected, which could seriously hinder the user's allies if the enemy has natural or secondary weapons (or the other way around).

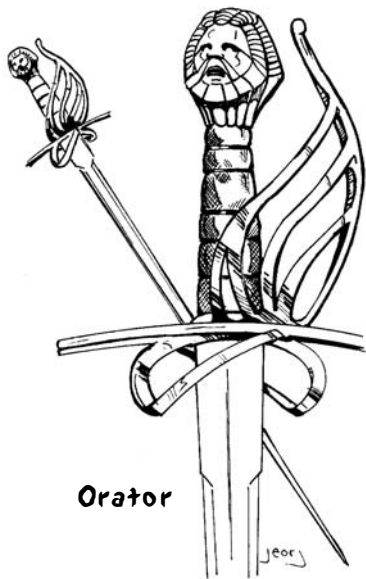
Father Antonio Gueverra is in the military only to heal, not to harm. He uses the Peace Blade to grant him safe passage through a battlefield, where he can tend to the wounded and evacuate those who need more help than he can provide. His voice and compassion do as much to help the wounded as his skill. Countless men have died unafraid with Father Gueverra's hands in theirs.

At night, Father Gueverra has nightmares about the terrible scenes in which he has taken part. At times, he sees himself overcome with anger and striking out with his sword, maiming and killing. In the morning, he refuses to touch any weapon other than his Peace Blade, lest his nightmares come true.

24. **Thorn of the Vine.** If the Thorn draws the blood of any creature, the being struck becomes slightly intoxicated, with subsequent hits causing greater intoxication. While the initial hits might not be felt

because of the immediacy of combat, they affect the creature normally if combat is ended. The target first begins to lose concentration, experiences slurred speech, and loses dexterity. Worse effects include the inability to make sound decisions, increasing loss of motor skills, and eventually unconsciousness. The condition lasts as long as if it had been acquired through normal consumption.

25. **Orator.** The sword speaks with the skill of a con man and has the wisdom of a judge. While weak in power, its advice makes it more valuable than many other weapons. While sage, the sword is not infallible.



The final decision on any subject, when one must be made, still falls on the owner. The sword's knowledge should be roughly equivalent to the maximum allowed to most humans, or only very slightly higher.

26. **Glass Shard.** The weapon's blade is made of magically hardened glass. It has the ability to dispel an illusion once per day as if the wielder were a wizard who had that ability. If the sword succeeds, the visual (and other) effects seem to be drawn into the sword (the image looks much like a bed sheet being pulled by the center into a small container).

On the very next combat turn, the weapon disperses the contained effect in a brilliant flash of light, blinding anyone within 60 feet for 2-12 combat turns. The user may resist the blindness with a 10 percent bonus (or +2 if the game mechanics use a d20). Other creatures within the area resist normally.

27. **Mindkiller.** The touch of this weapon disrupts the mind's ability to access certain areas. Characters struck, who attempt to use psionic or psychic abilities, must make a resistance check in order to activate each use. This restriction continues until the creature is healed of all wounds inflicted by the sword.

The Mindkiller's usual place is on the hip of the Disruptor, a villainous assassin of curious history and notorious vices. While his cost is staggering, the Disruptor does not accept final payment until his kill is made. He attacks only those who might be susceptible to his sword's touch, then uses his special powers to absorb the psionic ability of his victim while he is unable to defend himself.

The Disruptor has slain several minor heroes, but has only managed to drain a few of their minds; the rest tried to fight physically and he had to kill them before he could drain them. He would love to be commissioned to kill a physically weak, but mentally-powerful psychic, so that he could gain that person's abilities in addition to his own. He is also seeking a secondary weapon or tool to help protect him, because he has discovered that the Mindkiller is not foolproof in its use.

28. **The Comet's Tail.** This weapon leaves behind a white trail of light when swung, either in battle or simply as a flourish. This strange effect is slightly hypnotic, causing all enemies within 30 feet to stare at the pretty lights. All such distracted combatants fight with a minor penalty. More importantly, they might not notice surreptitious movement behind them, they might fail to see a wizard readying a spell, or they might hesitate before pursuing a fleeing foe. In general, most combatants stand a 20 percent chance of not noticing something they otherwise would have.

29. **Oakenblade.** This sword of wood is actually well balanced and serves well in normal combat. When used against a vampire, however, the piercing tip penetrates the heart on any critical hit, usually killing the vampire. In most systems, removing the sword again allows the vampire to recover, so this sword might only be useable once against any given vampire. The GM should decide the specifics of the effect if the game system does not define any rulings on the killing of vampires.



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The Shields
of
Bandran
DAY

ON THE SOUTH SHORE OF THE BANADER RIVER, JUST ABOVE A FALLS LIES THE SLEEPY VILLAGE OF LEW DOWN. GAREN AND POSEN DECIDED TO LODGE HERE UNTIL LORALE, INCAPACITATED BY POISONOUS WO-LAR-GRAS WOUNDS, COULD TRAVEL ONCE AGAIN. TO THE WEST, ACROSS THE RIVER, SPRAWLS THEIR DESTINATION, THE GREAT FREE CITY OF P'BAPAR.

I SPOKE WITH THE FERRYMAN. HE'S MAKING A CROSSING AT MIDDAY WITH A SMALL SHIPMENT AND HAS MORE THAN ENOUGH ROOM FOR US AS WELL.

IT MEANS LEAVING A LITTLE LATER THAN HOPED... BUT WITH LORALE STILL NOT AT FULL STRENGTH, I SUPPOSE IT CANNOT BE HELPED.



LET US RETURN TO OUR ROOM. LORALE MUST BE FAMISHED.

SHE WILL BE GLAD TO HEAR WE WILL FINALLY LET HER TRAVEL, EVEN IF IT IS BY FERRY.



UNBEKNOWNST TO POSEN AND GAREN, THEIR WORDS FALL ON UNFRIENDLY EARS.

HAVING GARNERED THE REQUESTED INFORMATION, THE CLOAKED FIGURE SLINKS AWAY...



TO A SECRET RENDEZVOUS.



I BEAR NEWS... THE THREE VILNA GUARDS THEY CROSS THE RIVER TODAY BY FERRY.



EXCELLENT. I'LL SIGNAL THE TROOPS ON THE OTHER SHORE TO EXPECT THEM. YOU STAY CLOSE ON THEIR HEELS IN CASE THEY CHANGE THEIR PLANS...

I COULD NOT HEAR THE EXACT TIME... I'LL GO ON THE FERRY TO SEE...



NO! ONCE THEY'RE ON BOARD THEY MUST CROSS. THEN THEY WILL BE OURS!



WHY SUCH AN INTEREST IN THE THREE... ARE THEY CARRYING SOMETHING? WHAT IS IT?



THAT IS NOT YOUR CONCERN... YOU WILL BE WELL REWARDED, THAT IS ALL YOU NEED KNOW.

I WAS TOLD REWARDED BEYOND MY DREAMS... WELL, I DREAM VERY VIVIDLY!

OUR TRIO PREPARES TO DEPART.

LORALE, GAREN, THE NEXT TIME YOU GIVE ME A CONCOCTION, LESSEN THE DOSAGE. I AM STIFF FROM ALL THE SLEEP I'VE HAD.

COME ON YOU TWO, LET'S SHAKE OFF THE DUST FROM THIS ONE HORSE HAMLET.

FOUR WHOLE DAYS IN LEW DOWNS! THERE'S NOTHING HERE...NO GAMBLING HOUSES, NO BROTHEL AND THE BEER, YUCK! IT'S WATERED DOWN SO AS YOU CAN'T GET DRUNK!

WHOMEVER DEDICATED THIS PLACE TO TALADARI THE HOLY MOTHER WASN'T THINKING ABOUT ATTRACTING NEWCOMERS AND OUT-OF-TOWNERS.

BUT THERE'S OUR RIDE OUT OF HERE!

LOOKS LIKE WE'RE TO HAVE SOME COMPANY ON THE WAY ACROSS...

WELL, IT MIGHT MAKE IT A LITTLE MORE INTERESTING.

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

coming this winter:

STAR C•R•U•S•A•D•E



FADING SUNS



The jumpgates to the barbarian worlds have opened up and Emperor Alexius' Questing Knights strive alongside adventurers, seekers and scoundrels to carve out their fates amid the stars.

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STAR CRUSADE MAY BE A **NEW FADING SUNS** CAMPAIGN SETTING BUT BRIAN IS ALL OVER IT ALREADY. (SIGH) I JUST CAN'T WIN.

A **VULDROK** TREATY! NOW EVERYONE IN THE FREE UNIVERSE WILL THINK CAPTAIN DAVE T. DIRK IS A WUSS!

I'M IMPRESSED BRIAN. THE HAWKWOOD FLEET HAS SURRENDERED WITHOUT A SINGLE MESON CANNON BEING FIRED.

WHADDA YOU MEAN BRIAN SIGNED MY NAME TO A SECRET ALLIANCE???? BUT I WANNA SLAUGHTER THIS **VULDROK SHIP!!**

I KNEW THAT SECRET ALLIANCE I NEGOTIATED WITH THE **VULDROK RAIDERS** WOULD PROVE BENEFICIAL.





Brian Burke sent in this rendition of the 'evil' Sara just after mashing B.A.'s GoreMunya city adventure set.



The mysterious artist known only as "AquaMarine" turned in this piece at Origins 1999. Beware of the Squeaky Dice

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KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE™ CHOP TIL YOU DROP

Special Tie-In Rules that allow the KODT characters to run in MAUL OF AMERICA™

By Jim Dietz

As improbable as it may sound, Nitro was able to convince Bob and the Knights (*once again*) that there was a secret Hackmaster Society in Muncie and that they've been running Live-Action Hackmaster events. This time, however, Nitro didn't send the Knights off to a biker bar (*Hawgwalters*). This time he lured them down to the Muncie Mall, dressed in character. According to the cryptic note Bob received, the game was slated to begin at 11 pm.

The Knights (*Bob, Dave, Sara, Brian, and B.A.*) showed up only to find the mall to be deserted. Confused, they sat down in the food court wondering if they had made a mistake. Perhaps there was another Muncie Mall? Maybe Bob read the note wrong?

And so they sat and waited, arguing over which was more lethal, the Fireball of Infinite Sidewinding or a thief using two +4 Daggers of Shredding coupled with the seldom used "Filet" skill from HackJournal #15 (*Secondary Culinary Skills*). Then the gang noticed other people were finally showing up to the game. They thought it strange that they were ALL dressed up like Zombies. But, as Bob pointed out, "Man, this the experience point potential is looking pretty sweet. This is MUCH better than that lame-ass ORCS AT THE GATES adventure B.A. ran us through.

As the "other players" approached, the Knights realized something was terribly wrong. These weren't fellow gamer-types dressed in scratch-built latex zombie suits. These guys were the real thing - REAL ZOMBIES!!

"We're in some real DEEP kimshee!" yelled Brian as he readied his staff. There was no reply. Everyone was running for their lives.

INTRODUCTION

To play this KODT- Tie-In to MAUL OF AMERICA™ you will need a copy of the the game. You'll also need to photocopy the special cards on the following page and add them to the standard card decks in MOA. (You'll want to enlarge them when you copy them and print them off on cardstock.) Up to six players can play; one person will need to control the zombies while the other 1-5 players try and escape.

WINNING

A Knight wins by escaping from the mall without dying. To escape the Knight must acquire one of all four item types (*food, medikit, weapon, ammo*) AND must spend at least one turn doing nothing in Weird Pete's Game Store (*how often do you get to go in a game store with no one else there?*).

The zombie player wins by killing all of the Knights -OR- by preventing any Knight from escaping for 2 hours (*of real time*).

SPECIAL SETUP RULES

For this mall, the board with "Weird Pete's" game store must be one of the boards used.

The Zombie player begins with 10 zombies on the board, but these zombies must begin at least 10 action points of movement away from the Knights.

The players will also need to take the cards given here, cut them out and mount them on their own sheets of cardstock or cardboard.

THE OTHER SPECIAL RULE

Zombies have an inherent fear of "Weird Pete's" store. After all, where else can you find mint-condition copies of the Hackmaster Combating the Undead supplement? Zombies cannot enter "Weird Pete's" store if there are more than two Knights in the store at once. If a zombie is already in the store when this occurs, it must leave the store and cannot do anything else until it is outside of Pete's store.

CHARACTER ABILITIES

The Knights each have special abilities.

BOB: Has been on a fitness kick and to simulate Knuckles' Boots of Enhanced Speed, brought his rollerblades to the mall. If Bob rolls doubles, he may roll again and add the rolls together to determine the number of actions he gets. If Bob does this, he cannot enter any stores during the turn, but must remain in the corridors.

DAVE: Karma extends across games and realities. Where would Dave be without a kewl weapon? Dave may begin play in possession of the Chainsaw...the closest thing Muncie Mall has to a Hackmaster +12.

SARA: Sara is a conscientious shopper. Because of this careful attitude, when she searches a store for survival gear, she may draw two cards and choose which card she wants to play. The other card immediately goes unused to the discard pile.

BRIAN: Because B.A. has been working the past few weeks, Brian has been honing up on his Quake and Doom II skills. Thus, Brian gets +1 with any rolls he makes while using a gun or flamethrower. This does not affect whether the weapon runs out of ammunition, i.e. if the roll is a "1" and the gun is out of ammo, Brian's +1 modifier will not keep the weapon from running out of ammo.

B.A.: B.A. is prepared for any gaming situation. This is no different. He already owns Hackmaster Live-Action Survival Guide (*including the bootlegged version*). B.A. does not need to spend a turn in "Weird Pete's" to win the game. In addition, when B.A. draws a card, the Zombie Controller is not allowed to draw a card.

**Jim Dietz of Jolly Roger Games is the designer of Maul of America, Chopping Maul and Orcs at the Gates.*

<p style="text-align: center;">WEIRD PETE</p> <p><i>"Hey, this ORCS AT THE GATES module is selling like spamcakes. You've gotta try it."</i></p> <p>What Pete is doing in the mall at this point is anybody's guess. You may play this if you occupy the game store. Roll one die.</p> <p>1: Open for business. Until another card is played, zombies may enter the game store freely. 2-3: Doing the books. Pete doesn't want to be bothered. No effect. 4-5: One of those zombie punks groaned when Pete was talking about "the good ol' days." Roll 1d6 and remove that number of zombies from the mall. 6: Pete joins you! Keep this card beside you. You may use it to discard one wound. Until discarded, you receive +2 to all attack rolls, but -1 to the number of actions you have available.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ROLLER BLADES</p> <p><i>"Bob, those are kewl. You rock. Hey, how'd you get that bruise on your forehead, dude??"</i></p> <p>If a player has roller blades and he rolls doubles when determining actions, he may roll again and add the results. Using the blades are NOT mandatory. If you use them you cannot enter any stores, but must remain in the corridors.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">KOO-KOO-KACHOO</p> <p><i>"I am the diceman." —Andy Warhol</i></p> <p>The Zombie Controller may play this card only during his turn. Until it is his turn again, no Knight may use his special ability. This also means B.A. cannot escape during this turn, since he will be lacking his Hackmaster Survival Guide.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">EAT ON THE RUN</p> <p><i>"Hey, B.A., aren't you still working the drive-thru down at Haskell's Spinach Emporium?"</i></p> <p>You may play this card on any turn where you have entered the food court (<i>the yellow central area</i>). You may heal all your wounds immediately.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">HACKMASTER +12</p> <p><i>"Nah, it couldn't be... Could it?"</i></p> <p>Life works in mysterious ways. You have found the mystical Hackmaster +12. This counts as a weapon (<i>for Escape purposes</i>).</p> <p>You may spend one action and attack a zombie in an adjacent square. The zombie is hit if you roll a 2-6.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">A JOLLY GOOD TIME</p> <p><i>"Jolly Roger?... Jolly Blackburn?... there must be some sort of conspiracy."</i></p> <p>To use this card, you must make a reference to a Nitro quote. It must be known to the other players.</p> <p>When you do this, you may then force each player to discard either a Player Card or Equipment card. You get to choose which type is discarded and the Knight chooses which card is discarded.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SARA'S BOYFRIEND</p> <p><i>"Man, I can't believe she'd choose a guy over gaming. I mean how stupid can a girl get???"</i></p> <p>Sara's boyfriend wanted to surprise her by coming to the game. A player with this card may do one of the following:</p> <p>1: Discard this card and take any equipment card from the Discard pile. 2: Discard this card and heal one wound. 3: Give this card to Sara. She must give you (at random) one player card AND one equipment card.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">HACKMASTER GUIDE TO URBAN ZOMBIE ROLE-PLAYING</p> <p><i>"Every gamer knows that the dice are the key. Never touch another man's dice. No force in the world will stop any payback you receive"</i></p> <p>At the beginning of your turn, you must roll one die. If the roll is a 1, quality control at Hard Eight failed and the book has fallen apart. Discard this card.</p> <p>While you have this card, you receive +1 to all dice you roll AND you may not be attacked by more than two zombies per turn.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">I'M A GAMER, NOT AN ATHLETE</p> <p><i>"AD&D is a demonstration sport at the 2006 Olympics in Turin."</i></p> <p>Play this card at the end of your turn. During the next turn, all players subtract the number of Equipment cards they possess from their die roll for determining actions. If the modified number is 0 or less, the player loses his turn.</p> <p>This card is discarded at the beginning of your next turn.</p>

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“Rumble for the Dinner Table”

A KODT Miniatures Game based on
THE WAY OF WAR™

By Bill Aguiar



So you broke down and bought a set of those really kewl KODT miniatures you've been seeing in the ads. You've spent hours painting them, giving careful attention to the smallest detail. Now you gleam with pride as friends admire them on your shelf where they occupy a place of honor in your miniatures shrine.

"They look great!" somebody tells you, "But wouldn't it be kewl if you could actually use them to game with?" You nod your head in agreement.

"Yeah! That would be too kewl for words!"

While there are no "official" rules for using the KODT miniatures in combat, you can easily use *The Way of War's* universal set of miniatures rules to do so. With this article, not only can you rumble with the Knights, but you'll also get an introduction to *The Way of War* rules. (Yes, I'm being all sinister here.)

PRELUDE TO A RUMBLE

First, you need to have some sort of excuse to use the minis. In this scenario, a combination of B.A.'s near weekly breakdowns, Sara's disgust over having her carefully-constructed and emotionally relevant character reduced to merely being the one wearing the chainmail bikini, and Brian's 55-minute discourse on the habitat, range and pack psychology of a bush-tailed, three-eyed, tree wallaby (which was idly mentioned in the flavor text of a recent adventure) has been the latest impetus of the group's threatened break-up.

This time, what has stopped them all from merely leaving the game is the disagreement over how to split up the club's treasury. Unfortunately, the club treasury is currently empty, having just been spent to purchase another dinner table to replace one that had recently been damaged during a 'spirited discussion' over a rules' call. Now a table is very difficult either to split (each one would get what, a leg?) or to share (do you want to drag a kitchen table around the town every other week?).

There was only one rational way to handle the situation, but as usual Sara's idea got outvoted and it was decided that a grudge match (Bob's contribution) would be held in the backyard, with the kitchen table both the goal and the prize. Unfortunately, Johnny Kizinski somehow got wind of this (probably due to the plan by Brian to sell tickets to the event in order to fund improvements to the dead character's memorial) and demanded that he be allowed to participate because over the years he had certainly paid for his share of tables. While Sara did not know him and did not buy into his reasoning, the guys (especially Bob and Dave who were still smarting over the 'dagger incident') merely wanted the excuse to pummel him for their own amusement.

The appointed day came, the crowds of people gathered, temporarily forsaking Weird Pete's, (mainly because Pete left Squirrely in charge while

he himself went to the Rumble. No one likes to deal with Squirrely when he's cranky.) They gathered in B.A.'s backyard, throngs of them, clustered around the edges, with the kitchen table standing alone, unyielding in the midst of the yard. At the appointed time, the Knights, past and present, emerged to find out who is going to stroll/walk/crawl away with the kitchen table, and who is going to dish out the most damage to each other. They're here to take names and kick ass.

GETTING STARTED

First off, you must form teams of miniatures. Unlike a lot of other miniatures games, where you have squads and so on, *Rumble of the Dinner Table* is limited by the fact that there are currently only six miniatures available, and each one of them is unique, so it's not like you can have a force of two Saras and a Brian wandering around. Unless you have handy access to a cloning lab, of course, but it's doubtful there is one in Muncie. Here are the suggestions for teams/sides. Of course, since this is based on a universal system that allows you to create your own battles, these are less hard and fast rules and more like suggestions.

2 PLAYERS

Player 1: Johnnie, Bob, Dave Player 2: B.A., Sara, Brian

3 PLAYERS

Player 1: Bob, Dave Player 2: Brian, Johnnie Player 3: B.A., Sara

4 PLAYERS

Player 1: B.A. Player 2: Bob Player 3: Dave Player 4: Brian

5 PLAYERS

Player 1: B.A. Player 2: Bob Player 3: Dave Player 4: Brian
Player 5: Sara

6 PLAYERS

Do you really need it explained to you? Each player gets one miniature, randomly chosen.

* Here's an alternative suggestion for you to try while waiting for your official KODT miniatures. Photocopy just one page out of a KODT magazine, and cut out just the faces of the Knights in a circle shape around an inch and a half across. If nothing else, page 40 of issue #34 of KODT has head shots of all of them, including Johnny.

What are the Knight's basic skills and attributes?

Each of the Knights have the following basic skills, or attributes.

Initiative: The ability of the model to react to situations on the field and take charge of them.

Movement: Standard number of inches the model can move in a turn.

Personal: The Attack value of the miniature in Personal Combat.

Range: The Attack value of the miniature in Range Combat.

Speed: Number of Actions the Knight has each turn.

Defense: The Defense value of the Knight.

Damage: How much Damage the Knight can take and still function.

Soldiery: How accomplished a soldier the model is, or in this case how used to fighting the Knight is.

Each particular Knight have these attributes;

B.A.

I:6 M:6 P:2 R:5 Spd:4 Def:4 Dam:4 Sol:5

BOB

I:4 M:6 P:5 R:3 Spd:4 Def:3 Dam:4 Sol:6

BRIAN

I:5 M:6 P:3 R:6 Spd:4 Def:5 Dam:4 Sol:5

DAVE

I:3 M:6 P:6 R:2 Spd:4 Def:3 Dam:4 Sol:6

JOHNNY

I:5 M:6 P:4 R:3 Spd:4 Def:5 Dam:4 Sol:5

SARA

I:5 M:6 P:4 R:4 Spd:4 Def:4 Dam:4 Sol:6

No, none of the Knights have superhuman or subhuman Attributes. Which means they are a lot alike. (*Is that really a bad thing? Wanna tell them that? Hub? Do you?*)

What are the Knight's basic weapons?

Since this is a miniature wargame, there are some weapons that they need to use. On the other hand, these are still the Knights, and it's not like they'll bring chain-guns onto the field, even if they had the slightest clue how to get their mitts on one. So their weapons are limited to what they would normally have some experience with. Here are some basic information about the Attributes of weapons.

Range: How many inches the weapon can inflict damage out to. If a weapon has a range of one inch, it can only be used in Personal Combat.

Damage: How much Damage the weapon inflicts.

Actions: How many Actions the weapon requires to operate.

Attack: Any modification the weapon has to the wielder's Attack value.

And here is the information on the Knights' weapons.

Thrown Dice: All of the Knights have a large supply of dice, with a deadly assortment of four sides, which can be thrown with much enthusiasm, if not any skill. The stats for the Thrown Dice are:

Range: 6 inches **Actions:** 1 pt of Speed

Damage: Reduces target model Damage total by one

The Ol' Grab-Smack-Rattle (A.K.A. The Smack): Done often to bring recalcitrant fellow players back in line. In this case it is

being used to push them back behind the line.

Range: 1 inch **Actions:** 2 points of Speed

Damage: Reduces target model Damage total by 2.

What is each Knight's special ability?

Each of the Knights has a special ability which can either be a special skill, equipment or weapon.

B.A. FELTON

"They don't call it a GM Shield for nothing."



Special Ability:
GM Screen

B.A. carried his badge of office onto the field with him — the GM screen. He has discovered that it actually has a tactical use, in that it blocks flying dice. Before B.A. rolls a Defense roll against an Attack using dice, he can first roll 1d10 plus Initiative, which represents his ability to flip up the screen in time. If he succeeds, a dice attack is repulsed without any further need to roll; if he fails, he still gets his normal Defense roll.

BOB HERZOG

"Hey, it's just used for hoof and mouth disease!"



Special Ability:
Freaky-Ass Cattle Equipment

Bob is still working for the **Hoe & Harness Insurance Company**, and just before the bout, he was called to look at some cattle problems. So he has some indescribable device with him, which he swears up and down isn't as bad as it looks, but instantly gives everyone else the creeps merely looking at it and speculating what, exactly, it does. Bob has decided to capitalize on it, and snuck it onto the field with him. Bob can use it exactly like the *Smack attack*, but if he hits someone with it and does damage, they must do a **Soldiery** roll in the **Soldiery** phase and beat a 10. If they fail they must spend the next turn running around and screaming their heads off before trying to roll again the next turn. Then, they receive a bonus of +2 for every turn they have spent screaming. And no, they can't use this as an opportunity to run over other characters in an effort to do damage. They simply run around in area within four inches of the place where they were struck, until they manage to recover from the icky, slimy feeling they got from that thing.

BRIAN VANHOOSE

"Arrrrrrggghh!!!"



Special Ability:
Table Flipper

Brian has a lot of experience flipping tables, to the point that the rest of the Knights try not to provoke him while at the table for fear of having a table upside their heads. Of course now, that's a useful ability to have, and it's half of the reason he's rushing so

hard to get to the table is so that he can wield it. If Brian is within one inch of the table, he can pick it up and flip it up to three inches away. Anyone whose base is underneath the table has to **Defend** against an **Attack** roll by Brian, with their **Defense** reduced by one. This takes one action, and it instantly **KOs** anyone who fails to resist it. Even those who do manage to resist still suffer 1 **Damage**. If someone currently has possession of the table, Brian can still flip the table, though he must succeed in a **Soldiery** contest with the current possessor of the table, with the highest-rolling player gaining possession of the table. Ties result in no one having possession of the table.

DAVE BOZWELL

"Behold the power!"



Special Ability:

Hackmaster +12

Dave and his **Hackmaster +12**. He never feels complete without it. So when he heard that a *'Hackmaster Live!'* game was in the offing, he constructed his masterpiece, a finely-balanced and humongous foam sword, with the legendary *"Hackmaster +12"* emblazoned on it, just in case no one was able to recognize it. But Dave has a better use in mind for it now. It has enough of a solid core, (completely illegal according to the **Hackmaster Live! Rules** of course,) to add a certain amount of realism to the game. Enough realism, in fact, to smack someone silly. Which, of course, Dave will do, repeatedly and without compunction. Fortunately, since it is not an official piece of **Hackmaster Live!** equipment, it lacks the fine craftsmanship of the typical **Hard Eight** product. It's so large and cumbersome it reduces Dave's chances to hit, but Dave considers the damage advantage well worth the effort.

Range: 1 inch **Actions:** 2 points of Speed

Damage: Reduces target model Damage total by 3.

Attack: Using this weapon reduces the player's **Attack** roll by 2.

JOHNNY KAZINSKI

"Brian did it!"



Special Ability:

The Blame Game

Johnny has not played in _____ years, not since that day that his very dice turned against him. But he still has his skill of setting people up. How else do you think he rose to a position of power at the **Big Juices**? Whenever he **Throws Dice** at someone and does **Damage**, he may roll 1d10 plus his **Soldiery** statistic, and if the total is greater than the 1d10 roll plus the **Soldiery** statistic of the target, he can shift the blame of the attack to another miniature of his choosing. The affected miniature must move toward the character the blame was cast on for the attack, and they must attack until the blamed character's damage has been reduced by at least one, at which point the original victim of Johnny is free to do whatever he wishes.

There is a risk to Johnny when he does this though. If he rolls a one on the 1d10 while trying to shift blame, his machinations are revealed, and both victims, the one who was attacked and the one who was to be blamed, advance on Johnny until each has reduced his Damage by one. They can do more of course, but they need to do at least that much. And since the person who has the table has a good reason to resist being distracted, he adds four to his *Soldiery* roll to see if he blames the wrong person.

SARA FELTON

"Yeah, so I'm a girl. Wanna make something of it?!"

Special Ability:

Parley

Sara's fabled, and often maligned, parley skill has the ability to stun opponents unfortunate enough to come up against her. Failure to save will cause an opponent to be unable to perform any action for one turn. If the opponent is Dave, he is not only stunned, but Sara will make an enraged attack upon his shirt, causing one point of damage if he fails to defend. B.A. and Sara, however, will not attack each other. Blood is thicker than water after all.

The Set-up

To play *Rumble of the Dinner Table* you will need a flat surface around two feet square. Place a quarter three inches from one edge, centered between the corners. This represents the Dinner Table that everyone is vying for (*or if you want something a little more believable as a table, you can use those little three-legged plastic things that are used in pizza boxes to prevent the box from squishing the pizza*).

On the opposite side of the square, also three inches from the edge, mark a line that stretches from side to side in whatever manner you feel comfortable in, though we suggest a string of some sort. This denotes the starting area, where the players start and where they need to drag the Dinner Table if they want to claim it. All of the models are placed on the far side of the line in any arrangement that the players choose, as long as no miniature is closer than two inches of another. Please don't fight over the arrangement, be adults about it. There will be plenty of time to be childish, to fight about it, and to dish out some payback as you play the game.

The Game

This is a simplified version of *The Way of War* rules specially adapted for use with the *Knights* and this magazine.

Step 1: Initiative

Each player rolls 1d10 for each miniature under his control, and adds his Initiative Attribute to it. The players determine their Initiative order, running from lowest to highest. Ties are decided so the miniature with the highest Initiative is ranked higher. If that doesn't determine it, roll 1d10, and the higher roll is ranked higher. The best way to keep track of this is by placing numbered slips of

paper next to each miniature, with 6 being highest ranked, 1 being lowest ranked, and just reusing them turn to turn.

Step 2: Movement

- All miniatures can move their Movement attribute in inches at no Action cost. They can jog at 1 1/2 times the standard movement at a cost of one Action, and run at twice the standard movement at a cost of two Actions.

- Each miniature can turn up to 45 degrees for free once per turn. Each additional 45-degree turn costs 1/4 of the base-movement attribute in inches.

- Movement for a figure is stopped if it comes within one inch of another miniature's front 180 degree arc.

Step 3: Personal Combat

- The highest-ranked player goes first.

- Personal Combat is any combat that happens at a range of one inch or less with weapons that have a range of one inch.

- A miniature can only attack in its front 180 degree arc.

- To inflict damage the model must succeed at a Hit/Damage roll. Attack value in this case is the Personal Combat attribute. To attack, you must spend the Actions necessary to use the weapon in question, even if the attack fails. The figure can attack with a weapon in Personal Combat as many times as he wishes and has actions for.

- To do damage to an opposing miniature, the attacking player rolls against the defending player: Attack value +1d10 must be greater than the Defense of the defending model +10

- If a character is reduced to zero Damage by a higher-ranked character in Initiative, that player must roll a 1d10 and add his character's *Soldiery* rating. If the total is 10 or less, the miniature is immediately placed face down and considered KO'd. Otherwise it is placed face down at the end of the Personal Combat phase.

- Once the highest-ranked player in the Initiative roll has finished, the second-highest player may attack, and so on in descending order until all miniatures who can perform a Personal Combat have had a chance to attack.

- Defending costs no actions.

- And no, you can't hit someone while they are down (KO'd). You're playing the *Knights* of the Dinner Table, not the Black Hand Gaming Society.

Step 4: Range Combat

- The highest-ranked miniature may go first.

- Range combat is combat that occurs at ranges greater than one inch.

- The figure must choose a target within the front 180 degrees of the model in its view.

- After choosing a target and expending the Actions for the weapon, measure the distance. If the target is within the range of the weapon, commence with the Hit/Damage roll. A miniature may fire as many times as it has Actions to expend on the weapon. In this case,

the Attack value is the Range Combat Attribute.

- To do the damage of the weapon, the Attack value +1d10 must be greater than the Defense of the model + 1d10. (Same as in Personal Combat.)

If a model is reduced to zero Damage, follow the same procedure outlined in the Personal Combat section, except substitute the term Range Combat for Personal.

Once the Range Combats of the highest-ranked miniatures have been resolved, the next-highest player does his Range Combats. The process continues until all players who want to fire have done so or have been eliminated.

Also, ditto on the no trying to injure people while they are down rule.

Step 5: *Soldiery*

In the original version of *The Way of War* rules, *Soldiery* is mostly used to make sure that miniatures stayed on the field of battle, even after they had seen all of their buddies buy it. With the *Knights*, it is not the fear of death, but rather humiliation that drives them. When a Knight is KO'd, he, or she, is merely knocked silly, and suddenly lying down on the ground for a while seems like a good idea.

No matter how much Damage a miniature takes, it can not be reduced below zero.

Recovering from a KO is more a matter of willpower than anything else. During the *Soldiery* phase, the character can make as many recovery rolls as desired, as long as they have enough action points. Each recovery roll takes one Action. If the player rolls a 1d10 and adds their character's *Soldiery* Attribute, and the total is greater than 10, the miniature recovers a single point of Damage.

When a miniature has recovered at least two points of Damage, he may stand up at the next Initiative phase and rejoin the game, but he has to use the standing recovery rules outlined below. When he has reached his, or her, full Damage, he, or she, must return to the game.

It is possible for a character to recover from an injury while standing, but it is more difficult. Each attempt still costs one Action, but the number that must be beaten to gain back a Damage is now 12.

Step 6: Finishing the Game

Steps one through five are repeated until one of the players has a miniature possessing the Dinner Table in the starting area at the end of a turn. It is possible that the table will be unclaimed in the starting area due to the original possessor being KO'd before the end of the turn, which should encourage the players to make things even more crazy. Check out the Carrying the Table rule to see how to get the table across the line.

Carrying the Table

Oddly enough, carrying a Dinner Table

Continued on page 48

LIFE'S A GAME!
PLAY!!

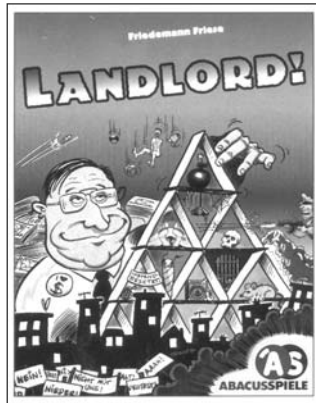


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LANDLORD!

Abacuspiele/Rio Grande Games



Developed in Germany, where tenants have strong laws protecting them, and where landlords have a hard time evicting anyone, this game may reflect the frustration of some of those landlords, with tongue-in-cheek humor. The object is simple — gather as much rent money as possible. The person with the most money at the end of the game wins.

Along the road to riches, players/landlords have to deal with squatters and other problem tenants, and they have the opportunity to practice some underhanded, even illegal, activities to sabotage other landlords, and to rid themselves of tenants who don't pay enough. Just watch out for the cops or you'll end up in jail!

The game consists of a deck of cards with parts of buildings on one side, and tenant and action cards on the other side. The game is for two to six players, ages 10 and up, and takes about 20 minutes to play. It also takes quite a large playing surface, especially if you have five or six players all wanting to build.

Brian's Rating: Move in and grab it!



SWASHBUCKLER

Jolly Roger Games, Charleston, Illinois

Before I get started on this one, there's something I need to point out. Jolly Roger Games has no connection with Jolly Blackburn (though JRG did license KODT to do the Orcs at the Gates Board Game. If you're one of the folks who approached Jolly at GenCon asking him to sign your copy of Swashbuckler, now you'll understand if he gave you a funny look.)

That said, it's time to set sail for unique adventure with this roleplaying game that'll have you feeling as if you may have stepped into an Errol Flynn movie. With a character-generation system where players' imaginations have more influence than die rolls, this is a game creative adventurers can really plunge into. As I skimmed the pages of this easy-to-read, 48-page manual, I found myself creating a character in my head and dreaming of a chance to take to the high seas.

From the first time I read the character attribute section, with such attributes as Chivalry, Romance and Bravery, I knew that playing it would be more like telling a good story rather than simply racking up experience points. Imagine, being able to choose whether my character would be a dashing rogue with a heart of gold, but a penchant for the finer things, or a love-struck hero, bent on winning the heart of a fair maiden, and not worrying about whether my character's attributes would reflect my vision!

Brian's Rating: This is a game for those ready to take charge of their characters.

ES&NE: A Role-Playing Game of High Fantasy

BaDGE Publications

476 Maher Road, Royal Oaks, CA 95076

Email: badgepubs@aol.com Cost: 10 bucks

What can you say about an RPG that comes packaged in a manila file folder with a color laser printed label slapped on the front? KEWL! This product was obviously a labor of love. As with many small-press endeavors this game was produced on a limited budget (*i.e. photocopied*). Who cares? For 10 bucks you get more than your money's worth. In the folder you'll find four books; Countries & Character (book 1), People, Magic and Creatures (book 2), Combat & Procedures (book 3), Catalogue & Hall of Heroes, Cities (book 4). You'll also find four color maps (with map legend and indexes, short geographical history/backgrounds on the reverse side). The books are packed with maps, charts, lists, etc. Not only do you get a bare-bones rpg system but you also get a fairly detailed campaign setting and enough adventure hooks to keep you and your players busy for months. And for 10 bucks? How kewl is that?



Brian's Rating: Don't be fooled by outward appearances - this one is definitely worth picking up.



A Look At Licenses

By Rick Moscatello

Way back in the early days of computer gaming (*not even 20 years ago*), every game title was a completely new event. Each game had its own rules system, designed specifically to exploit the kind of things computers were good at. Some games were hits and made lots of bucks, some games were flops that just couldn't sell anywhere.

Computer businesses quickly learned that one way to guarantee at least a few sales was to buy the license for an already popular game or storyline, and convert it to the computer. Usually, these types of games sucked heavily—not entirely the fault of the programmers, since the early computers had a hard time keeping up with the imaginations of the great game designers. SSI's "gold box" games, licensing the D&D™ rules system, were the greatest successes of this early, magical era.

Now, computers have come a long way since then. Let's look at some recent "license" titles and see how they do justice to the original game...

First up is Interplay's **Star Trek Starfleet Command**. The license here isn't so much **Star Trek**, as it is **Star Fleet Battles**. For the one or two of you out there who haven't tried it, SFB is a great tabletop game, so much fun to play that you hardly notice that the space combat is two-dimensional, and tactically not much different than WW2 naval engagements.

One nasty habit game developers have when they buy up a license is to take the game, and say, with a fanatic gleam in their eyes, "*Let's make it REAL TIME!!!!*" This is the main reason most such board game-to-computer game adaptations stink so bad. Most board games are fun because of the spectacle and the strategic considerations — and that sort of thing often gets lost in the "build-up-and-destroy" clickfest that describes a typical real-time game.

Sure enough, **Starfleet Command** takes the SFB system and makes it real time. Luckily, combat isn't very frenetic, since there's usually at least a five-second delay between one shot and the next, and that leaves plenty of time to click on navigation to set a course and "make it so" if need be. You never have more than a handful of ships/fighters/shuttles to fight with, so it's easy enough to give everyone orders in time. So, the first typical boner of a licensed game is avoided nicely.

Another typical mistake is not being faithful to the game, and, again, **Starfleet Command** comes through. All the major races are here, and every freakin' little detail is included. Darn near every race's special weapons are featured, on every race's special ships. While you can't customize your ship much, each race has about 20 different varieties, and that's plenty.

Options during space combat are as wide as possible, from reinforcing shields, to high-energy turns (*at least for smaller ships*), to beaming over marines, to mine laying, to tractor beams, to, well, everything that you can do in the game. It's clear that the programmers are lovers of the board game, or else they'd skip a lot of this "non-essential" stuff that makes the game so kewl.

The last pitfall in making a licensed game is lame-o AI (*artificial intelligence*). I can't count the number of license titles that are unplayable because the computer opponent is a complete yutz. AI is very important in a license game—most buyers are already familiar with the best strategies, and will figure out how to crush a weak computer in too short a time to justify the cost of a computer game. Yet again, all is well, as the SFB points system makes sure the fights are (*more or less*) even, and the computer is aggressive and resourceful enough to at least give you a run for your money in most battles.

Just in case this weren't enough to make the game great, there's a wonderful campaign mode, that lets you become an officer in any faction and work your way up in the ranks, using prestige to buy better ships and accessories. I'd keep saying more good stuff about the game (*like George "Sulu" Takei walking you through the tutorials, or the secret societies and special missions, or...*), but you might think I'm just raving. Here it is, simple: if you like SFB you GOTTA try this game out. If you don't, the game still has merit—you might not even realize that it is based on SFB. It's an unusual licensed game that has appeal to gamers who aren't fans of the original game.

Another licensed game is SSI's **Warhammer 40,000: Rites of War**. SSI has made a number of games with the **Warhammer** license, and they've had a hard time coming up with something that ranks "*slightly better than average*." This time around, they decided to tie the great license with their successful (*but elderly*) **Panzer General II** engine.

Unfortunately, much of the unique spectacle of the **Warhammer 40k** universe is lost when you're playing by rules meant for World War II combat. Admittedly, there's not that much difference, but there's a strong "been there, done that" feel to this game for any veteran of the **General** series. At least they didn't make it real time. Still, they lost faith with the original game, and the nifty units and special abilities still can't shake the feeling that all you're doing is moving brightly-colored and strangely-moving panzers through the ruins of a weird looking European village.

The computer AI is unusually feeble-minded. This is a bit of a surprise, since in the other **General** games,

it could often give a reasonable fight. The reason for the "better" play in the other games was the computer got to bring in lots of extra units as the battle progresses, but, in **Rites of War**, you can't "summon" more troops when needed, and apparently the AI wasn't changed to compensate for that. In the early missions, you'll sit back while the computer bashes its troops against you in futile assaults (*even when it is supposed to defend!*), and in the late missions, you'll use your far-too-strong experienced troops to overwhelm it. Compounding the weak AI problem is the lack of an e-mail multiplayer option—a strange absence, considering that other **General** games have it.

On the plus side, this is the first game that focuses on the Eldar—finally, the human fanatics of the Imperium take a back seat to the action. The Eldar can fight the humans, but mostly they'll go after the Tyranids (*in turn, making their first appearance in a computer game since the real time bloodfest, Space Hulk*). The battles are reasonable, and the Farseer cut scenes are excellent, so an Eldar fan will not be disappointed, even as **Panzer General** fans blow it off the hard drive after a few missions.

In other words, **Rites of War** is typical license fare—it works well for the fans, but if you don't already love the universe, you won't after playing the game.

Our last license title is not easy to find—Avalon Hill's **History of the World**. The game was uniformly and brutally slammed by the big-time computer gaming magazines, by reviewers that clearly never touched the board game.

For those not familiar with the game, here's an overview. The game starts in most ancient history, and everybody gets a civilization (*like the ancient Egyptians, or the Babylonians*). You take your turn, which is mostly just placing four or five pieces on the board. Then you get points based on how well

you placed your pieces. The game progresses to the next epoch, where you get a new, larger, civilization (*like the not-as-ancient Greeks*). You'll spend the second epoch crushing the civilizations of the earlier epoch. It's a very cool game, as each turn takes but a few minutes, no player can be destroyed, and it works well with two, three, or six players (*with less strategy and more "beer and pretzels" fun as you get more players*). There are a few drawbacks to the game: it works best with more players, there about a million pieces to mess with, scoring can be tedious, and combat can be a dice derby at times.

This makes it a great candidate for a computer conversion, as the AI can handle the extra positions, the computer has no problem with scoring or dice derbies, and the pieces are as easy to organize as anything else on a computer screen. The computer game solves all the problems beautifully, especially when it comes to the AI, and it even includes some quaint histories of the civilizations to read. While the "real" board game takes five hours or more to play, the computer does such a smooth job of handling the bookkeeping that you can play a solitaire game (*with five computer opponents*) in 45 minutes.

So why wasn't the game popular? It's a perfect copy of the board game. Heck, it's a RELIGIOUS copy of the game, it is so identical in feel. There are no spiffy graphics, not pointless cut scenes, no 100 megabyte opening sequences, none of the crap that, apparently, a game needs to rate highly in a top computer gaming magazine. Ok, maybe this game doesn't deserve a \$50 price tag, but if you are a fan of the board game, or are looking for a quiet, fun, strategy game, you really should pick through the discount racks to find this hidden treasure (for \$20 or less).

Until next month, Good gaming!



Rumble for the Dinner Table Continued from page 45

around is even more difficult than it sounds. To drag the table requires that a miniature be within one inch of it. To consider the table to be under a miniature's control, the miniature must get higher than a 10 when they add their **Soldiery** statistic, plus 1d10. Each attempt to grab the table reduces the miniature's **Speed** by one for the turn. A player who has the table can drag it behind the miniature who holds it at a speed of one less than the character's normal speed. Also, since it is difficult to smack people around with your hands full of table, all of the possessing miniature's **Attack** rolls are reduced by three.

Other miniatures can attempt to steal the table from the current holder. They also need to be within one inch of the table when they make the attempt. Both they and the current holder of the table must roll a 1d10 and add their **Soldiery** statistic to it, and whomever has the higher result has possession of the table, with the current possessor of the table retaining it in the case of ties. However, the current possessor of the table has an advantage since they already have a grip on it, so they may add +3 to their roll to retain the table.

It is possible to distract the possessor of the table in an attempt to take it away. Every point of **Damage** dealt to the possessing miniature in that turn reduces any rolls they may have to retain possession of the table by two.

Rather than trying to gain possession of the table, one can always decide to play king of the hill. If no one possesses the table, or if a miniature who currently possesses desires to, by reducing his **Speed** by one for the turn, he can stand on the table. No one can take possession of the table while someone is on it. **Attack** rolls for those standing on the table are increased by two, and the **Damage** for all **Attacks** except **Thrown Dice** is increased by one, with the range of the attacks beginning at the edge of the table. The downside of this is, since you are up on the table, everyone can

easily see you, and hit you with **Thrown Dice**. **Thrown Dice** rolls against a character on top of the table are, therefore, increased by two.

If a miniature is KO'd while on the table, it falls off and is placed within one inch of the table. The miniature can step off the table at any time by reducing its **Speed** for the turn by one, or by simply falling off the table and taking one **Damage**.

And no, you cannot drag the table while standing on it, and neither can Brian flip it while he is on it or while someone else is on it. Nice try though.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTERWARD

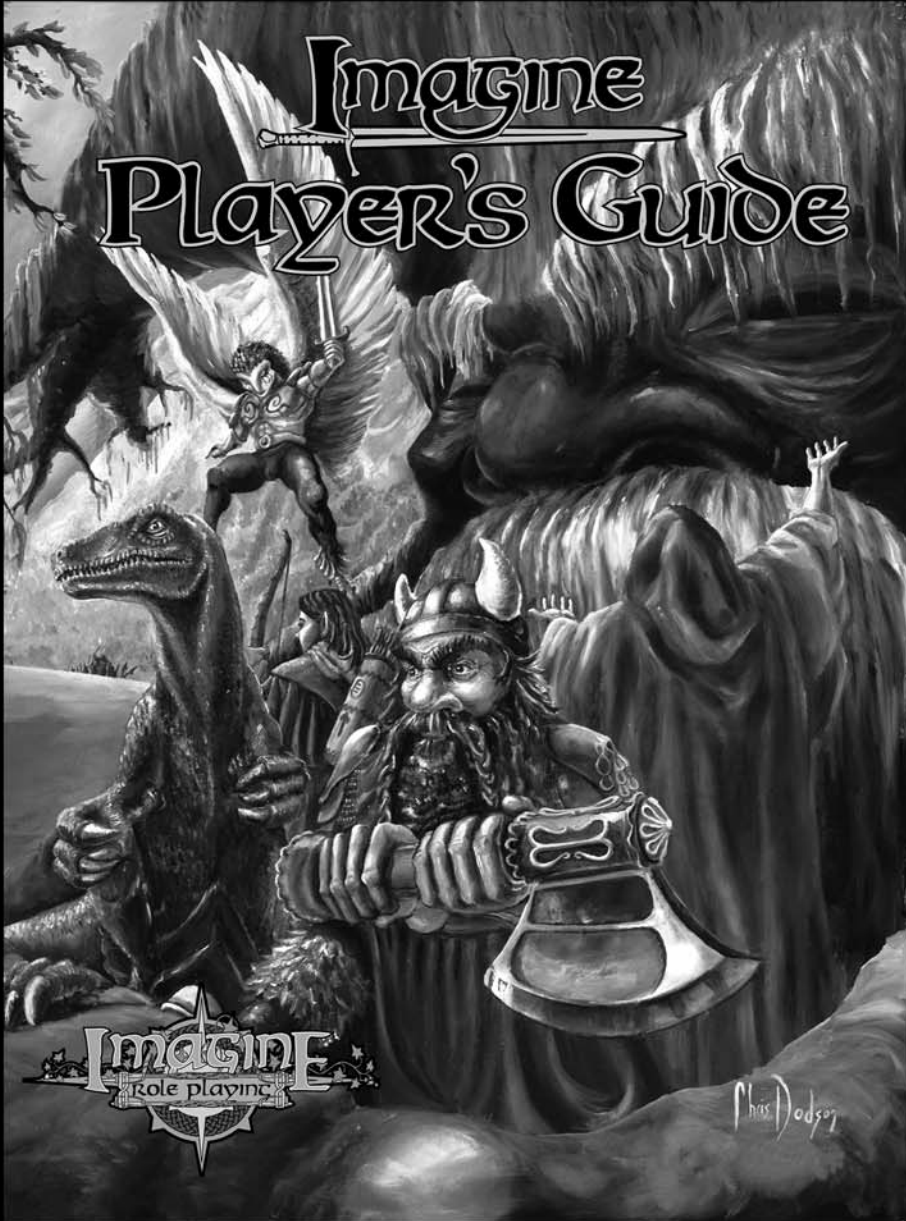
As the winner slowly manages to drag his prize across the finish line, just one thought enters his mind as he looks over the yard filled moaning **Knights**, scattered pieces of equipment and the odd broken dream or two. "This was way too much fun!"

And after a deep philosophical discussion about the value of forgiveness with, oh, I don't know, **Bitter Stevil**, they decide to stick together.

And begin saving up for a new new **Dinner Table**, since the old new **Dinner Table** was so badly banged up and scuffed to be of any use as a replacement anymore.

Unless, of course, Johnny wins. Then the group stays together out of sheer spite.

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Dungeons & Dragons Movie Update

Release date: Summer, 2000
 Directed by: Courtney Solomon
 Writing credits: Carroll Cartwright and
 Topper Lilien

Cast Overview:
 Tom Baker (I)
 Thora Birch as Empress Savina
 Jeremy Irons as Profion
 Zoe McLellan as A Mage
 Robert Miano
 Bruce Payne (I) as Damodar
 Marlon Wayans as Snails
 Justin Whalin as Ridley
 Kristen Wilson as Norda

Premise: When Profion, an evil wizard (Irons), schemes to dethrone the new empress (Birch) of a mystical land, she recruits a band of adventurers (which includes a sorceress [McLellan] and a rogue [Wayans]) to find a magical artifact that will foil the wizard's plot. This artifact, the Golden Rod of Dragon Control, gives the bearer the ability to control dragons... leading to a big final action scene featuring dozens(!) of computer animated dragons. Along the way, the evil wizard sends his henchman to also secure the Rod. The race is on to secure this magical instrument or the entire kingdom will fall prey to Profion's evil magic.

"Hoody-Hoo" Conspiracy Deepens!!

Tamaqua seniors say 'Hoodie Hoo'

■ For Schuylkill County, it's a goofy day to scream the winter blues away.

By BOB LAYLO
 Of The Morning Call

Move over Pausanawney Phil, here comes the Hoodie-Hoo revelers.

About 30 people at noon Friday stepped outside the Tamaqua Senior Resource Center and shouted "Hoodie Hoo" into the chilly winter air. The revelers, many in their 80s, donned homemade, crazy-looking hats and banged on noisemakers. Tamaqua ambulance crews joined in the festivities by sounding their sirens.

Why, you ask?

"It's to chase away the winter and welcome the spring," said Donna Woodring, coordinator of the senior center.

Around the country, it's been done the past several years. Some say the tradition began as part of Wisconsin folklore, but a Lehigh County couple take credit for creating the day that's punctuated with a primal scream.

Tom and Ruth Roy weren't around Friday to comment, but in an earlier interview with The Morning Call they said they founded the Wellness Permission League to come up with oddball holidays to make people feel better.

The Rofs said Hoodie-Hoo Day, which actually is today, was the first holiday they created.

Schuylkill County jumped the gun by a day because the senior centers there are closed today. Schuylkill County started observing the day three years ago at the Mahanoy City Senior Center.

Tamaqua jumped on the Hoodie-Hoo bandwagon this year.

Many of the senior citizens went all out for the day. Like 80-year-old Adele Uhl. She took a straw hat, attached the bottom of an orange juice container to the top and stuck a stuffed bird inside.

"It looked goofy enough," she said.



BOB LAYLO / The Morning Call
 Esther Bachert (left) and Adele Uhl enjoy Hoodie-Hoo Day Friday at the Tamaqua Senior Center.

Seniors took plastic coffee lids and flower seed packs and attached them to the ceiling of the center. Others created flowers out of colored construction paper.

Of course, the day wasn't just for seniors. Victoria Anderson, 3, and her sister, Kelsey, 5, helped make noise.

"She wants spring to come fast," Kelsey's mother, Michelle Murphy, said.

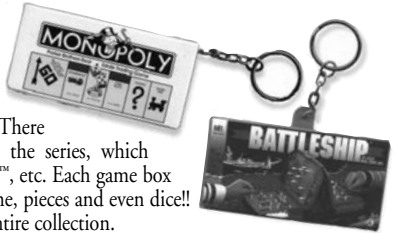
But Old Man Winter wasn't quite ready to give up his grip.

After hoisting and hoisting, the crowd scampered back inside for hot coffee, cocoa and steaming soup to fight off the chill.

Could the Knights of the Dinner Table's infamous warcry, "Hoody Hoo!" actually owe its origin to a Tamaqua, PA Senior Citizens group? Marilee and Dave Davieau sent in this newspaper clipping from the *The Morning Call (Allentown, PA)* covering "Hoodie Hoo Day". According to the article, revelers (most in their 80s) donned "homemade, crazy looking hats and banged on noisemakers" to chase away winter with the primal scream, "Hoodie Hoo!" The article goes on to say that the tradition began as part of Wisconsin folklore. Wisconsin? Could it be that Sara "Miss Wisconsin" Felton actually introduced the warcry to her fellow Knights? Hmmmmmm.....

KEYCHAINS TO 'DICE' FOR

Check out these ultra-kewl mini boardgame/key chains from Basic Fun!! There are more than a dozen keychains in the series, which include games like Clue™, Life™, Sorry™, etc. Each game box actually opens to reveal a mini boardgame, pieces and even dice!! Go to www.basicfun.com to see the entire collection.



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When we first saw this special edition of UNO® from Mattel we thought to ourselves, "Are they out of their Vulcan minds?" Once we peeled the shrinkwrap, however, and saw how beautiful these full-color cards truly are, we fully assimilated into Star Trek UNO®. This version features the characters and ships from the original television series. There are even some new cards and a few special rules to make the 'trek' experience complete. Ask for it at your local gameshop.



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That's right. Contributing to KODT is better than candy. (and it doesn't promote tooth decay). 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.

from the vine for your reading enjoyment



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GAMESMASTER, GAMESMASTER, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE??

What happens when you give a group of gamers a hand puppet (who has seen his better days), a video camera, several handfuls of dice and several days with nothing to do?

The answer is a 40-minute hack-fest called "Gamesmaster, Gamesmaster, What have you Done?" This amateur flick was produced by Breakfast of Demons Productions and presents the story of a gaming group in need of a player to fill an empty seat. The Gamemaster's solution is to summon a demon from the pits of hell (this is where the hand-puppet comes in) and force him to create a character and play in the group's campaign. Personally I found it very funny and laughed quite a bit. My wife, on the other hand, refuses to sit in the same room while it's playing. If you want to find out more about the film and how you can get a copy, E-mail brpope@ibm.net.



Spirit of Comics Retailing Awards

We'd like to congratulate store owners, Greg Ketter (*Dream Haven Books, Minneapolis, MN*) and Scott Thorne (*Star Clipper Comics and More, St. Louis, MO*) who both recently received 1999 Wil Eisner Spirit of Comics Retailer Awards.

The award recognizes merchants who, "exemplify the very best in the comic retailing enterprise." Way to go guys!

FIELD REPORT: SHORECON' 99 Cherry Hill, NJ

I was asked to attend as a guest-of-honor at this east coast event and eagerly accepted. (*Are you kidding? Free food? When do you want me?*) I've been wanting to attend this particular convention for several years but for various reasons, was never able to do so. I'm definitely going back to this one - I had a blast. Other guests included Steve Jackson (*Steve Jackson Games*), James Ernest (*CheapAss Games — Speaking of James if you happen to run into him be sure to ask him how his 'unscheduled' visit to Pittsburgh was.*), Rick Loomis (*Flying Buffalo*) and Peter Atkinson (*Wizards of the Coast*). Because there were so many events scheduled at the show we decided to run two KODT Live Readings. I really wish I had brought a video camera - some of the readings were the best I've ever seen. One attendee who had sat in on both readings came by the booth on Sunday to complain that his sides hurt from laughing so much. One of the highlights of the show for me was Ann Dupius' (*Grey Ghost Games*) HackMaster™ adventure which she ran after both readings. Ann adapted the *Fudge*™ system and ran a fairly mean adventure. Steve Jackson and I even sat in as NPC's on Friday night (*Steve took on the role of Gilead and I was Knobby Foot*). Talk about a killer GM! The adventure ended with everyone dead except for Knobby Foot (Hoody Hoo! I rule!!!) who managed to walk out of the dungeon with all the loot. And they say there's no justice!

I'd like to thank several people for making ShoreCon a wonderful experience. Rob Placer for holding back the dogs of chaos and making the show an enjoyable experience. (*Let's just say I was well fed.*) Georgeann Kelly (*ShoreCon's Miniature Game Coordinator*) among other things) for taking the time to teach me how to play Settlers of Catan (*Who, along with Ann Dupius showed no mercy and beat me to a pulp*). I'd also like to thank Aaron "Tal" Sheffield (*RPG Coordinator*) and Mark Geller (*Who apparently took Steve Jackson on a 'scenic' drive from the hotel to the airport. He still denies he was lost.*) Oh and last, but not least, I'd like to thank Bill "Daredevil" Johnson for a very entertaining ride to the airport after the show. If you've never been to ShoreCon you should definitely check it out. I'm told it will be in new digs next year and bigger and better than ever. I'll definitely be back. See ya there!!

Jolly

HOMEBREWED KODT WEB SITES

<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://www.clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/knightsofthedinnertable>

The 'Unofficial' KODT Fan Club



Above: Ann Dupius (*Grey Ghost Games*) runs a session of *Fudge*™ HackMaster™ for a group of hack-jockeys.

Top Right: "Nitro" lords over a *Black Hands* live reading.

Right: One of many KODT live readings which took place over the weekend.





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brian



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jolly



steve

KenzerCo is currently pulling it's year 2000 Convention schedule together. If you are interested in having one of

the KODT Developers as a guest contact Brian Jelke (restin@aol.com) or call (847) 540-1970.

We'd love to come do some KODT Live-Readings, Demos and dance like monkeys for peanuts in front of an angry mob.

**Looking for a copy of TSR's DIVINE RIGHT
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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 sounding 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.

First, on the subject of the **Black Hands**. I like the **Black Hand** stories, because I have gamed with these type of gamers before. I am completely opposed to this type of gaming. The competition between the players often makes the game unpleasant for at least one party. The worst example of this is a player we recently had to expel from a **Star Wars** game. He bragged to one of the other players that he was deliberately sabotaging the game.

Second, on the comments of Mr. William F. Hostman. Since you claim not to endorse the **Monty Haul** reward system, I can only assume that your players paid for every copper piece of treasure, every acre of land, and every honor with blood. I do not know how it is where you are, but around here, your cheap *Deux Ex Machina* tricks would have you parking your size 13s on the footstool in front of CNN wondering where your players had gone.

Here is an idea. If you want to lighten your PCs' load, why not rob them? A campaign around searching out the bandits who made off with their treasure possibly to fund a revolution or unholy resurrection of an ancient religion could be the ticket

Alan L. Longnecker
longnecker@i2k.com

I just sent this to say that I have noticed, that while your book continues to be brilliant, more and more of the letters and forum are being given over to people who want to have the same old rpg arguments i.e. sexism in gaming, hack and slashing vs role playing, the Knights being bad models for the real world of role playing etc. and this strikes me as being more than a little bit sad.

I mean, here we are given a chance to speak about the hobby we love to our fellow gamers and instead we chose to use this to voice the same arguments.

Jolly has said before that he doesn't consider

KODT to be a magazine but more a gaming experience, and this carries over to the joyous, fun feel you get in the magazine.

From cover to cover it's clear that Jolly and the other people who work on the magazine love gaming and aren't embarrassed to show it, which I simply love! Don't we all love gaming? Isn't that why we play the game? It's why I do! So why don't we use our space in KODT to say what we love about gaming rather than arguing about what we don't?

I love that all you need to game is a few good friends, a couple of books, and some dice. I love that it is a great way to spend time with your friends and to make new ones. I love that gaming lets us all have a chance to be the dashing hero/heroine, the evil villain, the tough warrior, the wise wizard, etc. I love that we can all have the opportunity to say those killer lines we always wanted to say, look the way we want to look. I love gaming because we can do anything we imagine, we can have special effects better than any Hollywood movie, and we can share this all with our friends, lastly I love gaming because it is great fun!

Phew, that's it — I've finished ranting! Please, anyone who wants to add to my list please do so. And all of you at KODT, please continue to put out the best gaming magazine out there.

Cheers.

dbhitman99@yahoo.com

P.S could you please print my E-mail address so that any people who want to talk about gaming, (*Especially Seventh Sea and Feng Shui*) comics, (*especially Warren Ellis & Alan Moore books*) or any thing else can drop me a line (*particularly if they know of any British cons so I can go to my first one. Thank You.*)

I've been reading KODT since issue #21, and since then, I've made a point of reading back as far as I can, funds permitting. Having picked up ish #34 today, and reading Alan's letter in the Open Forum, I felt the need to write and say something.

No, I don't believe that that **Black Hands** fit into the same category as the **Knights**. With the exception of Nitro, who seems to have a sense of fair play and a conscience, and Gordo, who's really a big softie), the Hands are an almost 'evil'

bunch. I don't have the same kind of sympathy for them as I do for the Knights, who are misguided and shortsighted, but are basically good.

This doesn't mean, however, that reading about the Hands cannot be funny and entertaining. The recent storylines with Crutch, for example, are hilarious. Personally, I look at Crutch's insistence on killing off his fellow party members time after time as good retribution against the spitefulness of the rest of the group. Stevil's extended stay in prison, especially, I feel is very appropriate, as I consider him the worst of the bunch.

Okay, maybe this sort of malicious enjoyment is unworthy of me, when I hold Sarah to be the epitome of a good gamer.

I don't know that she would approve, her bad experience with Troy's group notwithstanding. But I digress....

The point is, the presence of the Hands is not necessarily a bad thing. And comparing them to the tragedy at Columbine is baseless: when the line is drawn, the Hands suddenly become wimps.

Their behavior in ish #34 only emphasizes this. So, take what enjoyment you can out of them, and try not to take their behavior too seriously.

Hoody Hoo!

Greg Downing
(whiteowl1@mediaone.com)

I read Alan Miller's comments on **The Black Hands** and felt compelled to offer some input. I don't think Hands are any kind of "new trend," I actually

played in a frighteningly similar group myself nearly 10 years ago. It was a very interesting time for me, and certainly the weirdest way to be introduced to the world of RPGs. The adventurers in the campaign that I DM for these days are genuinely concerned about the welfare of NPCs and interested in having an entertaining adventure, so Mr. Miller can rest assured that the hobby is and will always be very healthy.

Keep up the good work! KODT has me splitting my sides with laughter each month in one way or another.

Chris Jantzen

I just got done reading Issue 34 of the **Knights of the Dinner Table** and on the last page you make a comment about the **Black Hands** not fitting into the overall feel of the comic. Well let me tell you this is one gamer that finds the stories about the **Black Hands** to be the funniest of them all. Sure I would kick anyone of those guys off my table at home but that does not mean that I have not played with people just like them at a convention or two. The last few issues that had the **Black Hands** playing in the bar had me laughing so loud in my office that the person I share it with thought I was nuts. In fact I would like to see **Crutch** join the group full-time, it is great that he gives **Weird Pete** and **Stevil** more damage than they can handle.

CRUTCH FOR PRESIDENT !!!

Bryan Andrews

*We've been amazed at the number of fans who wrote in to defend the **Black Hands** (or at least to say they enjoyed the strips). In fact at a recent poll taken at a KODT live-reading, when asked, "Who is your favorite character?" we were very surprised that **Newt Forager** missed winning by just ONE vote.*

*This is amazing when you stop to think that, whereas the characters in the **Knights** have had almost 10 years of development pumped into them - the **Black Hands** have only existed as a strip for about 18 months or so. Let's just say they have LOT'S of room to grow.*

*I think one reader said it best recently when she wrote, "The **Black Hands** are like that nephew or cousin we all have in our families. They just can't seem to get it together. Their life is a mess and they do things we really wish they wouldn't do. That's because we know that underneath, they're better than that. They know better. And, most importantly, they're family. You don't write off family. So you just keep on hoping they'll get it all together and fly (or in this case, 'game') right."*

I couldn't have said it better myself.

Jolly



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HARASSING TRICK-OR-TREATERS

Wfound this list things of ways to 'annoy and confuse' trick-or-treaters on the usenet shortly before Halloween. Obviously we had to give some of them a try and we're happy to report that YES they do work. An exit poll taken from trick-or-treaters leaving the KenzerCo grounds revealed that a whopping 98% of those subjected to suggestions from this list were thoroughly annoyed. (Twenty people reported being angry, two people reported they were 'saddened' by our behavior and one person reported he 'liked it, very much. Can I come back again?') However, we did find room for improvement. At the end, you'll find our OWN suggestions which you can try out next year.



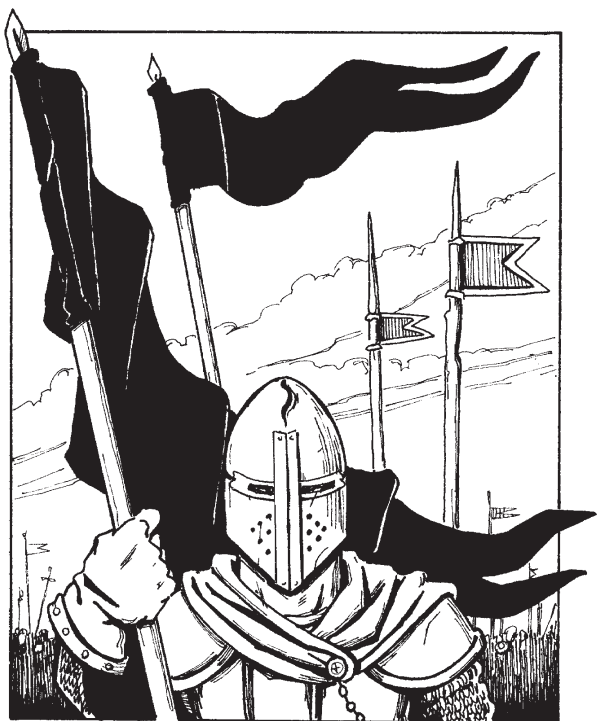
- Editor

1. Give away something other than candy. (*Toothpicks, golf balls, bags of sand, roadkill, etc.*)
2. Wait behind the door until some people come. When they get near the door, jump out, wearing a costume, and holding a bag, and yell, "Trick or Treat!" Look at them, scratch your head, and act confused.
3. Fill a briefcase with marbles and crackers. Write on it, "Top Secret" in big letters. When trick-or-treaters come, look around suspiciously, say, "It's about time you got here," give them the briefcase, and quickly shut the door.
4. Get about 30 people to wait in your living room. When trick-or-treaters come to the door, say, "Come in." When they do, have everyone yell, "Surprise!!!" Act like it's a surprise party.
5. Get everyone who comes to the door to come in and see if they can figure out what's wrong with your dishwasher. Insist that it makes an unnatural "whirring" sound.
6. After you give them candy, ask the trick-or-treaters to sign a receipt book and then hand them a bill.
7. Open the door dressed as a giant fish. Immediately collapse, and don't move or say anything until the trick-or-treaters go away.
8. When you answer the door, hold up one candy bar, throw it out into the street, and yell, "Crawl for it!"
9. When you answer the door, look at the trick-or-treaters, act shocked and scared, and start screaming your head off. Slam the door and run around the house, screaming until they go away.
10. Insist that the trick-or-treaters each do 10 push-ups before you give them any candy.
11. Hand out menus to the trick-or-treaters and let them order their candy. Keep asking if anyone wants to see the wine list.
12. Get a catapult. Sit on your porch and catapult pumpkins at anyone who comes within 50 yards of your house.
13. When people come to the door, jump out a nearby window, crashing through the glass, and run as far away from your house as you can.
14. Answer the door dressed as a pilgrim. Stare at the trick-or-treaters for a moment then scream at them that they are 'devil children!'
15. Instead of candy, give away colored eggs. If anyone protests, explain that the eggs are the only thing you had left over from Easter.
16. Answer the door dressed as a dentist. Angrily give the trick-or-treaters a two-hour lecture on tooth decay.
17. Answer the door with a mouthful of M & M's and several half-eaten candy bars in your hands. Act surprised, and close the door. Open it again in a few seconds, and insist that you don't have any candy.
18. Hand out cigarettes and bottles of gin.
19. Put a crown on a pumpkin and put the pumpkin on a throne on your porch. Insist that all of the trick-or-treaters bow before the pumpkin.
20. Dress up like a motorcycle mechanic. Yell and curse from the moment you open the door, and angrily throw the candy at the trick-or-treaters calling them, "Parasites!" Slam the door when you're finished.

Our Own In-House List

21. Collect discarded cigarette butts. Then, before opening the door, rub some of the black ash around your mouth. Give the cigarette butts out as candy telling the confused trick-or-treaters that it's the 'charred flavor' that makes them so tasty.
22. Give out Turkey Basters as treats. Tell them, "You'll thank me - come Thanksgiving!" Give them a knowing wink.
23. Save up all your empty printer cartridges, AOL™ disks/CD's, MicroWarehouse™ catalogs and other crap you've accumulated and give them away as treats.
24. Have each trick-or-treater fill out a Rain Check. Tell them they will receive their candy in 4 to 6 weeks. Then tell them there is a five-dollar shipping and handling charge.
25. After opening the door, go totally 'giddy' while jumping up and down and clapping your hands. Ask them if they want to come in and watch your Tele-Tubbies videos.
26. Give out Flintstone Chewable Vitamins.

from the writers of *Knights of the Dinner Table*



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THANKS FOR HOLDING ALL THAT *FADING SUNS* STUFF FOR ME PETE. I'LL PICK IT UP NEXT WEEK WHEN MY CHRISTMAS MONEY CD MATURES. I'M REALLY GLAD MY MOM TALKED ME INTO SAVING SOME MONEY TO BUY PRESENTS WITH THIS YEAR.

I TOLD MY DAD ABOUT MY *GANNOCK BROTHER BATTLE* CHARACTER AND HOW TOUGH HE WAS. 'COURSE HE WAS READIN' THE PAPER BUT STILL HE SAID, "HEY THAT'S GREAT DAVE." SO I'M GONNA SURPRISE HIM THIS YEAR BY ROLLIN' HIM UP HIS OWN CHARACTER.



GOD BLESS THE KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE!

THAT IS A GREAT IDEA DAVE. IT BEATS GETTING HIM MORE TIES, SOCKS AND UNDERWEAR.

YEAH, DAVE HAD SUCH A GREAT IDEA, I DECIDED I'M GONNA FILL UP ON MY *FADING SUNS* STUFF WHILE I GOT THE MONEY TOO. 'COURSE MY DAD WOULDN'T APPRECIATE HIS OWN CHARACTER AS MUCH AS DAVE'S WILL. SO I'LL HAVE TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING ELSE FOR HIM.