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Knights of the Dinner Table #43
Wasted Days and Wasted Knights
May, 2000

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

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Knights of the Dinner Table™

M A G A Z I N E

Wasted Days and Wasted Knights

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

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Although he won't admit it, Knights of the Dinner Table™ comic strip 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). Ten years later, he continues to draw and write strips for the monthly Knights of the Dinner Table™ magazine. 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, Brian, Dave or Steve ever imagined. Along the way, Jolly's ghost-written two novels for Steven King, wrote creen plays for and directed two Spielberg films, invented the internet with Al Gore and made some incredible friends. Jolly considers himself truly blessed and enjoys a +1 on all saves versus petrification.

Editorial of a Madman

"Don't let it end like this. Tell them I said something." — Pancho Villa

One of the areas I've always thought role-playing games like AD&D™ have been lacking is in the area of character death. By my way of thinking how a hero dies is nearly as important as how he lived. In both fantasy movies and fiction it is often the death of the hero which is his great defining moment. Face it — last words are important to a hero (*and to a villain as well*). Pancho Villa certainly knew this truth. After being mortally wounded by an assassin he cried out, *"Don't let it end like this! Tell them I said something"*.

Almost any fantasy movie worth its scratch has at least one death scene and some quotable last words. It's almost mandatory.

In John Boorman's movie, *Excalibur™*, for example (*which ranks as one of the top 'gamer' movies among most gamers I know*) the hero, King Arthur, has a truly classic death scene. As he lies mortally wounded he instructs Percival to *"take the sword and throw it into the lake."* When Percival protests Arthur tells him another King will one day come and the sword will rise again. Suddenly the hero's death takes on a broader meaning. It's a great scene and one of the reasons the movie gets watched over and over again.

But think for a moment. What would have happened if Arthur had simply been struck down in battle and no such exchange took place? What if his comrades simply found his stiff corpse among the many dead afterwards? Obviously the entire tone of the entire movie would be changed and the movie would somehow be the lesser for it.

Yet, that's exactly how most Player Characters meet their end in the game. After months (*or years*) of building up a character's experience you find your PC in yet another battle. Only this time when the dice are tossed and the combat rounds are ticked off, it goes against you. A few bad rolls and you look up to announce, *"That's it! I'm dead. I only had two hit-points left."*

Sure there's a chance your PC might get raised by his comrades but should the dice go against you again and it's determined he's *'forever'* dead - the end result is that you're denied a proper death scene.

By *'death scene'* I mean the dying PC manages to cling to life (*despite the fact the dice say he's stone dead*) just long enough for his friends to gather around for the send-off — that brief moment when he's able to say his last words and weave a bit of drama.

So why is it this dramatic device has so long been overlooked in roleplaying? You'd think, given the fact most RPGs are inspired by, or try to emulate movies/fiction, that *'glorious death'* provisions would be standard fare.

I believe there are several reasons why this hasn't happened. For one, in most RPGs *'death'* is never quite what it seems. For a price, a player can usually be raised from the dead and life, literally, goes on. Eventually he may bite the *'big one'* but by and large

death is more of an inconvenience than an end.

When the end does come - it's never really seen as such until much later when an attempt to raise the character fails. So a big death scene comes off as being a bit silly if you end up coming back to life and are seen walking around again the next day.

Another reason we don't usually see great 'death scenes' in roleplaying is because of the nature of role-playing games themselves. Sometimes the rules (*such as combat mechanics*) just get in the way. As mentioned before PCs tend to die quickly and unexpectedly as the result of a series of bad dice rolls.

I used to use a simple rule in my campaign. When a player died during melee (*and his comrades were still engaged in combat*) he was told to roll percentile dice each combat round. Depending on the nature of the mortal wounds which downed him he was given a percentage chance that was he'd be able to 'cling' to life that round. If he managed to hang on til the battle was over and his friends prevailed - he got his death scene.

Technically he was dead (*no amount pf healing would save him at this point*) but he got a few brief moments to bequeath his belongings, say his good-byes and most importantly say his last words.

The players always enjoyed this in-house provision and it seemed to take the edge off of the fact that someone just lost their seventh-level fighter because of a few bad fumbles.

And of course it set the stage for some classic, *'famous last words'* which would be repeated time and time again as the years passed. One that immediately comes to mind;

"Put my body in a catapult and fire me into the King's flower garden. I want to fester among his gardenias and smell up the place." — Rake Thorn (Rick McCloud)

Rake's friends attempted to do as he asked. Unfortunately their aim was off and poor Rake's body was simply splattered (*literally*) against the side of a tower wall.

I explained that one of the tower guards, upon hearing the splat looked over the parapet to investigate. Seeing the goo now sliding down the tower wall, the guard turned to a fellow guard and said, *"Hey! You gotta come see this. A whole freakin' flock of seagulls just smacked into the wall!"*

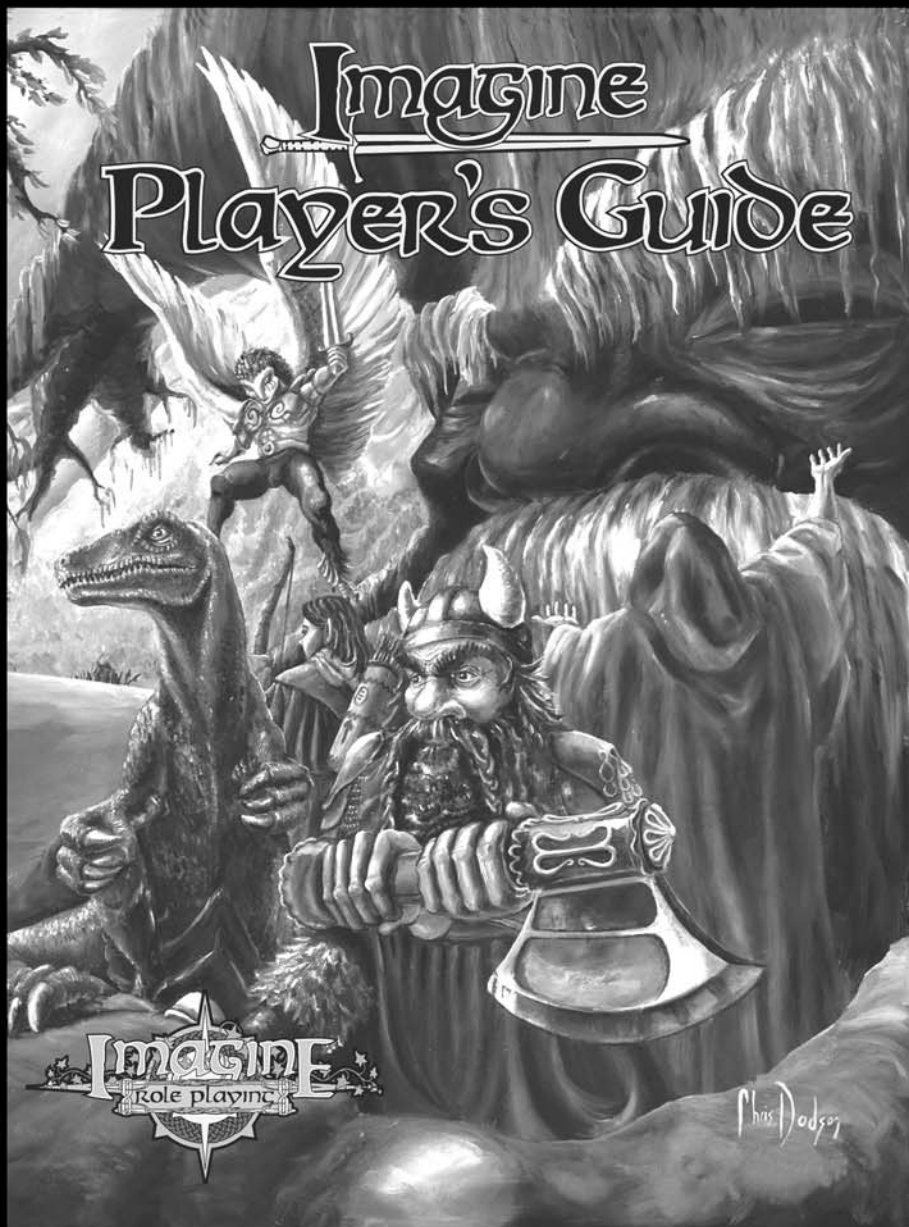
Rick, of course, wasn't amused.

Jolly R. Blackburn

Jolly R. Blackburn

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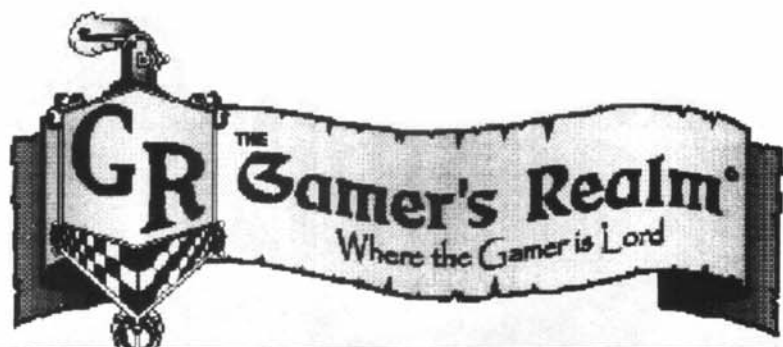
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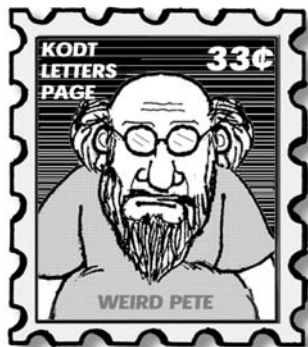
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Dear KODT,

Issue 40 rocked. It was just hysterical. I must have sold 4 issues just by reading it and laughing out loud so hard the whole game room looked up front to see what was going on.

Bob crashing out the window? "He was trying to get a refund."

The whole **Fairy Meat** thing was just sick! It was too funny. If I ever get time (*working on one book for you now, running the store, weekly game, blah blah blah*), I want to draw up a full set of rules for **Fairy Meat** for an upcoming issue. I'll let you know if I ever get a couple of hours to do it with.

Oh, and even my sales rep at **Games Workshop** noticed my ad in **Weird Pete's** window! He mentioned it when I called up to place an order. Great job! Positive feedback from a reader's letter about my swords article topped it off. It's like the whole issue was just for me. I feel special.

Lloyd Brown
War Dogs Game Center

Actually, Lloyd, that issue WAS made especially for you. It was an April Fool's joke. Our printer wouldn't print just 'one' copy so we had to run 20,000 copies and trash the rest — it cost us in the tune of \$5,467.34 to print them up plus 58 cents postage to mail the one copy to you.

Frankly, it wasn't nearly as funny (or as rewarding) as it sounded at the Christmas party a few months ago.

*Oh...and as for **Fairy Meat**, before you start writing you may want to check out the ad elsewhere in this issue. It's no joke - **Fairy Meat** is slated to be released this month.*

Jolly

Dear KODT,

My issue of KODT arrived today. It was like a vitamin; there is a *Recommended Monthly Allowance*, and after a while one begins to feel a bit starved for it!

Tell the KODT Developers to keep up the good work, and tell them that we- (*my wife and I*), both really like the **Black Hands**, and that we hope Jolly never stops

Our Readers Talk Back!

drawing them.

We also loved the "Battleship" strips. My wife laughed so hard at the last Battleship strip that I thought she was going to choke!

The KODT development team provides something we all desperately need: a little more-or-less regular oasis of delight in a world that can be hard and cold.

Name Withheld
via E-mail

Dear KODT,

Hooplas! I was flipping through my local comic shop today, and I came across a copy of **Knights of the Dinner Table**.

It looked amusing so I scooped it up. An hour later I was in stitches! I can completely relate to Sara, being the only female in my gaming group full of nit-wits. I hope that this isn't spamming you too much, but I drew a pic of Sara for you in thanks for a great comic.

Ursula "Hedgy" Husted
via E-mail

Nice work, Hedgy. Kinda reminds me of



the grammar school primer we're working on called, "Run Sara Run". (Which is the long awaited sequel to "Bobby-Boy got his Thermo-Nuclear Handheld Device"

Jolly

Dear KODT,

As a loyal KODT subscriber, I have eagerly been awaiting the arrival of your most excellent periodical, Issue #40 (*since about one hour after I read issue #39*), to see how the return of Johnny Kizinski turns out.

I arrived at my residence after a particularly grueling day at work and discovered upon entering my humble abode the coveted issue #40 all crisp and clean laying inside its precious plastic protective covering on top of my dinner table.

I immediately tore into it like a starving man tearing into a three course gourmet dinner. As is my normal custom when

receiving your most excellent periodical I immediately turned to the **Parting Shots**, as a sort of literary foreplay before diving into the KODT strips themselves, to see what I would be treated to for my comic enjoyment. I was pleased to discover "**Forty-Six Ways To Get Rid Of A Blind Date**" as the title promised many deep and painful belly laughs, though no actual practical applications for me at least at this point in my life.

I dove into the **Parting Shots**, relishing each and every word as I continued to read, pausing only to take a deep breath after laughing too hard. Then it happened. I just finished #18 and was proceeding to #19 only to discover that it was missing.

This brought a smile to my face as I thought I had found an editorial error, or perhaps a practical joke. However, I became more concerned the further into the **Parting Shots** I read, as I found more missing "Ways". Number 33 was also gone as well as numbers 36-42. So...I am not writing to request a refund or ask for a discount or even demand that you put said missing "Ways" in a future issue, though I wouldn't complain if you did.

No, I am simply asking you to tell the story of the missing "Ways". Perhaps it's an evil right-wing conspiracy attempting to bring **Kenzerco** low via corporate sabotage, or perhaps some militant group is seeking to ransom the missing "Ways" to finance their next war against the government.

You know if you couldn't actually come up with 46 "Ways" you could always just have called the **Parting Shots**, "**37 Ways To Get Rid Of A Blind Date**". Just a thought, not a criticism.

Also, I wanted to say that the whole "**Faerie Meat**" storyline was hilarious. I almost wet my pants from laughing when **Weird Pete** plunked that squirrel down on the table and wreaked havoc on the party. Will **Kenzerco** be marketing a **Faerie Meat** product line in the future?

By the way, I think introducing **Crutch** to the **Knights** is an excellent idea if that's where he and Johnny were heading.

Keep up the great work!

Dan Chavis
via E-mail

Thanks for the letter Dan. To be honest that list was found on the UseNet and expanded upon in house.

Just prior to going to press, however, a few staff members felt that several items on the list

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SEEING IS BELIEVING — COME TAKE A LOOK!!

bordered on the 'politically incorrect' side and a few were even offensive.

It was decided to pull those listings prior to going to press. Apparently somebody goofed and neglected to renumber/retile the list. Since no one was man enough to step forward and shoulder the blame we had our entire **Proof Reading Department** summarily executed by firing squad (for the third time in two years).

We regret that this may have indirectly led to the introduction of many typos in the past...uh...forty-two issues? We hope to get a new team of Proof Readers in place soon.

Jolly

Dear KODT

Naturally, let me start by saying you guys are absolutely great/hysterical (I am sure you get emails stating this all the time so I will just say "ditto" to the plethora of compliments others have surely made).

Is "Weird Pete Ashton" modeled after the owner of a gamestore in Waukegan IL?

I ask this because, like Pete, he is middle-aged, mildly overweight, balding, with beard, and wears glasses. He's also indicated he used to be a writer for TSR but due to some falling out no longer is, and seems a little bitter about it. He hosts a gaming club in the back of his store just like Pete as well.

Todd Spohnholz
via E-mail

While many characters in *KODT* were based on real individuals, **Weird Pete** is more of a montage of various retailers we've met over the years. We have met (or been introduced to) various individuals over the past five years who have made us second guess ourselves.

The *KODT* Development Team

Dear KODT

Greetings! I got both issue# 40 and **Bundle of Trouble Volume #5** a week apart, and I loved them both!

KODT #40 was brilliant. It follows that someone who's made such "shrewd" business investments as **Weird Pete** would blow it all on his **Virtual Reality Center**. (Did he really expect gamers to pay \$28 for a half hour?)

His "**Faerie Meat**" game will also be a disaster of miniscule proportions — a bizarre idea (cannibal psycho faeries with guns and grenades?) partially stolen from Nitro that, if published, would undoubtedly get lots of angry letters from parents who thought it was a nice, female-oriented fantasy game. (I have to admire his

choice of beta testers, though.)

And seeing Johnny Kizinski was a bit sad. While he may have everything the Knights lack (wife, kids, real job), he didn't seem too happy. His wife keeps him on a short leash, his new job doesn't sound exciting or profitable, and he's scared of a former love -- gaming. (It's also interesting that he no longer games, but his wife enjoys *Bingo*, her own game. Is this a reminder that while gaming is considered geekish, other games - like gambling and sports are universally accepted?)

His run-in with Crutch showed that you can take the gamer out of the Game, but you can't take the Game out of the gamer. I'd love to see a B.A. adventure with the Knights, plus Johnny and Crutch!

As for **Bundle of Trouble #5**, I loved the **HackNoia** campaign. Brian's cover story was priceless (especially the **Militant Fringe Mormon Sect**), and the near-war with Canada was right up the Knights' alley. I was surprised Sara got so upset — was she that bonded to a character after one adventure?

The **Bag of Holding** adventure was interesting — I never thought of using them as a troop transport.

One question — What happened to **Weird Pete's** warning, "Parents! I'm not yer kids' babysitter!?" (I loved how this changed from the original "We will gladly watch your children while you shop.")

How come **Weird Pete** doesn't have one of those "No shoplifting" signs, with some gaming slant tossed in? Every comic book and game shop I've been to has one. And why not do something more with **Pokemon**, easily the biggest thing to hit gaming in a while? (I think it's a flash in the pan -- but a damn shiny one!)

Fnord!
Jim Lynch
jmlmp@villagenet.com

As far as **Weird Pete's** signs - we've always had a lot of fun playing with those, so they get rotated quite a bit. If you (or anyone else) have some suggestions for signs to put in **Weird Pete's** window we'd definitely consider them.

Pokemon? We've done a few pokes at the game (**PokerMan**) but by and large we try to steer away from topical events. We feel that, while such spoofs are funny in the short term, they tend to date the humor and are usually painful to read even a few months/years later.

For example, when **The Blair Witch Project** first came out we received a ton of story ideas spoofing the movie. (Same thing when **Star Wars I** came out). We decided not to touch on them and

I'm really glad we didn't.

Every time I see another commercial with of a girl in a sock cap with a flashlight in her face saying, "I'm so scared - I'm going to miss the great discounts at SouthSide Auto this weekend.." I have to groan out loud.

Obviously we make exception now and then, but as a general rule we like to find our laughs elsewhere. One of the things so many readers comment on is the fact that they like to read *KODT* over and over and that the stories get funnier with each read. (Which I suppose is why the *KODT* Live-Readings grow larger and larger each year at the cons).

Jolly

Dear KODT

First, I would like to say I love the comic, and am glad you are putting in more pages of non-KODT for the same price. My whole **Advanced Dungeons and Dragons** group loves it.

Secondly, in issue #37 you asked for more dice stories. I have a green lucky twenty sider, (commonly referred to as my +1 twenty sider of initiative, or just the *Gawd*).

It also frequently kills PCs with its many crits, it is feared and revered to this day.

Mark McBride "Player Killer"
via E-mail

Glad you like the magazine and the extra non-KODT material. We try hard every month to bring interesting columns and articles for your reading pleasure.

Dave

Dear KODT

I loved issue 40! I'm so happy to see Crutch return. I can't wait to see how the Knights react to him.

And although I am a little ashamed to admit it, I liked **Faerie Meat**, and was wondering if you guys plan to put out such a game for real (once Brian gets all the bugs out of it of course).

Alex B
via E-mail

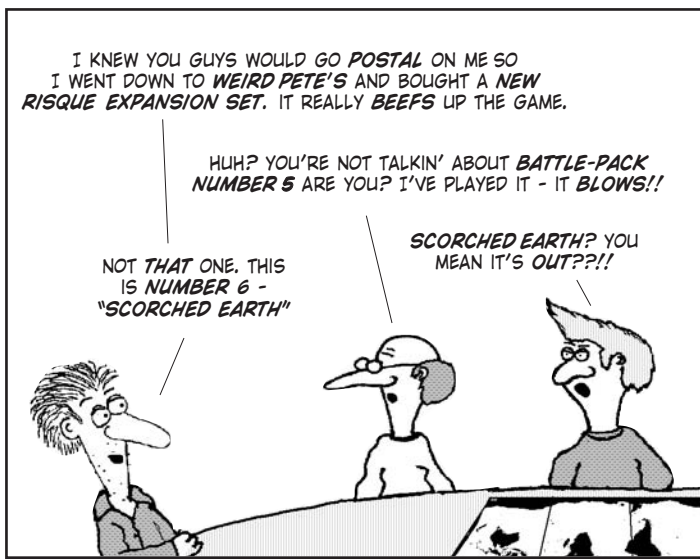
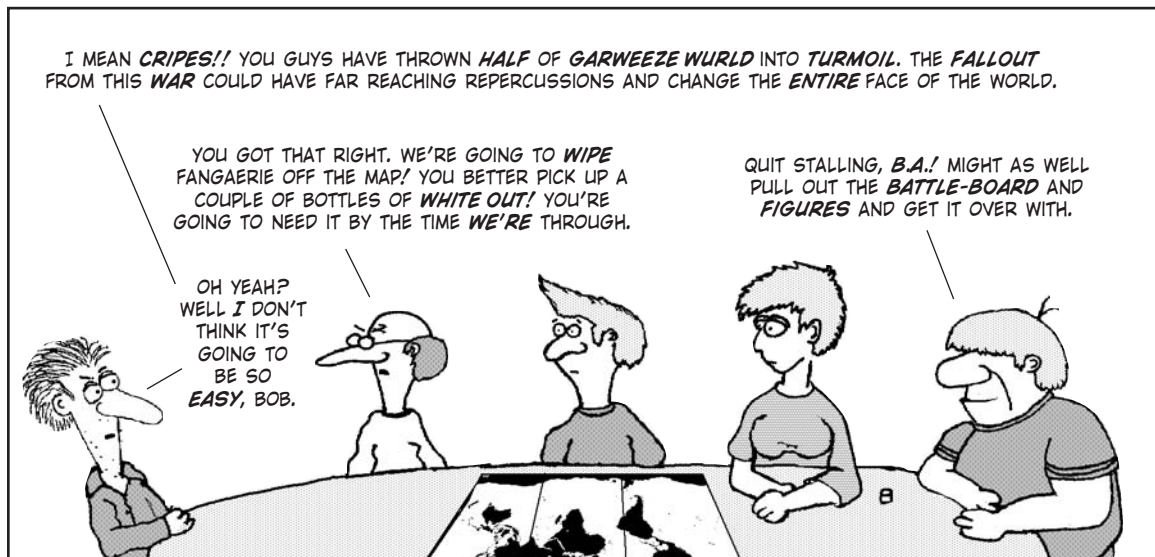
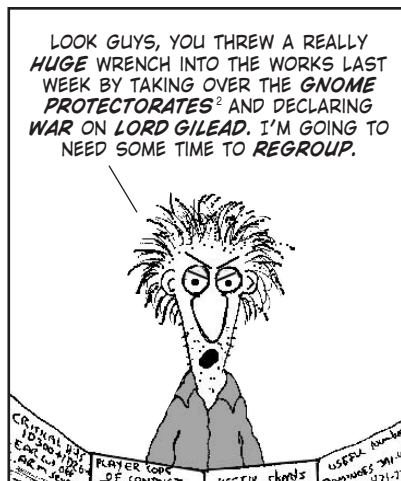
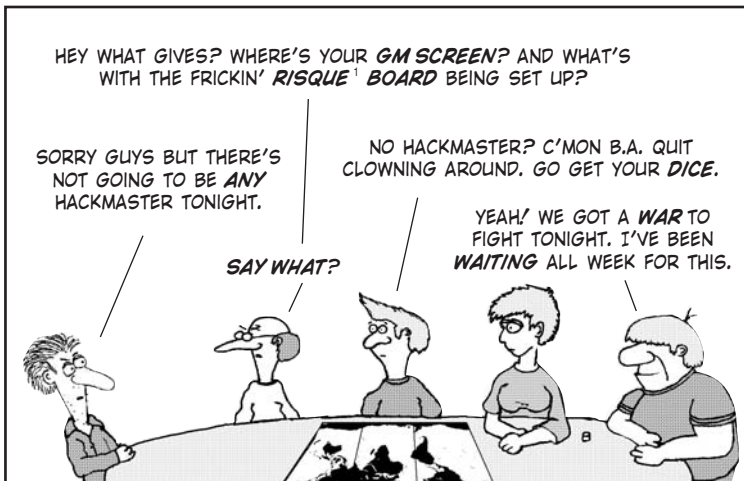
Wow! As mentioned before (as well in last issue's **GameVine**) we are indeed coming out with the game, **Fairy Meat**. We've been playtesting the game for over a year and it was those sessions which inspired the strip.

Jolly
□



A Winning Hand

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN WITH JOE JANKOWSKI



¹ See **Bundle of Trouble Volume Two** [KoDT#5] "Conquer and Deny"

² See KoDT #42 "A Very Delegate Situation"

GOOD CALL, B.A.!! BIRK'S WARGAME REVIEW GAVE THOSE RULES A TWELVE GUN SALUTE LAST ISSUE. AND HE NEVER PULLS HIS PUNCHES ON HIS REVIEWS.

DON'T WORRY, SARA. ACCORDING TO BIRK THIS SUPPLEMENT TAKES RISQUE WELL BEYOND THE REALM OF A STANDARD WARGAME.

C'MON, B.A., YOU KNOW I'M REALLY NOT FOND OF WARGAMES.

SO YOU GUYS APPROVE? WE CAN PLAY RISQUE TONIGHT AND RETURN TO OUR CAMPAIGN NEXT WEEK?

I CALL DIBS ON BLACK!!

OH, ALL RIGHT. WE'LL LET YOU SLIDE THIS TIME.



IT CHANGES THE VICTORY CONDITIONS. IN ORDER TO WIN THIS VERSION A PLAYER MUST MASTER THE SKILLS OF DIPLOMACY AND POLITICAL MANEUVERING AS WELL AS THE ART OF WAR.

OFT TIMES I FEEL LIKE ALEXANDER THE GREAT WHEN HE LAMENTED THAT THERE WERE NO MORE WORLDS TO CONQUER. YOU KNOW, I'M SURPRISED YOU GUYS ARE UP FOR RISQUE. I WOULD IMAGINE IT'S GETTING A LITTLE OLD LOSING TO ME ALL THE TIME.

LET'S NOT GET TOO COCKY, BRIAN. LAST TIME WE PLAYED RISQUE I ANNIHILATED YOUR ARMIES AND YOU THREW A TEMPER TANTRUM.

SADLY THESE TYPES OF GAMES ARE NO CHALLENGE FOR ME.

YEAH BIG GUY! YOU TOOK A REAL BEATING.

THAT GAME DIDN'T COUNT. I TOOK IT EASY ON SARA ON ACCOUNT OF IT WAS HER FIRST GAME.



WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO KID? SARA STOMPED YOUR BUTT LIKE A COCKROACH IN AN ALL GIRL'S DORMITORY.

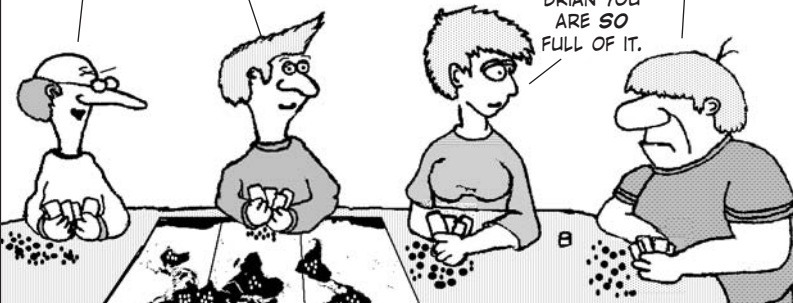
OH I GET IT. WHENEVER YOU LOSE IT'S JUST BECAUSE YOU LET US WIN - IS THAT IT?

HEY, I JUST HATE BEATING MY FRIENDS ALL THE TIME - THAT'S ALL. SOMETIMES IT'S JUST EASIER TO TAKE A DIVE THAN TO STRAIN A FRIENDSHIP OVER A GAME.

BRIAN YOU ARE SO FULL OF IT.

S'HYA RIGHT! I CALL THAT TALL TALK FOR A RED HEADED FAT MAN!

FILL YER HAND YOU BOASTFUL BASTARD! TONIGHT I'M GOING TO TEACH YOU A HEALTHY DOUBLE DOSE OF HUMILITY!



HAR HAR!! SURE THING CUE-BALL! BUT I'M AFRAID MY LESSON WILL HAVE TO WAIT FOR A MOMENT.

NATURE CALLS!!! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

A FEW SECONDS LATER...

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT GUY? JUST ONCE I'D LIKE TO TAKE HIM DOWN A FEW PEGS.

YOU AND ME BOTH. LOOK, THIS IS GREAT! I WAS HOPING WE'D GET A CHANCE TO TALK ALONE.

YOU GOT SOMETHING UP YOUR SLEEVE?

TALK? WHAT'S ON YER MIND, B.A.P?

YEAH, LET'S HEAR IT.

WE GOTTA MAKE THIS QUICK WHILE BRIAN IS IN THE RESTROOM! I'VE HAD IT UP TO HERE WITH HIS BRAGGING ABOUT NEVER LOSING.

WHADDA YA SAY WE ALL AGREE TO FORM AN IRON ALLIANCE -- GANG UP ON BRIAN AND TAKE HIM DOWN. WE STICK TOGETHER -- WHEN HE'S BEEN ELIMINATED, THEN MAY THE BEST MAN -- OR WOMAN -- WIN!!

SWEET! I WAS JUST THINKING THE SAME THING. LET'S DO IT!

FRICKIN' A!! THE MAN GOES DOWN!

YOU CAN COUNT ME IN. I SAY WE HURT HIM.

HE NEEDS A LESSON IN HUMILITY!

-KACKLE- THIS IS GOING TO BE SO KEWL. I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THE LOOK ON HIS FACE WHEN HE REALIZES HE'S IN TROUBLE.

A WEE BIT LATER...

OH MAN THIS IS GOING TO BE SO BRUTAL!! YOU GUYS MIGHT AS WELL QUIT RIGHT NOW AND SPARE YOURSELVES THE GRIEF!

'COS I JUST DREW A "WINNING HAND" HERE!!

BROO-HA HA HA HA! THESE CARDS ARE FRICKIN' AWESOME!!

MINUTES LATER...

YEAH, WELL, BROO-HA-HA YOURSELF **MISTER NUKE-BAIT!!** I'M PLAYING MY **FIRST STRIKE CAPABILITY CARD** AND TAKING OUT THOSE **NAVAL PIECES** YOU PLACED IN **SIAM**. **TAKE 'EM OFF THE BOARD!**

WA...WHAT??!!! YOU'RE FIRING MISSILES SO SOON??!! **BAD MOVE - BOBBY BOY!!** YOU DIDN'T **DECLARE WAR!!** NOW **EVERYONE ELSE** HAS THE **OPTION** OF COMING TO MY **DEFENSE** WITH THEIR OWN **RETALIATORY STRIKES**.

I DECLINE!!

ME TOO!



OH YES! **FIRST BLOOD** HAS BEEN **DRAWN**.



HEY WHAT GIVES??!!! YOU GUYS HAVE A **FREE STRIKE** AT **BOB** AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TAKE IT??

I CALL THAT **INSANE!!**

NO, NO, MY LITTLE **RADIATION-BOY** NOT "**INSANE**" -- IT'S CALLED "**IRON**" AS IN "**IRON ALLIANCE**" YOUR **BUTT'S** GOING TO **GLOW** SO MUCH BY THE TIME WE'RE THROUGH WITH YOU, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO **READ** IN THE **DARK**.

ACTUALLY THE RULES SIMPLY SAY WE GET A **FREE STRIKE** IN THE EVENT ANOTHER PLAYER LAUNCHES **NUKES** WITHOUT FIRST **DECLARING WAR** - BUT IT DOESN'T SAY WE **HAVE** TO FIRE AT THE **AGGRESSOR** -- RIGHT?

OH...IN **THAT CASE**, I **WILL** TAKE MY **FREE STRIKE!!** HEADS UP, **BRIAN**. YOU GOT **FOUR MERV'S** COMING AT YA!



LATER STILL...

OOPS! TOO BAD **BRIAN!** YOUR **ESCAPE ROUTE** APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN **CUT OFF!** SAY "**HELLO**" TO MY LITTLE FRIEND **THERMO** AND HIS BUDDY **NUKE!** **HA HA!!!** WHAT'S WRONG **BUNK?** FEELING THE **SQUEEZE** ARE YA?

HOW'S IT FEEL TO BE THE CENTER OF A **FOUR FRONT** WAR?

NOT SO **MOUTHY** WITH MY **MARK XII NUKES** HOUNDING YOUR **ASS** - ARE YOU?

IT'S JUST A GAME, **BRIAN**.



AND EVEN LATER STILL...

OH YOU WANT A **PRISONER EXCHANGE** - IS THAT IT? SURE. I **WASTE** YOUR TROOPS AND SEND THEM BACK TO YOU IN **MEAT WAGONS** IN **EXCHANGE** FOR THAT **STUPID LOOK** ON YOUR FACE!! **HA HA HO HO!!** **SO SAD - TOO BAD!!!**

AND GO AHEAD AND **MARK** YOUR **INDUSTRIAL INCOME** DOWN **FIVE NOTCHES**, DUDE! I'M SENDING MY **STRATEGIC BOMBERS** OVER YOUR **FACTORIES** AGAIN.





OKAY **TIME OUT!!** PER THE RULE 34.4 I'M CALLING FOR A ROUND OF **SECRET NEGOTIATIONS!** **BOB!** **DAVE!** LET'S TAKE IT OUT ON THE **FRONT PORCH.** I GOT A **PROPOSITION** TO THROW AT YOU.

SURE. WE CAN DISCUSS YOUR **FUNERAL** ARRANGEMENTS.

YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME, **THOUGH.** WE FORMED AN **IRON ALLIANCE** AGAINST YOU.

WE'LL **SEE** ABOUT THAT.



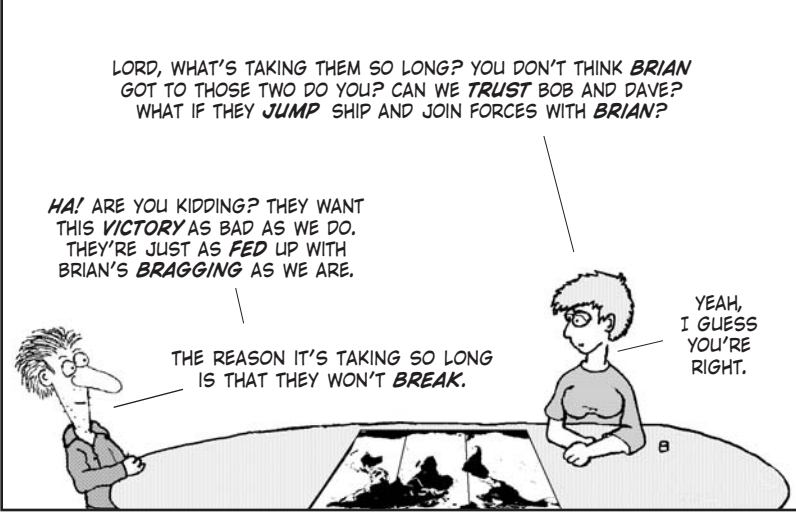
GUYS, **WAIT!!** DON'T GO. I DON'T **TRUST** HIM. HE'S GOING TO **TALK** YOU OUT OF OUR **ALLIANCE.**

DUDE, RELAX! THE **IRON ALLIANCE** SHALL REMAIN **UNBROKEN!** WE'LL GO SEE WHAT HE HAS TO SAY AND **REPORT** BACK TO YOU.

STAND FIRM, GUYS. YOU JUST **KNOW** HE'S GOING TO **WORK** ON YOU.

YO! NO NEED TO WORRY.

TWENTY MINUTES LATER...



LORD, WHAT'S TAKING THEM SO LONG? YOU DON'T THINK **BRIAN** GOT TO THOSE TWO DO YOU? CAN WE **TRUST** BOB AND DAVE? WHAT IF THEY **JUMP** SHIP AND JOIN FORCES WITH **BRIAN?**

HA! ARE YOU KIDDING? THEY WANT THIS **VICTORY** AS BAD AS WE DO. THEY'RE JUST AS **FED** UP WITH **BRIAN'S BRAGGING** AS WE ARE.

THE REASON IT'S TAKING SO LONG IS THAT THEY WON'T **BREAK.**

YEAH, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.

MOMENTS LATER...



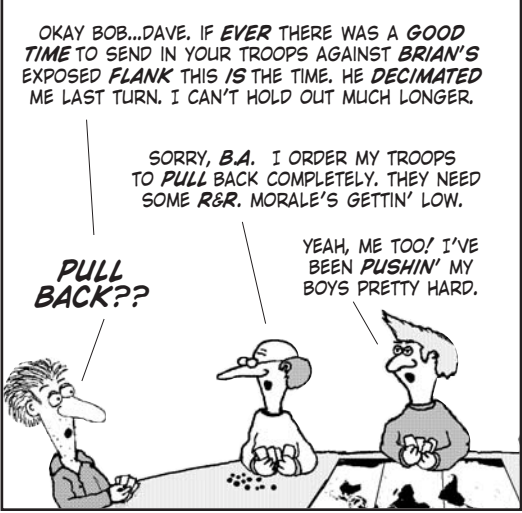
WELCOME BACK GUYS. UH.....ER...EVERYTHING KEWL?

YEAH, SURE. WHY WOULDN'T IT BE?

WE STILL HAVE AN **ALLIANCE?**

COULD YOU HAVE A **LITTLE FAITH** IN US?

LATER THAT NIGHT...



OKAY BOB...DAVE. IF **EVER** THERE WAS A **GOOD TIME** TO SEND IN YOUR TROOPS AGAINST **BRIAN'S** EXPOSED **FLANK** THIS IS THE TIME. HE **DECIMATED** ME LAST TURN. I CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER.

SORRY, **B.A.** I ORDER MY TROOPS TO **PULL BACK** COMPLETELY. THEY NEED SOME **R&R.** MORALE'S GETTIN' LOW.

PULL BACK???

YEAH, ME TOO! I'VE BEEN **PUSHIN'** MY BOYS PRETTY HARD.



YEAH, RIGHT! YOU'VE BEEN **PUSHING** YOUR MEN **HARD** ALL RIGHT. ALL YOU'VE BEEN DOING FOR THE PAST **FORTY-FIVE** MINUTES IS **MARCHING** YOUR MEN BACK AND FORTH AND **AVOIDING** **BRIAN'S** ARMIES AT **ALL COSTS!**

B.A.'S RIGHT. YOU GUYS AREN'T **SHOULDERING** YOUR FAIR SHARE OF THE LOAD. I'M GETTING **SLAUGHTERED** OVER HERE.

HEY, I'M JUST WAITING FOR THE **RIGHT** MOMENT TO STRIKE.

I'VE...UH...ER... I GOT SOME **LOGISTICS** PROBLEMS TO DEAL WITH.

SEVERAL TURNS LATER...

I'M SORRY B.A. BUT I **WON'T** BE ABLE TO **LEND** YOU THOSE **TANKS** I PROMISED YOU. I UH...ER... I NEED THEM TO **BOLSTER** MY SOUTHERN FLANK. BUT I'LL GIT WITH YA LATER. MAYBE I CAN **FREE UP** SOME **INFANTRY** IN A **TURN** OR TWO.

YOU CAN **SHOVE** YER **INFANTRY**. WE HAD A **DEAL** DAMMIT. I WAS **COUNTING** ON THOSE **TANKS**.

IT'S NOT HIS **FAULT** B.A. THERE ARE **EXTENUATING** CIRCUMSTANCES INVOLVED HERE.

WHOAH! SHUT UP, DAVE. THIS IS SUPPOSE TO BE ALL **HUSH HUSH!!**

I DON'T THINK I LIKE YOUR **ATTITUDE** MISTER.

HUSH HUSH?



I **KNEW IT!!** HE GOT TO YOU DIDN'T HE? YOU **TURNUED** ON THE **ALLIANCE!!**

OKAY, WE **CONFESS**. SORRY, DUDE, NOTHING PERSONAL BUT I'M OFFICIALLY **ANNOUNCING** MY SUPPORT OF **OVERLORD BRIAN'S** PUSH FOR **WORLD DOMINATION!**

MY, MY, YOU BROKE **B.A.'S** **'IRON ALLIANCE'**. MIND TELLING ME YOUR **SECRET?**

THE TRUTH IS I'M **REPOSITIONING** MY **TROOPS** TO **ATTACK** YOU NEXT **TURN**.

BUT FIRST YOU'LL HAVE TO **ENDURE** MY **NUKES**, B.A.

WHY YOU.. **FIRK DING** **BLAST...**

I **TOLD YOU!** I HAVE A **WINNING HAND!** **BOB** AND **DAVE** SAW THE **WRITING** ON THE **WALL**.



A FEW TURNS LATER...

SORRY GUYS! YOUR **USEFULNESS** HAS COME TO AN END. I ORDER MY **ELITE GUARD** TO SEIZE THE **TACTICAL NUKE ARTILLERY** DAVE ATTACHED TO MY **XIX CORPS** AND TURN THEM AGAINST HIM. THEN I SEND IN MY **YUCATAN RANGERS** TO MOP UP **BOB'S** REMAINING UNITS. THAT SHOULD TAKE HIM OUT OF THE GAME AND I COLLECT HIS **CARDS** AND OTHER **ASSETS!**

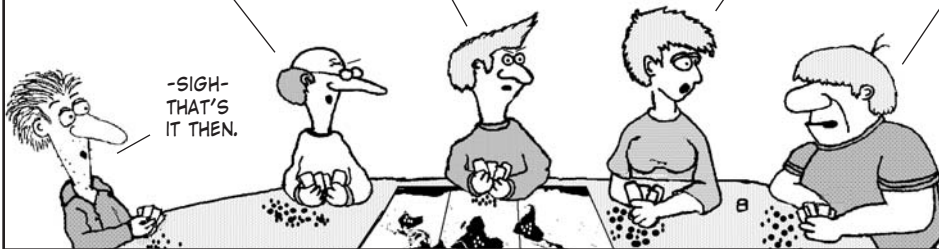
FINE! THANKS FOR PUTTING ME OUT OF MY **MISERY!**

THANK GAWD! I **KNEW** IT WAS COMING - THE **WAITING** WAS JUST **TOO INTENSE**.

WELL, THAT LOOKS LIKE THE **GAME**.

INDEED IT DOES.

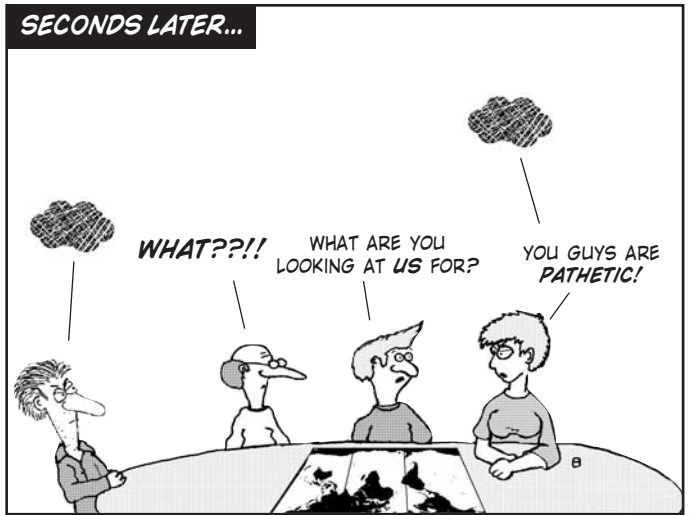
-SIGH- THAT'S IT THEN.





GOOD GAME, GUYS! MAYBE WE CAN PLAY *AGAIN* SOMETIME.

ANY HOO, I GOTTA RUN. MY *ONLINE* GAME OF *BATTLE JERKS* STARTS IN THIRTY MINUTES.



SECONDS LATER...

WHAT???!?

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT *US* FOR?

YOU GUYS ARE *PATHETIC!*

WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU THINKING???

I THOUGHT WE ALL AGREED TO *GANG UP* ON BRIAN AND TAKE HIM *OUT* OF THE GAME?

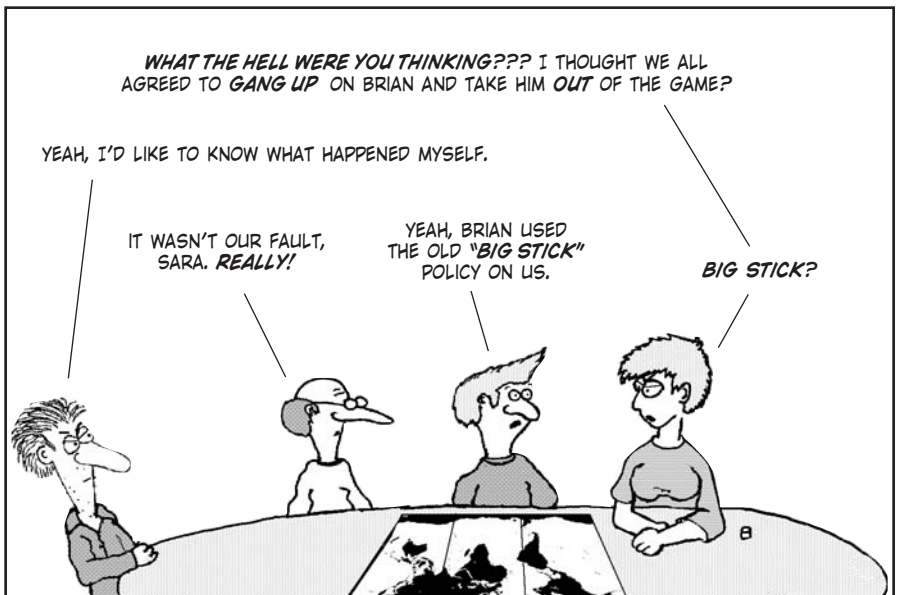
YEAH, I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED MYSELF.

I JUST HAVE *ONE* QUESTION FOR YOU GUYS!!

IT WASN'T OUR FAULT, SARA. *REALLY!*

YEAH, BRIAN USED THE OLD "*BIG STICK*" POLICY ON US.

BIG STICK?



THAT'S JUST *GREAT!* YOU LET HIM *BLUFF* YOU WITH *RETALIATION?* YOU SAW HIS *CARDS!!* THE MAN HAD *NOTHING!!*

NO, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! HE THREATENED TO *LITERALLY* USE A *BIG STICK* ON US IF WE DIDN'T PULL BACK OUR *TROOPS!*

NO WAY! *REALLY?* BRIAN THREATENED YOU?

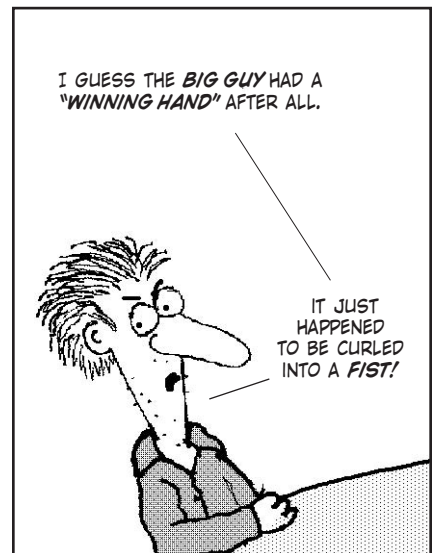
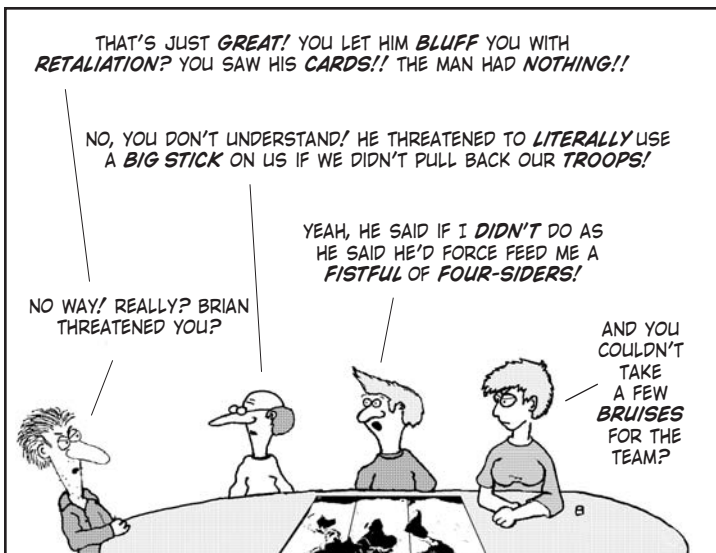
YEAH, HE SAID IF I *DIDN'T* DO AS HE SAID HE'D FORCE FEED ME A *FISTFUL* OF *FOUR-SIDERS!*

AND YOU COULDN'T TAKE A FEW *BRUISES* FOR THE TEAM?

I GUESS THE *BIG GUY* HAD A "*WINNING HAND*" AFTER ALL.



IT JUST HAPPENED TO BE *CURLED* INTO A *FIST!*



AFTER PERISHING IN "THE TEMPLE OF HORRENDOUS DOOM" THE BLACKHANDS ARE INFORMED BY THEIR GAMEMASTER, WEIRD PETE, THAT THE ADVENTURE IS ONLY JUST BEGINNING.

WITH THEIR DISEMBODIED SPIRITS TRAPPED IN THE "CHAMBER OF LOST SOULS" THE PLAYERS MUST SOMEHOW REJOIN WITH THEIR BODIES AND ESCAPE THE TEMPLE.

OKAY, WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF THE DEAD, BOYS AND GIRLS! YOUR RECENT DEMISE IS GOING TO REQUIRE A FEW MODIFICATIONS TO YOUR CHARACTERS. REMEMBER ALL THOSE PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES YOU MIN-MAXED WITH SO MUCH LOVE AND ATTENTION? SCRATCH 'EM OFF! IN YOUR ETHEREAL STATE THEY'RE AS USELESS AS PIPS ON A ONE-SIDED DIE!

ARE YOU SURE THIS ISN'T SOME ELABORATE ILLUSION??

YOU BETTER LISTEN UP GUYS. THIS IS WHERE IT GETS REALLY SCARY.



AS SPIRITS YOU NOW HAVE JUST ONE ATTRIBUTE TO WORRY ABOUT -- S.E.F.!!

THE HIGHER YOUR SEF THE MORE POWERS YOU CAN PURCHASE FROM THE "POWER LIST" I'M ABOUT TO HAND OUT. THE MORE POWERS YOU HAVE THE MORE INFLUENCE YOU CAN EXERT ON THE LIVING WORLD AROUND YOU. EVERYBODY WITH ME SO FAR?

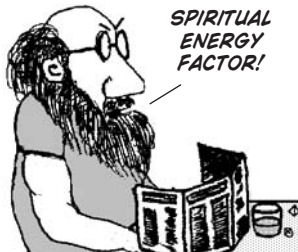
SPIRITUAL ENERGY FACTOR? WHAT TYPE OF DICE DO WE ROLL TO DETERMINE THAT?

SPIRITUAL ENERGY FACTOR!

YOU DON'T ROLL FOR IT, MORON! IT'S BASED ON YOUR PRIOR HIT POINTS. YOU TAKE YOUR HPS AND MULTIPLY THEM BY THE EXPERIENCE LEVEL YOUR CHARACTER HELD.

BUT WE WERE ONLY FIRST LEVEL!

THIS IS BRUTAL. I ONLY HAD 12 HITPOINTS.



WHAT ARE YOU COMPLAINING ABOUT? MY LAME-ASS PIXIE-BROWNIE ONLY HAD FIVE HITPOINTS! ONCE AGAIN I'M SCREWED!!

ACTUALLY THAT'S PRETTY GOOD FOR A PIXIE-HYBRID.

WHAT DO I CARE? SHE'S DEAD AND I INTEND TO KEEP HER THAT WAY.

FINE BY ME.

OKAY, SO I'M PASSING DOWN YOUR NEW CHARACTERS SHEET AMENDMENTS. YOU'LL USE THESE TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR S.E.F. LEVELS AND POWERS AND SO FORTH. ON THE BACK YOU'LL FIND A COMPILED LIST OF ALL THE AVAILABLE POWERS WHICH YOU CAN PURCHASE.

STUDY 'EM CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU SPEND YOUR SEFS.

THERE ARE NO TAP BACKS. ONCE YOU MAKE YOUR SELECTIONS YOU'RE STUCK WITH 'EM.



IT MIGHT EVEN BE A **GOOD IDEA** IF YOU **COORDINATED** YOUR **POWER PURCHASES** SO THE **PARTY** ENDS UP WITH A **GOOD ARSENAL** TO FALL BACK ON. WITHOUT THE **RIGHT POWERS** YOU'LL FIND IT **DAMN NEAR IMPOSSIBLE** TO ESCAPE THE **CHAMBER OF LOST SOULS!**

OUCH!!! THESE POWERS ARE **COSTLY!!** EVEN THE **WEAK-ASS STUFF** IS **FIVE SEFS** A POP.

NO WAIT, HERE'S ONE THAT COSTS ONLY **TWO SEFS** - **BEND SPOONS!**

THIS IS **INSANE!** I ONLY HAVE **FIFTEEN SEFS** TO WORK WITH.

LIKE THE MAN SAID - **CHOOSE WISELY!!**



AS I INDICATED BEFORE -- THE **ONLY WAY** YOU'LL BE ABLE TO **BEAT** THIS ADVENTURE IS BY **PULLING TOGETHER!** AS **SPIRITS** YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO **MELD** WITH ONE ANOTHER TO BECOME A **SINGLE CHARACTER** AND THEREBY **POOL YOUR POWERS.**



SIR, I DON'T MEAN ANY **DISRESPECT** BUT THIS **SMACKS** OF BEING **HOME-BREWED**. IT DOESN'T SOUND **ANYTHING** LIKE 'OFFICIAL' **HACKMASTER.**

HMMRRFFF! SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU **NEWT** BUT THIS IS **ALL GROUNDED** ON **APPROVED** **HACKMASTER MATERIAL.**

OFFICIAL MATERIAL? HOW COME I NEVER HEARD OF THIS **SPIRITUAL ENERGY STUFF?**



LOOK **WISE ASS!** I BASED MOST OF THIS STUFF ON A LARGELY **UNKNOWN** AND **POORLY-DISTRIBUTED** SUPPLEMENT **BISON HEAD GAMES** PUT OUT BACK IN THE 70'S. IT WAS CALLED "**DEATH AFTER LIFE**" AND DEALT WITH THE WORLD OF THE **UNDEAD** IN **GARWEEZE WURLD.**



BISON HEAD GAMES???! YOU MEAN THAT **THIRD-PARTY CRAP** THEY USED TO **CRANK** OUT BEFORE **GARY** YANKED THEIR **LICENSE?** THAT STUFF WAS **GAWD-AWFUL!!**

WELL, I'D HAVE TO **AGREE** WITH YA ON THAT ONE **NEWT**. BUT "**DEATH AFTER LIFE**" WAS THE **EXCEPTION.**

HEY IT WASN'T **ALL** BAD. SOME OF THEIR **SCRATCH-N-SNIFF** **DUNGEON DEBRIS** SETS WERE DECENT.

SIR ONCE AGAIN I **MUST** PROTEST. I **ONLY** PLAY BY SANCTIONED RULES.



YEAH, YEAH, WHATEVER. **SIMMER DOWN** THERE **JUNIOR**. IT JUST SO HAPPENS THIS SUPPLEMENT IS **STILL** LISTED ON **HARD EIGHT'S** WEBSITE IN THE **HACKMASTER CANON** - THAT MAKES IT **KOSHER.**

I'M A LITTLE **CONFUSED** HERE. IF WE **MELD** OUR **SPIRITS** TO BECOME **ONE CHARACTER** - WHO GETS TO RUN IT?

GOOD QUESTION, GORDO! IF EVERYONE IS **THROUGH** WHINING AND MOANING I'LL **EXPLAIN** IT TO YOU.

OH I'VE ONLY JUST **BEGUN** TO WHINE AND MOAN BUT FEEL FREE TO CONTINUE.



BASICALLY YOU'LL **ALL** BE RUNNING THE **CONJOINED-CHARACTER** AS A TEAM. THE PROBLEM IS THIS - ONLY **ONE** OF YOU CAN DETERMINE WHAT **ACTION** THE CHARACTER PERFORMS AT ANY GIVEN TIME. THIS MEANS YOU'LL BE CONSTANTLY **COMPETING** FOR CONTROL - UNLESS OF COURSE YOU **VOLUNTEER** TO PUT **ONE** PERSON IN CHARGE AND **AGREE** TO **ABIDE** BY HIS DECISIONS.

AGREE??!! WE CAN'T EVEN AGREE ON WHAT **TOP-PINGS** TO GET ON OUR **PIZZA**. I'VE BEEN TELLING THESE **CLOWNS** FOR TWO YEARS I'M **ALLERGIC** TO **ONIONS** AND **EVERY** WEEK I SIT HERE AND **PICK** FRICKIN' **DICED ONIONS** OFF MY DAMNNED PIZZA.

HE'S RIGHT SIR. WE'RE GOING TO SPEND **ALL** OUR TIME FIGHTING.

BUT I LOVE ONIONS!



NOPE! THERE'S **NOT** GOING TO BE ANY FIGHTING. IF YOU OPT **NOT** TO HAVE **ONE** PLAYER BE THE **CALLER** THAN **EVERY** TURN **EACH** OF YOU WILL GET TO **PROPOSE** AN ACTION FOR THE **CONJOINED-CHARACTER** TO PERFORM.

THEN AS A **GROUP** YOU **VOTE** ON WHICH PROPOSED ACTION TO **ACT** UPON.

BUT WOULDN'T WE JUST **VOTE** ON OUR OWN PROPOSED ACTION?



TRUE BUT HERE'S THE **BEAUTY** OF IT. BASICALLY YOU GET **ONE** VOTE FOR EACH **SEF** POINT YOU'VE CONTRIBUTED TO THE **CONJOINED-CHARACTER**.

IN THE EVENT OF A **TIE** VOTE THERE IS A **ROLL OFF** WITH THE **HIGH ROLLER** DECIDING THE **NEXT** ACTION.

OKAY, LET ME SEE IF I GOT THIS. MY ORIGINAL **8** HITPOINTS TIMES **ONE** ENTITLES ME TO **8** **SEF** POINTS. SO THAT MEANS I'D HAVE **8** **VOTES** AS FAR AS DETERMINING WHAT OUR **CONJOINED CHARACTER** DOES?

OKAY, SO LET'S TAKE A **THIRTY MINUTE** BREAK SO YOU GUYS CAN **PURCHASE** YOUR **POWERS** AND SO FORTH.

WHILE YOU DO THAT I'M GOING TO GO GRAB A **SODA!**

THAT'S RIGHT, **RAINMAN!**

SO, I'D HAVE **15** **VOTES** THEN.



MOMENTS LATER...

YOU KNOW, THIS ACTUALLY SOUNDS LIKE A LOT OF **FUN!!** IT'S **LITERALLY** "ALL FOR ONE - ONE FOR ALL!"

WELL, YOU MIGHT AS WELL **DEAL** WITH IT **STEVI**L. THIS IS JUST **PETE'S** WAY OF **FORCING** US TO WORK AS A **TEAM**. ACTUALLY IT'S NOT A **BAD** WAY OF APPROACHING THE PROBLEM.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT BUT I **DO** KNOW THIS - I'M GOING TO BE THE **FIRST** TO **CRACK** THE **TEMPLE** OF **HORRENDOUS DOOM**. I'LL BE **FAMOUS!!**

THIS REALLY **BLOWS!** IT REMINDS ME OF THOSE **STUPID GROUP PROJECTS** THEY FORCED US TO DO IN **COLLEGE**.

HMMMM... I WONDER IF **BEND SPOONS** WOULD ACTUALLY BE **USEFUL**.



YOU
DON'T
SLEEP.

WE DON'T
EITHER.



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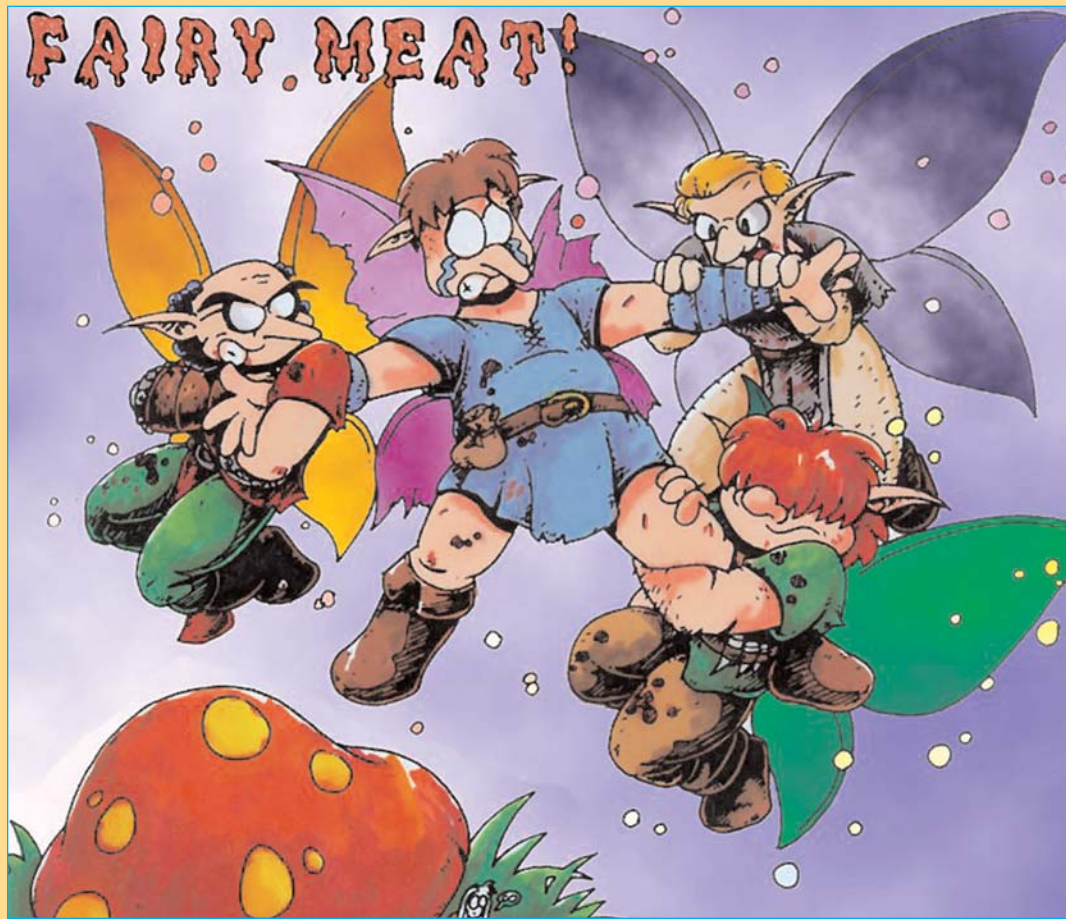
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Brian Burke sent in this rendition of Weird Pete's playtest session of Fairy Meat from KODT#40's "A POUND OF FLESH."

OKAY, **AQUAMARINE**, AFTER USING YOUR **POLYMORPH TO FROG POTION** ON **STEVI** YOU'RE SUCCESSFUL IN USING YOUR **COOKING PROFICIENCY** TO MAKE A **TASTY DISH OF FROG LEGS** WITH A **DELICATE WINE SAUCE** WHICH YOU **PROMPTLY FEED** TO YOUR **CROW FAMILIAR - NIGHTSHADE**. MEANWHILE, YOUR **LEMUR-MONKEY SHRIEKS** WITH **LAUGHTER** AS IT **HURLS CHUNKS OF HALF-EATEN FRUIT** AT **FIRE BLOSSOM**. OH...AND THE **GRUNGE ELVES** ASK FOR A **SECOND HELPING OF KRAGIN-BERRY PIE!**

EXCELLENT! NEXT I THINK I'LL PREPARE A **PIXIE-KABOB**. AWFULLY GENEROUS OF THE **GRUNGE ELVES** TO GIVE ME THE WELL-GUARDED **RECIPE!**

SHE'S **EVIL!!**
SHE'S EVEN **WORSE**
THAN **STEVI!**

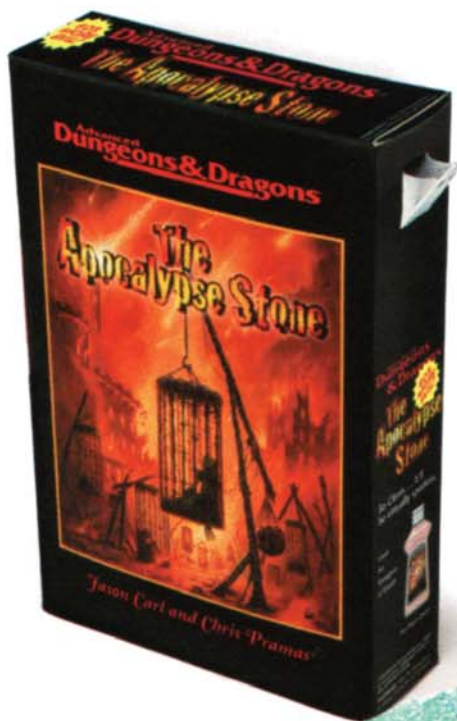
CAN I **STOP**
DANCING
NOW, **AQUA?**

HAR HAR!! HEY
STEVI LOOKS
LIKE YOU JUST
CROAKED!!
LITERALLY!!!
HAR HAR!!



Once again the mysterious artist known only as "AquaMarine" turned in some home-brewed KODT. Looks like she's changed camps this time out though and has migrated to the BlackHands' table.

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The Power Play

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

THESE **POWERS** ARE NEXT TO **USELESS**. ALL I CAN AFFORD IS **GREGORIAN CHANT** AND **CHANTILLY GRACE**. I'M **THIS CLOSE** TO GRABBIN' MY **KEYS** AND GOING OVER THE **HILL**. WHY ARE WE ALLOWING OURSELVES TO BE **ABUSED** LIKE THIS?

GEEZE LOUEEZE!! THERE ARE SO MANY **POWERS** TO CHOOSE FROM. HERE'S ONE THAT LOOKS INTERESTING -- '**INHABIT SMALL CONTAINERS**'. THAT ONLY COSTS **SIX**. I'D STILL HAVE **TWO** POINTS TO SPEND ON '**FOG MIRROR OR OTHER GLASS SURFACES**'.

EXCUSE ME, BUT WE'RE **SUPPOSED** TO BE USING THIS **TIME** TO COORDINATE OUR **POWER SELECTIONS** - **NOT** TO COMPLAIN!

I WONDER WHAT '**HURL SLIME**' DOES? SAYS HERE IT COSTS A **WHOPPING** TEN **SEF** POINTS.

BITE ME!

WILL YOU **LISTEN** TO YOURSELF? **LOOK AT YOU!** YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE OUR **GM** FOR CRYING OUT LOUD. IT'S **YOUR FAULT** WE'RE IN THIS **MESS**.

HEY - I'M **WORKING** ON GETTIN' MY CREDENTIALS BACK. MY **APPEAL HEARING** IS NEXT MONTH.

MEANWHILE WE **ALL SUFFER**.

SORRY!

HEY THERE'S SOMETHING **WRONG** WITH THESE **NEW CHARACTER SHEETS** **PETE** GAVE US. SOME OF THE **ENTRIES** HAVE **N.A.** STAMPED ACROSS THEM.

WHAT ARE YOU **TALKING** ABOUT?

HEY, YOU'RE RIGHT. IT SAYS **N.A.** UNDER **SEX** AND **RACE**. **NON-APPLICABLE?** WHAT THE.....

I SUPPOSE IT MAKES SENSE. **GENDER** AND **RACE** WOULDN'T MEAN A WHOLE LOT TO **SPIRITS**.

DOES THAT MEAN I'M **NO LONGER** CONSIDERED A **FEMALE PIXIE-BROWNIE?**

I SUPPOSE IT DOES.

HOODY HOO! I'M **RID** OF HER AT LAST. I CAN HOLD MY HEAD UP HIGH AGAIN.

OF COURSE IT'S ONLY **TEMPORARY**. WE'RE GOING TO **FIND** OUR **BODIES** AND CLAW OUR WAY BACK TO THE **WORLD OF THE LIVING** -- RIGHT?

RIGHT ON, **GORDO!** WE'RE GOING TO **BEAT** THIS ADVENTURE.

UH...SURE. THIS IS **FANTASY** ROLE-PLAYING -- YOU CAN **CLING** TO ANY **DELUSION** YOU WANT TO.

STEVI'L'S RIGHT ABOUT NOT HAVING ANY **DELUSIONS** ABOUT SURVIVING THIS THING FOLKS. I'D HATE TO SEE ANY **FALSE HOPE** YOU MAY HAVE **CRUELLY** BASHED TO BITS. I'VE SEEN IT ALL BEFORE. YOU START TO THINKING THAT MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, **YOU'RE** THE GUY WHO'S GOING TO DO IT - BE THE **FIRST** TO SURVIVE "**THE TEMPLE**".

C'MON IT CAN'T BE AS **BAD** AS THEY SAY. EVERY ADVENTURE HAS IT'S **ACHILLES HEEL**. I BET WE COULD **CRACK** THIS EGG IF WE WORKED AS A **TEAM!**

SHYA'RIGHT! YOU JUST **DON'T** KNOW. -SIGH- YOU JUST DON'T KNOW...

WELL NOW YOU GOT MY **DANDER** UP.

YOU'RE TALKIN' TO THE GUY WHO RAN A **2ND LEVEL HALF-DROW ASSASSIN** THROUGH THE ENTIRE **SERIES** OF "**HALL OF THE DESPOT WYRM**" - **MODULES G1 THRU G6**- WITH NO ARMOR, NO MAGIC WEAPONS AND NOT A **SINGLE** STAT ABOVE **14!!** THAT WAS **ME!!** AND I **LIVED** TO TALK ABOUT IT.

YOU GO DOWN TO **I.U.** SOMETIME AND TALK TO THE **BOYS** OVER AT THE **HOOSIER GAMER'S GUILD!!** MENTION **PAPILLON THE ASSASSIN** - SEE WHAT KIND OF **REACTION** YOU GET. YOU'LL SEE SOME **EYEBROWS** RISE. THEY REMEMBER WHAT **PAPILLON** DID AND THEY **DAMN SURE** REMEMBER **ME!!**

YOU RAN A **2ND LEVEL THIEF** THROUGH A **13TH LEVEL DUNGEON** AND LIVED TO TALK ABOUT IT?

I'M SITTIN' HERE AREN'T I?



SO I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY MORE OF THIS **DEFEATIST CRAP** ABOUT **UNBEATABLE DUNGEONS!**

PETE PUTS HIS PANTS ON ONE LEG AT TIME - SAME AS **ANY OTHER GM!** WE JUST NEED TO FIND THAT **ACHILLES HEEL** NEWT WAS TALKING ABOUT.

YEAH, MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT.



YOU **KNOW** I'M RIGHT. I'M NOT ABOUT TO LAY DOWN AND PLAY DEAD. THERE'S GOTTA BE **SOMETHING** WE CAN USE AGAINST.....

WHOOH!!! WHAT'S THIS??!! **HELLO!!!**

FIND SOMETHING **STEVIL?**

NOT SURE. HMMMMMM.....THIS IS ODD. I THINK I BETTER GO HAVE A LITTLE **CHAT** WITH **PETE** ABOUT THIS.



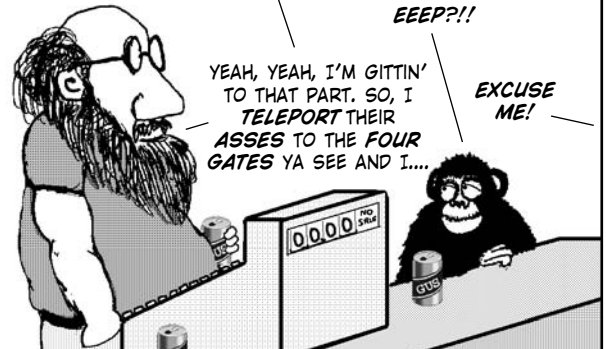
MEANWHILE...

...SO THEN **GORDO** STARTS **STRESSIN'** YA SEE, 'COS **STEVIL**, WAS REALLY PLAYIN' **ORCHID BLOSSOM** ALL **CARELESS** LIKE - TRYING TO GET 'ER **KILLED**. **HAR HAR!!!** YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE **BOY POPPIN' SWEAT** TRYIN' TO THINK OF A WAY TO **SAVE** THE OL' GIRL.

EEEP?!!

YEAH, YEAH, I'M GETTIN' TO THAT PART. SO, I **TELEPORT** THEIR **ASSES** TO THE **FOUR GATES** YA SEE AND I....

EXCUSE ME!



I HATE TO INTERRUPT "**BEER TIME FOR BONZO**" AND ALL BUT I **REQUIRE** A MOMENT OF YOUR TIME.

OH, HEY, **STEVIL**. YOU GUYS **FINISHED** PICKING YOUR **POWERS** ALREADY? BOY, THAT WAS SURE **QUICK**.

NO, ACTUALLY I HAVE A **QUESTION** FOR YA. I NOTICED SOMETHING ON THESE **NEW** CHARACTER SHEETS YOU GAVE US. THOUGHT YOU COULD **CLARIFY** SOMETHING FOR ME.

SURE **STEVIL**, WHAT YA GOT?

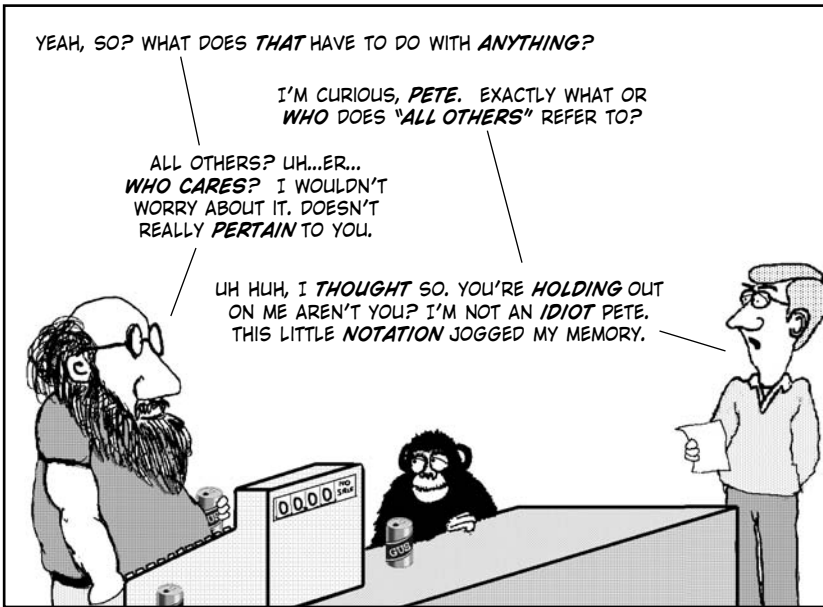
BELCH!!



IT SAYS HERE ON THE MARGIN IN **VERY SMALL PRINT**, AND I QUOTE, "**CHARACTERS** POSSESSING A **SOUL** SHOULD MULTIPLY THEIR **HITPOINTS** BY THEIR **EXPERIENCE LEVEL** TO DETERMINE THEIR **SEF** POINTS. ALL **OTHERS** SHOULD USE THE RULES ON **PAGE 96** OF '**DEATH AFTER LIFE**' TO DETERMINE THEIR **STARTING SEF.**"

ISN'T THAT **INTERESTING?** "ALL OTHERS SHOULD USE THE **RULES** ON **PAGE 96.**"





YEAH, SO? WHAT DOES *THAT* HAVE TO DO WITH *ANYTHING*?

I'M CURIOUS, *PETE*. EXACTLY WHAT OR *WHO* DOES "*ALL OTHERS*" REFER TO?

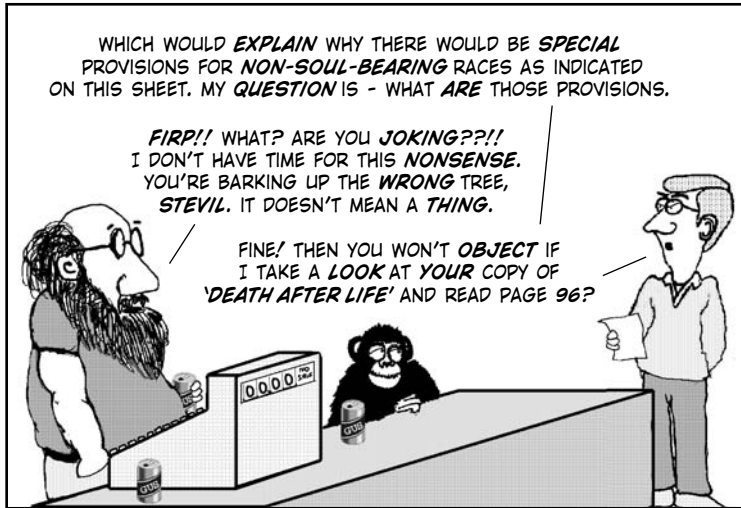
ALL OTHERS? UH...ER...
WHO CARES? I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT. DOESN'T REALLY *PERTAIN* TO YOU.

UH HUH, I *THOUGHT* SO. YOU'RE *HOLDING* OUT ON ME AREN'T YOU? I'M NOT AN *IDIOT* PETE. THIS LITTLE *NOTATION* JOGGED MY MEMORY.



I REMEMBER *GORDO* RAMBLING ONCE ABOUT HOW *PIXIE-HYBRIDS* TECHNICALLY DON'T HAVE *SOULS* - THEY'RE *MAGICAL CREATURES* BY NATURE ALONG WITH *FAIRIES* AND THEIR *ILK*.

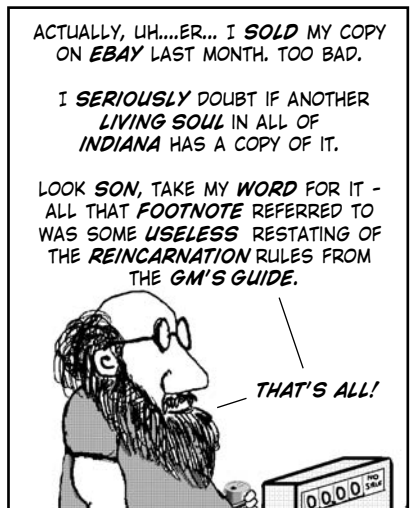
BUT THEY *DO* HAVE *SPIRITS*.



WHICH WOULD *EXPLAIN* WHY THERE WOULD BE *SPECIAL* PROVISIONS FOR *NON-SOUL-BEARING* RACES AS INDICATED ON THIS SHEET. MY *QUESTION* IS - WHAT *ARE* THOSE PROVISIONS.

FIRP!! WHAT? ARE YOU *JOKING??!!* I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS *NONSENSE*. YOU'RE BARKING UP THE *WRONG* TREE, *STEVIL*. IT DOESN'T MEAN A *THING*.

FINE! THEN YOU WON'T *OBJECT* IF I TAKE A *LOOK* AT *YOUR* COPY OF '*DEATH AFTER LIFE*' AND READ PAGE 96?

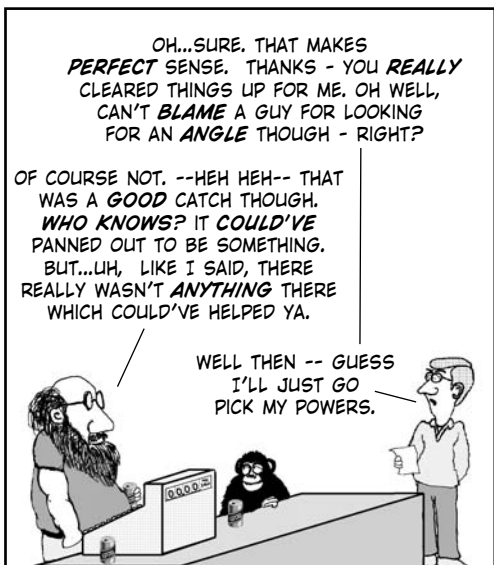


ACTUALLY, UH...ER... I *SOLD* MY COPY ON *EBAY* LAST MONTH. TOO BAD.

I *SERIOUSLY* DOUBT IF ANOTHER *LIVING SOUL* IN ALL OF *INDIANA* HAS A COPY OF IT.

LOOK SON, TAKE MY *WORD* FOR IT - ALL THAT *FOOTNOTE* REFERRED TO WAS SOME *USELESS* RESTATING OF THE *REINCARNATION* RULES FROM THE *GM'S GUIDE*.

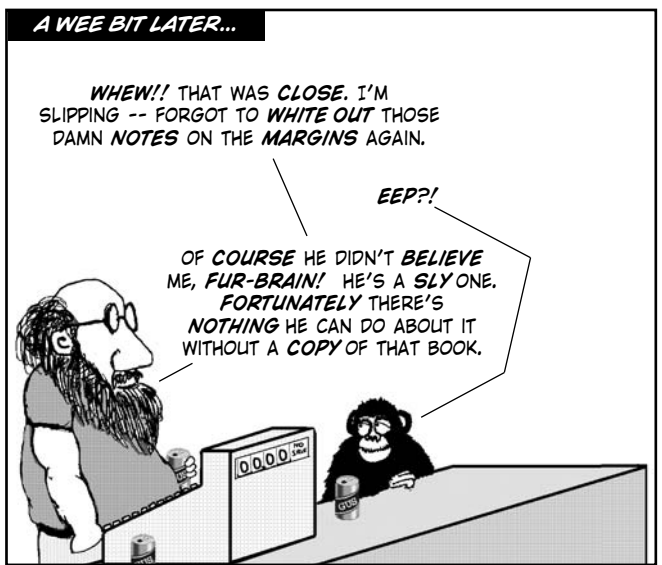
THAT'S ALL!



OH...SURE. THAT MAKES *PERFECT* SENSE. THANKS - YOU *REALLY* CLEARED THINGS UP FOR ME. OH WELL, CAN'T *BLAME* A GUY FOR LOOKING FOR AN *ANGLE* THOUGH - RIGHT?

OF COURSE NOT. --HEH HEH-- THAT WAS A *GOOD* CATCH THOUGH. *WHO KNOWS?* IT *COULD'VE* PANNED OUT TO BE SOMETHING. BUT...UH, LIKE I SAID, THERE *REALLY* WASN'T *ANYTHING* THERE WHICH *COULD'VE* HELPED YA.

WELL THEN -- GUESS I'LL JUST GO PICK MY *POWERS*.



A WEE BIT LATER...

WHEW!! THAT WAS *CLOSE*. I'M SLIPPING -- FORGOT TO *WHITE* OUT THOSE DAMN *NOTES* ON THE *MARGINS* AGAIN.

EEP?!

OF *COURSE* HE DIDN'T *BELIEVE* ME, *FUR-BRAIN!* HE'S A *SLY* ONE. *FORTUNATELY* THERE'S *NOTHING* HE CAN DO ABOUT IT WITHOUT A *COPY* OF THAT BOOK.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER IN THE PARKING LOT BEHIND PETE'S SHOP...

COME ON YA **BIG GOOF!** PICK UP THE PHONE. **PICK UP!!**

**BRING-BRING!!
BRING-BRING!!**



HULLO?!!

HELLO? **BRIAN?**
IT THAT YOU?

YEAH. **WHO'S THIS?**

**STEVIL VAN
HOSTILE!!**
I NEED A
FAVOR
FROM YOU.



A FAVOR? LOOK, I TOLD YOU **BEFORE** - I GOT **OUT** OF THE **DICE-LOADING** BUSINESS. PEOPLE WERE TALKING - THE **HEAT** WAS REALLY.....HUH?

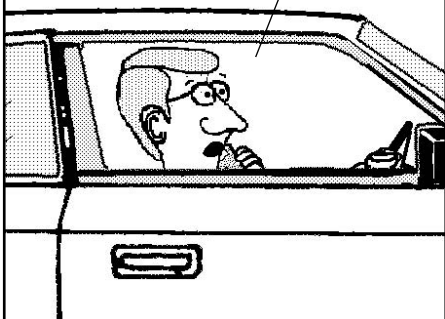
UH HUH.....YEAH. I SEE.

SURE. I **KNOW** THE BOOK. I HAVE **TWO** COPIES. ONE SIGNED BY THE AUTHOR AND A **PERSONAL** READING COPY.



YOU DO??!! THAT'S GREAT!

I JUST **KNEW** YOU WERE THE **MAN** WHO COULD HELP ME. LOOK, I GOT A **SITUATION** '**FORTY-TWO**'¹ HERE -- I NEED YOU TO PULL YOUR COPY AND **READ** ME **PAGE 96** OVER THE PHONE. YOU'D BE **HELPING** A FELLOW **CARD-CARRYING H.M.P.A.** MEMBER.²



A FEW MINUTES LATER....

WHOAH!!! READ THAT **LAST** PART OVER AGAIN.

UH HUH.....YEAH....I SEE, UH HUH, YEAH.....**YEAH??!!!**

NO WAY!! NO FRICKIN' WAY!!! ARE YOU **SURE??!!**

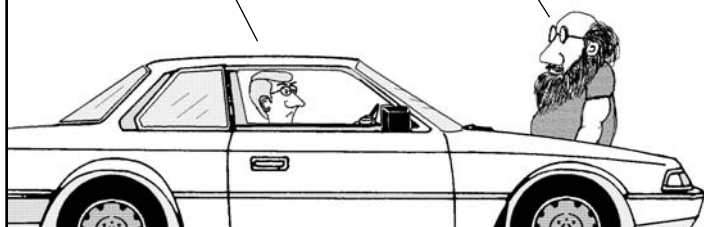


FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...

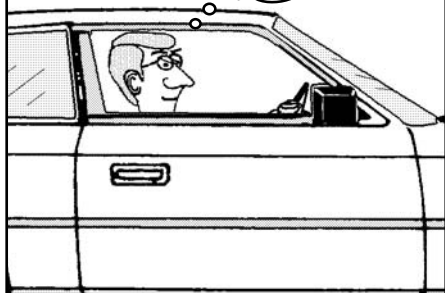
THERE YOU ARE!! HELL FIRE, BOY, WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU **EVERYWHERE**. YOU'RE HOLDING UP THE GAME.

OH, SORRY ABOUT THAT. I'LL BE **RIGHT** IN. I JUST NEEDED SOME **QUIET** SO I COULD PUT SOME **THOUGHT** INTO PICKING MY **POWERS**.

WELL, WELL, **GLAD** TO SEE YOU TAKIN' AN **INTEREST** IN THINGS. NICE TO HAVE YOU BACK.

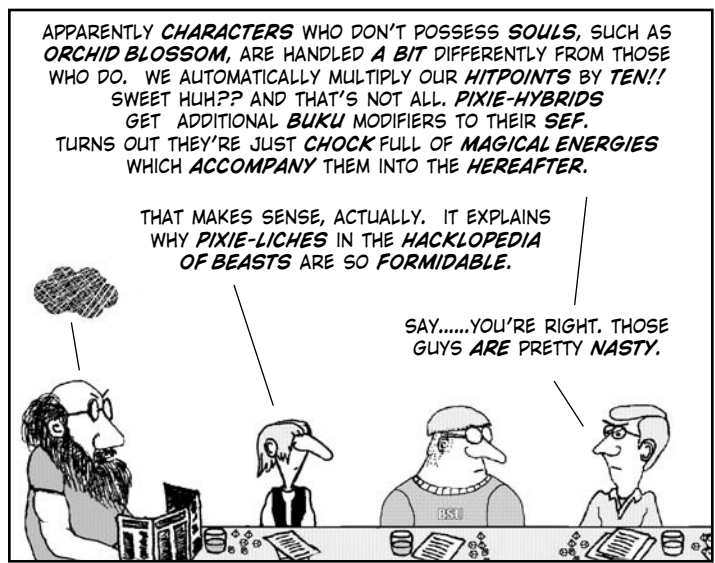
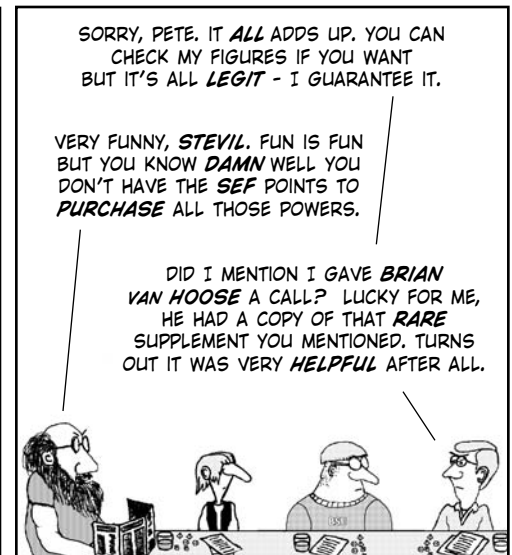
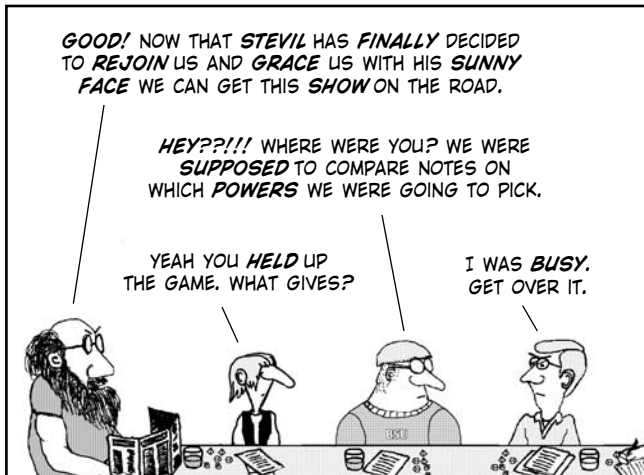


OH YEAH. I'VE JUST TAKEN A **KEEN** INTEREST IN THE GAME, **OLD MAN!!** I AM **DEFINITELY** BACK!



¹ 'Forty Two': One of the **Player Advantage Codes** [See **Bundle of Trouble Volume Four**, page 88]. The meaning of this particular code is, "We're about to learn the meaning of life - in other words we're dealing with a **Killer-GM**."

² By pointing out he's a 'card carrying member' of the **HackMaster Players Association**, Stevil is reminding Brian that it's the 'solemn obligation' of ALL **H.M.P.A.** members to come to the aid of a fellow (player) member in distress.



THIS FREAKIN' ROCKS! NOT ONLY IS **ORKUDYA** A **FORCE** TO BE **RECKONED** WITH NOW, BUT I'VE ALSO **SHED** MYSELF OF THE **STIGMA** OF BEING A **FEMALE PIXIE BROWNIE** ALL IN **ONE FELL SWOOP**.
"**FEAR ME**, MY FRIENDS, FOR THIS WILL **TRULY** BE MY **DARKEST HOUR**."*

ORKUDYA?? YOU MEAN **ORCHID** DON'T YOU?

PAGE 96 DIDN'T HAPPEN TO SAY ANYTHING ABOUT **GENERIC FIGHTERS** DID IT?

SORRY, **GORDO**. I CHANGED MY NAME TO MATCH MY **NEW VISION**. I GOT **PLANS** FOR THIS GUY. IF YOU CARE TO **TAG ALONG** YOU CAN **BASK** IN THE **GLORY** THAT IS SOON TO BE **ORKUDYA!!**

WOW! **WHEN** DID **THIS** HAPPEN? YOU'RE **EMBRACING** YOUR CHARACTER?

AND WHY NOT? DIDN'T YOU HEAR **NEWT**? I'M ON MY WAY TO BECOMING A **PIXIE-LICHE!** THIS IS THE **FIRST** CHARACTER I'VE HAD IN **MONTHS** WITH ANY **REAL BITE** TO BACK UP HIS BARK.

WELL...TO **EACH** HER OWN I SUPPOSE.

HEY, I'M **GENDER-NEUTRAL** NOW. REMEMBER?

BUT YOU STILL HAVE **LOVELY EYES**, **PIXIE SWEETS!** HEH HEH.



OKAY, **FINE!** **BRAVO!** **BRAVO!** SO YOU PULLED A **FAST** ONE ON ME. NO PROBLEMO.

IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S GOING TO **CHANGE** ANYTHING.

THE **TEMPLE** WILL **EAT** YOU **ALIVE** AND **SPIT** YOU OUT!

LATER IN THE "CHAMBER OF LOST SOULS"

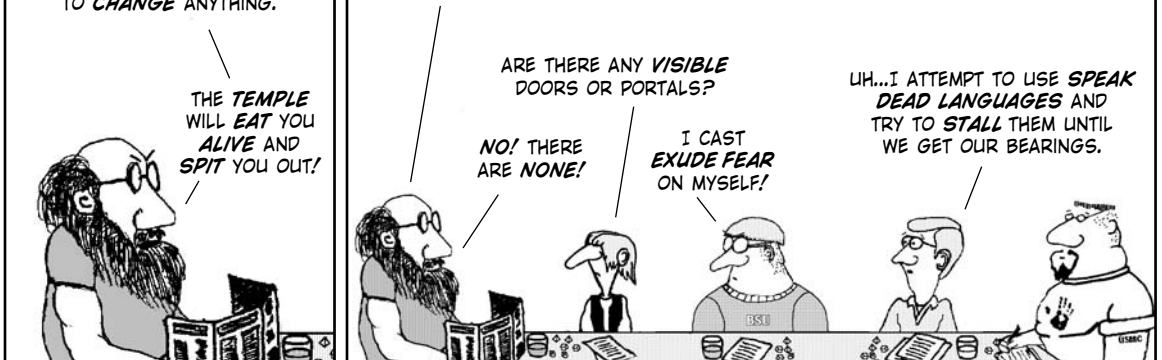
THE **CHAMBER** IS ABSOLUTE **BEDLAM!!** **THOUSANDS** AND **THOUSANDS** OF **LOST SOULS** TWIST AND WRITHE LIKE **NIGHTCRAWLERS** IN A **LIVE-BAIT BUCKET**. LIKE ONE **SINGLE** MASS IN AN **ETERNAL STRUGGLE** TO **FREE** THEMSELVES THEY **CRY** AND **WAIL** OUT OF **MADNESS!!**. SENSING YOUR **WEAKNESS** THEY BEGIN TO **SURROUND** YOU AND **SIZE** YOU UP.

ARE THERE ANY **VISIBLE** DOORS OR PORTALS?

NO! THERE ARE **NONE!**

I CAST **EXUDE FEAR** ON MYSELF!

UH...I ATTEMPT TO USE **SPEAK DEAD LANGUAGES** AND TRY TO **STALL** THEM UNTIL WE GET OUR BEARINGS.



SORRY **GORDO** BY **EXUDING FEAR** YOU ONLY MADE A **TARGET** OF YOURSELF. YOU ARE **CHANNELED** FOR **THREE POINTS** OF **SEF**. MARK 'EM OFF. KEEP IN MIND WHEN YOUR **SEF** REACHES **ZERO** YOU'LL BE **FOREVER DEAD**. ALSO, AS YOUR **SEF** DROPS YOU **LOSE** POWERS IF YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TO MAINTAIN THEIR **COST**.

DARN! LOOKS LIKE I JUST **LOST** MY **DREAM INTRUSION** POWER THEN.

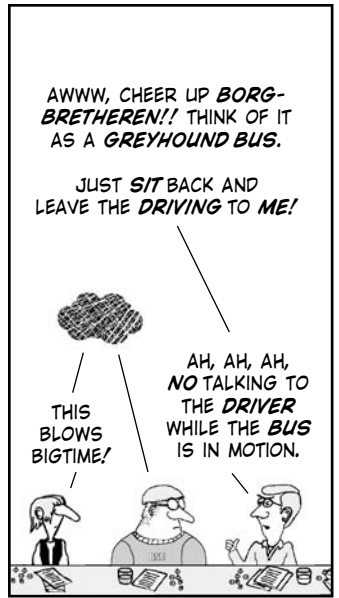
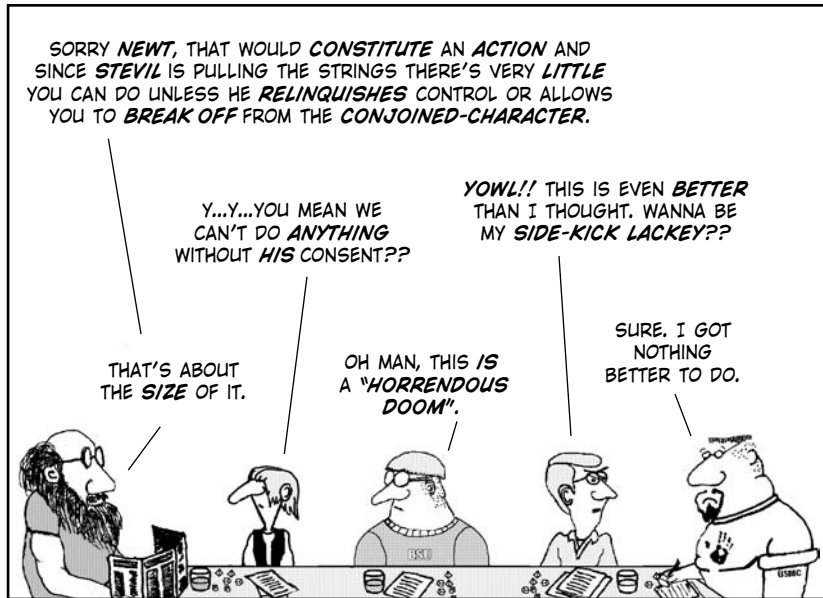
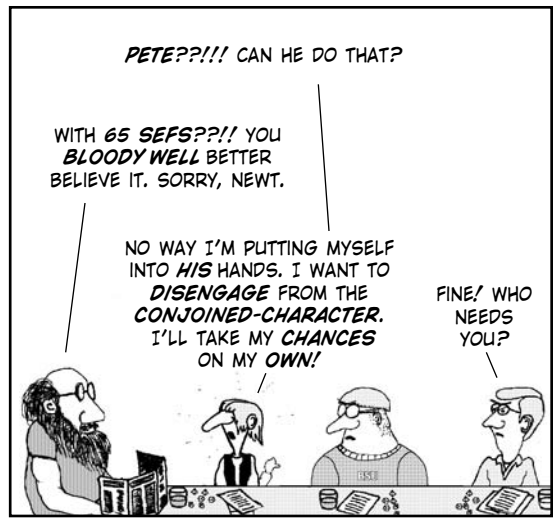
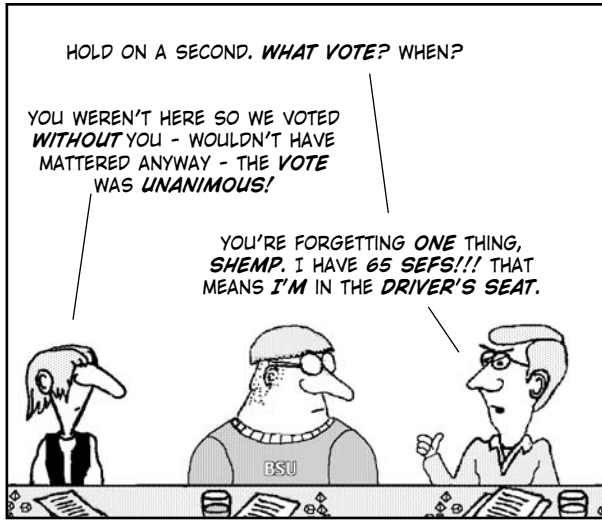
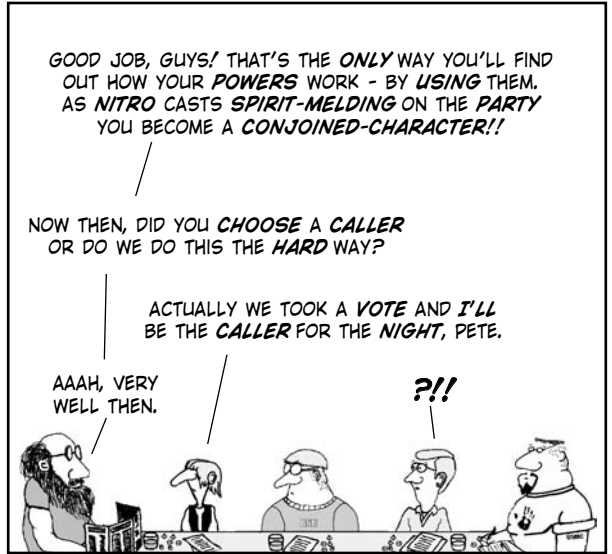
OKAY **STEVIL**, AS YOU BEGIN TO **SPEAK** SEVERAL **ROGUE-SPIRITS** SEPARATE FROM THE **SPIRIT-MASS** AND **APPROACH** YOU.

UH OH. NOW WHAT?

UH, GUYS, **FEAR** AND **WEAKNESS** SEEM TO ATTRACT THESE GUYS. MAYBE WE SHOULD PUT ON A **STRONG FRONT** AND SHOW 'EM WE MEAN **BUSINESS?**



* Stevil is quoting the Demon Liche, *Swar'Hular* from Gary Jackson's short story, "She's Got a Ticket to Scrye"



A WEE BIT LATER....

YOU'D BETTER DO SOMETHING SOON FOLKS. AS YOU STRUGGLE TO ESCAPE THE CHAMBER YOU ARE CONSTANTLY BEING ATTACKED BY ROGUE SPIRITS WHO BREAK OFF FROM THE SPIRIT MASS AND SWARM AROUND YOU. EVERYBODY MARK OFF ONE SEF POINT FROM YOUR SHEETS.

IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED, YOUR SPIRITS ARE SLOWLY BEING DEGRADED BY THE ATTACKS.

WHEN YOUR LAST SEF POINT IS GONE YOUR CHARACTER WILL BE FOREVER DEAD!

C'MON STEVIL! YER BLOWIN' IT FOR US. GIVE US BACK CONTROL OF THE CONJOINED CHARACTER SO WE CAN TRY SOME OTHER OPTIONS. IF I'M GOING DOWN I'D LIKE TO GO OUT FIGHTING UNDER MY OWN CONTROL.

ARE YOU MOUTHING OFF AGAIN? JUST KEEP REPEATING THE PHRASE "WE HAVE BEEN ASSIMILATED - WE ARE BORG!" MAYBE IT WILL SINK IN.

C'MON STEVIL! DON'T BE AN IDIOT!! DO SOMETHING! WE CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER.

IDIOT??



WELL...LET'S TRY ANOTHER POWER THEN - SHALL WE? SO FAR NOTHING SEEMS TO BE HELPING. HMMMMMM.... HEY PETE, WHAT'S SOUL TAP DO?

I'VE DONE TOLD YOU FIVE TIMES ALREADY. AS FLEDGLING SPIRITS YOU HAVE TO DISCOVER FOR YOURSELVES HOW TO USE YOUR POWERS.

AH, WHAT THE HELL? I GO AHEAD AND CAST IT.

UH OH! CAREFUL THERE STEVIL.



OKAY YOU CAST SOUL TAP. YOUR INTUITION TELLS YOU THAT YOU NEED TO CHOOSE A TARGET BEFORE IT WILL TAKE EFFECT.

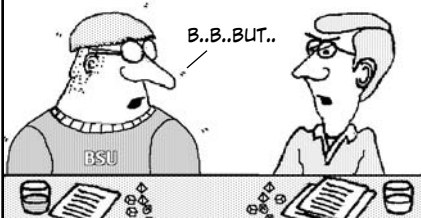


A TARGET EH? OKAY, I CAST IT TOWARD GORDO OVER HERE.

ME???! C'MON STEVIL. CAST IT ON ONE OF THOSE ROGUE SPIRITS!!

YOU'LL TAKE IT AND LIKE IT. I DIDN'T LIKE THAT LITTLE "IDIOT" REMARK YOU MADE.

B..B..BUT..



OKAY, SINCE YOU'RE CONJOINED I'M GOING TO RULE THAT YOUR SPELL TAP TARGETS THE ENTIRE PARTY. HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS. GORDO, NEWT AND NITRO? EACH OF YOU MARK OFF ONE SEF POINT. STEVIL? ADD THREE POINTS TO YOURS.

AAAAAAAHAH, SO THAT'S WHAT THESE GOONS HAVE BEEN USING AGAINST US. SWEET!! I TARGET ONE OF THEM AND CAST SOUL TAP AGAIN!!

-SIGH- OKAY YOU TARGET A ROGUE SPIRIT AND HE YOWLS IN PAIN AND BACKS OFF. GO AHEAD AND GIVE YOURSELF ANOTHER SEF POINT STEVIL.

YOU MEAN HE'S GROWING STRONGER??

I JUST LOST ANOTHER POWER THEN.

I AM LICHE!! HEAR ME ROAR!!



LATER STILL....

SORRY STEVIL!! THE ROGUE SPIRITS HAVE REJOINED WITH THE SPIRIT MASS WHERE YOUR SOUL TAPS ARE HARMLESS TO THEM.

AS NITRO SURMISED, THEY ONLY ATTACK THOSE THEY FEEL ARE WEAKER THAN THEMSELVES.



OH SO THAT'S THEIR GAME IS IT? GHOUL-YARD BULLIES ARE THEY? WELL, I GOT A FEW TRICKS UP MY SLEEVES. I EXPEL GORDO FROM THE CONJOINED CHARACTER AND CAST EXUDE FEAR ON HIM.

LET'S SEE IF THEY TAKE THE BAIT AND COME AFTER HIS ASS!

GAAAA!!!! WH..WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

ACTUALLY HE'S EXUDING FEAR ALREADY.

HO HO!! BRILLIANT PLOY. BRILLIANT!!



OKAY TWO ROGUE SPIRITS BREAK OFF FROM THE PACK AND POUNCE UPON GORDO. THEY TAP HIM FOR TWO SEF POINTS.

FRICKIN A!! I'M USING A SOUL TAP ON ONE OF THOSE GOONS AND GAINING ANOTHER SEF POINT.

AAAAAAA!!! THAT'S IT. GAME OVER! I ONLY HAVE ONE SEF LEFT!

ACTUALLY YOU CAN HELP, NEWT. I REEL GORDO BACK IN AND EXPEL YOU WITH A LITTLE EXUDE FEAR.

IF I COULD HELP YOU I WOULD, GORDO. YOU KNOW THAT.

HAR HAR!!

DON'T LAUGH. YOU'RE UP NEXT MISTER CHUM-LINE!

ARE YOU SERIOUS? BUT I'M YOUR SIDE KICK LACKEY!!

SORRY, I NEED ALL THE SEF I CAN GET.



LATER STILL....

OKAY SO ACCORDING TO MY FIGURES NEWT AND GORDO ARE DOWN TO ONE SEF EACH AND NITRO HAS TWO. YOU'VE GOT THEM ON THEIR LAST LEG.

OKAY, HOLD UP A SEC. YOU SAID I COULD SPEND THE EXTRA SEF I'VE GARNERED TO BUY MORE POWERS - RIGHT? LET ME GO ON A LITTLE SHOPPING SPREE.

OKAY BUT MAKE IT QUICK!

LET'S SEE, BOLSTER SPIRITS - I WONDER WHAT THAT DOES.

THAT ONE SOUNDS INTERESTING.

OKAY I PURCHASE BOLSTER SPIRITS AND CAST IT ON....LET'S SEE, I CAST IT ON GORDO!!



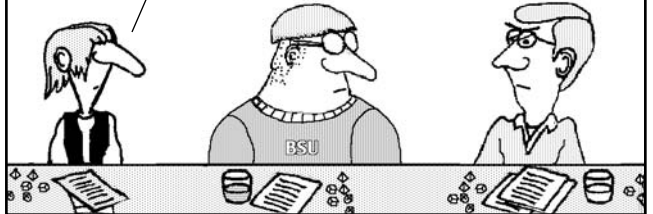
OKAY *STEVIL* YOUR *SEF* GOES DOWN BY *ONE* WHILE *GORDO'S SEF* GOES UP BY *ONE* POINT.



SAAAAAY, *THANKS* *STEVIL*. THERE FOR A *SECOND* I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO *DO ME IN*. YOU MUST HAVE HAD THIS *PLANNED* ALL ALONG - HUH?

OKAY SO HOW BOUT CASTIN' SOME OF THAT *MO JO* ON ME? LET'S START TRANSFERRING THOSE *SEF* POINTS AROUND.

SORRY *GORDO*, JUST *PRIMING* THE PUMP. I ALMOST *HATE* DOING THIS BUT, UH....



YOU'RE *GOING* BACK OUT TO *DRAW* SOME MORE *ROGUE SPIRIT* FIRE.

WHAT??!!

HEY WHADDA YA THINK YOU'RE DOING?

YOU MIGHT AS WELL *SUIT UP*, NEWT. YOU'RE *NEXT!!*



SWEET!! I'VE SET UP A *SEF-RECYCLING LOOP!* GAIN A POINT - LOSE A POINT! NOW WE CAN KEEP THOSE *ROGUE SPIRITS* DISTRACTED WHILE WE LOOK FOR A WAY TO ESCAPE THE *CHAMBER*.

YOU WERE RIGHT. THIS IS YOUR '*DARKEST HOUR*' YOU'VE TAKEN AN ADVENTURE DESIGNED TO BUILD *TEAMWORK* AND MADE IT A *ONE-MAN SHOW!*

I MEANT WHAT I SAID, *NITRO*. I'M GOING *ALL* THE WAY. I'M GOING TO *CRACK* THIS EGG.



TO BE CONTINUED...

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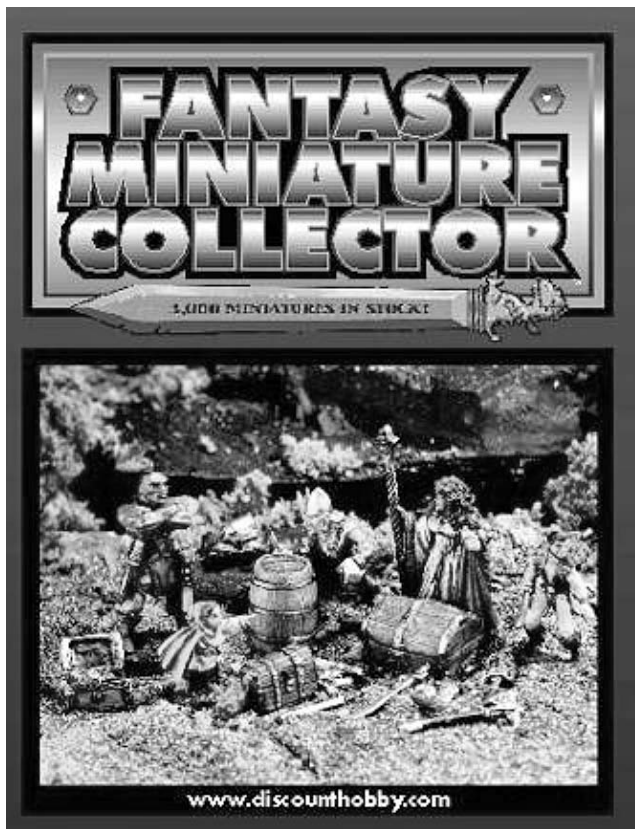
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HOODY FRICKIN' HOO!

**A FIRST SNEAK PEEK AT TWO
"NEW" ADDITIONS TO THE KODT FAMILY!!**

Okay, so you've probably seen the ads by now. And, most likely, you've heard the buzz on the internet — Kenzer and Company is releasing two new spin-off comics of *Knights of the Dinner Table*. (And there was much rejoicing.)

Almost as soon as the the press releases were sent out we were besieged with inquiries from fans wanting, (demanding actually) to know more. "C'mon! Spill the details!" wrote one reader, "Don't make me hurt you!"

So, we drew straws to see who would get the privilege of 'spilling the details' and I drew the short one. Thus, I've been tasked with giving our readers a 'sneak peek' at what's in store for them and to reveal a few more details than what could previously be gleaned from the ads and cryptic releases.



Aaron Williams (of *Nodwick*™ and *Floyd* fame™) brings his artistic talents to *Knights of the Dinner Table Illustrated*™.

KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE ILLUSTRATED™

Artist: Aaron Williams Writers: KODT Development Team with Aaron Williams

As the early press releases pointed out, *KODT Illustrated* is an idea that's been long overdue. Almost since the very first issue of *KODT* fans have been suggesting a spin-off series with stories presented from the other side of B.A.'s GM screen. Instead of Bob, Dave, Sara and Brian sitting around the table role-playing - why not tell the stories from the point of view of their Characters?

Actually, this is something we've been wanting to do for a long time but we decided to wait until we could do it right. That meant finding the right talent to pull it together. We found part of that needed talent in Aaron Williams who has already earned a following through his work on *Nodwick*™ and *Floyd*™ in the pages on *Dragon*™ magazine. When Aaron presented his first sketches of Teflon Billy, Knuckles, El Ravager and Zayre we knew we had our man. (Besides he works cheap and he fell for the 'check is in the mail' ploy.)

In each issue of *K-ILL* we will retell the classic stories (as well as some new tales) from the original *KODT* strips (Such as *The Cows of War* - shown above and below). You won't want to miss the fun. Look for this bi-monthly publication starting in June, 2000 at game and comic shops everywhere. □



Another panel from *Knights of the Dinner Tale Illustrated* Issue# 1. El Ravager discovers a 'magic' cow.

HACKMASTERS OF EVERKNIGHT™

Artist: Manny Vega

Writers: KODT Development

Team and Manny Vega

Ever read KODT and wish you could join the gang on their adventures in Garweeze Wurd? Do you find yourself wondering about all the veiled references to the HackMasters of EverKnight?

For those of you who don't know what I'm talking about — Garweeze Wurd is the default campaign setting that comes with Gary Jackson's HackMaster RPG. It's also the setting he based his Hackmasters of EverKnight/Gnome Titan novels in. This book doesn't follow the exploits of Knuckles, Teflon Billy and El Rav (You can check out KODT ILLUSTRATED for that).

This spin-off follows the adventures of the heroes from Gary's books — a team of unlikely heroes, known as the HackMasters of EverKnight who are forced to flee from one unknown danger only to get pulled into something even larger and more insidious.



Manny Vega brings Garweeze Wurd (along with swack iron dragons and the HackMasters) to life in this scene from HackMasters of EverKnight Issue#1

Written by the KODT Development Team and illustrated by Manny Vega (Manny also writes for the series as well as doing the artwork), this comic has more HACK per page than is legally permissible. But we're just crazy enough to try and get away with it.

These are the guys whose example is so often followed by the Knights of the Dinner Table. The same "Bad Boys of Hack" so frequently quoted by El Ravager and Teflon Billy. ("It all works out when the hacking is done!")

You'll want to join the HackMasters as they stumble from one adventure to the next — revealing for the first time the dark recesses of Garweeze Wurd.

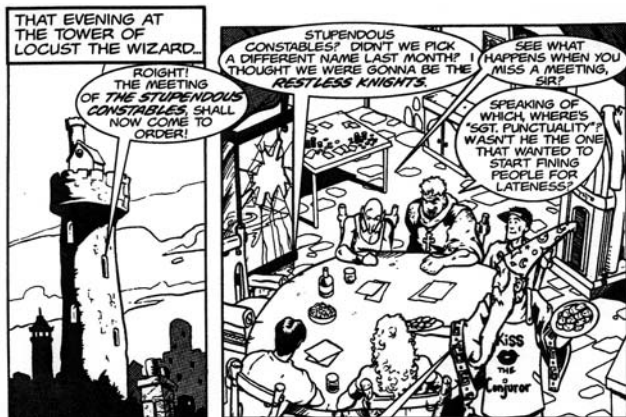
Behold Swack Iron Dragons in mortal combat. Peer into the dark shadowy underworld of the Dragon Committee. Just be sure to bring your sword - things may get TENSE!!

HackMasters of EverKnight is a bi-monthly publication which hits the streets in May, 2000. Interest is high so be sure to reserve your copy today at your local hobby/comic shop.

THE TRAVELERS™

Artist: Brendon and Brian Fram (Pencils by Bran Dawson) Writer/Creator: Tony Digerolamo

The Travelers isn't a KODT spin-off at all but it fits in with the family so well we thought we should mention it. We stumbled across this series (having read the first three issues) and enjoyed them tremendously in house. When the self-publisher, Tony Digerolamo, approached us about picking up the title we jumped at the chance. Described as "Monty Python meets D&D meets The Three Stooges" the only thing we can add is, "It's damn funny stuff!"



The comic centers around the antics of a group of hapless adventurers. (You can get a glimpse of them in the panel to the left) Each issue contains an entire self-contained story. Fantasy adventure with attitude.

We will be releasing Issues 1 to 3 for those missed them during March thru May, 2000. An all NEW issue (4) will be released in June, 2000 and will appear bi-monthly thereafter.

Discover the comic which made three out of four KODT Developers sick with laughter (The fourth developer died instantly.)

13 WAYS TO BREAK THE ICE

A BAKER'S DOZEN TO HELP NEW ADVENTURING PARTIES BOND

by Lloyd Brown

The beginning of a campaign is a time of great excitement. The players not only begin their discovery of the DM's precious world, they learn about each other and get their first ideas about their own characters that strongly influence how they play those characters throughout their lives.

In the haste to begin the game, many groups skip over an essential element of the story, the PCs' history, before the game begins. The characters demonstrate an unusual amount of trust between themselves, and they should have a good reason for that trust. Simply meeting each other in a tavern and discovering a mutual love of gold and hatred of evil is not enough to agree to venture out into the wilderness, allow a stranger to watch the character's back, or share gold and magic items.

While creating the characters, and certainly while planning the first game session of the new campaign, the DM and players should agree on how the players know each other. Have they known each other their whole lives? Do pairs of them meet for the first time during play? Does the group all come together in a single, unforgettable moment? These ideas offer DMs and players ways to work their characters into the game or into the first adventure in interesting and believable ways. Some are functional and serve well in a gritty, realistic campaign. Others are fantastic and involve a taste of magic from the very start. Naturally, the players should feel free to pick and choose from more than one idea to create their characters' backstory.

1. MYSTERIOUS SUMMONS

A spellcaster or extra-planar creature calls the PCs together for a purpose. The purpose could be finding the lost protector of a great artifact, performing seemingly pointless jobs that might become clear later on (*or might not, as in the role of Sheelba and Ningauble from Fritz Leiber's works*), or destroying a creature that threatens a protege of the otherwise busy being.

In the first example, the PCs might have to search for a reclusive elf in a foreign land. Their summoner knows that each of them has some relation to the elves. One might be a scholar of their language, and another might hate elves but the summoner knows that the character has the potential for change. In the last example, perhaps each of the PCs have some weapon that can harm the beast (*a werewolf, for example*), and their combined might is necessary to bring about its destruction.

In addition to their mysterious benefactors' goal, the party might wish to discover their benefactor's identity (*if they do not know it*).

Perhaps the secret summoner is not a benefactor and they must struggle to disassociate themselves from him, only to find that he has a special hold on them somehow.

Discovering his identity and motivation would give the characters leverage in ending his power over them.

2. RELATION

While relation by blood is possible, most PC groups consist of members of different races. The party might be related by proximity (*they're neighbors*) or by the association of their ancestors (the PCs are all descendants of a famous group of heroes).

A group might wish to use characters related by blood for a temporary campaign or for a campaign with a specific purpose. Perhaps each of the children in the family assumed a different occupation, or they were sundered at birth and they have just rejoined each other. In a political settings like *Birthright*, the characters might all be contenders for a dominion with a nominal allegiance to the family's patriarch but very real aspirations of their own.

Adventures include all manner of threats to the family, from ending a family curse to retrieving a rogue cousin who stole the family's hoard to escorting an unwilling bachelor to his wedding. Vassals might answer a call from their liege, while neighbors might respond to a local threat by banding together.

3. ASSOCIATION

Characters who are not related by blood but by oath come together in pursuit of that oath. They might gather to fight on a battlefield for their liege or meet monthly as part of their guild. Adventures arise out of battlefields easily: the characters might discover the body of someone known to them but in the wrong uniform. They might then seek to find out why that person was fighting for his supposed enemy. A third force might enter the battle and the party could endeavor to determine their motivations or prevent them from interfering again by disrupting supply or communication lines.

Guild adventures probably take place in an urban setting rather than out in the wilderness. Freelancers (*non-guild members*) might encroach on their territory, street gangs might harass members, and the characters could also be members of a government enforcement agency such as patrolmen, investigators or secret police. Patrolmen could also double as "*monster protection*", keeping people on the streets safe from monsters who threaten the walls, or flying or burrowing monsters that can threaten any part of a city. Investigators could wage a long-term war with the thieves' guild which might include undercover work. They might also hunt smugglers, chase burglars across rooftops and ask themselves "*whodunit?*"

A secret police force's duties might include rooting out spies, suppressing rebellions (*which they might discover to have a sound basis for their dissatisfaction with the govern-*

ment) and protecting the leader and possibly his ambassadors. While the number of monsters in this kind of campaign might be low, the level of intrigue can run high.

4. FUGITIVES

The PCs are exiles from a city or country ravaged by a war, a famine or a natural disaster. They might meet while trying to provide for the safety of other survivors. They might recognize each other by hearing a voice shouting in frustration as he tries to communicate with a local who does not speak his language. The frustrated character, of course, is another refugee, experiencing a difficulty typical of emigrants.

Possible first adventures include escorting other exiles to a place of permanent refuge or spearheading efforts to retake the lost lands. They might petition the local rulers to intercede on their behalf. Worse, the locals could be the invaders, and the PCs might have to try to blend in and escape notice.

In the case of famine or natural disaster, perhaps the PCs search for a circle of druids to move into the area to replace the weakened circle there. They might petition aid for their countrymen from local temples, or they search for a better place to move their own families. Being adventurers, perhaps they try to make a safe place for their families by killing monsters and driving out criminals.

5. RELIGION

The PCs all follow the same faith (*although they might be of different sects*) to different degrees. They might meet on a pilgrimage or a temple function. While clerics are the obvious main PCs here, perhaps the cleric saved the party thief from sinking into evil. The fighter might be a guard. A wizard might have been converted after the priest healed him; his conversion might be more or less real, depending on the character's personality. Any characters might be common worshippers.

Adventures might stem from an external threat, such

as theft of a religious icon or artifact. Desecration of an altar, vandalism, or looting might bring the PCs together as they look for the perpetrators. Threats from within the faith, such as a schism or heresy, might not only bring them together but also spark debates that either deepen their faith or bring it into question. These adventures could develop a player's role-playing ability greatly.

6. LIMITED SPACE

The PCs are in town for the beginning of a festival or a celebration and all find themselves booked into the same common room at an inn or boarding house. Roadside inns are also popular since the DM can easily force the PCs to stay there with bad weather (*a torrential downpour, a blizzard, or a sandstorm all work well*).

Adventure possibilities include one of the PCs being slipped a note containing confidential information, overhearing a sensitive conversation or having a fortune told by a wandering seer (*who is a front for a pickpocket*). Perhaps the confidential information includes personal notes about the other PCs. The conversation might pertain to an attempt to rob another PC and the eavesdropping character decides to warn his fellow traveler. The seer, who is a fraud, might have an actual vision and tell a truthful future or possible future.

7. DEATH

A married couple has died and each of the party members knew one of the two. The PCs might meet at the memorial service or at the reading of the will. Perhaps the couple asked one of the PCs to oversee the distribution of the estate. In the case of a suspicious death, they might meet while investigating the circumstances surrounding the NPC's demise.

The couple might have announced a wish that their friends accomplish some task for them, such as returning their remains to their distant homeland. On the other hand, maybe distribution of the property includes delivering precious cargo a great distance and the PC in charge of the delivery might need help. Naturally, he turns to the other PCs, who have either behaved them-

OKAY SO YOUR **NEW** CHARACTERS FIRST MET IN A **BAR** WHERE DAVE'S CHARACTER **PECK SLAYER** WAS GETTING HIS **BUTT** KICKED BY THE **GNOMISH** ACROBATIC-TWINS, **YURDLE** AND **GURDLE**. THE REST OF YOU ALL FELT **PITY** FOR THE POOR **GREEN-FIGHTER** AND CHIPPED IN TO PAY FOR **DAMAGES** HIS **FLUNG** BODY DID TO THE **BACK BAR**. THIS FORMED A **FRIENDSHIP** WHICH SOON **FLOURISHED** AS A **GRATEFUL PECK SLAYER** SWORE **ALLEGIANCE** TO YOU AND OFFERED HIS **SERVICES** AND **UNDYING DEVOTION**.

UNDYING DEVOTION? DOES THAT MEAN WE CAN **PUSH** HIM AROUND AND STUFF AND HE CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT?

THIS IS **GREAT!** WE WON'T HAVE TO HIRE A **TORCH BEARER** AFTER ALL.



selves well since the deaths of their friends, or were named specifically in the will.

8. AUCTION

The PCs attend an auction and discover that they wish to bid on the same item, each for their own reasons. The auction might last for several days, allowing some interaction time between sessions. NPCs might wish to appropriate the items that the PCs purchase, possibly by illegal means. One of the items might hold a curse or bring with it problems of its own (*it could be stolen, incomplete, or broken*).

A good place to start for the auction is a retiring or deceased adventurer or an entire party. Their journals, treasure maps that haven't been pursued, unused material components and formulae for unique spells might be very useful to a new party of adventurers. The old party's legacy might even include (*unintentionally*) a few enemies who seek to locate the retirees through their items or identify them by certain clothing now worn by the beginning characters.

9. COMPETITION

The PCs might meet at an archery tournament, a joust, a wrestling match or another competition. The event need not include direct physical competition - it can be a poetry contest, a musical event, or a different artistic event. These competitions are especially popular in settings where a character's social status and grace are as important as (*or more important than*) his personal ability.

While initial encounters would obviously include competition with NPCs (*and possibly other PCs*), subsequent encounters might revolve around the discovery of cheats, attempts to steal prizes from the victorious PCs, and the suppression of the questionable practices of the inevitable gamblers that flock to the competition.

The contest's prize itself might be the subject of an adventure. Perhaps another person claims it for his own, saying that the competition was unfair. The prize, while seemingly unimportant, might have symbolic value to a clan of dwarves or an order of wizards. These people might try to persuade any victorious PCs to hand it over, offer to purchase it from them or even steal it from them.

10. STUDENTS

The PCs are all students of a common martial arts school or fighting school. Wizard PCs could have the same mentor, and members of other classes could be associates, servants, or guards of the tutor. In any case, they should all be associated with the same school and might have an established hierarchy dependent on their relationship.

The characters might meet during a "*final exam*" or they might discover that they were all graduates of the same school by recognizing trademark clothing or slogans on the street. A trusted teacher might bring them together for his own purposes. The sudden destruction of their school might lead them on an adventure to discover why. Other problems involving the school might include the capture of a graduate who is giving them a

bad reputation through evil deeds, a challenge from a rival or even a financial threat to the school's continued existence. The characters might need to undertake a quest in order to come up with taxes, fees, or other money the school needs.

11. SECRET SOCIETY

The PCs have an ulterior, probably illegal, goal. The goal might be the overthrow of the government or the worship of an illegal faith. They might simply want something unpopular, but just, such as the elimination of slavery from the campaign setting.

This type of introduction works best if the campaign setting is evil or oppressive, and the characters represent the Good minority. The *Veiled Alliance* in the *Dark Sun* world is a common example of a secret society that works to provide adventures for the PCs during their entire careers. These secretive wizards have their own agenda that opposes the campaign's main villains, the sorcerings.

Adventures might include the liberation of a political prisoner, raids on the society's enemies or attempts to expose other (*rival*) societies. The society's main goal could provide for a long-term campaign goal if the characters make it their own.

Leaving the society could also provide adventures if the society does not allow its members to leave. Perhaps a new (*and evil*) leader has taken over and the characters no longer wish to be a part of it. They would then be both fugitives from the law (*for their past actions*) and the targets of their former companions for their recent departure.

12. MYSTERY

The PCs all share a strange birthmark, a recurring dream or a birth under odd circumstances. Casual conversation determines that each of the others shares the mystery. The PCs might undertake a long series of adventures might reveal the reason for the mystery.

The mystery works best if each character can provide some small clue to the whole. Perhaps each has the birthmark in a different place. Each might see the dream from a different point of view, and only together do they see the big picture (a battle is a good example; each character can see it from the part of either an archer, a cavalryman, a general, a messenger, etc). Their first adventure might stem from one of these clues and leave the characters with another clue to a distant location. Traveling there invites many more adventures.

13. SHARED DANGER

The party begins by being threatened by a common foe. While monster threats are common, the party might meet subtler dangers. A great fire began the adventure "*A Hot Day in Ltel*" (*from Dungeon Adventures #41*), for example. A plague, an unjust law that threatens the PCs' freedom or the threat of a terrible predator might be just the catalyst the group needs to band together. □

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Star Crusade 2: Lost Worlds

July
2000

Following up on the previous sourcebook, 'Star Crusade', which dealt with the Kurgan & Vuldrok worlds, this book details the independent worlds of barbarian space – worlds of mystery and wonder



www.holistic-design.com

RAT BASTARD!! WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU **SOLD** ME INTO **SLAVERY**? YOU MEAN THAT SO-CALLED **SNACK RUN** TO THE **VULDROK RAIDER BASE** WAS JUST A **TRICK** TO GET ME OFF THE SHIP?

SORRY BOB, YOU KNOW THE OLD **VULDROK** SAYING, "TRUST NO ONE IN **BARBARIAN SPACE**?"

WE ARE GOING TO SPLIT THE **PROCEEDS** FROM THAT LITTLE TRANSACTION - **RIGHT?**

SPLIT THE **PROCEEDS**? SORRY DAVE, I DIDN'T WANT TO **BREAK UP** THE SET. YOU WERE **PART** OF THE DEAL. I PACKED YOU AN **OVERNIGHT BAG**. I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOU - YOU **SHOULD** BE ABLE TO **ESCAPE**. EVENTUALLY...

I SUPPOSE YOU SOLD **ME** AS WELL.



NO WAY! YOU'LL FETCH 3 **TIMES AS MUCH** AT OUR NEXT STOP!

YEAH, I HAD A *GIRLFRIEND* ONCE. SHE WAS THE *LOVE* OF MY LIFE, A *KINDER, GENTLER* SOUL NEVER BEFORE WALKED *GOD'S SWEET EARTH*. SHE WAS ONE SWEET *ANGEL!*

WHAT HAPPENED?

AN *EVIL WRAITH-RYDER* CHARMED HER AND STOLE HER AWAY BEYOND THE *VEIL OF TEARS*. I NEVER SAW HER AGAIN.

??!! ARE WE TALKING ABOUT YOUR *CHARACTER?*

WELL....YEAH. WHAT'D YA THINK I WAS TALKING ABOUT?

-WHEW- NEVER MIND!

YOU HEARD ME! I TAKE MY *SHORT SWORD* AND USE IT TO *POLE VAULT* MYSELF OVER THE WALL. THEN I DO A *TRIPLE-SOMERSAULT* AND *LAND* ON A *HAY CART* ON THE OTHER SIDE WHICH *BREAKS MY FALL!!* BEFORE THE GUARD CAN REACT, I *THROW MY PLUS SIX DAGGER OF THROWING* AT THE GUARD AND HIT HIM *SQUARE* IN THE *THROAT* NOT ONLY *MORTALLY* WOUNDING HIM BUT *PREVENTING* HIM FROM *CRYING* OUT AND *ALERTING* HIS COMRADES. THEN I TAKE A *FLASK OF FLAMING OIL* WHICH I'VE BEEN HOLDING THE *WHOLE* TIME AND....

YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING *CLAUDE VAN DAMME* MOVIES AGAIN HAVEN'T YOU?

S'HYA RIGHT! I'VE *SEEN* YOUR STATS BUDDY! YOU AIN'T GOT THE *NUMBERS* TO BACK UP YOUR *THREATS* SO *TALK TO THE HAND!*

WHOAH! GUYS, *PLEASE!* CAN YOU HOLD THE *DEBATE* UNTIL AFTER THE GAME?

YOU BETTER *BELIEVE* I'VE GOT THE *STATS* TO KICK YOUR *ROSY RED DWARVEN ASS!* YOU WANT SOME? THEN COME *GET* IT. I'LL *OBLIGE* YA.

JUST LET 'EM FIGHT! EVERYTIME THEY GO UP *ANOTHER* LEVEL THEY HAVE TO *REESTABLISH* THE *PECKING ORDER* AGAIN.

FILL YER HAND WITH DICE! YOU'RE ABOUT TO TANGLE WITH *185 POUNDS OF DWARVEN FURY* SMART GUY!

GUYS! *PLEASE!!*

C'MON *BRIAN!* WHAT ARE YOU UP TO? *NOBODY* BUYS *4,000* HEAD OF *SHEEP* FROM THE *PRICE LISTS*. YOU HAVE AN *ANGLE* DON'T YOU?

YEAH! COME *CLEAN* DUDE!

OH, I'M *JUST* EXPLOITING A *TYPO* IN THE *2ND EDITION* BOOKS.

SHEEP ONLY COST *4* COPPER PIECES A HEAD ON THE *PRICE LISTS* AND THE *APPENDIX ON RAISING LIVESTOCK* STATES THAT *FIVE* SHEEP ARE ENOUGH TO CONSTITUTE A *FLOCK* FOR GAME PURPOSES.

AND ACCORDING TO THAT *SAME* PRICE LIST A *FLOCK* IS WORTH *TEN GOLD!!*

I'M *CASHING* IN!!



PUBLISHERS!!

GET YOUR GAME SPOTLIGHTED HERE! SEND YOUR REVIEW COPIES TO: KODT: BRIAN'S PICKS 1003 MONROE PIKE MARION, IN 46953

THUNDER'S EDGE

Fantasy Flight Games

www.rpgnet/ffg

Nothing I love more than a game with 'teeth' — and this game has 'em. Following in the footsteps of the well received *Twilight Imperium* and *BattleMist*, this game incorporates the same moveable hexagon system that ensures no two games are alike.

Thunder's Edge is a tactical multi-player board game set in the future. A small, insignificant mining colony in the backwashes of space suddenly becomes prime real estate when a wormhole begins to form nearby. Now there's a mad scramble by the populist factions back on Earth to seize economic and military control of the colony.

To win you must be as cunning in the political arena as you are on the battlefield. Each player assumes control of one of five factions and seeks to insure that his faction has a place in mankind's next great era of space exploration. Easy to learn - Challenging enough to earn my recommendation.

Brian's Rating: Lock and Load!!



TORRES

Rio Grande Games

PO Box 45715

Rio Rancho, NM 87174

Email: www.riograndegames.com

In another well-produced, absolutely beautiful game, *Torres* (meaning Towers) has players competing to build castles and maneuver their knights into top scoring positions.

Torres is for 2-4 players, ages 12 and up. A typical game takes about an hour to play. It is a game where luck plays a small part, but strategy is key. Not only is the game unbelievably kewl looking, it is awesome fun. The board has a scoring track circling the outer edge and an 8 x 8 area for castle building. It contains 92 tower blocks to use and 24 knights.

The players earn points at the end of each of the three years for every castle where they are represented by a knight. The score is the product of the surface area of the castle and the level where the knight stands. The player who collects the most points over the three years is the winner. On a player's turn, he has five action points to spend in any order. With these points, they can add a knight, move a knight, place a tower block, acquire action cards or move along the scoring track. Having knights in the king's castle gives players bonus points.

Brian's Rating: Edifying entertainment.

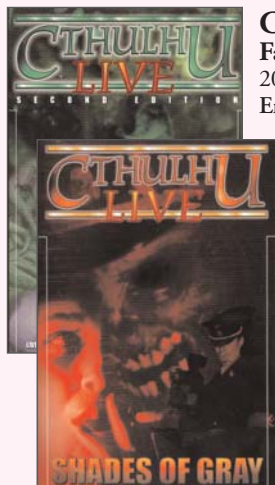


CTHULHU LIVE SECOND EDITION, SHADES OF GRAY

Fantasy Flight Games

2021 W. County Rd. C, Roseville, MN 55113

Email: rpg.net/ffg ffg@rpg.net Cost: \$19.95, \$17.95



Fog crawled across the damp streets, nosing through the smashed crates and rotting fish like a wispy, gray alley cat... I caught a glimpse of a pale, naked body and a puddle of crimson. Something like a man, but green and slick as a frog's belly squatted over the stiff. Mugs screamed like a schoolgirl and froze in his tracks. I clamped the stock against my belly and sprayed an arc of .45 slugs... Then my blood froze as I heard a wet plopping sound and the scrape of claws on the concrete floor from the direction of the storm drain.

Fans of *Call of Cthulhu*, H.P. Lovecraft, pulp fiction and/or film noir, should get a sick thrill when picking up copies of Fantasy Flight's *Cthulhu Live* books. These books offer everything a creative group of gamers needs to enact live scenarios, complete with set decorations, props and costumes. And, while I've taken part in few live roleplaying ventures myself, these books have whetted my curiosity like nothing else. If you like your roleplaying on the dark and mysterious side, with a theatrical flair, this is for you. The books not only include scenarios and casting ideas, they come complete with rules for creating characters, new combat rules and monsters. The core rulebook, *Cthulhu Live, Second Edition* includes the Keeper's Guide and the Player's Guide. It also features simple rules, tips about how to build a re-usable wardrobe, how to find or build inexpensive props, how to

make monsters, including easy instructions and sample diagrams and two ready-to-play adventures. *Shades of Gray* includes new skills, and character templates as well as five complete adventure scripts.

Brian's Rating: For a spooky good time, check this out.



The Shields
of
Baudran

THE THREE VILNA GUARDS THOUGHT THEY HAD COMPLETED THEIR MISSION BY REACHING THE CITY-STATE OF P'BAPAR AND TURNING THE SACRED SEAL OF UDA OVER TO PRINCE KIRASI. NOW LORD TUBAR, ALONG WITH HIS DEMON AND UNDEAD TROOPS, HAS MATERIALIZED VIA A PORTAL OF HIS MAKING.



TUBAR, WHY DO YOU ATTACK US? I WOULD GLADLY GIVE YOU HALF OF MY DUKEDOM!



AND WHY, LITTLE BROTHER, SHOULD I SETTLE FOR YOUR TABLE SCRAPS WHEN IN A SHORT WHILE I WILL TAKE IT ALL?

OUTSIDE THE GREAT HALL



THIS MIST IS SOLID!



TUBAR'S USED SORCERY TO SEAL US IN...

THERE WILL BE NO AID FROM ARCHDUKE E'DOS!

WITH COMPLETE DISREGARD FOR THEIR PERSONAL SAFETY, LORALE, GAREN AND POSEN THROW THEMSELVES AGAINST TUBAR'S DEADLY HOARD.

FOR THEY KNOW THAT IF PRINCE KIRASI FALLS, TUBAR'S REIGN OF TERROR WILL BEGIN. AND EACH PREFER DEATH OVER TUBAR'S RULE.

LONG LIVE PRINCE KIRASI AND THE DUCHY OF BANDRAN!

FOR THE HONOR OF THE VILNA GUARDS!!



I SPIT AT THEE, CREATURE SO FOUL!!!

DAVID DAY.



NOW DIE...AND GO BACK TO THE BOWEL OF HELL FROM WHICH WHENCE YOU CAME!

URK.....!!!!



WE'RE REDUCING THEIR NUMBERS.

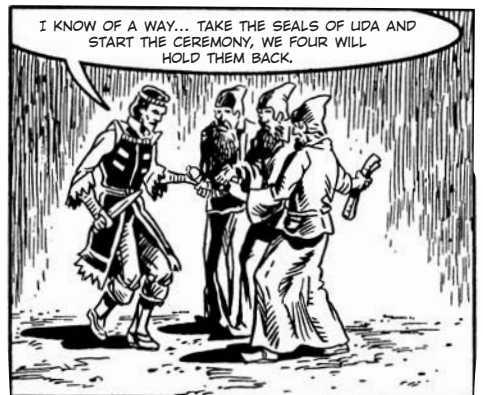


BUT FOR EACH ONE THAT FALLS...

TWO MORE COME THROUGH THE PORTAL TO TAKE ITS PLACE.



THEN WE MUST FIND A WAY TO CLOSE IT!



I KNOW OF A WAY... TAKE THE SEALS OF UDA AND START THE CEREMONY, WE FOUR WILL HOLD THEM BACK.



NO YOU DON'T!

NOT WHILE I STILL WIELD THE POWER...

OF THE DARK ARTS.

NEXT ISSUE...THE FINALE!

EXPANDING YOUR STAR FRONTIERS™

by Kenneth Newquist

Star Frontiers™ was an unapologetic space opera RPG bristling with a 1980s sci-fi feel that died an premature death.

It offered a half-dozen alien races, some of which were far odder than anything you'll see on *Star Trek*™, lots of cool toys, and a bare-bones universe that was easy to import and export ideas from.

The game ran from 1982 to 1985, and although I had both boxed sets and a couple of modules, I never actually got to play it (*at least with other people*) for two reasons. First, my friends loved *Dungeons and Dragons*™ and refused to play anything else and second, TSR killed the game just as it was getting interesting.

It looks like *Star Frontiers* has had the last laugh -- TSR has been absorbed by *Wizards of the Coast*, but dozens of *Star Frontier* Web sites can still be found on the Web. While these sites are great for *Frontier* fans, any one GMing a science-fiction-themed campaign can easily adapt the ideas featured here for their own use.

STAR FRONTIERS: NOW AND FOREVER



This site sums up most fans' feelings on the setting. The site has lots of good information about published 'canon' material as well as links to fan-written adventures

and ongoing campaigns. There's also a full-blown *Star Frontiers* novel called *Red Knight* by the site's operator, Layne K. Saltern. N&F's is a helpful site for those looking to expand their *Star Frontiers* campaign, or looking for seed ideas for another game system.

STARBASE HELLHOUND

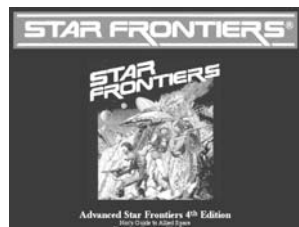
An excellent but unfortunately dated site is *Starbase: Hellhound*. The site includes a number of easily adaptable gems, the best of which is a home-world generator. There are also a number of short, but good, write-ups on weapons as well as overviews of *Frontier* races. Alas, the site hasn't been updated since March 1998, so don't expect any new content.

FRONTIER 3

The links work but the images don't on *Frontier 3*. It has a few tidbits of information -- like new aliens -- that are helpful for GMs. The best parts are the *Star Frontiers* Conundrums, a section dedicated to figuring out some of SF's more confusing errors and contradictions (*like*

why it takes so long to get from one planet to another through the game's hyperspace-like Void).

ADVANCED STAR FRONTIERS



An even more extensive site than *Now and Forever* is *Advanced Star Frontiers*. The site's 4th edition of the gaming system includes complete rules for

setting up and running a campaign. There are new skills, weapons, specialties, races, classes, ammo, technology ... you name it, you'll find it on this site. ASF's version of the game departs from canon in numerous ways, but with content this deep, who cares?

STAR FRONTIERS NETBOOK

While these sites were good to excellent, one predominant theme on many of the other sites I visited was heavy bit rot. Sites like the *Star Frontiers* Netbook seem to offer tremendous amounts of information ... until you click on a link and are hit by a "404 Page Not Found" message.

This doesn't bode well for a dead game on the verge of entering its second decade -- if the digital decay continues, all sign of a very cool game could disappear from the net in the not-to-distant future.



Have a site that will make a game master's life easier? Have a game system or campaign setting you'd like to see featured? E-mail me to me at knewquist@nuketown.com

ADVANCED STAR FRONTIERS

<http://users.vnet.net/seawolf/sf/index.html>

FRONTIER 3

<http://www.bauser.com/roleplaying/StarFrontiers/index.html>

STARBASE: HELLHOUND

<http://members.tripod.com/~TheHound/>

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<http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Cavern/1475/sfnetbook.html>

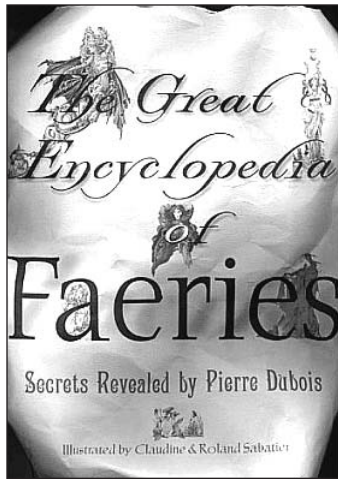
STAR FRONTIERS: NOW AND FOREVER

<http://www.xmission.com/~layne/Star.html>



The Great Encyclopedia of Faeries

by John O'Neill



THE GREAT ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FAERIES *Secrets Revealed by Pierre DuBois*

Illustrators:

Claudine & Roland Sabatier

Publisher:

Simon & Schuster (April 2000)

Format: Hardcover, 184 pages

I have to admit it was with some pride that I visited the international headquarters of **Kenzer and Company** in downtown Chicago recently. I'm still a newbie in the company's vast global enterprise, with just a few reviews in the back of **Knights of the Dinner Table** to my credit, but I knew I'd made my mark this time.

I had a huge and detailed survey of the complete works of **J.R.R. Tolkien** with me, just in time for issue 43, and it was sure to knock 'em dead. Might even get moved up to the front of the magazine.

The company limo let me off at the Kenzer building on East Jackson, right in front of the statue of Jolly Blackburn, and I rode the elevator to the 23rd floor.

Edith Burbank at the front desk greeted me with the sneer she reserves for reviewers and salesmen. I'm sure she doesn't treat Jolly or Steve Johansson this way.

"Submission for issue 43," I said, pushing the thick envelope across her desk. She immediately dropped it, envelope and all, into

the shredder. **Bzzzzkt!!**

"Orders from the boss," she said with a smile, ignoring my squeals of protest. "New assignment."

"What new assignment?" I managed to sputter. "Where is David?"

"Mr. Kenzer is in China, negotiating KODT theme parks across Southeast Asia. I'll buzz you through to Mr. Jelke"

Still in shock, I cleared security and rode up to Brian's office on the 31st floor. I found him in the west boardroom, wrapping up a meeting with the Swiss bankers. He was wearing a pair of fake wings and slippers with stardust on them.

"Brian, you've gotta do something about Edith," I began, trying hard not to stare at the slippers — Creative guys are pretty touchy.

"She's outta control. She just shredded a document I spent four weeks on! Luckily, I have this copy on disk --"

He took the disk and tossed it out the window. **Zing.**

"Fairies," he said.

"What?" I managed, watching my work spiral to plastic doom thirty floors straight down.

"Fairies, it's gotta be fairies. We're launching *Fairy Meat* next month, and it's got to tie in. Global marketing is on board, and so is the entire international brand team. It's gonna be huge. Everything has to be about fairies."

His wings bobbed as he walked.

"But --"

"One missed beat," he interrupted, "and the company won't look focused. Got any fairy books?"

"Well, I just got an advance copy of *The Great Encyclopedia of Faeries* from S&S, but it's huge. I couldn't --"

"Great. Get the piece to proofing by five o'clock. And make sure legal clears it this time -- they're still working overtime because of your last crack about Gary Jackson."

FAIRIES IT IS

So here I am staring at a giant book about fairies. Not just a regular coffee table book, either - this sucker is enormous, with

entries on about a zillion different kinds of fairies, from Valkyries to Banshees, Bogeymen to Nymphs, Swan Maidens to Sirens. It even includes fairy trees, cats, horses, and flowers. For every entry there's info on size, appearance, clothes, habitat, food, activities -- this is a friggin' **Monster Manual** of fairies.

In fact, that's not a bad comparison. With the exception of raw gaming statistics, **The Great Encyclopedia of Faeries** includes everything a Game Master needs to inject these magical critters into a campaign. And judging from the detail the author has dug up for each of his subjects, I can't imagine a campaign that wouldn't be so improved.

In addition to the basic facts, each entry comes with a colorful history of the creature described. Often this includes a local myth from Russia, Sweden, Denmark, or some other far-off nation where the atmosphere is heavy with fairy lore. These tales are fascinating in themselves, and are generic enough to be transportable into a campaign setting if so desired.

The other thing that accompanies each entry is truly marvelous artwork by the husband and wife team of Claudine and Roland Sabatier. The art is wonderfully suited to the subject matter, light and airy when dealing with White Ladies and proper fairies, dark and surprisingly gruesome when framing the entries for Larvae and The Black Sisters. I'm certain there will be people who buy this book simply for the art's sake.

MAIDENS AND BOGEYMEN

The book is divided into six sections, corresponding to the six major categories of fairies. The first two, **Maidens of Clouds and Time** and **The Fairies of the Hearth**, contain entries for *genies of thunderstorms*, the *Babouchka*, *Cinderella* and the *Sleeping Beauties*, the *Bogey Beasts*, and many more.

The most striking entries here include the *Larvae*, who are the

continued on page 47



A Trio of Good Games

By Rick Moscatello

I should start off by thanking all of you for your kind words concerning *Asheron's Call*. I'm surprised how many people read KODT who also play AC, but I'm even more surprised that I'm amusing more people than I'm annoying. One of the things that got me into being a computer game "critic" was the apparent cluelessness of the professional reviewers I read. It seemed the average monkey could get paid by magazines to play games, and, by gawd, I consider myself a better than average monkey.

Just a few months ago I was disappointed that no really playable game (*beyond AC*) came out for the Christmas season. *Diablo II* was nowhere to be found (*I'm told the mass beta will have started by the time you read this*), the latest C&C was a write-off (*got the expansion set in the mail, and I won't bother to open it*), *Quake 3* was just a very pretty *Quake 2*, and, well, nothing was as great as it should have been.

Then, *Nox* appeared in the mail. At first glance, I thought "Great, another *Diablo* clone...probably not as good as *Darkstone*." Flipping through the ol' manual did nothing to dispel the thought, as you get three different character classes, and your goal, in brief, is to trudge through dungeons, slaughtering everything while accumulating enough power to beat the Big Bad Person at the end. The third person viewpoint is likewise very *Diablo*-esque, but this where, for the most part, the similarities end.

Each of the three different character classes has a specially tailored mini-campaign. While many of the maps and puzzles are the same in each, there are enough differences that playing through three times is more fun than trouble.

If anything, play is even more action-filled than *Diablo*, with even less role-playing...think of the game as an updated *Gauntlet* (*from the arcade*) to get a real idea of what *Nox* is about. *The maps are gorgeously detailed, by the way, and filled with a host of moveable/flammable/destructible objects. It's even worthwhile to cast fireball-type spells, just to watch the destruction it an inflict on the room (in addition to the usual damage it does to foes).*

Where the game most diverges from *Diablo* is in the multiplayer. Who could have guessed that "Capture the Flag" would work in a game like this? While the combat doesn't require the lightning reflexes of a *Quake*-type game, it's very refreshing to play that kind of game in a *Nox* atmosphere, and the maps and multiplayer scenarios are all very playable (*alas, there are no options to play multiplayer against the AI*), and I always have a special place in my heart for games where you can lay mines and otherwise set traps for an unwary opponent.

In the end, *Nox* might not be a groundbreaker like *Diablo*, *Gauntlet*, or *Quake*, but it's a very worthy game, taking ideas from the greatest hits of the previous decade.

Another good game, more successful than *Nox* in pulling me away from AC, is *The Sims*. It's rather funny to see the old joke about knights and wizards, sitting around a table playing "Buildings and Businessmen", nearly come to life, as *The Sims* is a game where you take control of real(ish) people in a real(ish) world and do what you can to give them a happy and productive life.

Much like *Sim City*, *The Sims* is an easy game to summarize, but it's so hard to explain why it's almost impossible to stop once you start playing.

While the game isn't advertised as a RPG, I can't help but look at it as one. You roll up a sim (*or more...you can easily have a half dozen sims living in one house, but things are much easier handling just one or two at first*), or assign the skill points, equip it with a basic house, and you're ready to play. Your main goal in the game is keeping your sims happy, and, happiness is achieved by satisfying goals.

A sim needs entertainment, so you'd best get it a television set. Turns out, the bigger the TV set, the more quickly the sim is sufficiently entertained--giving you more time to fulfill other goals. Much like the wide-screen TV, satisfying other goals will also require money, which means your sim needs a job.

To get the jobs that pay the most money, your sim will need skills, and, again, the role-playing element comes into play. While fantasy RPGs say you get skills by killing orcs, this modern RPG says your best bet is to buy a bookcase (*if you want mechanical or cooking skills*), or chess set (*if you want to improve logic skill*), or so on. This is perhaps not as exciting, but certainly no less realistic (*except possibly where you can buy a mirror to enhance charisma*). The range of items available in the game is truly amazing, and you can download more from the website every week or so.

In addition, you also have to develop relationships for your sims. The relationship rules are a bit odd--you can only invite a same-sex sim to live with your sim, even though they'll end up having the same last name (*hope the religious right never finds out about this little part of the game*). You can get married with an opposite-sex sim; in fact, you can be married to multiple sims. You could then use the appropriately sexed sim to invite someone else to live in the house. In short, relationship management can be very intricate and complicated. Hey, just like reality!

Alas, it happens just a bit too often that you get reminded that you're dealing with a computer game. The pathfinding AI is rather weak, and a sim can literally starve to death before finding out how to maneuver around a coffee table. You can step in and move the sim yourself, although only a happy sim will listen to you. Another little issue I have concerns hygiene. Granted, I'm a gamer, and we're not known for hygiene, but, in scale terms, a sim spends about 2 hours each day washing (*and I'm not talking about cleaning up the place*) and I'm just SURE only Lady MacBeth would consider that normal. I understand that they put a lot of effort into those cleaning animations, and that there's an option to fast forward through boring stuff, but there are several activities that seem to take entirely too much time.

Oh well, these are pretty small complaints. This is definitely a "too playable" game, so buy it at your own risk.

The final really kewl game to grace my hard drive this month is *Planescape Torment*. Wow.

Hey, that's not enough for you to rush out and buy it immediately? I'm probably the only gamer in the western hemisphere who didn't totally love *Baldur's Gate*, but this game, which has many similarities, does everything better.

My favorite part of the game is dying. I can't help but be a little tired of most every other game, where dying just means you need to reload from your last saved position. In *Torment*, dying is no big deal, and is an important way to save your other party members (*who don't resurrect nearly as easily*) unnecessary grief. This ALONE makes *Torment* a must-have must-play game.

The next big deal is the setting. I can count on the fingers of one amputated hand the number of fantasy RPGs that aren't set in some pseudo-medieval Europe fantasy setting. Granted, it's a fun place, but *Torment* puts you in the outer planes, and every world you deal with (*you do a goodly bit of wandering around*) is whacked in a most amusing way.

What gives this game a "triple hoody hoo" rating are the NPCs and NPC interactions. While things aren't quite as intricate in *The Sims*, we're still talking good stuff, as you really need to be careful what you say to, and what kind of people you hang around with. Ok, there are a few NPCs that are blowoffs, but this game easily blows away any other computer RPG I've seen (*with Fallout being the only thing that comes close*).

I haven't even touched upon the quests, which, finally, are not entirely comprised of the "go forth, kill lots of goons, pick up the valuable item they are guarding, and give it to me" variety. I don't have the space to mention the big name voices, that do far too few of the cool NPC sayings. Just buy it. You'll love it.

I'm still playing *Asheron's Call*, although I'm slowly tiring of it. My monarchy is now at a respectable 70+ followers of the "Cult of R",

and I am starting to see KODT-style shenanigans. I had this one vassal, and he got a friend. The friend wanted my vassal to leave me, and join the friend's monarchy. This sort of thing happens a lot--go, make friends with someone from another monarchy, and then "recruit them".

Normally, I say "if it's so important for your friend to be in your family, then why don't you join MY family?". Usually, this kind of logic ticks them off enough that they go away. But, this time was different. The new friend was a wife of someone else in the monarchy, she just couldn't leave her real life husband because their monarchy is really a family, so I said, "okeedoke, have fun!". Two weeks later, my former vassal comes back--the husband and wife team abandoned him in a few days, never to be seen again. Some family!

A week after that ANOTHER vassal has a new friend, and the new friend is married, and the monarchy is a family. Again. Wow, people are actually using this kind of story just to get recruits. The husband even offered to CALL me (*on the phone--this is a freakin' GAME, dude!*) to help with the negotiations. Like I'm going to fall for this again. It's nearly as slimy as the guy in the grocery store parking lot (*I'm sure you've seen him*), who approaches you because he needs a few dollars to get some gas. The first time around you might be a sucker, but not after that.

It's a great time to be a gamer, but a lousy time to have only 24 hours in a day. Pick your computer game wisely...there are too many good ones out right now. □

Book Review: continued from page 45

product of "nocturnal pollution," which apparently arises from "carnal relations with specters." They are said to feed on "all human fluids, souls, blood, flesh, even decomposed (especially decomposed...)."

Yuk! These aren't the kind of fairies I used to believe in. The carefully phrased description of how these creatures form, feed and grow is enough to make even a staunch horror fan squirm.

"*Teughghia, Fausseroles and other fallen Faeries*" is another fascinating entry.

Thoroughly evil and debauched, these creatures are den mothers to horrid urchins who look like trolls in diapers. While generally incapable of evil on a grand scale, they are exactly the kind of nuisance monster that can add tremendous flavor to a town setting if carefully handled. Their motivations and quirks are well laid out, as well as a number of folk tales of their occasional capture and unmasking.

RIVERS AND QUEENS

Next we encounter *The Golden Queens of the Middle World* -- including *Faerie Godmothers, White Ladies and the Banshee* -- and *The Faeries of Rivers and the Sea*, such as *Nixes and Swan Maidens*.

Hands down favorites here

include the *Red Ladies* and the *Black Ladies* who (*as one might guess*) are *White Ladies* gone bad. Insatiable ogresses who are obsessed with their own decaying beauty, they devour children and are terrified of most reflective surfaces. The men who fall into their lecherous clutches "are found in the morning as empty envelopes of rough skin."

In the realm of rivers and oceans we find the *Naga*, a noble and beautiful creature who bestows great gifts on those who worship and are faithful.

The tale of the King of the *Naga*, saved from a stoning death by children who mistook him for a cobra by the young King Seneka, frames much of the cultured history of the *Naga* and their relationship with men.

GREEN KINGDOMS AND INFINITE DREAMS

The last sections in the book are *The Maidens of the Green Kingdoms* -- we're talking *Dryads, Nymphs and Muses* here -- and *The Ethereal Ones of Infinite Dreams*, meaning such creatures as *Will-o-the-Wisps, Enchantresses, and Morgan le Fey*.

We're in slightly more traditional territory here, with fairies who flit over mushrooms and cast spells of enchantment, such as the *Maeve*, evoked by Shakespeare and William Butler Yeats. But here you'll also

find entries for the *Hadas* of Portugal and Spain, who are related to witches and *Lamias* who only steal children when there's a dang good reason for it. They also turn into serpents and shrews to test those who they ask for a kiss, looking for those who can give freely with no feeling of disgust.

But the real eye-catcher here is *Cailleac Bheur*, a hag who haunts the British Isles. When the witches of Halloween ring the church bells and dance on the tombs to wake the dead, *Cailleac Bheur* emerges from the earth to send an icy shiver over the land. Her skin is blue with cold and her face is frozen in a grimace of terror, and her diet is solely human flesh. But when she grows lonely she visits the farms of bachelors or widowers, and those who are not repulsed by her hideous looks and welcome her into their homes find themselves in the arms of a beautiful and passionate young girl.

Altogether, this is a surprising book. Filled with rich folklore and fascinating art, it makes fascinating reading for everyone. But in the hands of a skilled Game Master, I can see how *The Great Encyclopedia of Faeries* could become one of the year's more original gaming resources.

Highly recommended.

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THE "CLUCK TRUCK"

Todd Spohnholtz

I would also like to relate a funny little situation my gaming group got themselves into one session recently (*I was DMing*).

Having decided to play some new characters, the players rolled them up and decided to go out and purchase some equipment for their first adventure.

Two of the characters had decided that, as important as a decent weapon and armor were, so too was a suitable form of transportation to carry the "mounds of gold and platinum they were sure to find" back to town. After purchasing moderate weapons and armor (moderate at least for 1st level starting funds) they pooled their gold and haggled a farmer out of his old and run down cart, leaving them with a combined total of less than 15gp. Their next encounter was with the broad smile and hearty laugh of the owner of the local stables after being asked how many horses they could get with about 10gp. (*in actuality, the players are very experienced they just decided to play ignorant 1st level characters this time*)

THE BABE AND SWITCH

by Pete

Issue #39's TRADING PLACES brought back memories of a night at the *University of Cincinnati* gaming club. I went with the sole intention of visiting friends, and maybe doing a bit of quiet reading.

Four new members begged me to create a pick-up game, and after a half hour of pleading, I gave in. I told 'em to roll up characters, and to keep them to 125 point maximums (*this was for Champions*). No rule dodging or power planning, just keep it "real."

I settled back to read for a bit, and then checked out their characters. One was easily worth 1,000 points, and the others weren't much better. It was then I plotted my revenge. I gave them 20 minutes to redo their characters, and worked out the details in my head.

When the game began I collected character sheets, gave 'em the once over, and passed them back. "This isn't my character," one guy said.

"It is now" I responded, and we started much to their chagrin. Making up for countless years of aggravation and out of character play, I had them play themselves, with their character's bodies. They loved the idea, until two of the group realized that their characters didn't match their sex.

And then I introduced them to what effect characters with an 18 comeliness, 18 charisma and very little clothing would have on a room full of gamers (*BTW, the adventure began in the room the club met, during the meeting*).

Then the biker gang showed up. Then the BRICK found out that most floors won't take the weight of a 1,000 pound character stomping around.

Oh, and they also learned that the small box where you specify what your costume looks like . . . if that's empty, you're not wearing anything (*see above note about sex starved gamers and beautiful women*).

I don't know about the other players, but I had a blast. □

WHAT'S WRONG, BUNK??!!

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Disappointed as they were, they did not give up but rather put their heads together to think of a "plan B". The brainchild born of this mental conglomeration was to purchase approximately 100 chickens from a local farmer and tether them all to the front of the cart.

After making the purchase and tethering the poor animals to the cart, the "Unwise" guys quickly discovered that to get anywhere someone was still needed to assist the chickens by pushing the cart from behind.

The other character meanwhile, needed to be in front waving his hands wildly while running around the chickens in order to keep the chaotic mass of birds moving together in roughly one direction as a (*semi*)cohesive force.

In addition, when driving the "cluck truck" I just had to slap them with a serious reaction modifier when meeting townspeople for the first time since there is just no way they could be seen as sane individuals under those circumstances. Needless to say, we laughed for a long time. □

QUEEN KRAWLER

by James Forest

This happened in a D&D game, a long time ago. The players, having just fought through some of the toughest encounters imaginable: monsters, traps, old foes from earlier in their careers, finally come upon a treasure chamber. Gold, gems and other valuables lay strewn across the floor. However, above it all sat a single spider, sitting in its web. The party, being so on edge just to get to this point, freaked. Now mind you, this is a party of high level characters, experienced players all. They think it is some super monster, a trap of some sort. You never saw so many fireballs, lightning bolts and even a holy word go off. In the ensuing devastation, most of the treasure was destroyed and to this day, we don't know if that "spider" was just a spider. □

TASTY BEVERAGE?

by Eric Miles

Call me sick but I absolutely loved the Grunge Elf stories in KODT. As a DM always looking for fresh new ideas, it didn't take me long to start working on my own home-brewed rules for them.

I didn't tell my players of my evil handiwork. I decided they'd have to discover it for themselves - through the game.

When they decided to explore a wilderness region in my campaign world I knew the time had come.

I introduced my players to a Grel hunting party who were returning from, "The Running".

What should they be carrying but a huge load of bagged fairies. No joke, I have one of the Grels reach into the bag and grab a fairy and hold it up.

"Hey! I'll trade ya this SPRITE for a drink of water!"

The entire table exploded with laughter. □

News, Rumors and Industry Buzz plucked



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GOT THE 'WRITE' STUFF??!

Then check out these opportunities at KenzerCo.



KODT INDEPENDENT REVIEW COUNCIL

In anticipation of the expanded game review section which will be added to the KODT line-up this summer we are looking for reviewers to join the IRC (Independent Review Council). Once formed IRC will be charged with presenting our readers with hard-hitting reviews. Not only will they be reviewing games but they'll be scrutinizing each other. Think of it as Siskel and Ebert but with dice. Those interested in joining the team should send a sample review to jollyrbb@aol.com. □

JOIN THE FUN AND MAYHEM!

That's right. Working on KODT is like a big freakin' party! The fun never stops around here. Really! It's like every day is a Saturday or something. And we want to share that FUN! Got ideas for things like cartoons, articles on gaming, adventures, industry news, reviews, etc.? And we just raised our rates - among the highest in the industry. Hoody Hool! Well, quit playing with those dice and drop an e-mail for our guidelines to: KenzerCo@aol.com.



INDUSTRY NEWS COLUMNIST(S) NEEDED



Knights of the Dinner Table Magazine will be undergoing some dramatic changes in the coming year. One of those changes is to be a dedicated and more comprehensive industry news column. Alas, the KenzerCo staff has faced reality. We are simply too busy and strung out to handle the chore of gathering such material from month to month and do the column justice. That's why we're looking for someone to head up GameVine. Do you know the ins and outs of the gaming industry? Are you handy with a webbrowser and have a nose for news? Well maybe you're the person we've been looking for. (And hey, we're willing to pay in real cash). Email jollyrb@aol.com if you're interested in the job.

ART ATTACKS

Need something to jazz up those bare walls in the ol' game room? These 'Classic Toon' prints from BuyEnlarge.com may be just the thing you're looking for. Nearly a dozen different 'classic' cartoons have been yanked from the daily funny pages and given an artistic rendering. Any museum curator would be proud to have these babies hanging on in his gallery. (Our personal favorite is *Hagar the Horrible as Mona Lisa*). □



- JURASSIC PARK III. Helen Hunt, Elizabeth Shue, and Chris Klein have signed on to star in JPIII <http://www.cinescape.com>
- Bernard Hill (Best known for his role as Captain John Smith in Titanic) has been cast to play Theoden in LORD OF THE RINGS.
- FEARSUM, a show about a paranormal website has been added to the Fox network line-up. The show was created by the same folks behind THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT.
- Pearson Television has announced plans to create a series called SPARTACUS. Scheduled for a fall 2001 premiere, the series will also feature Julius Caesar, Marcus Crassus, a Nubian archer named Axum, and Spartacus' love interest, Zarah. The bad news? It's from the same folks who brought us BAY WATCH and FIRST WAVE.
- Steven Spielberg has announced he will direct the former Stanley Kubrick secret project known as A.I. It is believed to be a post-apocalyptic story about a young Pinocchio/AstroBoy-like android.
- Nigel Hawthorne (*Madness of King George, Tarzan*) is in final negotiations to play Jack the Ripper in The Hughes' brothers FROM HELL. Johnny Depp has been cast in the lead role of a Scotland Yard detective.
- Wesley Snipes and Kris Kristofferson have been cast to star in BLADE 2: BLOOD HUNT
- Shooting has started on The Devil's Backbone a Civil War-period independent horror film. The South will rise again? □



from the vine for your reading enjoyment

Photo - New Line Cinema



FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING:

*Dominic Monaghan (Standing on right) as Merry;
Sean Astin (Sitting on left) as Sam Gamgee;
Billy Boyd (Sitting on right) as Pippin
and Elijah Wood as Frodo (Standing on left)*

Photo - New Line Cinema



The set for Bag End as construction nears completion.

Photo - New Line Cinema



“ONE MOVIE TO RULE THEM ALL!”

AN UPDATE ON THE

LORD OF THE RINGS™ MOVIE TRILOGY

As gamers, we all love movies. Some movies, however, seem to rank a higher Drool Factor on the Spaz-Meter than others - flicks that are anxiously awaited with white knuckles and bated breath.

One such movie is the long-in-the-making *Dungeons and Dragons*™ movie. The other is the *Lord of the Rings*™ trilogy from New Line Cinema which began shooting in December, 1999.

Many Tolkien fans were justifiably concerned when they learned that Hollywood had once again set its gaze upon the professor's classic trilogy. They still hadn't forgotten the botched animated movie in the late 70's or the warmed-over/half baked television adaptations which followed on its heels which just hadn't done justice to the works.

So when Peter Jackson announced a year and half ago that he would be bringing LOTR to the big screen again as a live-action adaptation there were a few raised eyebrows.

The usenet began to buzz with rumors as to who would be cast. (*Sean Connery as Gandalf was an early favorite but Peter Jackson maintained he wanted unknowns to play the primaries - which is odd because Christopher Lee soon bagged the role of Sauron*)

New Line Cinema has been slowly feeding eager fans their first glimpses of Middle Earth and, uh, well...you be the judge. The movie is being filmed in remote locations in New Zealand and from what we can tell it's looking very promising. If you want to keep updated on the movie you can visit the official website(s) for the movie at; <http://www.theonering.net> or <http://www.lordoftherings.net>

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Photo - New Line Cinema

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- <http://pages.infinite.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> — KODT Fan Club
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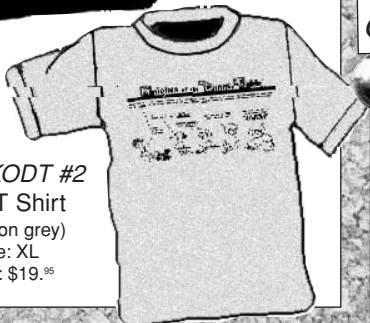
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LIZARD LYLE GUMBIE!!

A year ago.....A saving throw cast friend and foe into a world of woe!
I can't forget. I can't forgive.
I just wish El Tanyon had lived!!!

Gail,
Will you marry me?
(Don't forget I have a +3 modifier for my 18 Charm and 17 Charisma)
Jeff

CHARACTER OBITUARY

In memory of CHANCE IRONKILT
6th level Fighter - Loved by all.
During his short career he killed dragons, orcs and all things dark and foul. In the end he was betrayed by friends.
"DUDE YOU WERE ROBBED!"
Our DM is a jerk! ---- Tim Oliver

Join us for SciCon3 on May 27 & 28, 2000 in Kingsport, TN for the Star Frontiers event of the year! Fans of this sci-fi classic won't want to miss the action. Contact Matt at SciCon99@aol.com for details.

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AUGUST 4 - 13, 2000 • San Diego, CA
Events include AD&D, Deadlands, Civilization, Diplomacy, Star Fleet Battles, Battletech, Vampire, Rifts, Warhammer 40K, Rolemaster, MTG and Axis and Allies. Other activities include miniature wargaming, trivia, and figure painting contests. Registration: \$21 until 20; \$30 at door. Write to: Gamefest XX, 3954 Harney St., San Diego, CA 92110

Attention Convention Organizers

KenzerCo is currently pulling its 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.

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" - \$160], [2.75" x 2" - \$80], [1.5" x 1" - \$40]. 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 off, to the gentleman who recently thanked me for defending Stevil and the Black Hands: while it was very nice to be thanked, and to have my name show up in the comic again, it was under false pretenses.

What I was defending was not the actions or behavior of *any* of the hands, but merely the right of the group to stay in the comic book on the basis that their misadventures could still be amusing.

Before you start writing a Bob-style "angry letter", however, you'll be pleased to note that, due to the responses of other Forum writers, I've come to the conclusion that many times, the **Knights** can be just as bad, if not worse, than the **Black Hands**. This does not mean that I will stop reading - it's merely an observation on my part.

Secondly, and more specifically, to mister Ben Sunde, I have this to say.

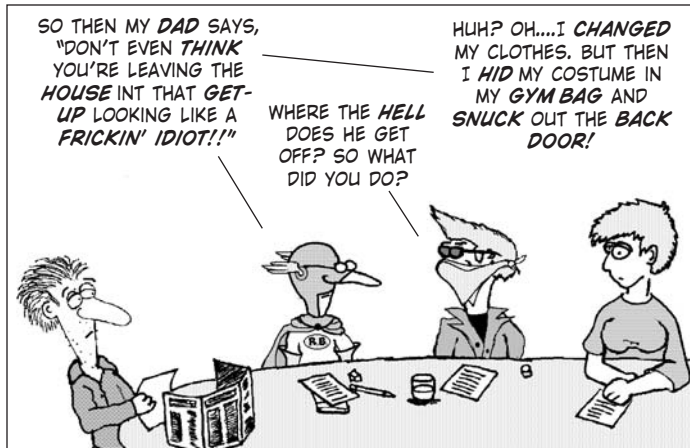
You're right, the last letter of RPG is "Game". What you've neglected to note is that the first two letters are "ROLE PLAYING". Not WarGame, or Hack-And-Slash-Game, or even Cut-Off-The-Heads-Of-The-Party-Members-Game.

And playing a role is more than pretending to be a wizard or a fighter or what have you. Of course, there are lots of people out there who disagree with me, but you know what? I don't play with them and I would not deign to.

If I want the enjoyment of slaying everything in sight, including my friends, then I have two words for you: **Quake Deathmatch**.

This also does not mean that I'm anything like that prissy actor [Cody Winkle] who joined the **Knights** and roleplayed Brian's familiar.

Acting is a part of roleplaying, but only



SO THEN MY DAD SAYS, "DON'T EVEN THINK YOU'RE LEAVING THE HOUSE INT THAT GET-UP LOOKING LIKE A FRICKIN' IDIOT!!!"

WHERE THE HELL DOES HE GET OFF? SO WHAT DID YOU DO?

HUH? OH....I CHANGED MY CLOTHES. BUT THEN I HID MY COSTUME IN MY GYM BAG AND SNUCK OUT THE BACK DOOR!

a part. Most importantly, RPGing is about problem-solving, or at least, the good games are.

Solving a mystery or riddle, rescuing prisoners, thwarting the "bad guys" without harming innocents. Even in the heat of battle, trying to figure out how to best affect a monster with things that *will* affect it and hopefully harm it, and likewise trying to survive at the same time: *that* is still problem solving. But I am furthermore desirous of creating a character who interests me.

I don't play games where I have not had the time to think up a character concept, because then I am not invested in the character, and I invariably fall asleep during games.

All right, that's enough ranting. Let me end on something that everyone can agree on.

Till Stevil plays a pixi.....uhm, no wait. Till Weird Pete makes a wise investment, Make Mine KODT!

Greg Downing
via E-mail

I had to write and comment on the recent talk of 'geeks' in KODT. A year or so ago, Mr. Blackburn wrote an editorial about how being a 'geek' was becoming a trendy catch word in advertising and that 'we' were in danger of becoming 'kewl'.

At the time I disagreed with his observation. I certainly hadn't seen any such trends. Damn if I wasn't wrong.

From the moment I read that editorial

it seemed I couldn't turn on the TV or look at a magazine without seeing the word "geek" or some nerdy guy in military specs with white tape holding the nose piece together.

There's even one commercial running on CNN in which various people are proudly shown wearing such glasses.

"Don't you wish you could be a web-head?" it asks the viewer.

I also recall a minor debate over the 'Jesse' episode which showed role-players in a somewhat unflattering light. Now role-players are showing up all over the place. (Such as Dexter's Lab, and the trendy MTV series, Downtown.)

Did anyone happen to notice the recent episode of **Freaks and Geeks** (*There's that 'G' word again*) in which a 'geek' is reading the original **AD&D Monster Manual**™ on the school lawn?

How odd it was to see 'that' cover on primetime TV with out someone yelling "Devil worshipper" or "Teen Suicide".

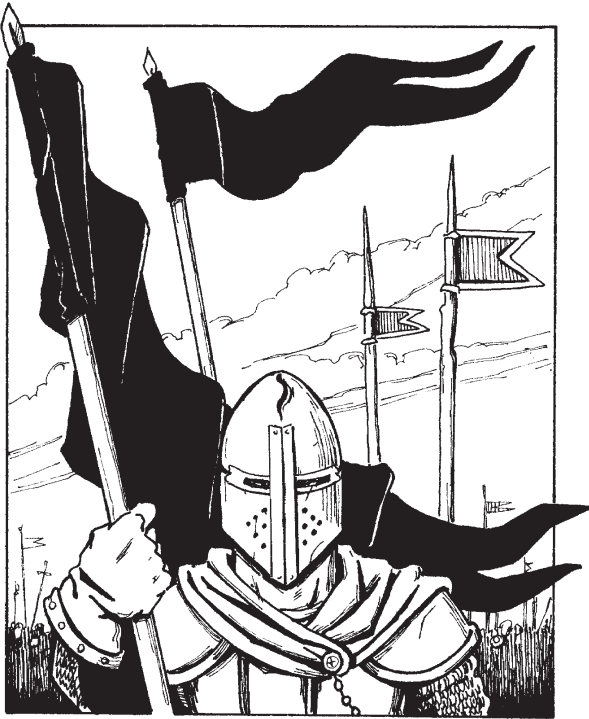
Just a normal looking kid reading up on his monsters. Best of all, some 'babe' notices him and comes and sits down to introduce herself and *talk* with him?

After conversing for a few minutes she comments, "Hey! You know what? You're pretty kewl! I'm glad I decided to talk to you."

I never thought I'd live to see the day. Perhaps role-playing has a bright future after all.

Steve Long
via E-mail

authored by the KODT Development Team of Jolly, Brian, David & Steve



Kingdoms of Kalamar™ Fantasy Roleplaying Setting

The dark hordes of the Flaymaster, Lord of Pain and Torture, raid the southern lands from their northern temple fastness. The Minions of Misfortune, vile worshippers of the Creator of Strife, threaten the cities and lands of the east. And the legions of the Vast Empire, once the greatest force for good on Tellene, march against all those that stand for truth and the common weal. Now is the time for heroes in the Kingdoms of Kalamar!

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Volume I: Sourcebook of the Sovereign Lands

- Presents the history, climate and chronology of the Sovereign Lands, the main continent of the world of Tellene.
- Details the Sovereign Lands by region, for easy reference; each section includes a map showing geography, kingdom boundaries, major settlements and political hotspots.
- Over 25 kingdoms, city-states and regions ripe for adventure, running the gamut from noble kingdoms to vile realms of tyranny and from cities of thieves to primeval barbarian tribes.
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- Includes details on the moons, stars and zodiac of Tellene, as well as unusual magical and extra-planar events and locations.
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- Details the history of the Gods of Tellene and the War of the Gods as well as their nature and their relationship with mortals.
- Describes in detail each of the forty-three Gods of Tellene, including their spheres, faiths, temples and specialty priests.
- Includes a section on the languages of the Sovereign Lands and the scripts of each, from High Elvish to Hobgoblin.
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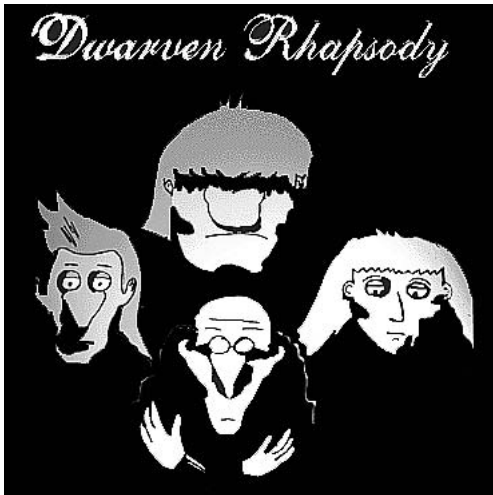
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Sung to the tune of Queens', "Bohemian Rhapsody" Lyrics and art by Erik Bouchard



It's not the real life
It's Hackmaster Fantasy
Caught in La La Land
I am born in this reality
I open my eyes
Look down on my sheet and see...

I'm just a poor dwarf, - I have no family
Because I hack to come, slash to go,
A little high, little low,
Anyway the Orc goes,
doesn't really matter to me.....to me

B.A., just killed my dwarf,
Put a poisoned knife against my head,
Rolled a one and now I'm dead,
B.A., my dwarf had just begun,
But now you've gone and blown my dwarf away
B.A. oooooooooo,
Do you know you make me cry
The 5 bucks I owe you, you'll have tomorrow
Take my sheet, take my sheet, nothing really matters...

Maybe, my time has come,
Must've been the Orc who ate my spine
Hit points gone - now it's time,
Goodbye El Ravager - I've got to go
Gotta leave my things behind and begin anew

B.A oooooooooo (*The orcs will go*)
Why'd you want me dead?
Wish I could reroll that saving throw

I see a little silhouette of a dwarf,
Justinia, Justinia will you pay to resurrect me
Fire breath and Lava-very very frightening me

*Boris Alphonso, Boris Alphonso,
Boris Alphonso, Boris Alphonso
Boris Alphonso Gazebo-Magnifico*

I'm just a poor dwarf nobody loves me
He's just a poor dwarf from a poor family
Hacking his way from every monstrosity
Easy come easy go - missed my saving throw

God Luvia! No- we will not let you roll- Let him reroll
God Luvia! we will not let you roll- Let him reroll
God Luvia! we will not let you roll- Let me reroll
Will not let you roll- Let me reroll
Will not let you roll- Let me reroll

Go,go,go,go,go,go,go
B B B.A., B B B.A., B B B.A. let me reroll
I hope Luvia has a place put aside for me, for me, for me

[musical interlude, heavy guitar and all ...]

So you think you can kill me and laugh at my eye
So you will take my sheet and leave Knuckles to die
Oh B.A.-Can't do this to me B.A.

I just gotta get out- just gotta get out of your house
OK, B.A. you've won,
Anyone can see,
You are a Killer GM,
I will roll another character for me,
I'll waste 'em all with my crossbow ...

Special thanks to Tom Michael from Las Vegas.
And as he said "Don't come here to gamble- you'll lose your money". ☐

EL RAVAGER FINDS A HIGH PLACE AND "DIPS" HIS HACKMASTER PLUS TWELVE IN MEMORY OF HIS FALLEN DWARVEN COMRADE. A SINGLE TEAR STAINS HIS WEATHERED TAWNY FACE!

YEAH, YEAH, SCREW THE TEARS! JUST GET MY ASS RAISED.

I STILL REMEMBER A TIME WHEN DEATH ACTUALLY MEANT SOMETHING.



A MAY
release from
**KENZER &
COMPANY**

FAIRY MEAT

Today's Fairies are
cute, magical and...
muderously addicted
to the flesh and blood
of their own kin!



FAIRY MEAT
is the acclaimed 1:1
scale miniatures game
of glittering anarchy
and raging faecide.

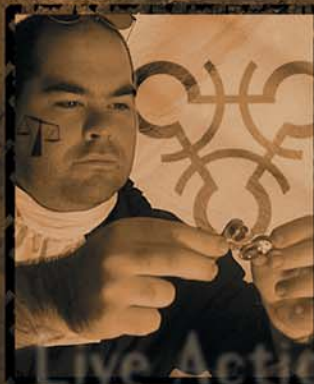
meat is meat
learn to eat



Passion Play

Fading Suns

Live Action Role-Playing



— May 2000 —

Finally, the much-requested live action rulebook for Fading Suns! Noble masques, duels of honor, palace and cathedral intrigues, scavenger hunts amid alien ruins – now players can live out these stories at conventions or in their own homes.

DAVE?! WILL YOU STOP PUNCHING BOB IN THE FACE?*

FIRP!! SPUTTER!!
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
YOU BROKE MY GLASSES YOU BIG GOOF!

BRIAN? WILL YOU PLEASE HURRY UP AND FIND THOSE DAMAGE RATINGS FOR HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT BEFORE THEY KILL EACH OTHER.

SEE??? MY FIST DOES A LOT MORE DAMAGE THAN AN OPEN HAND SLAP. I THINK THEY MUST HAVE MADE A MISTAKE ON THOSE DAMAGE RATINGS OR SOMETHING.

ACTUALLY I FOUND IT TWENTY MINUTES AGO. THE INDEX IN THIS BOOK ROCKS! BUT THIS IS JUST TOO MUCH ENTERTAINMENT. WHY STOP IT?



*Remember folks, you can't hit each other in LARPs but you can use squirt guns.