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# Knights of the Dinner Table™

M A G A Z I N E



## The Six Million Hit-Point Man

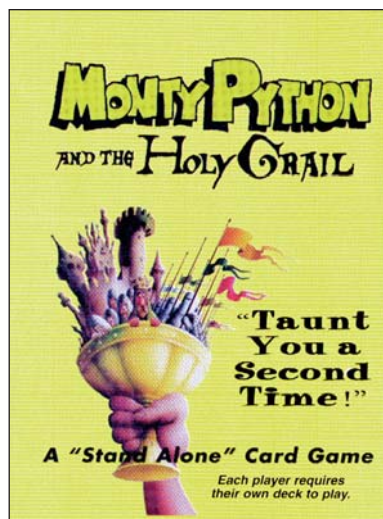
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THE SIX MILLION HIT-POINT MAN  
November, 2000

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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. Check out our website for writer's guidelines.

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# Knights of the Dinner Table™ MAGAZINE

## "THE SIX MILLION HIT-POINT MAN"

THE KODT DEVELOPMENT TEAM IS  
JOLLY R. BLACKBURN • BRIAN JELKE • STEVE JOHANSSON • DAVID S. KENZER  
Cover Art by George and Jackie Vrbanic • Editorial Assistance: Barbara Blackburn

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**K**NIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE™ was accidentally created by Jolly R. Blackburn way back in 1990 as 'filler' for his small press magazine, SHADIS™. Writing and drawing KODT strips, however, isn't nearly the lonely job it was in the past. Since joining the ranks of KENZER AND COMPANY and the formation of the KODT D-TEAM, the Knights have gone far beyond anything Jolly or fellow D-team members, Steve, Dave or Brian ever imagined. We look forward to seeing where the gang takes us next.



**Best Professional  
Game Magazine  
1997, 1998, 1999**

# Editorial-of-a-Madman™

**“And his block is knocked off!!  
(But ‘You” can put it back on again!)”**

**1960’s TV commercial for  
“Rock ‘em Sock ‘em” Robots**

**S**itting on the gaming table in my office is a vintage (1965) Rock ‘em Sock ‘em Robots game I managed to pick up at auction on eBay last summer — an object I take great pride in. Don’t ask me why, but I searched in vain for this particular toy for several years. Apparently I wasn’t the only person interested in owning a piece of his/her childhood again because, depending on condition, this hard to find, much sought after game fetched upwards of 200 bucks. Something I was never prepared to pay even if I DID manage to stumble across one. So I was a bit surprised to find a set of RSR in its original box with a pitiful opening bid of 30 bucks (and only an hour remaining before the bidding closed.)

Now, being the Gamer that I am, when my highly collectible piece of gaming history arrived via Federal Express I immediately pulled it out of its box and gently set it up on the kitchen table. It was like a piece of fine art to me. And even though I hadn’t seen a Rock ‘em Sock ‘em game set in nearly thirty years, every line and rivet on the retro-looking robots were familiar to me. It was almost as if the toy spoke to me on a level only my inner-child could fully understand.

I then did something that would make any serious toy/game collector cringe in horror — I sat down and began to play with it. That’s right, I took a 35 year old classic toy and I submitted it the kind of rigorous abuse that only a forty-year old man could subject it to.

*“I am gamer - hear me roar!”*

I challenged anyone who would take me on — my wife, my daughter, the family cat, a guy who just happened to be passing by my house. I wasn’t particular. I was going to get some payback for all the beatings my big brother dealt me in the Robo-Arena when we were kids.

Soon old Lady Mercy was sent packing from my house as the sounds of clashing, hard plastic fists striking one another filled the air along with the *‘whrrrrrrrrrrr’* of robot heads (er... blocks) being knocked off and the satisfying *‘clack’* of those same heads being snapped back in place.

And when I finally tired of reliving my childhood and venting my *‘rage against the machine’*, I put the game on permanent display in my office and tossed the empty box in the closet. Why? Don’t ask silly questions. Some guys put their bowling trophies on their mantle. I display my toys. You figure it out.

So you’re probably thinking at this point that having a Rock ‘em Sock ‘em Robot set up in my office makes me some kind of certified geek. A grown man playing with toys? That may be but thankfully I’m not alone. Men playing with toy robots is suddenly in vogue.

Last week, Todd Weaver (our new warehouse manager) was sitting in my living room channel surfing when something made us both sit up in our seats and go, “Huh?”

We’d stumbled upon Comedy Central’s new show, “BattleBots”. (If you’ve missed this show or don’t know anything about it, check out this issue’s GameVine.) Basically the show pits folks like NASA engineers and Hollywood special effects guys against each other. They build remote controlled robots armed to the teeth with such weapons as hydraulic hammers, carbide saw blades and diamond-tipped drills, etc. They then toss these ‘battlebots’ into an arena to fight to the death. Bing!! Can you say gamer-candy?? Where do I sign up?

After watching for a few minutes, Todd turned to me and said, “You know, this has board game written all over it! This is awesome!”

*“Yeah, I know.”* I said half-joking, “It’s called Battletech!”

Todd and I tried to resist the urge to take more than a ‘mild interest’ in the show. I know Todd will deny this ever happening but soon

we were both screaming at the TV and rooting for our favorite bots to “Tear ‘im up!!” and “Rip his mother-board out!”

Now I’m the first to admit it’s a very silly (geeky) show. (Which I guess explains why Comedy Central picked it up rather than ESPN.)

On the flip side, at least the battles are real and not faked like the WWF. It’s obvious the bot-handlers are intent on winning. Half the fun is watching them. When one battlebot was killed, I half expected its owner to break into tears. (Instead be whined about the other team playing dirty). These battles are surprisingly intense and bone-crushingly violent (that is, if robots had bones). Since most of these robots return week after week, they bear a wide variety of battle scars which only adds to the excitement. It’s violent to the extreme and yet... it isn’t. Kind of like back alley kick-boxing but with only half the guilt (since the only thing really being hurt is the losers’ pride.)

And for us... ahem... men, the show has the added attraction of high-tech gadgetry. There are even dudes running around with tool belts and duct tape making last minute tweaks and repairs to their battlebots before sending them in to do battle. In fact, the only thing I really don’t like about the show are the play-by-play announcers who attempt over-hype the action. I wish they’d just shut up and let us enjoy the carnage. (Good hacking doesn’t need commentary. It speaks for itself!) But hey, there’s still plenty to love about this show. The only thing missing are the dice and a little side betting action.

The comparison to Rock ‘em Sock ‘em Robots is all too obvious to me. In fact, I’m left wondering if the guys who came up with the premise for this show used to get beat up by their older brothers in the game as kids. And I’m sure if you poke around in the credits for BattleBots long enough you’ll find a handful of gamers in there somewhere.

At any rate, the show is a big hit for Comedy Central. I guess it just goes to prove my theory that there are a lot of folks running around out there with gamer tendencies who aren’t even aware of it.

*Jolly R. Blackburn*

Jolly R. Blackburn



The “Blue Bomber” taunts the “Red Rocket”.

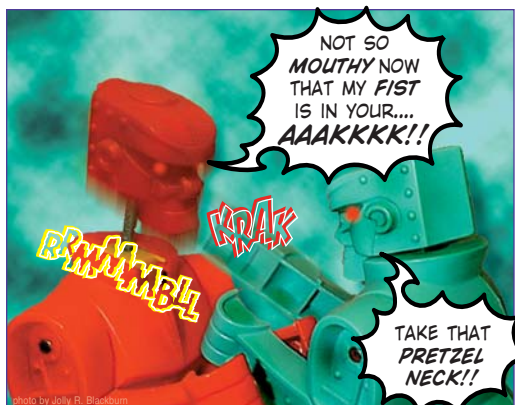


photo by Jolly R. Blackburn

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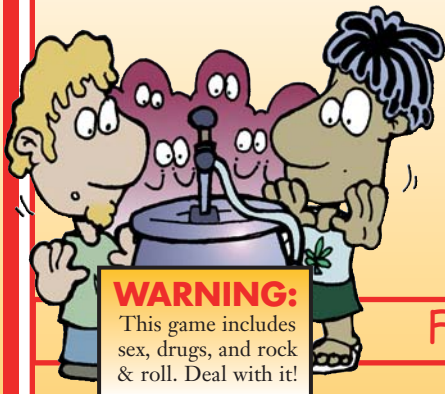
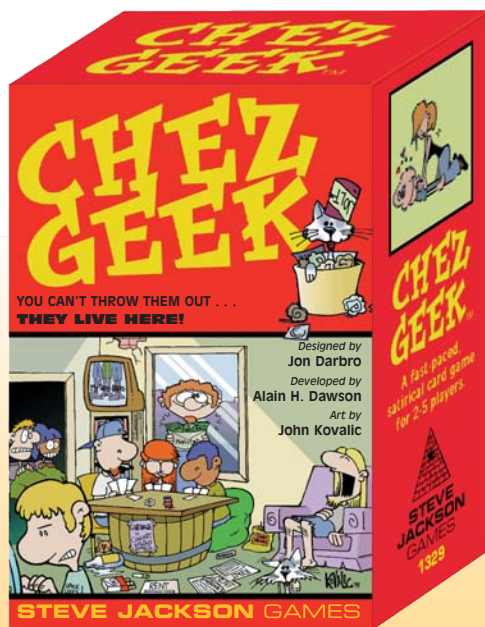
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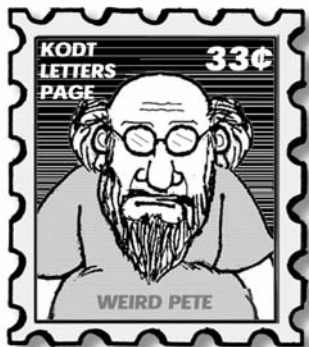
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# Our Readers Talk Back!



Dear KODT,

I really loved the "Sprechen Sie Dwarvish?" strip. I've always been fascinated by languages and alphabets, so it was a treat to see runes and Tolkien's Elvish script getting a good workout. I did notice a couple of letters here and there were missing, but I put that down to the Knights' incorrect pronunciation of the "languages" they were trying to speak.

Here are the passages I was able to figure out (*thank goodness I still had my copy of "The Languages of Tolkien's Middle Earth" handy!*).

B.A.: "Greetings my friends what can do for you?"

Brian: "I'm doing very well, thank you. and you?"

---

B.A.: "Excuse sir, which way to the brothel?"

Brian: "Go west, young man!"

---

B.A.: "Say again?"

Brian: "These idiots [the other players] have no idea what were saying."

B.A.: "what were..."

---

B.A.: "Oh yeah? Well scr\*\*w you bud! You can take your axe and shove it."

---

Brian: "Einstein's Theory of Relativity states that a man travelling the speed of light..."

---

Sara: "Dave your hair is so funny looking. You look like you're walking in a wind storm."

---

Brian: (too an oblivious Sara) "Your eyes are like two radiant pools of blue wine floating in a sea of alabaster."

---

Sara: "Peace is for the weak."

Brian's statement in *Dragonspeak* threw me. I saw it was written in reverse elven script, but when I tried to translate it, both left and right readings, it didn't make any sense. Maybe it wasn't supposed to, but

I'm not sure. After all, all the rest of the script translated into something. Anyway, I thought you'd like to know that someone (*probably several someones*) translated what you were trying to say. And that quote from "*Grindfar's Third Syllabi*" is probably the only way Brian will ever admit how he really feels about Sara -- to her face, anyway. ;-)

Rick Kurgas  
via E-mail

*Good job, Rick! Several readers wrote in to say they had 'cracked' the code so to speak but you're the only one (so far) to pretty much translate the strip in its entirety. I'm impressed.*

*What was Brian saying in dragonspeak? I guess it's okay to tell you now. The closest word in the English language is, "Belch!"*

Jolly

Dear KODT,

Just had to drop you a line and tell you how much I loved #45 & #46.

Really feel you've made a breakthrough with the Patty G stories. These are a nice change to the KODT and Black Hand adventures- a whole different feel to them. Love Patty G herself. Feel she's a great change from the dysfunctional B.A., Weird Pete, & Nitro stories. And the whole sub-storyline of Crutch trying to find a group to play with is sooo historically RPG correct. (*We had a few friends who played with our group to stay out of bar fights. Quite different players!*)

Laughed my ass off at the last two panels on Hack and Roll All Night and Bob's getting beat up by Erik of the Twelve Scars. Gawd forgive me, but I LOVE watching Bob get screwed in the game. It just cracks me up.

I also love watching Brian's plans completely fall through and having him pay for "rule playing" instead of "role playing", but that seldom happens.

Keep up the good work- you're definitely unchallenged as the best story teller of the industry, and a damn fine strip writer in general as well. And I appreciate the fact that you're not just covering the same old ground and resting on your jolly laurels, but are exploring new veins of humor. Thanks for the fine effort.

Kim Eastland  
via E-mail

*Thanks, Kim. As a longtime fan of your work at TSR while still in its heyday your comments mean a lot.*

Jolly

Dear KODT,

First, I would like to thank the staff of KODT for putting out all of the "fun work" that brings laughter and fond memories of games past.

As a fellow gamer for almost 20 years, I can think of no other group of people better suited to produce the new *Dungeons & Dragons™* comic book.

As a long time "consumer" and gamer of the game genre, *Wizards of the Coast* was wise in this decision and I'm equally impressed with their 3rd Ed *Players' Handbook*.

I remember long ago picking up a really cool D&D related comic known as "The Realms" by *Arrow Comics* and was really disappointed when they just stopped (*to this day I have no idea on what happened to them*).

Kenzer & Co, please do not let this happen to you. I look forward to receiving KODT and the related pleasures of gaming that are covered. Hopefully I will be able to contribute a suitable article or the like in the near future. Thank you and keep up the "fun work".

Patrick Ciraco  
via E-mail

*Thanks for the vote of confidence, Patrick. Don't worry! All of us here at KenzerCo are huge D&D fans and want to do this project right.*

*You can also take comfort in the fact that we have a solid track record for supporting our product lines. As a crown jewel, obviously we're interested in the D&D comic line being a long and prosperous one.*

Jolly

Dear KODT,

I would like to start this letter off by saying what a great job all of you are doing! The situations the *Knights* find themselves in seem all too familiar to a lot of us long-time gamers! You constantly make me laugh with their antics, and for that I am forever grateful.

I noticed in a few of the past mags that the *Knights* were playing some very interesting sounding games. I find myself WANTING to play *Risque* or *Formula Day!!!* Please tell me, even if you have to lie, that you will be creating these games! I know they don't exist, but the way they were playing them sounded awesome! Of course, you would have to create them with the hack-expansion packs that make them worth playing! I couldn't stop laughing when I saw Bob in that full-body cast

(Issue #44) after playing **Formula Day** with the **Road Rage** card deck!

And who could forget Brian's "**Big Stick Policy**" when they were playing **Risque** with **Battle-Pack Number 6**, "**Scorched Earth**"?!? (Issue #43)

Dammit, you make me WANT to PLAY these games!!! Well, now you've gone and got my dander up! You have to make these games and let me buy them! I want to give you my money. Of course if you don't, I will be forced to bring my 10th level spell "**Funk of 40,000 Years**" online...

Keep up the good work, and may your dice never go numb!

Tom Coster  
via E-mail

*That sounds like a veiled threat, Tom. Of course we would have our Corporate-Mage simply counter your Funk Spell with our own Repel-Funk spell. (patent pending)*

*It's absolutely amazing how many letters we receive asking for real-life versions of the games the Knights play in the strips. Have we given serious thought to actually developing these games?*

*With the recent release, Fairy Meat being so well received who knows? To be honest, I wouldn't mind playing a little Road Rage myself.*

Jolly

Dear KODT,

I just finished issue 46. The hilarity never stops! I love your magazine. Being an old time D&D'er (been playing the game in one form or another since 1982), it brings back a lot of fond memories. I especially liked the ideas presented in the "**This That and the Other Thing: Odd Followers**" column by Christian Walker.

I think B.A. needs to try having a pack of ghouls follow the Knights around feeding off the carnage. Heck, that group could probably feed an army of ghouls with the body count they rack up.

Keep up the good work!

Hans Cummings  
via E-mail

Dear KODT,

This was the first year I had the chance to attend a **KODT Live Reading**. The one held during **Origins** ROCKED. About 80 people were there. I got to play B. A. twice and Stevil once. It was so kewl.

Then came **GENCON** and yet another live reading before 300-400 people this time. I walked in with my hand raised this time so Brian Jelke said, "Well you're up first so come on up".

I ran up to the dais to take my place as B. A. looking out over the crowd was a thrill. After the reading we all were asked to come over to the prize table where Jolly had set up prizes for us to win, all we had to do was roll 2d6. (There was a chart showing prizes from 1-12, the #1 prize was a signed **KODT** #1.)

Jolly, can tell you please tell me how you roll

a '1' on 2d6? But two of the numbers were "**DIBS**" — if you rolled it you could choose any prize.

Well, rolled dibs and immediately looked at Brian then the crowd and said "I want B.A.'s chair!"

Brian said "uh....sure." so I ran back to the dais for another reading. After that reading I rolled "dibs" once more, the crowd loved it. (Later, Jolly said he was rooting for me to roll another "dibs".)

After three straight goes as B.A. I finally failed a roll, but I did get a coupon for **1000 XP** which was signed by the Kenzer crew for use with any accredited **HackMaster** GM.

The best thing was when I got home and received my new copy of **KODT Illustrated** and saw that two of the stories I read at the live reading were then in that issue. That totally rocked. **HOODY FRICKIN' HOO!**

Kenn Boyle  
Nanteen@epix.net

*How do you manage to roll a '1' on 2d6? Easy — but you have to use the Lugar Creek Die-Roll Convention as established at my own gaming table in the fall of '82.*

*It's a long and drawn out process which is frowned upon in most gaming circles. However, it's completely legal at most KODT Live Readings. Ask me at next year's event, and I'll explain the process.*

Jolly

Dear KODT,

This one is for Jolly. Just wanted to drop you a quick note to say thank you for everything. At **GenCon** you signed my **KODT** #1, #2 and #3, as well as **SHADIS** #1 and #3!

That was a big thrill for me, but even bigger was the kick I got from the **KODT Live Reading!** That ROCKED!

I even got to be on-stage for one (I played Brian for "Agent of Evil".)

My wife (who is also a gamer) said that the live reading confirmed her suspicion that a lot of gamers (and GMs in particular) are frustrated actors. I think she may have hit the nail on the head, because some of the performances were great, not including my own; I was really nervous.

This year for our local Con, I'd like to do a **KODT Live Reading**. Do you guys provide kits?

Anyway, thanks again for all that you and the team do. Keep on Gaming!

Mark Dykstra  
via E-mail

*We don't have a kit, Mark but we did run a "How to run your own KODT Live Reading" article in an early issue of KODT. I believe you can find the Adobe Acrobat file at kenzerco.com.*

*We encourage conventions and retail shops to run their own Live Readings. They can be great fun.*

Jolly

Dear KODT,

I have been a faithful and eager reader of **KODT** since issue thirteen. As soon as the newest copy is purchased, I eagerly sit down and devour it cover-to-cover at my earliest convenience. As I sat down to peruse issue 47, I was faced with the sheer horror of the "**Snake Slayer**" story in your editorial!

Being an amateur *herpetologist* and a person with a great love and admiration for reptiles and amphibians, your story of the brutal stoning to death of an innocent serpent rocked me to my very core! For the first time ever, I was thoroughly angry with you!

I go to schools and give voluntary lectures on reptiles to prevent this very attitude and behavior. Snakes have been cursed with the worst reputations an animal can bear. Yes, some snakes are poisonous, and can injure or even kill a human. You yourself admitted that the snake was minding his own business, and the two of you killed him just because he "scared the snout out of you". I just want to make it clear to the many readers of **KODT** that this is NOT the appropriate behavior to exhibit towards ANY wild animals. Leave them alone and they will leave you alone. Jolly, since you still seem to have a fear of snakes, I volunteer to help you out. Since my friends and I at The **Dragons Claw** booth go to many of the same conventions that **Kenzer and Co.** does, I will bring along several of my pet snakes for you to meet! They are very friendly, and love to meet new people! I am definitely looking forward to next summer's convention schedule as I'm sure you are!

Sheryl  
via E-mail

*I look forward to meeting your fine snakes, Sheryl. My editorial was actually meant to poke fun at my younger self. I would be the first to agree that killing innocent creatures is 'inappropriate behavior'.*

*As I stated in my editorial, I was much younger then and a bit naïve. (Keep in mind this was back in the days when locals proudly held annual 'Rattle Snake Round-ups' to see who could literally club the most snakes.)*

*At any rate, I surely wasn't suggesting readers go out and stone snakes. If there's a non-profit organization to promote the kind of volunteer work you mentioned, let me know. I'll gladly donate a few dollars as penance for my transgression.*

Jolly



A CARD OR A LETTER -  
WOULD SURE MAKE  
US FEEL **BETTER!**

Write to **Table Talk**  
c/o **KenzerCo**  
**25667 Hillview Court**  
**Mundelein, IL 60060**  
or E-mail: [mailbag@kenzerco.com](mailto:mailbag@kenzerco.com)

**HackMaster GM ToolKit** THIS TRIAL VERSION OF HMGMTKV2.1 EXPIRES IN KRACKED DAYS

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**ADVENTURE MAKER** | File Edit View Insert Format Font Tools Table Window Work Help | 2:17 a.m.

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**NPC GALLERY** | [Icons]

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**MONSTER GALLERY** | ★ **GAMEMASTER'S CAMPAIGN LOG: Day 204** | **GAMEMASTER: B.A. Felton**

**PLAYER STATS** | **GAME SESSION SUMMARY:** At long last I have the players where I want them - back under my control. Dave has been stripped of his *HackMaster +12* as has Brian of his *bag-of-tricks* along with his vast collection of magical artifacts - both stolen by **Pewter** who is now long gone. I feel like dancing in the streets. My campaign, which only weeks before was treacherously close to completely collapsing due to the balance-of-power tipping so heavily in the players' favor now seems well on its way to being salvaged. If I can just manage a few more adjustments, without the players' catching on to what I'm doing, the campaign should be back on track in a matter of weeks.

**HACK STATS** | **RECAP OF LAST WEEK'S ADVENTURE:** The entire party, with the exception of Sara's character (*Justina*), was slain by the so-called '**Stone Menagerie**'. A reluctant *Justina* was forced to leave her slain comrades behind. Severely wounded (*down to 2 hitpoints*), she wandered to a local Inn (*The Whimsical Sow*) where she found food and shelter. She soon learned, however, that she had a bounty on her head and that **Ahk Tang's** bounty hunters were scouring the countryside looking for her and her comrades. Fearing she'd be given over to the enemy if her identity were discovered, *Justina* stole a horse and left in the dark of night. She eventually made her way to the nearby town of **Drayton's Forge** where she requested **sanctuary** at the **Temple of the Feeble Gawd** (*which the temple priests granted based on her past generous donations.*)

**DICE ANALYZER** | While she recovered from her wounds and lay near death, *Justina* used the little remaining hard coin she had on her person to hire the services of a **Runner**. [NPC#2173] She tasked him with assembling a party of hirelings and provisioning them for an expedition to retrieve the bodies of **El Ravager**, **Knuckles the VI** and **Teflon Billy**. (*Said expedition to be launched under her personal leadership once she had regained her strength.*)

**PLOT CHECKER** | Using the **pulley and elevator room system** devised by **Lord Flatoroy**, *Justina* ingeniously reconfigured the dungeon, creating a safe passageway to the **Medusa's Lair**. With the bodies of her slain comrades recovered, **Justina** set upon a quest to have them raised. After a long fruitless search, she finally managed to find a **Rogue Priest**<sup>1</sup> willing to help her...

**RULES CHECK** |

**Campaign Journal** |

**DICE BAG** |

**MAP BUILDER** |

**WEATHER** |

**RANDOM MONSTERS** |

**GARWEEZE WURLD** |

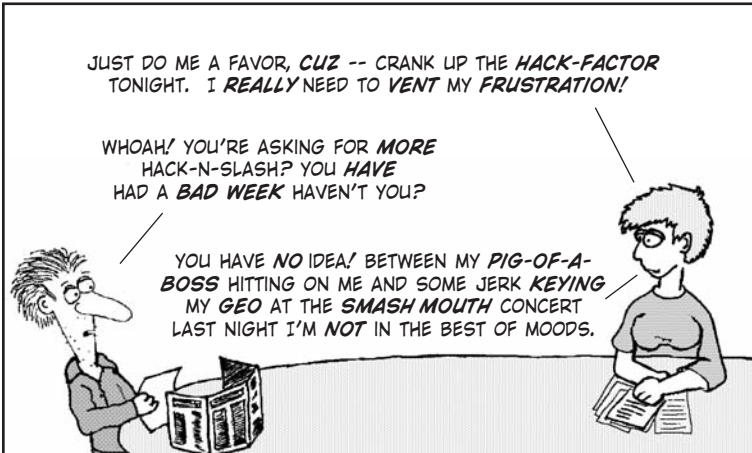
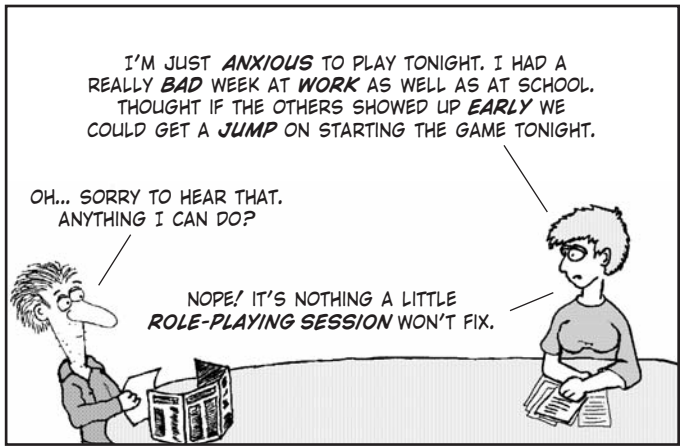
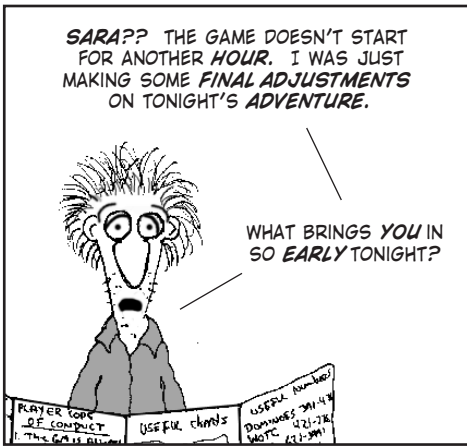
**IDEA GENERATOR** |

**CLUB TREASURY** |

**HARD EIGHT HOTLINE** |

**ARCHIVES** |

**BATTLE MASTER** |



<sup>1</sup> **Rogue Priest:** A priest/cleric who operates outside the Order. They typically dance a fine-line when comes to adhering to the doctrines of their chosen faith careful not to draw the ire of their gawd while at the same time testing the limits to which they can go. **Rogue Priests** often work together, underground, and exploit the powers derived from their status -- working them to their advantage and financial gain.

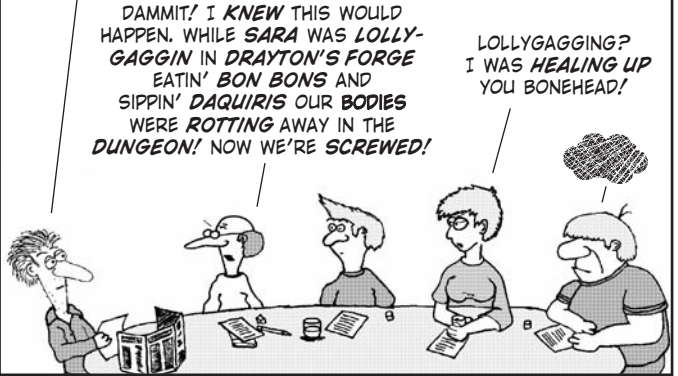
LATER THAT SAME NIGHT.....

OKAY SARA, THE ROGUE PRIEST STUDIES THE SMALL PAD OF PAPER WHICH HE'S BEEN WORKING HIS NUMBERS ON AND FURROWS HIS BROW.



"I'M SORRY, MUH-LADY, BUT I'M AFRAID TOO MUCH TIME HAS LAPSED SINCE THE DEATHS OF YOUR FALLEN COMRADES."

I'M AFRAID A RAISE DEAD RITE IS OUT OF THE QUESTION -- IT WOULD BE USELESS. YOUR SITUATION CALLS FOR THE REAL ECCLESIASTICAL STUFF -- A RESURRECTION!



DAMMIT! I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN. WHILE SARA WAS LOLLYGAGGIN' IN DRAYTON'S FORGE EATIN' BON BONS AND SIPPIN' DAQUIRIS OUR BODIES WERE ROTTING AWAY IN THE DUNGEON! NOW WE'RE SCREWED!

LOLLYGAGGING? I WAS HEALING UP YOU BONEHEAD!

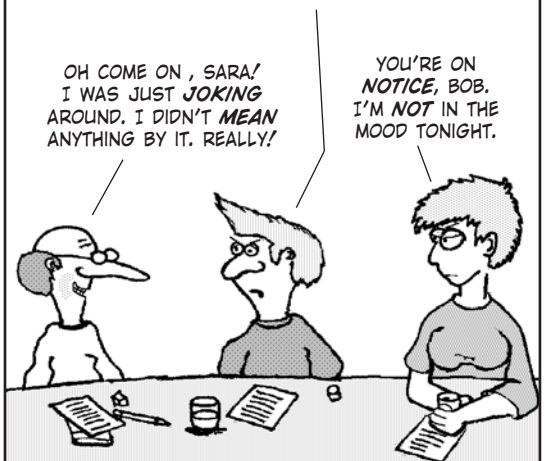
YOU KNOW, I'M STARTIN' TO THINK MAYBE IT'D BE A GOOD IDEA TO POCKET THE GOLD AND WRITE YOU GUYS OFF.



WRITE US OFF? WHAT KIND OF CRAZY TALK IS THAT?

MAYBE IT DIDN'T OCCUR TO YOU BUT I HOLD THE POWER HERE. THE ONLY THING STANDING BETWEEN YOU AND ROLLING UP NEW CHARACTERS FROM SCRATCH IS ME!!

DANG IT, BOB! YER BLOWIN' IT FOR US. APOLOGIZE TO THE LADY! NOW!!



OH COME ON, SARA! I WAS JUST JOKING AROUND. I DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING BY IT. REALLY!

YOU'RE ON NOTICE, BOB. I'M NOT IN THE MOOD TONIGHT.

OKAY SARA, THE ROGUE PRIEST LOOKS AT YOU APOLOGETICALLY AND GIVES YOU HIS 'ROCK BOTTOM' PRICE. HE'S WILLING TO DO THE JOB FOR 50,000 GOLD PIECES A POP! BUT HE'LL NEED THE CASH UP FRONT!!



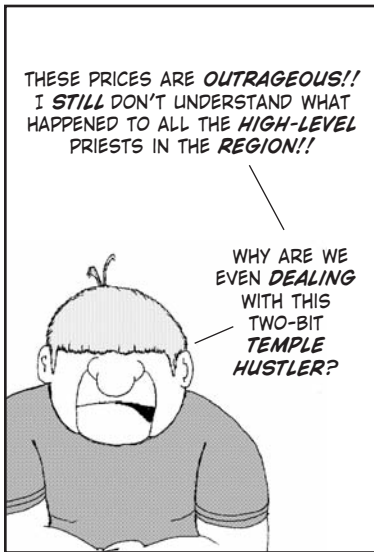
FIFTY GEES??!! JUST TO HAVE US RESURRECTED? EACH? WHAT A SHYSTER!

150,000 TOTAL? IT MIGHT AS WELL BE A MILLION!! -- I DON'T HAVE NEARLY ENOUGH.

HE SAYS HE'S NOT WILLING TO BUDGE ON HIS PRICE EITHER.

YOWL!!

HMMRRFFF!! WHAT DID I TELL YA? CORRUPTION IS RAMPANT AMONG THESE ROUGE PRIEST TYPES.



THESE PRICES ARE **OUTRAGEOUS!!** I **STILL** DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THE **HIGH-LEVEL** PRIESTS IN THE **REGION!!**

WHY ARE WE EVEN DEALING WITH THIS TWO-BIT **TEMPLE** **HUSTLER?**



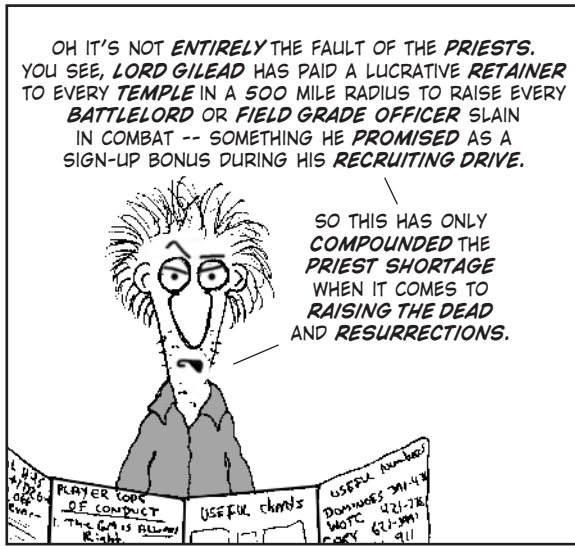
I **EXPLAINED** THAT ALREADY. THAT **LITTLE WORLD WAR** YOU GUYS STARTED CREATED A **HUGE DEMAND** FOR **RESURRECTIONS**. YOU DIDN'T **SERIOUSLY** THINK YOU'RE THE **ONLY** ONES INTERESTED IN **RAISING** FALLEN **COMRADES** DID YOU? THERE'S BEEN A **BACKLOG** FOR **MONTHS!!** AND TO BE HONEST, THERE AREN'T MANY **PRIESTS** LEFT WILLING TO TAKE THE **AGE-HIT**<sup>1</sup> ASSOCIATED WITH **RESURRECTIONS!**

YOU MEAN I GOTTA **STAY** DEAD 'COS THESE **CLOWNS** DON'T WANNA **AGE** A FEW YEARS?

GEE, I NEVER **THOUGHT** OF IT FROM **THEIR** POINT OF VIEW.

FIRK DING... THOSE **SELF-SERVING** **BASTARDS!** WHAT **GOOD** ARE THEY IF THEY AREN'T WILLING TO **RAISE** US?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.



OH IT'S NOT **ENTIRELY** THE FAULT OF THE **PRIESTS**. YOU SEE, **LORD GILEAD** HAS PAID A **LUCRATIVE RETAINER** TO EVERY **TEMPLE** IN A **500 MILE** RADIUS TO **RAISE** EVERY **BATTLELORD** OR **FIELD GRADE OFFICER** SLAIN IN **COMBAT** -- SOMETHING HE **PROMISED** AS A **SIGN-UP BONUS** DURING HIS **RECRUITING DRIVE**.

SO THIS HAS ONLY **COMPOUNDED** THE **PRIEST** **SHORTAGE** WHEN IT COMES TO **RAISING** THE **DEAD** AND **RESURRECTIONS**.



**GILEAD?!!** AGAIN HE'S MAKING OUR **LIVES** MISERABLE. EVEN IN **DEATH** HE'S A **THORN** IN OUR **BUTTS!**

RECRUITING DRIVE? NO WONDER OUR **MEN** WERE **JUMPING** THE **FENCE** TO THE OTHER SIDE IN **DROVES!**

HE NEVER DID FIGHT **FAIR!**



IT'S LOOKING RATHER **GRIM** GUYS. I HAD TO **PAWN** THOSE **WEAPONS** AND **MAGIC ITEMS** OF YOURS WHICH I MANAGED TO SHOVE IN MY **FANNY** **PACK OF HOLDING** IN ORDER TO **RAISE** MONEY TO **COME** BACK AND **GET** YOU. AFTER **PAYING** THOSE **HIRELINGS** TO **HELP** **RETRIEVE** YOUR **BODIES**, I'M AFRAID I ONLY HAVE ABOUT **8,000 GOLD** **PIECES** LEFT. YOUR **BODIES** HAD BEEN **PICKED** OVER WITH A **FINE** **TOOTH** **COMB** BY THE TIME I GOT BACK TO YOU.

THIS **BLOWS!** SOME **THIEVING** **BASTARD** EVEN **YANKED** MY **GOLD** **TOOTH** OF **PURIFY** **BEVERAGE**<sup>2</sup>.

WE'RE **TOAST!** **GAME** **OVER!!**

HMMRRFFF! I BET OUR **LITTLE** **FRIEND** **PEWTER** CAME BACK AND PAID US A **LITTLE** **POST-MORTEM** VISIT.



YOU MAY HAVE TO MAKE A **TREK** UP TO **HELL'S** **THROAT**<sup>2</sup> AND **RETRIEVE** OUR **EMERGENCY** **SLUSH FUND**, **SARA**. IT'LL TAKE **WEEKS** BUT I DON'T SEE WHERE WE HAVE ANY **CHOICE**.

GOOD IDEA BUT THERE'S ONE **SMALL** **PROBLEM** WITH THAT, **BRIAN**.

WHAT'S THAT?

<sup>1</sup> **Age-Hit:** According to **HackMaster 3rd edition** rules, unless a fallen hero was slain while directly engaged in a holy cause relating to the Cleric's gawd or had clearly furthered the gawd's work through 'feats and deeds' while living, the Cleric performing the ceremony takes an 'age-hit' — 1d4 years per level of the PC or NPC being raised. Most Clerics are thus very selective about whom they resurrect.

<sup>2</sup> **Hell's Throat:** [See "A Heated Situation" in **HackMasters of EverKnight #1**] A remote wilderness region of **Garweeze Wurld** (also known as "The Marrow") famous for its maze of intertwining networks of deep canyons and hidden caves. (First detailed by Gary Jackson in his classic module, (F5) **Into the Fray**.) The region is popular with adventurers seeking to hide secret hoards.

YOU WERE CARRYING THE *MAP* IN YOUR *BAG OF HEFTY CAPACITY* FOR, UH... HOW DID YOU PUT IT? '*SAFE KEEPING*'? I'M AFRAID THE DIRECTIONS WERE SO RIDICULOUSLY *COMPLEX* THAT THERE'S NO *CHANCE* OF *JUSTINA* EVER FINDING IT ON HER OWN.

IT *HAD* TO BE *COMPLEX*. *JONID COINCRAWLER* WAS *SNIFFING* AROUND AT THE TIME. WE DIDN'T WANT HIM *RIPPING* US OFF *AGAIN*!

OH... YEAH. I'D FORGOTTEN.

*CRIPES!* LOOKS LIKE WE'RE IN SOME *DEEP KIMSHEE* HERE.

OKAY, THERE'S ONLY *ONE* THING LEFT TO DO *SARA* AND IT'S UP TO *YOU!* YOU'VE GOT TO *WORK* THIS GUY -- GET HIM TO *COME DOWN* ON HIS *RATES*.

TALK HIM DOWN *142,000* GOLD PIECES?? YOU HEARD THE MAN. HE'S NOT GOING TO *BUDGE*.

MEANS *NOTHING!*

HE'S JUST THROWING OUT A *CHALLENGE*. THE MAN'S *INVITING* YOU TO *HAGGLE* WITH HIM. ALL YOU'VE GOT TO DO IS TO *CONVINCE* HIM HE NEEDS *YOUR MONEY* MORE THAN YOU NEED HIS *SERVICES*.

WELL, I SUPPOSE IT WOULDN'T *HURT* TO TRY.

*TRY???!!*  
WELL, THAT'S A *PISS POOR* ATTITUDE!

IF YOU GO INTO THIS WITH *THAT* KIND OF *MINDSET*, WE'RE *SCREWED!* HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO *TELL* YOU -- *HAGGLING* ISN'T A SIMPLE MATTER OF ROLLING A *FEW DICE!* IT'S A *SOPHISTICATED DANCE* BETWEEN YOU AND THE *GM!*

YOU'VE GOT TO ROLL UP YOUR *SLEEVES* AND *JUMP* IN WITH *BOTH FEET* AND GAIN THE *EDGE!*

OKAY, I SEE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING. ANY SUGGESTIONS ON HOW I SHOULD PROCEED?

BOTTOM LINE -- IT'S ALL ABOUT GARNERING AS MANY *MODIFIERS* AS POSSIBLE FROM *B.A.* BEFORE MAKING THAT FINAL *HAGGLE ROLL*.

THIS IS WHERE YOU *EXCEL*, *SARA* -- ROLEPLAY IT TO THE *HILT* AND *B.A.* WON'T HAVE ANY *CHOICE* BUT TO START *DOLING* OUT THOSE *MODIFIERS*.

SURE! I CAN DO THAT!

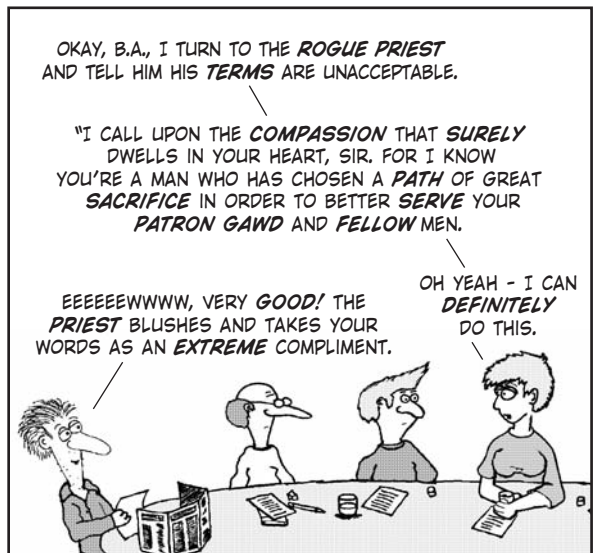
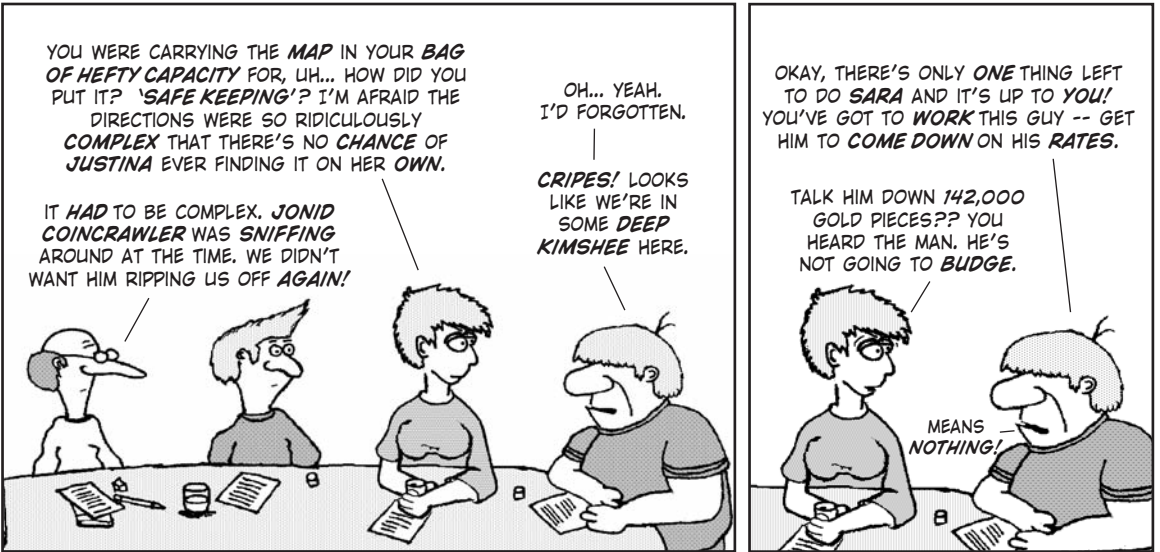
AAAAAH, NOW THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

OKAY, B.A., I TURN TO THE *ROGUE PRIEST* AND TELL HIM HIS *TERMS* ARE UNACCEPTABLE.

"I CALL UPON THE *COMPASSION* THAT *SURELY* DWELLS IN YOUR HEART, SIR. FOR I KNOW YOU'RE A MAN WHO HAS CHOSEN A *PATH* OF GREAT *SACRIFICE* IN ORDER TO BETTER *SERVE* YOUR *PATRON GAWD* AND *FELLOW MEN*.

EEEEEEWWWWW, VERY *GOOD!* THE *PRIEST* BLUSHES AND TAKES YOUR WORDS AS AN *EXTREME COMPLIMENT*.

OH YEAH - I CAN *DEFINITELY* DO THIS.



**A WEE BIT LATER...**

I **SCOFF** AT HIS **COUNTER-OFFER**. "35,000 GOLD PIECES? DO YOU THINK I FELL OFF THE **DEAD CART** OR SOMETHING? I MAY BE **BLONDE** BUT I'M NOT **DUMB**, SIR."

"TELL YA WHAT I'M GOING TO DO. I'LL THROW IN MY **LONG BOW OF STRUMMING** ALONG WITH THE **8,000** IN HARD COIN. FOR THAT YOU ONLY RAISE **EL RAVAGER**. HOW'S THAT SOUND?"

SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE TRYING TO TAKE **ADVANTAGE** OF AN OLD MAN - THAT'S WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE.



HEY, WHAT THE... **SARA??!!** WHAT ABOUT **ME AND BRIAN**? YOU'RE NOT THINKING OF **WRITING US OFF** ARE YOU?

OF COURSE NOT, SILLY. RELAX. I'VE GOT A **PLAN!**



THE GUY **OBVIOUSLY** ISN'T GOING TO COME DOWN **LOW** ENOUGH TO HAVE **ALL** OF YOU RAISED. IF I CAN AT **LEAST** MANAGE TO HAVE OUR **FIGHTER** RAISED I'LL HAVE AN **EXTRA BARGAINING CHIP** IN **MY CORNER** TO WORK WITH -- CRANK UP THE **INTIMIDATION FACTOR** A FEW DEGREES. KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

HEY, THAT'S NOT SUCH A **BAD IDEA**.

YOU WANT I SHOULD **MUSCLE** THIS GUY? IS THAT THE **PLAN**?

HOPEFULLY, IT WON'T GO THAT FAR.

OUTSTANDING, **SARA**. WAY TO **HEDGE YER BET!**



THE **ROGUE PRIEST** FLATLY **REFUSES** YOUR OFFER, **SARA**. HE HAS **NO USE** FOR YOUR **LONG BOW** AND SERIOUSLY **DOUBTS** YOUR CLAIM THAT IT'S **MAGICAL**.

AT ANY RATE, HE FEELS YOU DON'T FULLY **UNDERSTAND** HOW HE OPERATES.



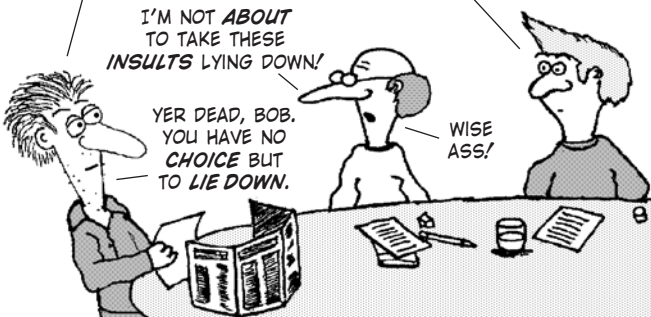
HE'S EXPLAINS THAT HE'S FAR TOO **OLD** TO **RISK** A **RESURRECTION** SPELL HIMSELF. "DO YOU HAVE **ANY IDEA** WHAT THE **AGE PENALTIES** WILL BE TO RAISE **THREE BODIES**? IT WOULD BE THE **DEATH** OF ME!! I VALUE **LIFE** TOO HIGHLY TO **CASH IN** MY CHIPS JUST TO **RAISE** YOUR **LOSER FRIENDS** WHO FORGOT TO **DUCK**."

**LOSER FRIENDS?** WHERE DOES HE GET OFF TALKING ABOUT THE **DEAD** LIKE THAT? **SHEESH!!**

I'M NOT ABOUT TO TAKE THESE **INSULTS LYING DOWN!**

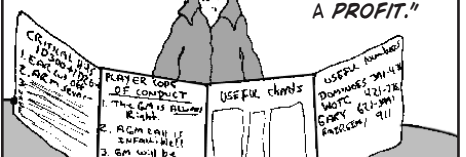
YER DEAD, **BOB**. YOU HAVE NO **CHOICE** BUT TO **LIE DOWN**.

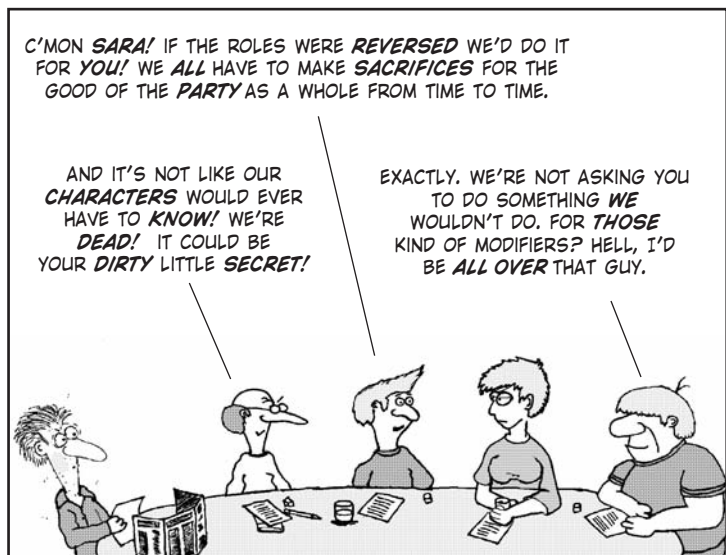
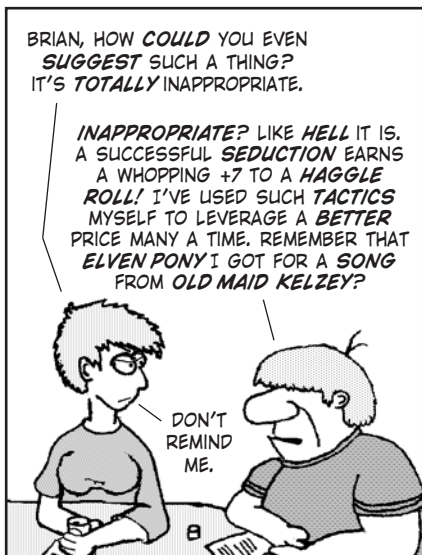
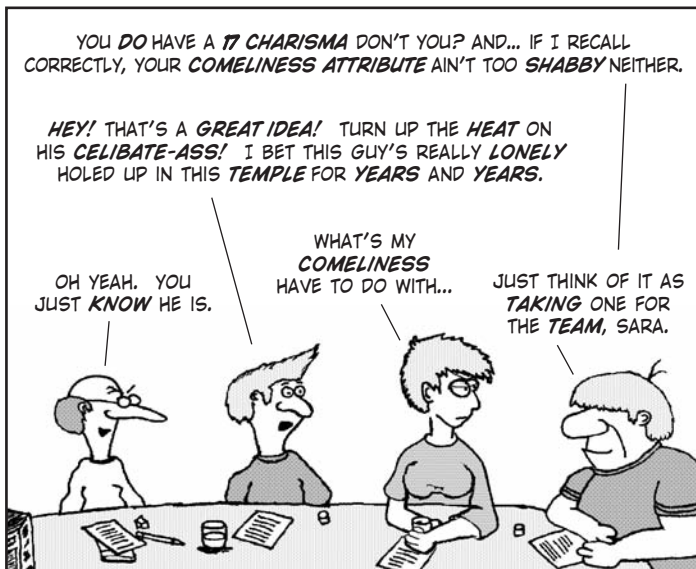
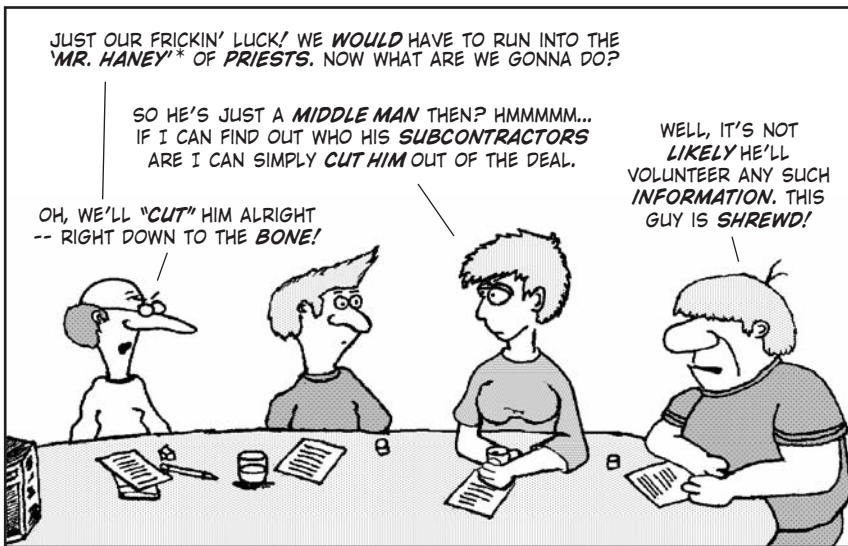
WISE ASS!



"THE REASON MY **RATES** ARE SO **HIGH** IS THAT I **SUBCONTRACT** ALL MY **SPECIALTY SPELLWORK** OUT TO OTHER **PRIESTS**."

"SO YOU SEE, I **REALLY** DON'T HAVE MUCH ROOM TO **YIELD** ON MY **PRICES** IF I EXPECT TO MAKE A **PROFIT**."



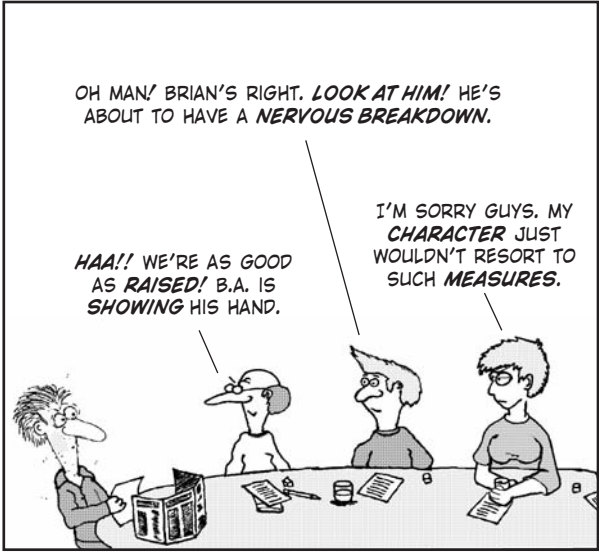


\* Mr. Haney: For the benefit of our younger readers, Mr. Haney was a running character in the 60's television show *Green Acres* who constantly tried to swindle the show's main character, Mr. Douglas.



LOOK SARA, IT'S JUST A LITTLE **GAME TABLE POLITICS!** IT'S **NEVER** GOING TO GO THAT FAR. THERE'S **NO WAY** B.A. CAN HANDLE THE **PRESSURE** OF PLAYING THIS **SITUATION** OUT TO ITS **CONCLUSION.**

YER HIS **COUSIN** FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD. JUST **LOOK** AT HIM - HE'S ABOUT TO **BREAK** ALREADY.



OH MAN! BRIAN'S RIGHT. **LOOK AT HIM!** HE'S ABOUT TO HAVE A **NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.**

I'M SORRY GUYS. MY **CHARACTER** JUST WOULDN'T RESORT TO SUCH **MEASURES.**



OH C'MON, DON'T BE **SHY** TOOTS! JUST FLASH THOSE BIG **BABY BLUES** AT HIM. -SNICKER-



GIVE 'IM THAT -KACKLE-COME-HITHER LOOK.

SHAKE THAT LITTLE **MONEY MAKER** AND...

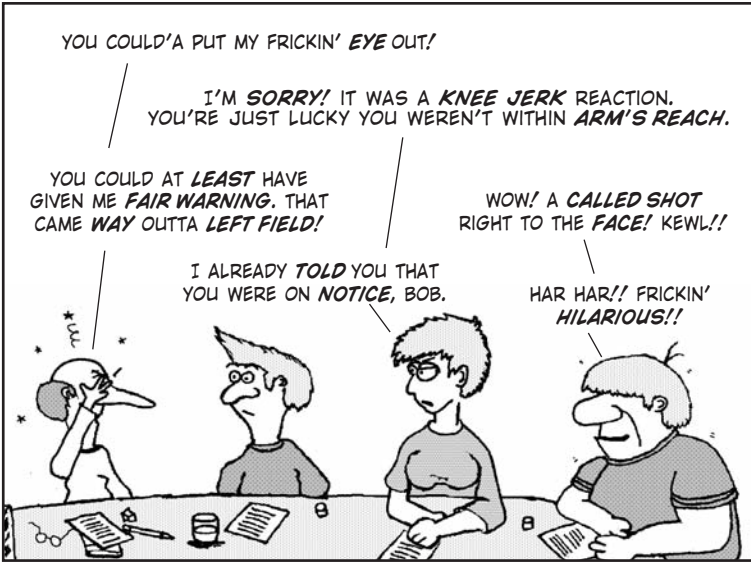
WHACK!!

UNNGGGHH!



**OWWWWWWWW!!!!**  
GEEZUS! WHAT'S WITH YOU? WHAT THE **HELL** DID YOU DO THAT FOR?

THE **ONLY** THING I'M GOING TO **SHAKE** IS THAT SCRAWNY LITTLE **NECK** OF YERS IF YOU OPEN YOUR **MOUTH** AGAIN.



YOU COULD'A PUT MY FRICKIN' **EYE** OUT!

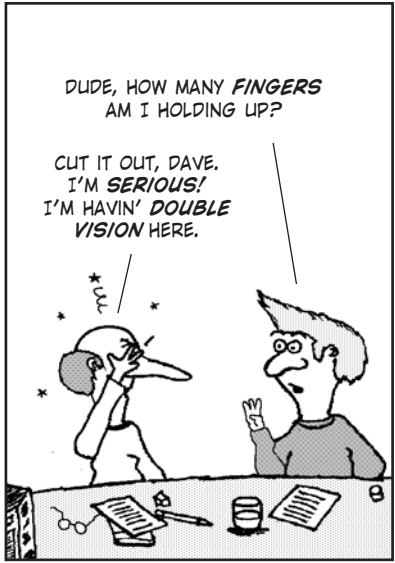
I'M **SORRY!** IT WAS A **KNEE JERK** REACTION. YOU'RE JUST LUCKY YOU WEREN'T WITHIN **ARM'S REACH.**

YOU COULD AT **LEAST** HAVE GIVEN ME **FAIR WARNING.** THAT CAME **WAY** OUTTA **LEFT FIELD!**

WOW! A **CALLED SHOT** RIGHT TO THE **FACE!** KEWL!!

I ALREADY **TOLD** YOU THAT YOU WERE ON **NOTICE, BOB.**

HAR HAR!! FRICKIN' **HILARIOUS!!**



DUDE, HOW MANY **FINGERS** AM I HOLDING UP?

CUT IT OUT, DAVE. I'M **SERIOUS!** I'M HAVIN' **DOUBLE VISION** HERE.

THAT WAS *UNCALLED* FOR, SARA. I WAS JUST TALKING IN *CHARACTER!* YOU SHOULDN'T OUTTA *BEAN* A GUY WHEN HE'S JUST *TALKING* IN CHARACTER.

BUT DUDE, YOUR CHARACTER IS *DEAD* AT THE MOMENT. *REMEMBER?*

STAY OUT OF THIS *DAVE!*

I *AM* SORRY, BOB. REALLY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO *OVERREACT*.

OH QUIT YER *WHINING*. IT WAS JUST A *SODA CAN*. YOU'VE BEEN DEALT *MUCH* WORSE.

LOOK, I HAVE TO *PUT UP* WITH THOSE KIND OF *SNIDE* COMMENTS ALL DAY AT MY JOB AT *BIG BIG VIDEO*.

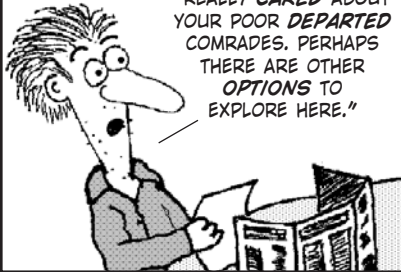
FRANKLY, IT'S A LITTLE *ANNOYING* HAVING TO DEAL WITH AT THE *GAMING TABLE*.



OKAY, SOUNDS LIKE AN APOLOGY TO ME. SO LET'S MOVE ON. SHALL WE?

THE *ROGUE PRIEST* SUDDENLY *SOFTENS* AND SHOVS HIS *NOTE PAD* INTO THE *FOLDS* OF HIS ROBE. HE STEPS *CLOSER* TO YOU, *SARA* AND GENTLY PUTS A HAND ON YOUR SHOULDER.

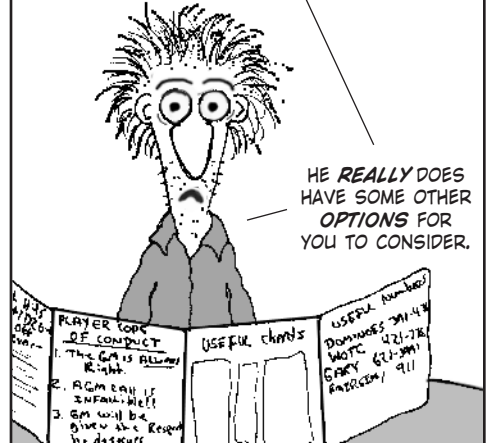
"LOOK, MY DEAR LADY. IT'S *OBVIOUS* YOU REALLY *CARED* ABOUT YOUR POOR *DEPARTED* COMRADES. PERHAPS THERE ARE OTHER *OPTIONS* TO EXPLORE HERE."



NOW *LOOK* HERE, B.A. I THOUGHT I MADE IT *PERFECTLY* CLEAR-- MODIFIERS OR NO MODIFIERS -- *JUSTINA* ISN'T ABOUT TO...



OH... -GULP- *NO!!!* THAT'S NOT WHAT I... ER, -FIRP- I MEAN THAT'S NOT WHAT *'HE'* MEANT.



HE *REALLY* DOES HAVE SOME OTHER *OPTIONS* FOR YOU TO CONSIDER.

OTHER OPTIONS, EH? OKAY, I'M ALL *EARS!* WHAT DOES HE HAVE IN MIND?

"LOOK," HE SAYS, "I HAVE A *DRUID FRIEND* WHO HAS SOME REALLY *REASONABLE* PRICES ON *REINCARNATIONS!* IT'S NOT FOR *EVERYBODY*, YOU UNDERSTAND, BUT IF *MONEY'S* A PROBLEM..."

REINCARNATION? SHYA'RIGHT! YOU CAN *FORGET* THAT *DREK!*

OH MAN, I'D *HATE* TO GO *THAT* ROUTE. BUT YOU SAY IT'S *CHEAP?*

*CHEAP* AND *RISKY!!*

OH *GAWD*, NO WAY! HAVE YOU TAKEN A *LOOK* AT THOSE *REINCARNATION TABLES* IN 3RD EDITION? *TIMMY JACKSON'S* WORK I TELL YOU. THEY'RE *WHACKED!*



WELL *WHO CARES?* IF IT'S A CHOICE BETWEEN *LIVIN'* OR *STAYIN' DEAD* I'LL TAKE MY *CHANCES*. I DON'T MIND COMIN' BACK AS A *HALF-ORC* OR A *DWARF* OR SOMETHING IF THAT'S THE WAY THE *DICE* HAPPEN TO ROLL. *SURVIVAL* IS THE KEY TO *EVERYTHING!*

WHOAH, DUDE! YOU JUST DON'T *KNOW* WHAT YER SAYIN'. YOU FORGETTIN' WHAT HAPPENED TO *JOHNNY KIZINSKI* THAT ONE TIME?

YEAH, JOHNNY GOT REAL *CHINTZY* WITH HIS *GOLD* AND THOUGHT HE'D GO THE *CHEAP* ROUTE WHEN HIS *HALF-OGRE BATTLE DANCER* BIT THE *BIG ONE!*



HE GOT *REINCARNATED* AND CAME BACK AS A *GIBBERING SHE-BABOON!*

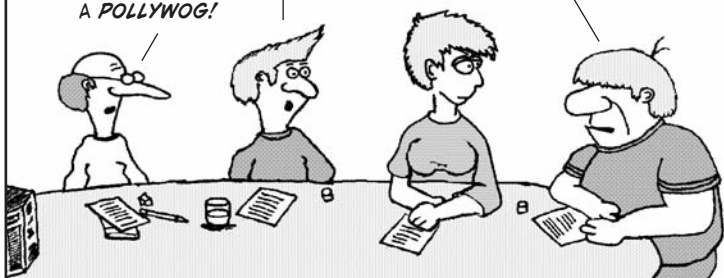
THE MAN CRIED *REAL TEARS!* A CHARACTER WITH A *BRILLIANT TEN YEAR LEGACY* -- *RUINED* IN THE *BLINK* OF AN EYE.



YEAH, YEAH, I'VE *HEARD* THE STORY. BUT YOU LEFT OUT THE FACT THAT HE ROLLED A *ZERO-THREE!!* JUST *BAD LUCK* ALL AROUND.

BETTER *HEED* HIS ADVICE, DAVE. I KNOW OF A GUY OVER IN *KOKOMO* WHO CAME BACK AS A *POLLYWOG!*

YOU MUST BE TALKIN' ABOUT *WHITEY MORAN*. POOR FOOL! HE'D BARELY STARTED *SPROUTING LEGS* AND *HOPPING* ABOUT WHEN A PAIR OF *FORAGING RACCOONS* DID HIM IN.



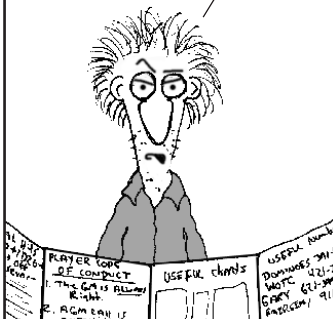
LIKE I SAID, I'M WILLING TO TAKE MY *CHANCES*. GO AHEAD AND HAVE ME *REINCARNATED*, SARA.

DAVE, ARE YOU *SURE?* THOSE TABLES ARE *WEIGHTED* TOWARD *UNDESIRABLE* RESULTS. MAYBE YOU SHOULD...

IT'S *OKAY*. REALLY.



NOW *HOLD ON*, FOLKS. I'VE LET THIS GO ON *FAR ENOUGH*. YOU *REALLY* SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO *COMMUNICATE* YOUR CHARACTERS' *WISHES* TO SARA. YOU'RE ALL *DEAD*.



ACTUALLY B.A., ACCORDING TO THE *RULES* IF A PLAYER CAN LAY DOWN A *FOUNDATION* THAT HIS *DECEASED* CHARACTER HAD A *STRONG BOND* WITH A *LIVING* CHARACTER HE HAS A *PERCENTAGE* CHANCE OF BEING ABLE TO *COMMUNICATE* WITH THAT CHARACTER -- BASED ON THE *LENGTH* OF THE RELATIONSHIP AND THE *URGENCY* OF THE DESIRED *MESSAGE*.



-SIGH- FINE! WHAT DO I CARE? IF YOU WANT TO COMMUNICATE WITH JUSTINA, DAVE, I'LL ALLOW YOU TO SEND ONE MESSAGE.

CONSIDER IT A FREEBIE! YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO ROLL!

AAAA-UMMMMMM!!! JUSTINAAAAAAA! HEAR MEEEEEEEEEE! I WISH TO BE REINCARNATED. OH-BAAAAAY MY REQUSSSSSTTT!!

OH LORD... MARK MY WORDS! YER GOING TO REGRET THIS DUDE!

OKAY, DAVE. IT'S YOUR FUNERAL. BUT, GOOD OR BAD, I'M NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OUTCOME.

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

OKAY, THE ROGUE PRIEST TAKES YOUR 2,400 GOLD PIECES AND INSTRUCTS THE DRUID TO PROCEED WITH THE RITUAL.

OKAY, TIME FOR THE MOMENT OF TRUTH!

AND IT LOOKS LIKE A SIXTY-THREE!

SHOOKA! SHOOKA! ROLL!!

SIXTY-THREE? THAT'S NOT TOO LOW, I SUPPOSE. WHAT'S HE COME BACK AS?

HEY THAT'S ABOUT AVERAGE! MAYBE I'LL BE HUMAN OR EVEN ELVEN.

SIXTY-THREE? OH GAWD!!! HE'S HOSED!

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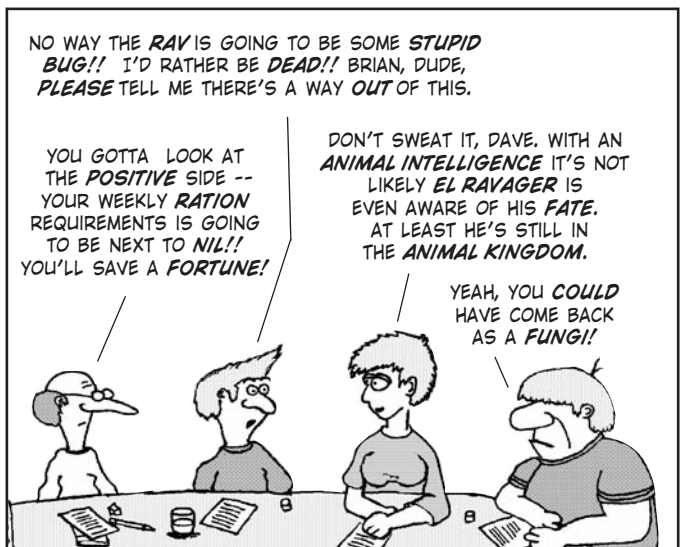
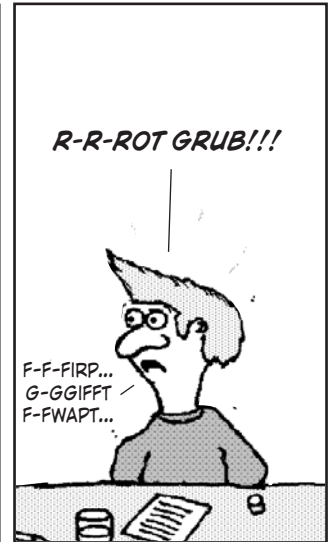
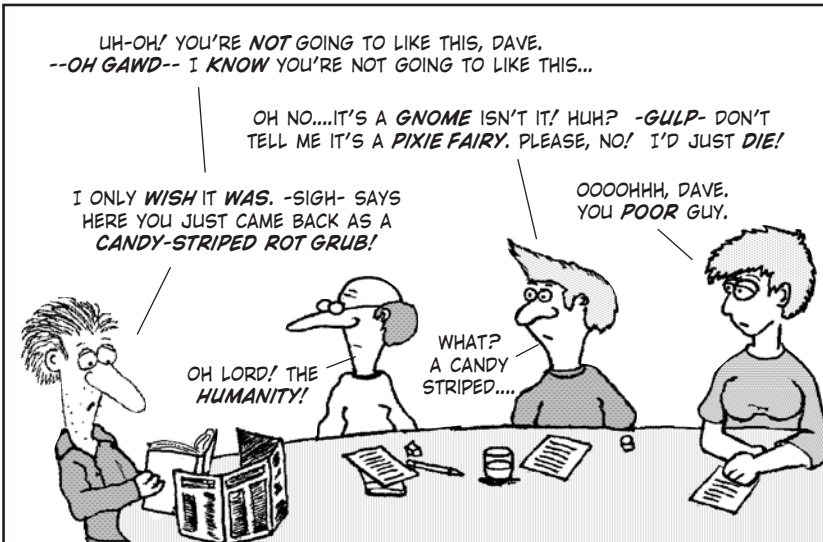
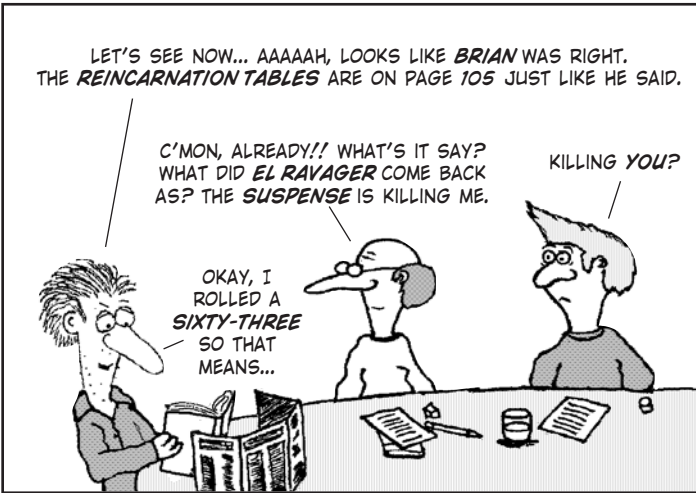
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# My 'Grubby' Little Friend

BY JOLLY BLACKBURN



C'MON, QUIT **JOKING** AROUND. I'M **SERIOUS**.  
IS THERE **ANY WAY** OUT OF THIS? HUH?

WELL... THERE IS **ONE** WAY. BUT IT WOULD ONLY SEND YOU BACK TO THE **SPIRIT WORLD** AND MAKE YOU **ELIGIBLE** FOR **RESURRECTION** AGAIN -- **BACK** TO YOUR **OLD BODY**. YOU'D BE RIGHT BACK IN THE **SAME** SITUATION AS BEFORE AND **2,400 G.P.S SHOT!**

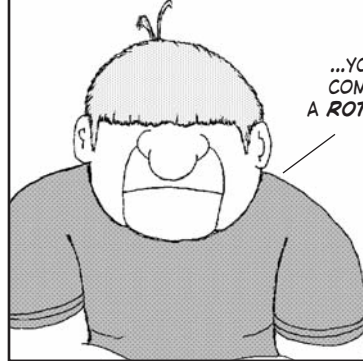
WHO CARES ABOUT THE **GOLD!** WHAT DO I NEED TO DO???! HUH? **TELL ME!**

ACCORDING TO THE **RULES**...



...IF SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN **REINCARNATED** DIES WITHIN **24 HOURS** AFTER COMING BACK IN THEIR **NEW FORM** THE **REINCARNATION** DOESN'T **TAKE** AND THE **SOUL** IS STILL **LINKED** TO THE **OLD BODY** RATHER THAN THE **REINCARNATED BODY**. OTHERWISE, AFTER **24 HOURS** IF YOU DIED AND WERE **SUBSEQUENTLY** RESURRECTED...

...YOU'D SIMPLY COME **BACK** AS A **ROT GRUB** AGAIN.



NOT A PROBLEM! THE **CLOCK** IS TICKING.

SARA, **QUICK!! STOMP ME!!**

I **BEG** YOU PARDON?

**KILL ME!!**

I-I-I **COULDN'T** DO THAT!



SURE YOU CAN! JUST TAKE THOSE **SIZE-SEVENS** AND **HEEL STOMP** ME! I'M **BEGGIN' YA!** **KILLLLLLL MEEEEEE!!!**

BUT DAVE, **JUSTINA** IS **LAWFUL GOOD!** SHE COULDN'T **POSSIBLY** KILL A **GOOD FRIEND** IN **COLD BLOOD!**

C'MON SARA! PUT THE **POOR BASTARD** OUT OF HIS **MISERY!**

DON'T GIMME THAT **CRAP!** YOU **KILL** ME, DAMMIT! YOU **OWE** ME!

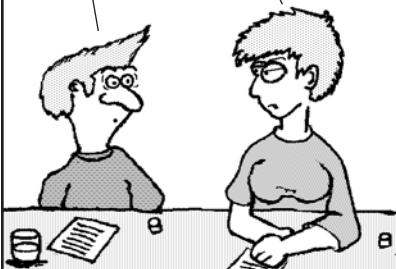
I CAN'T STAND TO SEE HIM **SUFFER** LIKE THIS. **PLEASE, SARA.** DO IT!



OH... **ALRIGHT!** I SUPPOSE I **COULD** JUSTIFY IT AS A **MERCY KILLING**.

I **STOMP** ON YOU AND **GRIND** MY **HEEL** UNTIL YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A **GREASE SPOT**.

T-T-THANKS, SARA!



HEY **B.A.!** HOW MANY **EXPERIENCE POINTS** DO I GET FOR THE **STOMPIN'** THE **GRUB WORM?**

-SNICKER-



OH... **HAR HAR!!** THAT'S REAL **FUNNY!** I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU CAN FIND **HUMOR** IN THIS. I CAN'T BELIEVE I LET YOU **TALK** ME INTO THE **REINCARNATION** THING!

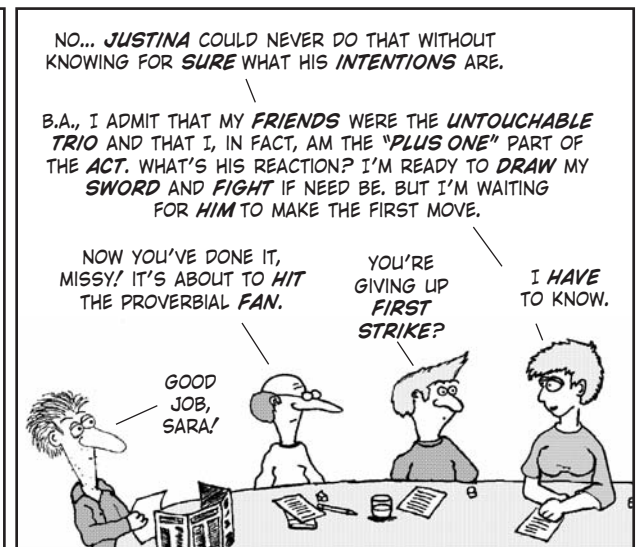
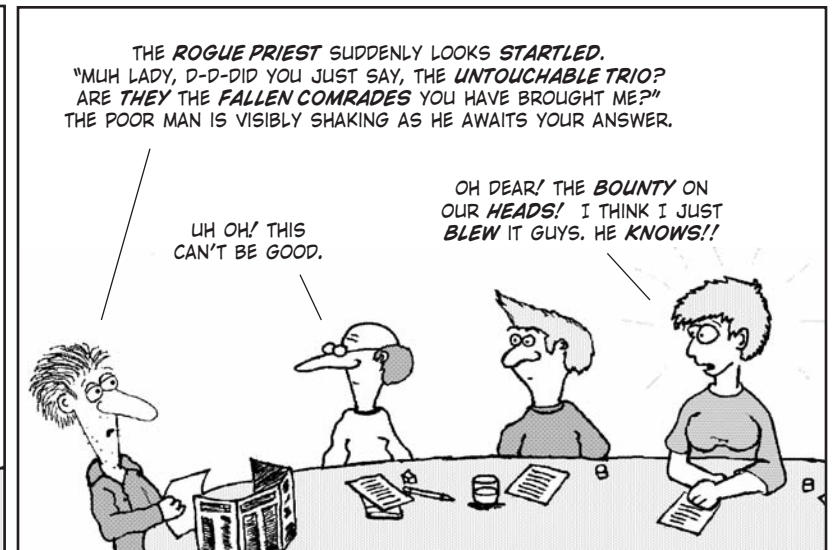
YEAH, RIGHT. **WHATEVER!** I'M JUST TAKIN THE **E.P.S** WHERE I **FIND 'EM!** ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU ALWAYS SAY?



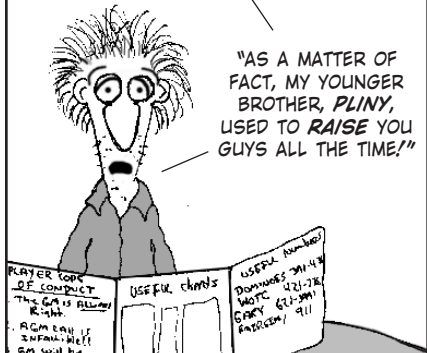
**LAWFUL GOOD** MY ASS! YOU'RE **EVIL!**

# Why Didn't you Say so?

BY JOLLY BLACKBURN



THE **PRIEST** LOOKS AT YOU AND SMILES. "OH... **REALLY?**" THEN HE **LAUGHS!** "WHY THE HELL DIDN'T YOU **SAY SO?**" TURNS OUT HE'S BEEN A **BIG FAN** OF YOUR ADVENTURING PARTY FOR **YEARS**.



"AS A MATTER OF FACT, MY YOUNGER BROTHER, **PLINY**, USED TO **RAISE** YOU GUYS ALL THE TIME!"

"OH, AND WHEN YOU GUYS **BUSTED UP** OL' **GILEAD'S** LITTLE **PEACE CONFERENCE** WITH THE **SOUTHERN ORC LEAGUE?** I **LOVED** THAT! THOSE **STINKIN' ORCS** KILLED MY **GRANDPARENTS!**"

THE **ROGUE PRIEST** GOES ON AND ON ABOUT YOUR **EXPLOITS**. AS A MATTER OF FACT, FOR **YEARS** HE'S BEEN HOPING TO RUN INTO YOU.



SAY... WE **MISJUDGED** THIS DUDE. HE'S **KEWL**.

DID YOU SAY HE'S A **FAN?**

**WOW!** HE'S BEEN FOLLOWING OUR **CAREERS?**

HE SEEMS REALLY **EXCITED**, SARA. HE SUGGESTS THAT, GIVEN THIS **NEW** INFORMATION, **MAYBE** THE TWO OF YOU CAN **WORK** SOMETHING OUT AFTERALL.

OH, SO **NOW** HE WANTS TO DO BUSINESS, HUH? I PLAY IT **COOL** AND TELL HIM I'M WILLING TO **HEAR** HIM OUT.

HE SAYS HE'D BE WILLING TO **WAIVE** HIS **FEES** IF YOU AND YOUR **COMRADES** AGREE TO DO A LITTLE **JOB** FOR HIM.

WAIVE? YOU MEAN AS IN **FREE?**

HOT DAMN! SEE? THIS IS WHY I ALWAYS **HARP** ON KEEPIN' OUR **GROUP HONOR** FACTOR IN THE **BLACK**.



HE ASKS YOU IF YOU'VE EVER HEARD OF THE **DUNGEONS OF KREATIN FAARPANG**.



**KREATIN FAARPANG??!** HEY, WASN'T HE THE **HIGH PRIEST** FOR THE **APE GAWD** IN THE **SULTAN OF HACK** NOVEL? HOLY MOLY, HE WAS ONE **CRAZY BAD DUDE!** NOBODY **KICKED ASS** AND **TOOK NAMES** LIKE THAT GUY. THEY EVEN HAVE A **WICKED DRINK** NAMED AFTER HIM AT THE **CRAVEN MONK INN**. IS HE SAYING HE'S FOUND **KREATIN'S DUNGEON?**

GOOD RECALL, BOB. BUT YOU'RE **DEAD**. THE **PRIEST** IS TALKING TO **SARA**.

K-K-KREATIN FAARPANG? **YEAH!** THAT DUDE **ROCKED!** HE THROAT-PUNCHED **THOR** ONCE AND LIVED TO TELL THE **TALE!**

OH HEART BE STILL - **KREATIN** WAS A COLLECTOR OF **FINE** MAGIC ITEMS AND RELICS. HE WAS BASED ON ONE OF **JO JO ZEKE'S** PLAYER CHARACTERS -- ONE OF THE **FIRST** MULTI-CLASSED HIGH LEVEL CHARACTERS IN **HACKMASTER!**



SARA, THE **PRIEST** GOES ON TO EXPLAIN THAT THERE'S A **CERTAIN** ITEM IN THE **DUNGEONS OF KREATIN FAARPANG** HE'S **DESPERATELY** BEEN TRYING TO GET HIS HANDS ON. IF YOU **PROMISE** TO RETRIEVE IT FOR HIM, HE'LL BE WILLING TO RAISE YOUR FRIENDS FOR **FREE!**

I IMMEDIATELY AGREE TO HIS TERMS. AS SOON AS HE CAN **RESURRECT** MY COMRADES AND THEY ARE BACK TO **FULL STRENGTH** WE CAN BE ON OUR WAY TO THE **DUNGEONS**.

HE SCRATCHES HIS CHIN AND FROWNS. YOU MEAN RAISE THEM **FIRST?** OH, NO, NO, I MEANT **AFTER** YOU RETRIEVE THE ITEM FOR ME.

YOU MEAN HE WANTS ME TO GO IT **ALONE??**

HE'S **INSANE!**

I EXPLAIN THAT WE WORK AS A **TEAM** AND THAT I STAND VERY LITTLE **CHANCE** OF GETTING THE **ITEM** HE DESIRES WORKING ALONE. THERE'S **NO WAY**.

"BUT MU LADY, FORGIVE ME -- I MEAN NO **INSULT** BUT IT WOULD BE VERY **FOOLISH** OF ME TO AGREE TO RAISE THEM **FIRST**. WHILE I **ADMIRE** THE **UNTOUCHABLE TRIO** FOR THEIR MANY **DEEDS** AND **HEROICS** I WOULDN'T **TRUST** THEM AS FAR AS I COULD **THROW** THEM. THEY WOULD JUST CLEAN OUT THE **DUNGEONS** AND MAKE OFF WITH ANY **TREASURE** THEY FOUND ALONG WITH THE **ITEM** I SEEK. THEIR **REPUTATION** IS WELL KNOWN. I HAVE TO HOLD **SOMETHING...** AS **COLLATERAL**.

HE DOESN'T TRUST US? WHY NOT?

DAMN! HE MUST'VE HEARD ABOUT THAT **LAND GRAB** DEAL I BACKED OUT OF. I MEANT TO PAY BACK THOSE **INVESTORS**.

WELL **SURELY** THERE'S SOMETHING WE CAN DO. SOME KIND OF **ARRANGEMENT** SO WE **BOTH** GET WHAT WE WANT?

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, THERE IS **SOMETHING...**

HEH, HEH. NOW FOR THE **OTHER SHOE** TO DROP.

YES? GO ON.

I COULD COVER THE COSTS FOR A **DIMINISHED-RITE**. IT WOULD JUST BE **TEMPORARY** YOU UNDERSTAND. ONCE YOU BROUGHT ME THE **'ITEM'**, WE WOULD GO AHEAD AND DO A **FULL-RESURRECTION**.

**DIMINISHED-RITE?** WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?

IT'S **LAME!** THAT'S WHAT IT IS. YOU ONLY COME BACK AT **HALF** YOUR ORIGINAL **EXPERIENCE LEVEL!** YOU ALSO HAVE TO MAKE **SAVING THROWS** AGAINST **EACH** OF YOUR SKILLS OR THEY GO DOWN **70-20 PERCENT**.

**HALF??!!** THAT'S TOTALLY **WHACKED!**

SCREW THAT!



**A FEW MINUTES LATER....**

WELL HE *DID* SAY IT WOULD ONLY BE *TEMPORARY*. YOU'D BE *ALIVE* -- THAT'S THE *IMPORTANT* THING. AND ONCE WE BRING HIM WHAT HE WANTS YOU'LL ALL BE YOUR *OLD SELVES* AGAIN. SO WHAT'S TO *LOSE*?

I SUPPOSE. BUT IT FEELS LIKE HE'S HOLDING PART OF ME *HOSTAGE*. I JUST DON'T *LIKE* IT.



OKAY, AND THAT TAKES CARE OF *KNUCKLES*. WELCOME BACK TO THE WORLD OF THE *LIVING*, FOLKS. THE *ROGUE PRIEST* MANAGED TO SCROUNGE UP SOME SIMPLE *CLOTHING* AND A SUIT OF *LEATHER ARMOR* ALONG WITH A FEW *BLADED WEAPONS* WHICH HE OFFERS YOU. HE *APOLOGIZES* FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE MORE.

I CALL *DIBS* ON THE *LEATHER ARMOR*. IT'LL HAVE TO DO UNTIL WE CAN GET INTO *TOWN*.

AH, MAN! YOU BEAT ME TO IT. I GUESS I'LL SORT THROUGH THE *WEAPONS*.



I GUESS THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS AFTER *HEALING UP* IS TO GET BACK TO THAT *PAWN SHOP* AND TRY AND GET SOME OF OUR STUFF BACK. HOW MUCH ARE WE IN *HOCK*?

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU PAWNED MY FRICKIN' *CROSSBOW OF SLAYING!*

ABOUT 20 GRAND! WE ONLY HAVE ABOUT *SIX THOU* LEFT IN THE *KITTY*. AND WE'RE GOING TO NEED TO BUY *HORSES* AND *PROVISIONS* OUT OF THAT.

DON'T SWEAT IT, GUYS.



EVEN IN OUR *DIMINISHED STATE* WE'RE PRETTY *KICK-ASS* AS A TEAM. WE CAN RAISE THE *14,000 GOLD* PIECES WE NEED IN A MATTER OF DAYS IF WE PUT OUR MINDS TO IT. *BOB* CAN DO A LITTLE *PICK-POCKET ACTION* IN THE MARKET PLACE WHILE I USE MY *GAMBLING SKILLS* AND BUMP ABOUT THE *TAVERNS* AND *ROLL OVER* OUR GOLD.

HEY, THAT'S AN *EXCELLENT* IDEA. EVEN AT *8TH LEVEL* *KNUCKLES* IS NO *SLOUCH!*

AND I COULD RUN MY *ARM WRESTLING SCAM!*



**A WEE BIT LATER...**

YOU HAVE BEEN SEATED AT AN *EXTRAVAGANT DINNER* WHERE YOU ARE *WINED* AND *DINED!* THE *SALAD* IS LACED WITH *MEDICINAL HERBS* THAT WILL *SPEED* YOUR RECOVERY AND YOU'LL BE GIVEN ROOMS IN THE *TEMPLE* WHERE YOU'LL BE *NURSED* BACK TO HEALTH BEFORE SETTING OUT ON YOUR *QUEST*.

GEE, MIGHTY NICE OF THE GUY. BUT, UH, WHAT ABOUT THIS *DUNGEON* HE TALKED ABOUT? AND JUST EXACTLY WHAT *DOES* HE WANT US TO BRING BACK FROM IT?

HEY, THAT'S RIGHT. HE NEVER *DID* TELL US.

PROBABLY SOME *MAJOR RELIC!*



THE *ROGUE PRIEST* DABS THE CORNER OF HIS MOUTH WITH HIS *NAPKIN* AND *APOLOGIZES*. HE CLEARS AWAY THE *PLATES* ON THE TABLE AND ROLLS OUT A *HUGE MAP* THAT SHOWS THE ROUTE TO THE SECRET PATH OF THE *DUNGEONS OF KREATIN FAARPANG*.

"NOW *HERE* IS WHAT I WANT YOU TO *DO...*"



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BACK OFF, JACK!! YOU TRY ONE MORE STUPID STUNT LIKE THAT AND I'LL ZAP YA WITH MY "TOUCH OF DEATH" ABILITY.

SOME PEOPLE ARE JUST NOT CUT OUT TO PLAY MAGIC-USERS, BOB.



HEY, NEWT. LOAN ME SOME HEALING JUICE. I'LL GET YA BACK WHEN WE GET BACK TO TOWN. TURNS OUT THIS BANSHEE BITE IS A REAL BLEEDER.

OH, SORRY STEVIL. I CAN'T SPARE ANY. I LIKE TO KEEP TWO TIMES MY HITPOINTS IN HEALING POTION POTENTIAL ON HAND AT ALL TIMES.

FINE! JUST STAND STILL AND I'LL SHAVE YOU DOWN A FEW POINTS.



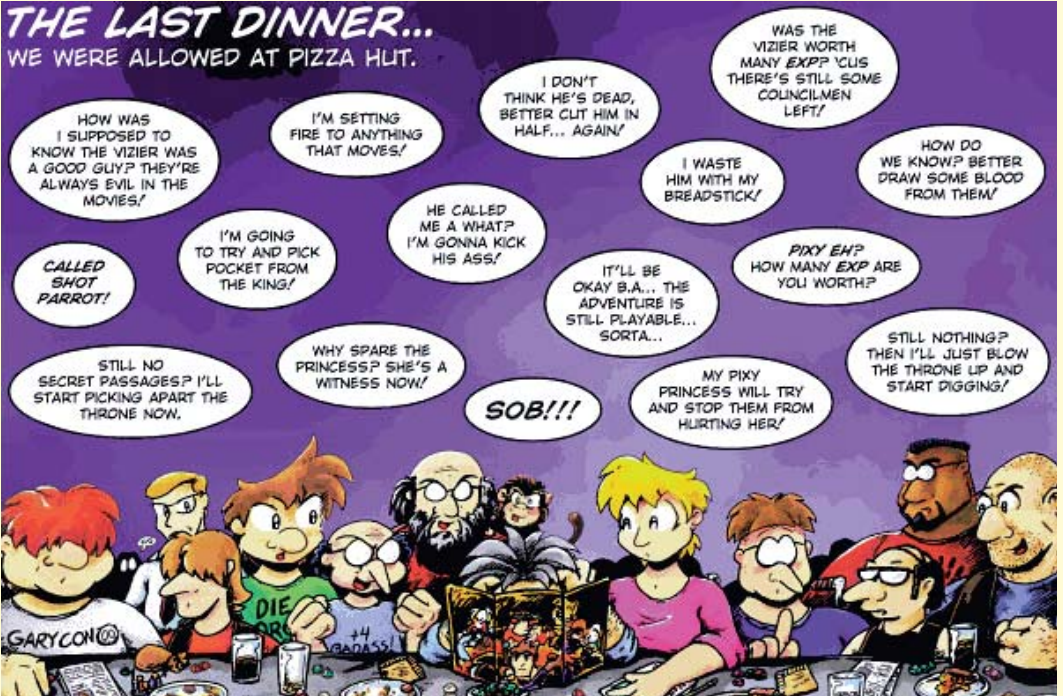
LOOK, I DON'T CARE HOW MANY TIMES YOU JUMP UP AND DOWN AND SCREAM, "LAY IT ON ME MAMA!" YOUR ATTEMPT TO SEDUCE THE PRINCESS FAILS. NOW CAN WE PLEASE CONTINUE WITH THE KING'S BALL?

YOU DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO ROLL FOR IT. C'MON B.A. SHE HAS THE HOTS FOR ME. WHY ELSE WOULD SHE HAVE BEEN EYE-BALLING ME LIKE THAT?

UH... MAYBE BECAUSE YOU WERE SHOVING A TEA SERVICE SET DOWN THE FRONT OF YOUR PANTS?



THE LAST DINNER... WE WERE ALLOWED AT PIZZA HUT.



HOW WAS I SUPPOSED TO KNOW THE VIZIER WAS A GOOD GUY? THEY'RE ALWAYS EVIL IN THE MOVIES!

I'M SETTING FIRE TO ANYTHING THAT MOVES!

I DON'T THINK HE'S DEAD, BETTER CUT HIM IN HALF... AGAIN!

WAS THE VIZIER WORTH MANY EXP? 'CUS THERE'S STILL SOME COUNCILMEN LEFT!

HOW DO WE KNOW? BETTER DRAW SOME BLOOD FROM THEM!

CALLED SHOT PARROT!

I'M GOING TO TRY AND PICK POCKET FROM THE KING!

HE CALLED ME A WHAT? I'M GONNA KICK HIS ASS!

I WASTE HIM WITH MY BREADSTICK!

PIXY EH? HOW MANY EXP ARE YOU WORTH?

STILL NO SECRET PASSAGES? I'LL START PICKING APART THE THRONE NOW.

WHY SPARE THE PRINCESS? SHE'S A WITNESS NOW!

SOB!!!

IT'LL BE OKAY B.A... THE ADVENTURE IS STILL PLAYABLE... SORTA...

MY PIXY PRINCESS WILL TRY AND STOP THEM FROM HURTING HER!

STILL NOTHING? THEN I'LL JUST BLOW THE THRONE UP AND START DIGGING!

The above home-brewed panel by Brian Burke shows the entire gang (the Knights and the Black Hands) playing one huge Hack-fest!

# Aliens Seek

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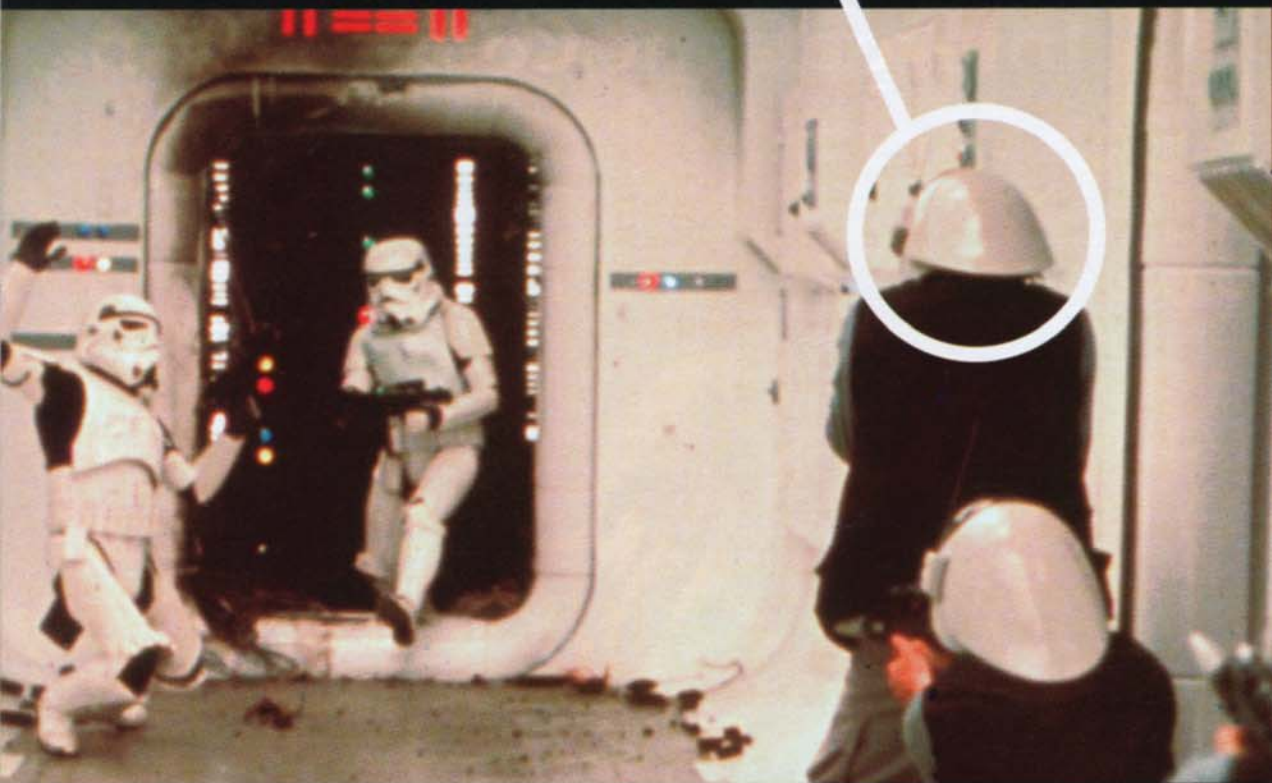
Highly detailed colonization vessels, stunning graphics and image-rich cards add depth and presence to the game.

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# SHORECON PHOTO-GALLERY

On September 28 thru October 1 we were invited to be guests of SHORECON 2000 at the Hilton in Cherry Hill, NJ. As always, everyone had a great time! Here are some of the highlights from the show.

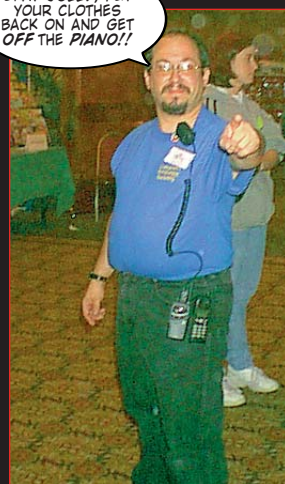


One of the open gaming rooms. There was a whole lotta carnage going on in here throughout the con.



This year we ran more KODT Live Readings than ever before. (A total of four over the course of the weekend.) Above are some of the highlights.

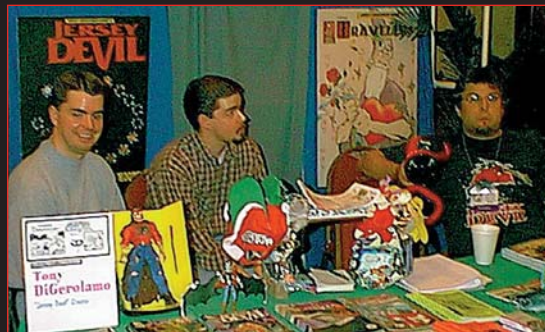
OKAY JOLLY, PUT YOUR CLOTHES BACK ON AND GET OFF THE PIANO!!



Rob Placer ran a tight ship. Very little escaped his watchful eye as he and his vigilant staff roamed the hallways.



One of the biggest crowd pleasers at the show were the Battling Robot duels where sparks flew (literally) outside the dealer's room.



The Brothers Fraim (left) hang out at the KenzerCo booth scarfing down free soda and pizza as Tony DiGerolamo (right) tries to calculate New Jersey tax in his head. (He later passed out and was carried out on a gurney.)



Not every event was a winner. The "Win a date with a ShoreCon Staffer" contest was a bust. Rob Placer later explained, "It was my fault. I shouldn't have scheduled the event at 4 a.m. What was I thinking?"

# Heavens to Merga-Troll!

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

ON THE ROAD TO THE DUNGEONS OF KREATIN FAARPANG...

AS YOU INCH YOUR WAY ALONG THE **NARROW LEDGE** ON THE MOUNTAIN'S FACE, HUGGING THE **ROCK** AS THOUGH YOUR **LIVES** DEPENDED ON IT, A **STIFF WIND** SUDDENLY WHIPS UP AND **TUGS** AT YOUR CLOTHING.



YOUR **HEAVILY LADEN** PACK BEARER LOSES HIS FOOTING AND GOES **SPINNING OFF** HEAD OVER HEELS AS HE **HURTLES** TOWARD THE VALLEY FLOOR **FAR** BELOW.



HIS PITIFUL **SCREAMS** SLOWLY FADE AS HE DROPS FROM SIGHT. **IMMENSE** FEELINGS OF **GUILT** STAB AT YOU LIKE A RUSTY DAGGER AS YOU RECALL THE **PROMISE** YOU MADE TO HIS **LITTLE GIRL** -- THAT HER **FATHER** WOULD BE HOME WITH A **FAT COIN PURSE** IN TIME TO CELEBRATE **GROGGER FEST** WITH HER AND HER **SICKLY** LITTLE BROTHER.

HEY, WE JUST SAID THAT BECAUSE NOBODY WANTED TO **SIGN UP** WITH US WITH THE **HOLIDAYS** COMING UP.

DAMN! MY **PORTABLE FORGE** WAS IN THOSE **PACKS** HE WAS CARRYING. SO MUCH FOR MAKING **ARMOR REPAIRS** ON THE FLY.



I'LL TELL YOU **ONE** THING -- WHOEVER DREW THAT **MAP** THE **ROGUE PRIEST** GAVE US, HAD SOME **FRICKIN' NERVE** CALLIN' THIS **PIECE-OF-TRASH** GOAT TRAIL A "**MOUNTAIN PASS**". THIS **ONE-SIXTEENTH** MOVEMENT RATE IS FOR THE **BIRDS!** THE RULES **CLEARLY** STATE THAT MOVEMENT IS ONLY **HALVED** WHEN UTILIZING **PASSES!**

B.A. EXPLAINED THAT, BOB. THIS **LEDGE** WAS **GNOME-ENGINEERED** WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR ITS **NARROWNESS**. THE **GNOME TITANS** BUILT THIS TRAIL DURING THE **TROLL WARS** IN ORDER TO REDIRECT THEIR **BROKEN SUPPLY LINES**.

WE JUST HAVE TO BE **CAREFUL!** THAT'S ALL.



THIS BLOWS!

A WEE BIT LATER...

AS YOU **CAUTIOUSLY** WORK YOUR WAY AROUND THE **BEND**, YOU DISCOVER A **PRECARIOUS** LOOKING **ROPE BRIDGE** JUST A FEW HUNDRED YARDS AHEAD. APPARENTLY PART OF THE **LEDGE** FELL AWAY **YEARS** AGO LEAVING A **WIDE GAP** NOW SPANNED BY THE BRIDGE.

PRECARIOUS? **CRAP...** THERE'S ALWAYS A FEW **NEGATIVE MODIFIERS** HIDDEN IN A WORD LIKE THAT.

OH YOU JUST **KNOW** IT.



AS YOU ARE **STUDYING** THE BRIDGE A LARGE **TROLL** BRANDISHING AN **AXE** STEPS OUT FROM A **SHALLOW TUNNEL** WHICH HAS BEEN **BORED** INTO THE **ROCK FACE** -- SERVING AS HIS **LAIR**. HE LOOKS TOWARD YOU AND GIVES YOU A **MENACING GRIN**.

**TROLL?! DAMN!** I SURE WISH OUR **FIGHTER** WAS AT THE **POINT**. THIS **LEDGE** IS TOO **NARROW** FOR US TO RE-ADJUST OUR **MARCHING ORDER**.

FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD -- ARE WE GOING TO HAVE TO **TURN BACK?**

LOOKS LIKE HE WANTS TO TALK. THAT'S A **GOOD SIGN**.

SHYA'RIGHT -- IT'S A **GOOD SIGN**, ALRIGHT. IT'S A **SIGN** HE'S GONNA **EXTORT** SOME KIND OF **OUTRAGEOUS TOLL** FROM US IN ORDER TO USE HIS **BRIDGE**.



THE **TROLL** GESTURES FOR YOU TO **APPROACH!**

AS YOU APPROACH THE **TROLL** HIS **GRIN** GROWS EVEN **WIDER**. "GOOD AFTERNOON, FOLKS! YOU **JUST** MADE IT IN TIME, I WAS ABOUT TO **CLOSE UP** FOR THE DAY. BEEN A BIT OF BAD **WEATHER** ON UP THE **PASS** THE PAST FEW WEEKS -- A LOT OF **SNOW** HAS FALLEN UP THERE SO THERE HAVEN'T BEEN MANY **TRAVELERS** KNOCKING ABOUT ON THE TRAIL. NO MATTER -- COME ON IN AND **SHARE** MY FIRE. I'VE GOT SOME **GROSS ONION STEW** AND **DAY-OLD BREAD** INSIDE. I DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO DRAW ANY **FRESH WATER** TODAY BUT I CAN OFFER YOU SOME FAIR TASTING **WINE**. HOW'S **THAT** GRAB YOU?"

HUH? HOLD ON A SEC... MAYBE I DIDN'T HEAR YOU **RIGHT**. DIDN'T YOU SAY THIS GUY WAS A **TROLL**?

HE SURE DOESN'T **ACT** LIKE A TROLL. WHAT GIVES?

**MERGA-TROLLS**? OH MY GOODNESS - I'VE **ALWAYS** WANTED TO MEET ONE OF THESE GUYS.

YES, A **MERGA-TROLL** TO BE PRECISE.



WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT THE **HELL** IS A **MERGA-TROLL**?

WELL, THEY'RE MORE **COMMONLY** REFERRED TO AS THE '**CIVILIZED TROLLS**' BY OUTSIDERS.

CIVILIZED TROLLS? THAT'S AN **OXYMORON**!

WE LEARNED ALL ABOUT THEM AT **HACKMASTER CAMP**!

WHAT'S THE **DEAL** WITH THIS GUY?

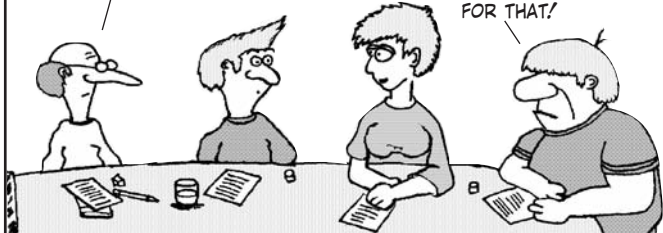


APPARENTLY THIS PARTICULAR **CLAN** WERE YOUR **TYPICAL TROLLS** UP UNTIL A FEW HUNDRED YEARS AGO. THEN, ACCORDING TO LEGEND, A RELIGIOUS ZEALOT NAMED **MERGA IKOR** --WHO WAS **HUMAN**, MIND YOU -- CONVERTED THEM FROM THEIR **BEAST CULTS** OVER TO THE **GAWD, IKKA PAATANG**. **IKKA** MUST HAVE **BLESSED** THEM OR SOMETHING BECAUSE WITHIN A FEW DECADES THEIR **CULTURE** BEGAN TO **BLOSSOM**.

AND WE'RE TALKING ABOUT **TROLLS** HERE - RIGHT?

SADLY THERE AREN'T **MANY** OF THEM LEFT SINCE **IKKA PAATANG** DEMANDS HER FOLLOWERS TO BE **CELIBATE**.

THANK **GAWD** FOR THAT!



OH.....?? YOU HAVE A **PROBLEM** WITH THE **MERGA-TROLLS**, BRIAN?

**PROBLEM**? DAMN STRAIGHT I HAVE A **PROBLEM** WITH THEM. IT AIN'T **NATURAL**! THEY GO AGAINST EVERYTHING **LISTED** UNDER **TROLLS** IN THE **HACKLOPEDIA OF BEASTS**! I WISH THEY'D **NEVER** LET **TIMMY JACKSON** SCREW AROUND WITH THEIR **SOCIETY & HABITAT** ENTRIES.

IT'S JUST ONE **OFF-SHOOT** CLAN.



I THINK IT'S **NICE** TO HAVE A LITTLE **VARIETY** IN THE **MIX**. MAKES THINGS INTERESTING. THEY JUST DREW UPON SOME OF THE **IDEAS** NORMAN BOWZER PRESENTED IN HIS BOOK, "**TROLL FURY**."<sup>1</sup>

I **HATE** TROLLS!

HMMRRRRFFF! IF YOU WANT **NICE** AND **INTERESTING** GO PLAY **WARRIOR FANTASTIC**!<sup>2</sup> 'COS THAT'S WHAT **HACKMASTER** WILL BECOME IF THEY DON'T LEARN TO **HOLD** THE LINE. THEY NEVER, **NEVER** SHOULD HAVE STARTED **MESSING** AROUND WITH THE **GAME** LIKE THAT.



<sup>1</sup> Troll Fury: See Bundle of Trouble Volume Seven "The Sting"

<sup>2</sup> The Warrior Fantastic: After HackMaster hit the shelves, a rash of rip-off feel-alikes soon followed. Most came and went with little fanfare. One game, however, from Bison Head Games [The Warrior Fantastic], managed to win a large following. The RPG actually gave HackMaster a run for it's money in the early 80's until Bison Head began to 're-tool' the game to appeal to younger players. The results were disastrous. Players abandoned the game in droves and TWF faded from sight.

BRIAN, LIGHTEN UP! IT'S JUST ONE TROLL CLAN. WHY'S IT A BIG DEAL?

COZ THAT'S HOW IT STARTS. SOME UNQUALIFIED IDIOT GETS HIS FOOT IN THE DOOR AND FEELS THE NEED TO PUT HIS THUMBPRINT ON EVERYTHING. WADDA YA THINK HAPPENED TO WARRIOR FANTASTIC? THEY HAD A NICE LITTLE GAME UNTIL THE RULE-TWEAKERS GOT THEIR MITS ON IT.



WHATEVER!

AN HOUR OR SO LATER...

OKAY, I'M AFRAID I'M GOING TO HAVE TO INTERRUPT OUR HOST. THAT WAS A FINE DRAMATIC READING OF 'THE TROLL WHO CAME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN' BUT IT'S GETTING LATE. I EXPLAIN THE MEAL WAS MARVELOUS BUT WE'RE ON A QUEST. WE MUST CONTINUE ON OUR WAY.

HE EXPRESSES HIS SINCERE REGRETS THAT YOU MUST DEPART BUT HE UNDERSTANDS. HE OFFERS TO PACK YOU A LUNCH FOR THE ROAD.

A SACK LUNCH? HE'S GOING TO PACK US A SACK LUNCH? OH FOR THE LOVE OF... THIS AIN'T NATURAL!

I THANK HIM FOR MENDING MY LEGGINGS. THAT WAS VERY NICE OF HIM.



OKAY, SO I FIGURE HE'LL BROACH THE SUBJECT SOON ENOUGH SO I'LL MAKE IT EASY FOR HIM. I ASSUME THERE'S A TOLL INVOLVED HERE OR A TRIBUTE OF SOME KIND. WHAT'S THE TAB?

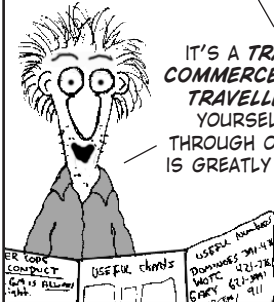
HE LOOKS SURPRISED? "TAB?"

THE DAMAGE! HOW MUCH IS THIS GOING TO COST US?



"OH... NO, WE DID AWAY WITH TOLLS. THE MERGA TRAVELLERS AID SOCIETY DECIDED TO TAKE A DIFFERENT APPROACH YEARS AGO. WE ACCEPT DONATIONS WHICH GO TOWARD MAINTAINING THE TRAIL AND ITS BRIDGES BUT IT'S STRICTLY VOLUNTARY.

IT'S A TRADE OFF. THE COMMERCE GENERATED BY TRAVELLERS SUCH AS YOURSELVES MOVING THROUGH OUR TERRITORY IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!



DONATION???! OH FOR THE...

B.A., SOUNDS LIKE THIS GUY IS PRETTY MUCH AT EASE WITH US AND ALL. I'M GOING TO MOVE BEHIND HIM AND SHOVE HIM OVER THE EDGE OF THE TRAIL.

I'M SURE HE'LL RE-GEN LATER AND CLIMB BACK UP.

BUT WE SHOULD BE LONG GONE!



HEY B.A., I CALL DIBS ON THE DONATION BUCKET. THEN I'M GONNA GRAB THE LAST OF THAT GROUS ONION STEW!

BRIAN???!?

WHY WOULD YOU DO SUCH A CRUEL THING? BESIDES, KILLING A HOST WHO HAS PROVIDED YOU FOOD AND SHELTER IS A MINUS 50 TO YOUR PERSONAL HONOR!

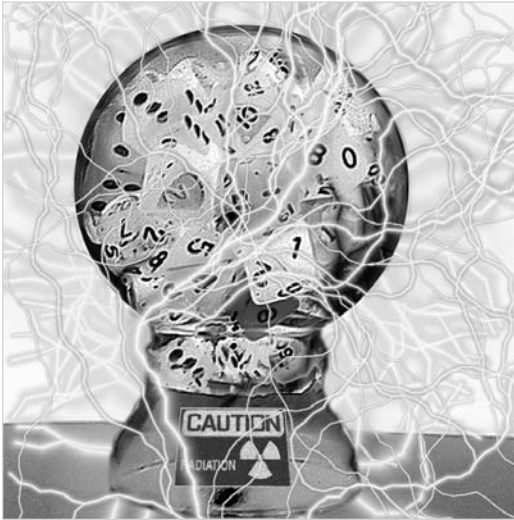
NO PROBLEM. TAKE IT ALL. BUT PAYBACK'S COMIN' -- AND SHE'S RIDING A FAST HORSE!

OH MAN, THAT WAS KEWL! HE JUST SHOVED THE DUDE OVER THE EDGE. -SNICKER-

I TOLD YOU - IT AIN'T NATURAL. I'M JUST HOLDING THE LINE. IT WAS WORTH THE PERSONAL COST.



CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE: "THE BRONZE CONCH OF AAAAHHHHH..." -- B.A.'S REVENGE --



Once again, we'd like to remind our readers that the views & opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of the editor or KenzerCo. Reviews & Ratings are presented exactly as submitted. *Critical Mass* is meant to be an open forum where many opinions can be presented. If you feel a game has gotten a bad rap or was unfairly critiqued by another reader we encourage you to share your own views.

Jolly



### TITLE: **Siege**

PUBLISHER: Iron Bear Studios

RETAIL PRICE: approx. \$8.00

CATEGORY: Non-collectable Card Game

Recommend to a friend?: No

Recommend for a Brian Award?: No

#### PRODUCTION VALUE

Writing: 1

Art & Illustration: 2.25

Overall Production: 4

#### PLAY VALUE

Rules Presentation: 1

System/Playability: 2

Replay Value: 5

Entertainment Value: 1

TOTAL: 11

OVERALL RATING : 1.57

REVIEWED BY: Mark Dykstra

COMMENTS: I'm attracted to small press games because they are cheap and usually loads of fun to play. I also don't need to learn massive amounts of rules in order to have 10 minutes of fun. So when I saw **Siege** in a local games store, I thought of all the time I spent when I was younger thinking about knights storming castles, and I snatched it off the shelf.

The game is packaged in a plastic 'snap box' with two decks (one for the attacker, and the other for the

defender), 12 pages of rules and two (small) dice. Set up for play involves finding cards in the decks and setting out a tableau consisting of ranks for each player. My wife and I were able to get through at least this much of the rules before we were lost. There are some rules covering some specific situations, but very few rules covering general situations, and most of those rules were hard to understand. For instance: attacks are resolved by a single die roll, which is simple enough but the roll is based solely on the attacking unit. An archer has an equal chance of destroying another archer as he does of destroying a catapult! Some cards (like moats) are useless unless they are drawn and used in the first turn! Event cards remain unexplained altogether: do they affect the person who played the card, her opponent, or both players? It's also implied by the numbers on the cards that peasants can attack, but supply carts also have the same numbers on them. Does this mean that the attacker has supply carts rumbling over the battlefield running soldiers down?!

The illustrations are also very uneven. The art on some of the cards reminded me of the style of illustrations used in old manuscripts, showing odd poses of individual characters. But authenticity buffs will be sorely disappointed. The 'bowmen' cards clearly show a man holding a crossbow. And the illustrations for some things (famine, supply cart) look too modern.

Alas, there are too many problems with this game to recommend it. My feelings are that this is eight bucks that I just threw down the drain. If you HAVE to have this game, I would recommend taking the rules booklet, setting it on fire, and coming up with your own rules. You'll probably have more fun.

### TITLE: **Dungeons and Dragons 3E**

PUBLISHER: Wizards of the Coast

RETAIL PRICE: \$19.95

CATEGORY: RPG Core rules (High Fantasy)

Recommend to a friend?: Yes

Recommend for a Brian Award?: Yes

#### PRODUCTION VALUE

Writing: 5

Art & Illustration: 2

Overall Production: 5

#### PLAY VALUE

Rules Presentation: 5

System/Playability: 4

Replay Value: 5

Entertainment Value: 5

TOTAL: 31

OVERALL RATING : 4.43

REVIEWED BY: CatKnight

COMMENTS: D&D is back, and as good as she's ever been. The epic high fantasy 'feel' which seemed to drift away as supplement after supplement overwhelmed Second Edition has returned, just in time

to hopefully bring another generation of RPGers into the fold.

The game system itself has been greatly simplified and more thoroughly explained - this alone will help attract novice players. Character creation, even with the new abilities (*feats*), is relatively easy and characters are a little more customizable than before. Classes and races are relatively balanced with few exceptions... (*Humans are viable again!!*)... and the system is much harder to 'break' than say... *Skills* and *Powers* was.

The only part that worries me so far are *Attacks of Opportunity*. If you want to simulate being ready to attack as an enemy moves within range... use the Ready action and hope you win initiative! Combined with certain feats or the rogue's sneak attack ability, this new ruling can get nasty very fast.

The only true weak part is the art, which is probably supposed to remind learned players of Leonardo daVinci's drawings. The first drawing is allegedly of a thirty year old male human. Strangely, I think everyone knows what thirty year old men look like. The skeletal differences and chin angles looked like a primer on drawing more than anything. The only saving grace was the equipment pictures, which in some cases were quite welcome.

Overall... D&D is back, and as strong as ever if not stronger. The high fantasy genre hasn't received much role-playing support lately... now it's back in style.

## TITLE: Stratego Legends

PUBLISHER: Avalon Hill

RETAIL PRICE: \$25 for starter box \$5 for boosters

CATEGORY: Boardgame (fantasy/strategy)

Recommend to a friend?: Yes

Recommend for a Brian Award?: Yes

### PRODUCTION VALUE

Writing: 5

Art & Illustration: 5

Overall Production: 5

### PLAY VALUE

Rules Presentation: 5

System/Playability: 5

Replay Value: 5

Entertainment Value: 5

TOTAL: 70

OVERALL RATING : 5

REVIEWED BY: Matt Fischer

COMMENTS: *Stratego Legends* is to *Stratego* what *Magic: The Gathering* is to *Go Fish*. This brilliant reworking of *Stratego* has a fantasy flare. As in *Stratego*, there is a board with several numbered playing pieces. Unlike the original, however, when one piece challenges another, the higher number wins (*barring special effects -- we'll get to those in a moment*).

The starter box comes with 4 squares of assorted terrain that are randomly assembled each game to create a unique playing field. Also included are 60 playing pieces (30 for each army) and stickers to differentiate them. The artwork on the stickers, though small, is very detailed. The pieces themselves have a little castle motif.

Play begins by arranging the armies on their respective sides at random. Some may think this removes the strategy element it but only heightens it. The pieces each have a special power (*recorded on six handy reference cards*) and these powers are the crux of the game's strategic element. As before, you must defend your castle for the first player to reach the other's castle wins. [*I always thought that was strange, really, I always thought the castle was meant to defend the army...*]

So, from the outset you must scramble to get your pieces into a good, defensible position using regular moves in conjunction with special powers and magic.

Game play is simple and straightforward. Not counting sticker application time, this game should take a maximum of 10 minutes to learn.

All this alone would make *Stratego Legends* well worth the sticker price. But wait, there's more: it's expandable. With more boards you can put them all together and play one giant battle or add more players to the game.

Of course, you'll need more pieces. *Avalon Hill's* got ya covered here—there are two expansion packs (*one for the good guys and one for the evil horde*) thus far, and possibly more to come.

Already special promo pieces have been given out at *Origins* and *GenCon* (4 different pieces in all. If anyone has the *Origins* set I'll swap ya my left eye...) But the great part is that none of the extra pieces are necessary to play. The game plays beautifully without them! That said, having more pieces and thus being able to custom build armies is even more fun. You can focus on certain groups of pieces and decide the style in which you want to crush your enemies. The evil "mold" pieces are my favorite — nothing like rotting your enemies to death. This game has the most bang for the buck of any game I've played in a decade (*with the possible exception of D&D 3rd edition*).

Well? Do you agree with the reviews presented by your fellow readers this issue? Do you disagree? We want to hear what you think. E-mail your comments to [jolly@kenzerco.com](mailto:jolly@kenzerco.com)

And don't forget - you can download a Critical Mass review template from [www.kenzerco.com](http://www.kenzerco.com)



Review n: a critical evaluation.

Reviewer n: a writer of critical reviews.

Critic: n: one who expresses a reasoned opinion on a matter involving a judgement of its value while exercising careful judgement or judicious evaluation.

**2385 Dwarven Bear  
Cavalry Commander**



**2391  
Kimberlee**



**2430 Rictur Diehn**

*(Designed by Phillip Roop)*

*(Winner of Reapers On-line painting Contest)*



**2386  
Boris Mingla**



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# JOURNEY THROUGH AMBER'S WEB OF SHADOWS

by Kenneth Newquist

**A**mber is the one true city, of which all other cities are but pale reflections. It resides on the one true earth, and from its place at the center of reality it casts myriad Shadows to the very edge of chaos. Each of these shadows is an alternate reality, and those with the royal blood of Amber can walk through them, picking and choosing the worlds they want to live in.

This is the universe that Roger Zelazny introduced with his classic **Amber Chronicles**, and its one that that has survived past his death thanks in part to a certain game -- the **Amber Diceless Role-Playing Game** by *Phage Press*.

Many gamers instinctively cradle their dice close to their chests when they hear of a game where not a single 20-sider is ever thrown. Others though, have embraced it, and have sworn off dice entirely. Not surprisingly many of them can be found online, which is particularly well-suited to the game's particular mechanics.

## THE ROGER ZELAZNY PAGE

The first stop for any Zelazny fan -- regardless of whether they play the RPG -- should be **The Roger Zelazny Page**. The page may not look like much, but it has a tremendous amount of Zelazny material, including interviews, audio/video links, photos, links to other Zelazny resources and much more. It's a great place for anyone who wants to learn more about Zelazny, or lament the fact that he died in 1995.

## AMBER DICTIONARY PAGE

The **Amber Dictionary Page** is a simple page defining most of the major people, places and things in Zelazny's universe. It's an excellent page for GMs looking for a little inspiration -- its amazing number of ideas that reviewing these old familiar names can jog loose. Most of the off-site links don't work, but it's still worth visiting

## AMBER, THE GOLDEN CIRCLE

Named for the ring of kingdoms closest to **Amber**, **The Golden Circle** is a web ring made up of more than 200 Amber sites. The web ring's moderator keeps the ring current, and weeds out the inevitable 404s that crop up. A

"*Featured Pages*" section helps sort through the chaff, and fans can stop by the site's chat room to talk with others (but unfortunately the site doesn't appear to have regularly scheduled chats). There's also an under-used discussion board, but you don't come to a site like this for toys. You come for links, and this one has plenty of them.

## NINE PRINCES

This site from Hong Kong offers up an alternative vision of Amber, one based on the question, "*What if Roger Zelazny had merged his ideas with those found in the films of Tsui Hark, John Woo and Ringo Lam?*" Rather than sit atop the mighty mountain Kolvir, this version of the Eternal City sits on Hong Kong Island at the mouth of the Pearl River. NPiHK is abased on the Amber RPG, and the game offers a re-telling of the original Amber novels from its unique perspective. Fans get a chance to play new chapters at the annual **AmberCon**.

## THE AMBER DARWIN AWARDS

The **Amber Darwin Awards** were inspired by their real-world counterparts. Like the *Darwin Awards*, the Amber version is awarded to players/characters who kill off their characters in astoundingly stupid ways. It has a little more leeway than the real ones though, since it also includes characters who did stupid things, but somehow lived



through them. It's a hilarious page for anyone who has an understanding of Amber, and even those who don't may get a few chuckles out of it.

## AMBER E-MAIL LIST

The Amber E-mail List is an excellent resource for newbies and veterans alike. Most of the time it doesn't see a lot of traffic, but it does have its occasional spikes. The subscribers are very helpful, and aspiring Amber RPG game masters would do well to join it. The list's home page includes a frequently asked questions page, as well as instructions on how to join the list.

## EQUINOX

On the campaign side of things, Equinox is the home page for a huge, and ongoing, play-by-e-mail Amber campaign. The site is a testament to the value of having a Web site for your game. It serves as combination archive and news service, and contains more information than a visitor can easily get through in an hour -- or even 40 hours -- of surfing. I particularly enjoyed the *Players* page, which gives a quick overview of the more than two-dozen characters in this game.



*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 it to me at; [knewquist@nuketown.com](mailto:knewquist@nuketown.com)*

**THE ROGER ZELAZNY PAGE**  
<http://zelazny.corrupt.net/>

**AMBER DICTIONARY PAGE**  
<http://www.stwing.upenn.edu/~avm/Amber.shtml>

**THE GOLDEN CIRCLE**  
<http://www.chorazin.org.uk/gcircle/>

**NINE PRINCES IN HONG KONG**  
<http://www.matantisi.com/ghoul/9pinhk.html>

**THE AMBER DARWIN AWARDS**  
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/1903/amber/darwin/index.htm>

**AMBER E-MAIL LIST**  
<http://users.neca.com/ursa/amberfaq.html>

**EQUINOX**  
<http://www.equinox.org/>

# BAD TO THE BONE!

by John O'Neill

OFF THE SHELF



## BONE: Volumes 1 -4

Written and drawn by: Jeff Smith  
Published by: Cartoon Books

Last month I reviewed the new edition of *Lord of Light*, my favorite science fiction novel (*still on sale near you! Act now!*) and it was a nice excuse to dust off the superlatives. I'm still in an enthusiastic mood, so this month I'm going to talk about one of the very best comics on the market: Jeff Smith's superb *Bone*. I don't even have the excuse of a new edition this time... but the collected editions are still available and the comic is back on a monthly schedule, so I'll live with myself.

First thing you need to know about *Bone* is: the entire run is in print. All 39 issues, as of this month. The earliest issues are collected in six handsome bound volumes, available at most self-respecting comic shops and book stores – no need to pay astronomical prices for those rare early issues.

Mind you, you can pay astronomical prices for the early issues if you've got your heart set on it. The first issues of the comic, which were self-published by Smith's own *Cartoon Books* in 1991, had extremely small print runs. As the series caught on – particularly during the brief period when *Bone* was published by *Image Comics*, near the height of the speculator craze in the comics market – first printings of the early issues skyrocketed in value to over \$100 each.

Smith went against all the conventional wisdom of the time and went back to press with the early issues, mak-

ing sure new readers would be able to find early issues cheaply. A short-sighted philosophy, he was told by the market gurus and successful independent publishers of the day – never undercut the value of your back issues, or collectors will shun your product forever. Strangely enough, most of those publishers are out of business today, and Jeff Smith is publishing the most successful black and white comic of the last ten years. When the first six issues were collected in trade paperback in *Out From Boneville*, it sold over 100,000 copies.

*Out from Boneville* begins shortly after three cousins – Smiley Bone, Phoney Bone, and Fone Bone -- are run out of the town of Boneville as a result of Phoney Bone's scheme to get elected mayor. Driven apart by a blinding storm, the three separately make their way into a hidden valley populated by talking bugs, villainous rat creatures, and a small community of humans. There they are befriended by an eclectic mix of humans, including tavern-owner Lucius, the mysterious Gran'ma, and the charming and beautiful Thorn.



There are plenty of hilarious moments in *Out from Boneville* – especially Phoney Bone's relentless schemes to take advantage of the "simple farm people" he finds himself with -- but constantly in the background is the threat of the hideous rat creatures, huge and stupid monsters who sneak through the valley on orders from their sinister and supernatural leader, the Lord of the Locusts. Exactly what his objectives are is unclear, but his sudden interest in the Bone cousins – and the danger from his minions – is very real.

In the second volume, *The Great Cow Race*, Smith reveals a few more clues to the mystery of the rat creatures – including their link to Thorn and Gran'ma. But taking center stage this time is the annual cow race, an ingenious scam by Phoney and Smiley Bone involving fast talk and a cow suit, and a spectacular climax that mixes Fone, the race, and an infuriated rat creature patrol.

By the second and third volume, *Eyes of the Storm* and *The Dragonslayer*, the great comic opera of the first issues has subsided. In their place is an intricately woven epic fantasy of love, revenge, dragons and dire evil. We learn more about the history of Thorn and Gran'ma, and how the events of a generation past are bearing fruit now... and how the growing peril of the Lord of the Locusts ties into it all.

Like the great epic fantasies of our time – from *Lord of the Rings* to *Star Wars* – *Bone* mixes tension and humor brilliantly. One always sets the stage for the other. We are laughing out loud, and a scant two pages later on the edge of our seat. This is no mean feat, and it's a wonder that Smith can do it so effortlessly, book after book.

While there's plenty that's new and original about *Bone* (*and much that's clearly inspired by some of the finest American comics, including Walt Kelly's Pogo and Carl Barks' Donald Duck*), what's most surprising is the amazing degree of polish for a debut effort. Although Jeff Smith did a brief *Bone* strip for a college paper, and worked for a while as a professional artist, *Bone* was his first full-length comic effort. But it's executed with such confidence and professionalism that you'd never know.

On top of all of that, *Bone* is self-published. Breaking into comics, much less being successful, is a risky proposition at best. Smith made it look easy, and his success at every level – commercially, critically, and (*especially*) artistically – has been an inspiration for a whole new generation of writers, artists and self-publishers who are bringing new blood into comics in the new millennium.

Don't get left out. *Bone* is the most charming, thrilling, and genuinely funny comic on the market today (*with the exception of Knights of the Dinner Table, naturally!*). You need to read it.

Seek it out. You can thank me later.

+++++

*John O'Neill is the founder of the SF Site (www.sfite.com) and Black Gate magazine. His favorite Hindu deity is Krishna. He can be reached at john@blackgate.com.*

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## SOMETHING FREE AND GOOD, SOMETHING EXPENSIVE AND GOOD, SOMETHING EXPENSIVE AND NOT SO GOOD.

By Rick Moscatello

**H**ey, want to hear about a great game? It has multiple character classes, going deep into randomly generated dungeons packed with an insanely large number of monster varieties, and loaded with a treasure system with almost an infinite variety of possible items. A few fixed levels and areas add some continuity to the game, and there's even a town you can visit to buy more neat stuff.

Sound familiar? Long, long before **Diablo** was a household word (*even in houses that didn't have pit bulls*), a little game called **NetHack** ruled dungeon crawling computers. It was a classic dungeon crawl, where your goal was to trudge through many dungeon levels, gaining phat lewt and leveling as fast as possible so you could bash ever greater monsters.

How could such a great game be unknown, when it's so like **Diablo**? Easy: the graphics, simply put, suXXor (*that's munchkin-speak for "suck", by the way*). Nonetheless, **NetHack** is an amazingly deep game, and while the original **Diablo** is forgotten, **NetHack** is still very much being expanded, developed, and worshiped at sites all across the 'net, with tournaments, updates, and spoilers of every sort.

Hop on over to [www.win.tue.nl/games/roguelike/nethack/](http://www.win.tue.nl/games/roguelike/nethack/), force yourself to download the game, and play. The ASCII graphics take a bit of getting used to, but once you've played for a few hours, you'll see that this is a game so very, very, deep, that it's amazing that you can get it for free. Because there's so much involved with the game, it might be worth your while to check out the spoilers--new players can easily get overwhelmed at all the information coming at them, even if it's all text.

On the other hand, I know some of you just gotta have graphics, and have some spending money just burning a hole in your pocket. If that's the case, I've a short but fun game you should check out.

It's a general rule for computer games that those which are based on **Star Trek** are lame. As anyone who watches **Star Trek** knows, **Voyager** is easily the lamest series in the whole Rodenberry universe. C'mon, a wayward starship led by a whiskey-voiced battleaxe, with crew members engaging in "relations" darn near every episode, and a heinously whiny doctor/hologram/idiot who spends entirely too much time being the focus of too many episodes? And don't even get me started on that holodeck...they should rip that sucker out and put in a handball court, the thing catastrophically malfunctioning so much.

Through some magic that defies explanation, the computer game based on **Voyager** is NOT lame. You're probably better off if you're NOT a fan; **Star Trek: Voyager Elite Force** is a first person shooter, and the level of violence here is, um, a bit more than ol' Gene R would tolerate in his oh-so-politically correct universe.

Then again, with races like *Klingons* and *Borg*, it really is rather satisfying to simply blast them, rather than achieve a level of communication with them.

As far as anyone is concerned, **Quake 3** and **Unreal Tournament** are the only first person shooter games worth playing multiplayer; **Elite Force** has a multiplayer option (*taking place on the oh so vile holodeck*), but you'll find yourself wishing for the rocket launcher so much that I don't expect multiplayer **Star Trek** to take off anytime soon. Let's move on to the solo campaign.

The best way to describe the solo game is "restricted-ly cool". Using a number of scripted scenarios on a level comparable to **Half-Life/Opposing Force**, the campaign, takes you to a wide variety of places where no man has gone before, so you can make first contact with alien races and shoot them. Why the restriction? The campaign is a bit short, and you'll likely finish it in less than 8 hours of hardcore play.

Obviously, in a universe where everyone carries disintegrator weapons, a bit of a modification to the **Star Trek** universe is needed. Much like in **Half-Life**, you'll get issued a special battle suit (*hey, you're part of the Elite Force*) that'll protect your life form from the hazards of futuristic combat. In another little break from "reality", you'll find health and energy kits scattered through the levels--this sorta thing could annoy, but when you're hurtin', you don't complain where the healing is coming from.

The only real quibble with the game involves the enemy AI--these guys get a little clumsy, and sometimes just don't have a clue how to respond to being shot. At least they don't wear battle suits, and it's simple enough to just kill the ones that don't have brains and move on.

Taking a clue from **Unreal Tournament**, **Elite Force** has 9 distinct weapons, and each has an alternate mode of fire. There's a distinct tendency for the weapons to be energy based, but if you don't mind bright flashes accompanying nearly every sort of shot, this isn't so bad, although one does miss the "kick" of a shotgun. I guess there just isn't any way to improve upon the classic **DOOM** weapon mix.

What really make the game worthwhile are the scripted scenes. Not only will you typically find yourself shooting at and being shot at by multiple hostiles, you'll very typically have a number of crewman helping you out (*of course, crummy AI is much less tolerable when it's your guys acting like lobotomized buffoons*). One neat twist is you'll often have to keep your buddies alive, especially engineers and the like who just can't seem to do their job if you let them get disintegrated. There are also a few non-combat "cut scenes" where you'll basically interact with **Voyager** crew members, letting them know how much fun you're having with the new battle suit and picking up some more firepower before beam-

Continued on 39....

# TAKIN' ON W. DuCASH

by Keith Marshman

We were on a western type mission. A widow named America, a beautiful Spanish type, had a large spread that was being cut up by W. Du Cash and his fifty hired hands, tough hombres, good with a weapon.

We met America in the town bar that soon became our base, run by three sisters-in-law, Louise, Ouri, and Ippi. America explained that her family had gotten her land from the Indians, and explained that the fat cat boss Du Cash was trying to seize it any way possible. We were hired to take care of things.

First gun man we run in to was Texas, who was quickly laid low. That led to a fight with The Virginian, and his brother, West. Then we met up with a group: Utah, Montana, Colorado, and Nevada. No match for us. Then we got into a shoot out with a gang: Oregon, Idaho, Arizona and the Dakota Brothers: North and South.

I started to get suspicious about then. Along the river we fought The man from Maine. The others in our party got suspicious with our next encounter. It was the New gang: Hampshire, Jersey, York, Mexico along with the Carolina sisters: North and South.

By the time we mopped up the last of them, Delaware, Vermont, Pennsylvania, and the two newest members, Alaska and Hawaii, we couldn't stop laughing. (*It helped that it was I am by then*)

We met back at the bar to have it out with the big boss. He was alone and we thought we had the drop on him, when we was bushwhacked by the bar owners. Also known as Miss Ouri, Mrs. Ippi and Louise E. Ana.

I got extra x.p.'s by figuring out that the boss's first name was Washington, and that he usually went by his initials. Washington D.C. ☐

# HONESTLY SPEAKING...

by Stuart Fores

I was running a group through a scenario pack called 'Starstone', an old D&D scenario pack. Amongst the group was one player, Alan, who never let anything faze his good humour. You could throw hazard after hazard in his direction and he kept smiling - nothing ever got to him.

During the Starstone campaign the group had uncovered the working of an evil Cleric in the area. After much searching the party eventually uncovered the lair that this Cleric was using. The party stole into the lair and soon found themselves in the underground temple that this Cleric had established. They easily defeated the few undead guardians that defended the temple and began to search for treasure. Alan, however playing a Monk, decided that other action had to be taken, so he set about defiling the altar in this temple. Halfway through this a secret door the party had not located opened and the evil Cleric entered. Upon

# QUICK DRAW

by Alan Barclay

Our little group of intrepid adventurers had just been magically transported, along with their trusty mounts, to a ledge 500 feet above a vast jungle. A glance up and down revealed that the ledge protruded from the side of a sheer rock spire one thousand feet tall. The climb either way would be treacherous. Fortunately, there was a large pair of doors in the rock face next to us, through which we expected to find the powerful necromancer who had been terrorizing our world.

The transition process had left our Paladin blind (*staring into magic obelisks is apparently not good for the eyesight*) and the horses spooked. Each of the group grabbed the reigns of the nearest horse and calmed it down. Our two mages, a wizard and his NPC apprentice, failed to calm their beast. It frothed and bucked, tried to run, and plummeted into space. The apprentice launched himself after the beast.

At this point, we realized two things: our wizard's spell books, along with many other valuables, were in the horse's saddle pack. Second, the apprentice would not have jumped unless he had a *Feather Fall* spell ready.

As the apprentice tried, and failed, to remove the pack from the falling horse, a quick discussion ensued over just what 'was' on that horse. We realized two things: first, the key magic item we needed to get home, a hollow tetrahedron of balsa wood, was in the pack, and, second, our wizard still had his *Wand of Levitation*.

With his trusty wand, the wizard levitated the unfortunate creature (*the horse, not the apprentice*). As the horse suddenly changed direction, the apprentice grabbed for the reigns, but missed. He cast his *Feather Fall* and floated downward, looking forlornly up at his master.

This must have pulled the old boy's heartstrings because the wizard reversed the levitation and lowered the beast toward the apprentice. At this point, we all thought this was very clever: the apprentice would climb onto the horse and ride back up to our ledge.

But, no. Just as the horse loomed twenty feet above the apprentice, it exceeded the range of the levitation spell. The wizard gaped in horror. The apprentice squeaked and floundered in the air. The horse plummeted earthward.

As the horse hit the earth far below, landing on its saddle, smashing the wizard's backpack, and pancaking the apprentice into the muddy jungle floor, we realized two things: first, we were stuck on the threshold of a necromancer's lair with a depressed wizard and a blind paladin; second, our gamemaster was giggling uncontrollably. ☐

seeing the party in his temple he demanded to know who they were and what they were doing in his temple.

Before anyone could react Alan immediately responded to the Cleric, "We're desecrating it."

This was all said as if it was the most natural thing to say, with Alan smiling cheerfully throughout the entire delivery. Everyone else in the group, including myself, fell out laughing - everyone stunned by the simple honesty of the statement. I even allowed Alan's character a round of surprise against the Cleric, as I ruled that since he had stunned me (*the GM*) with his words, then the Cleric too would be taken aback.

Needless to say, the party were able to overwhelm the Cleric quickly. ☐

## Bruno the Bandit by Ian McDonald

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Read Bruno daily at [www.brunothebandit.com](http://www.brunothebandit.com)

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# Knights of the Dinner Table

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ing back out for more butt-kicking.

So if you're finally ready to play a decent *Star Trek* game, check this one out. Blasting Borg has never been more fun.

Well, it finally happened. I picked up a first person shooter that I just couldn't enjoy. *KISS: Psycho Circus* really had me excited with its promises of DOOM-like quantities of monsters to bash. The basic story of the game is you take control of 4 dudes, each running through monster packed levels picking up various pieces of KISS costumes until you finally have them all. While I can appreciate the effort, first person shooters are all about the monsters, the levels, the weapons, and the battles. The story just doesn't matter.

The monsters are plentiful, colorful, and interesting. You've got swarms of little spider dudes, you've got some flapping things, some floating gas bags, and many variants on the evil clown theme.

A very nice bunch, although the reliance on those little spider dudes causes the levels to all look the same after a while. I wish they could have upgraded them or something...it's hard for the excitement to build when on the last level, you're fighting hordes of the same types of goons that you fought on the first level.

Other than the slight lack of variety in the monsters, the levels are interesting, running the usual mix of modern city and Hell, with an understandable circus theme in most of them. Sometimes you'll find yourself stopping to just take a look around, although certain areas just seem to generate monsters regularly, so sightseeing is generally not recommended. Shame.

Ah, the weapons; this is where the game collapses. They're all so weak. The rate of fire is generally slow, the damage is

generally feeble, the ammo isn't sufficient (*which would be more tolerable if you could fire more rapidly*).

Hordes of monsters are no fun if you can't kill them. You start with an amazingly powerful melee weapon (*say, a sword*), and, time and again, you'll give up using the "nerf shotgun" and clear the room with your sword. Not only do you miss the noise and bloodshed of the chainsaw, you'll find yourself so frustrated at grabbing yet another new weapon, and finding it's just as useless as every other weapon you have. The biggest disappointment has to be the Jack in the Box. He's really cute. You chuck him like a grenade. He pokes his head out. If he sees something, he explodes. Otherwise, he'll just keep looking around until something shows up. A nice idea, but that explosion seems hardly more effective than a firecracker.

Because the weapons are so feeble, the battles just can't be interesting. You'll shoot, dodge, shoot, dodge...that's enough to kill one small bad guy. Then repeat. Then repeat. Then repeat. Alternatively, you can swing the sword, crush everything around you. Then swing again. There's just nothing in between, and it doesn't seem to matter what you're up against, the fights all have the same quality to them.

Oh well, I guess not every shooter can be fun after all. If you are a KISS fan, you might also be disappointed, as there really isn't that much KISS-related stuff in the game (of course, if you loathe KISS, don't let that be your reason for not picking it up). There is some nice artwork here, so the game isn't a writeoff; I'd just wait until it hits the discount rack before picking it up. □



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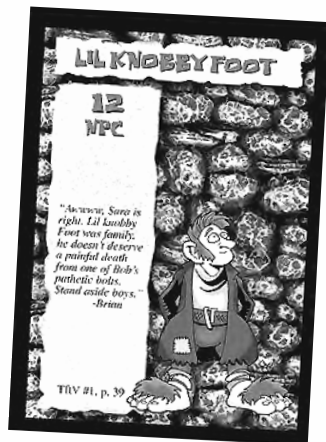
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**T**hat's right. Working on KODT is like a big freakin' party! The fun never stops around here. Really! It's like every day is a Saturday or something. And we want to share that FUN! Got ideas for things like cartoons, articles on gaming, adventures, industry news, reviews, etc.? And we just raised our rates - among the highest in the industry. Hoody Hoo! Well, quit playing with those dice and drop an e-mail for our guidelines to: KenzerCo@aol.com. □

## HACK™'S ON TRACK! KODT Card Game to ship in November.

**B**ack in KODT#46 we announced in GameVine that *Eden Studios* was producing an officially licensed card game based on *Knights of the Dinner Table™* appropriately known as, *Hack!* As we go to press, we've been told that *Hack* will be released in November (*which means it just might be available as you read this.*) *Eden* has a Card Gallery on their website featuring several of *Hack* cards in living color. Mmmmm-pretty! *Hack* decks are sure to be in great demand so a word to the wise — scoot yer butt down to your local gameshop and reserve yours today. □



## THAR BE DRAGONS IN THEM THAR HILLS!

...And for a price you can rent one!



**O**kay, so your best gaming buddy is getting married next spring. It falls on you to throw a bachelor party he'll never forget. But what to do? Buy a few kegs and arrange for a stripper to 'crash' the party? Naaaa... That's been done. Your friend deserves something a little more creative — don't you think?

Here's a suggestion.... Why not rent a three-ton, fire-belching dragon? If you're lucky enough to live in California (or even Nevada) you can make it happen. Uh...for a price that is.

The name of this dragon is Claude Idrilla. Claude is a modern sculpture made of various materials with a weight of 3 tons. The creator of this magnificent beast is Gabe Zanotto. The dragon has been Zanotto's lifetime creation and it has taken nearly 20 years for him to bring him to life. Claude the dragon has been on exhibit many times and has won awards, trophies and ribbons of all sorts.

Anyone is welcome to rent Claude at any time. For any occasion!! Traveling is per mile, plus a flat rate depending on which part of the state your event is being held. He doesn't charge mileage for the first fifty miles from Marysville, California. And he's willing to travel as far as Reno Nevada or Las Vegas.

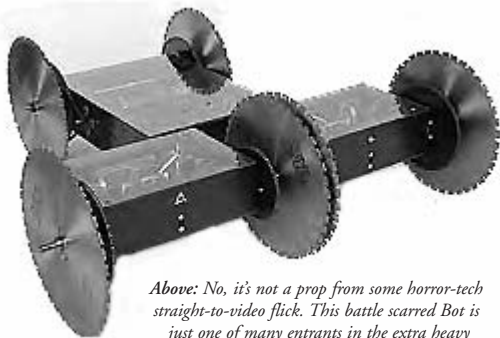
And in case you're curious, here are Claude's stats. Weight of 6,130 Pounds! Wing Span of 19 Feet! Height of 12 Feet! Length of 18 Feet! Blows Fire up to 12 Feet!

For more information you can contact Mr. Zanotto at <http://www.angelfire.com/id/arealdragon/index.html> □

*News item submitted by William James Cuffe*

plucked from the vine for your reading enjoyment

# OH YEAH? WELL, I GOT YER HEAVY METAL RIGHT HERE, BUB!!!



Above: No, it's not a prop from some horror-tech straight-to-video flick. This battle scarred Bot is just one of many entrants in the extra heavy class on Comedy Central's new show, *BattleBots*.

With the premiere episode of *BattleBots* being one of *Comedy Central's* highest-rated series premieres ever, the cable network has ordered an additional 13 episodes of the show for premiere in December. The new episodes will be shot during a competition held in Las Vegas in early November.

In case you've missed this latest craze, *BattleBots* is the emerging sport of live robotic combat. Imagine a face-off between Hollywood's best special effects artists and NASA's greatest scientists -- put them in a modernistic boxing ring and you're just scratching the surface of what *BattleBots* is all about. It may sound silly...(okay, okay, it's silly) but the action can be really gripping.

*BattleBots* contestants design and build radio controlled robots weighing up to 488 lbs. that employ an array of destructive weaponry such as hammers, saws, and spikes. This is the ultimate contest of engineering, strategy and creativity, and the goal is survival. Sure it's raw violence but with machine vs. machine you don't have to feel guilty about yelling "tear 'em to pieces Shaft!" at your TV screen. The next *BattleBots* event is scheduled for November 2000 in Las Vegas, Nevada. □

## • COPS 65 A.D.?

Dreamworks and David Milch (*NYPD Blue*) are developing an hour-long cop drama set in ancient Rome. The series will focus on the head of the **Urban Cohort** law enforcement agency during the reign of Nero in 65 A.D.. Ridley Scott (*Gladiator*) is expected to direct the show's two-hour pilot.

## • WESTWORLD REMAKE IN THE WORKS

Joe Silver is said to be developing a remake of the classic 1973 Michael Crichton film *WestWorld*. Richard D'Ovidio (*Ace in the Hole*) has been hired to write its script.

## • AFTER THE VISITATION

Glen Morgan and James Wong have signed to produce, write, and direct *Columbia Pictures' After the Visitation* — a sci-fi thriller, based on an obscure Russian novella published in the 1970s which involves a man who leads a band of treasure hunters into a mysterious area of U.N. controlled land where an alien visitation once occurred.

## • GLADIATOR MEETS AMERICAN PIE?

FOX has bought a comedy pitch from Kristen Buckley and Brian Regan for an untitled Roman comedy described as uh... er... *Gladiator* meets *American Pie*? Buckley & Regan previously wrote *102 Dalmations*.

## • INTERSTELLAR PIG?

Damon Santosefano is in negotiations to direct the sci-fi adventure *Interstellar Pig*, a Nickelodian production based on a William Sleator novel about a young boy playing a board game of intergalactic proportions with a group of aliens.

## • COUNTRY BEAR JAMBOREE TO BECOME A MOVIE

Disney has given the greenlight to *Country Bears*, a live-action feature based on the Disneyland attraction of the same name. □

# FREE SWAG!! YOURS FOR THE DOWNLOADING

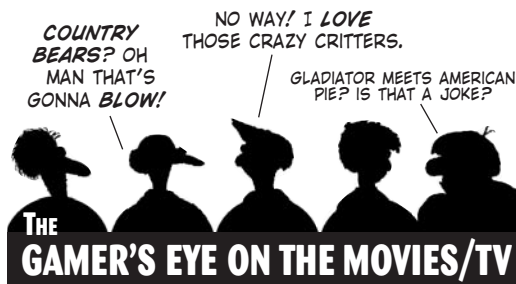


What sort of madness is this? This deal is so good there must be a few pit traps or at least a poisoned needle trap involved somewhere. Did you know you can download dozens of AD&D™ 1st and 2nd edition modules and supplements from the internet — for FREE?

No, we're not advocating piracy. This is on the level. *Wizards of the Coast* recently began posting 'classic' AD&D modules and supplements in PDF format on their site at:

[http://www.wizards.com/dnd/DnDDownloads\\_classics.asp](http://www.wizards.com/dnd/DnDDownloads_classics.asp)

These free downloads include EVERYTHING including the original covers, maps and spot illos. How kewl is that? You'll find campaign settings and supplements such as *Greyhawk*, *Forgotten Realms* and *Dark Sun* too. New downloads are posted frequently. The list is huge and it's growing. Check it out — before they come to their senses! □





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.

I'm writing this in response to Scott Gastineau's letter on *Munchkins* in KODT 45. His point is that there is nothing wrong with being a Munchkin and that they are unfairly ridiculed and persecuted in gaming society. While I agree with the basic premise that there is nothing *\*inherently\** wrong with *munchkinism*, I think it's more a matter of context.

First, however, I think some terminology needs to be covered to make sure we're discussing the same things. In my mind, a *Munchkin's* primary (but not only) concern is the power of their character. They want their character to be able to do great and amazing things (often but not always in combat) right off the bat, and only get better as time goes on.

They will run their character towards achieving this ideal. It is important to point out that this does not necessarily require nit-picking rules arguments (the hallmark of the *Rules-Lawyer*) or back-stabbing other party members. They do tend, however to play min-maxxed characters and seek to acquire even more power for their characters.

A *Rules-Lawyer* is a separate problem. Sometimes you will get a player who is both a *Munchkin* and a *Rules-Lawyer*, but not



always. A *Rules-Lawyer*, in my mind, loves to argue and be right. To this end, they will never let a rules-based argument drop until either they're agreed with or irrefutably proven wrong (at which point they often claim the rules are bad). This is not the same as pointing out a potential miss-call on the part of the GM or another player.

The big difference between a *Rules-Lawyer* and just someone who knows the rules is *persistence*. A *Rules-Lawyer* has to be right, even if it disrupts the game.

A bad GM is another separate issue. You can get a GM who is also a *Munchkin* (min-maxxing his NPCs; a problem if done specifically to unnecessarily over-power the players), a *Rules-Lawyer* (steadfastly adhering to the letter of the rules even to the detriment of the game), a *Plot-Dictator* (I have a storyline in mind and we will follow it), adversarial (it's me against the players; unless you're playing *Paranoia*) or any of a number of other negative traits.

Now, to the point about *Munchcanism*: *Munchkins* are a problem only if it becomes a source of disruption to the game. This generally happens when a *Munchkin* player or GM becomes part of a group that is

not interested in the *Munchkin* play-style. It is important to point out that, while a player is not wrong in being a *Munchkin*, it is their responsibility to find a group that is comfortable with this kind of play rather than forcing their style of play upon the group.

As to the question of, "can I think of any campaign that was ruined by *Munchcanism*?" Yes, I can. I can think of a number of *Champions* and a couple of *D&D* campaigns in which one or two *Munchkin* players ruined the atmosphere of an otherwise low-powered campaign. These were examples of where the *Munchkin* playing style did not mesh with that of the rest of the group.

My biggest contention with Mr. Gastineau's letter comes in the paragraph on "good GMing". While I agree with the majority of your points, I do think one addition needs to be made: A good GM will not run a campaign they don't want to run. Basically what this means is that if the GM is uncomfortable with running a style of campaign, such as *Munchkin*, that is desired by the players, that GM should look for a different group and let someone else GM for the

Munchkin group.

I realize that Mr. Gastineau may have considered this point blindingly obvious, but without this point the "good GMing" paragraph seems to place the responsibility for a good campaign only on the GM's shoulders. Basically, my point is that a GM should not feel that they have to run any certain style of game. They should only run what they're comfortable with running.

Aside from the above nit-picks, I think that Mr. Gastineau's letter brings up some very good points. I especially agree with his main point; that no one should deride someone else for enjoying a certain style of play.

The trick is simply a matter of finding a like-minded group of people to play with. So, just because in someone else's campaign the players are regularly slaying gods, you should not consider it a bad campaign. It should only be considered a bad campaign if those involved are not having fun.

Deric Page  
via E-mail

I recently e-mailed the following KODT quote to some fellow porphyrics:

*"Man, I'm telling ya I don't like being the map-monkey. The toxic fumes from the black marker makes me goofy! Remember when I thought your ten-sider was a spider and tried to squash it? PEN-FUMES, DUDE!!"*

Dave Bozwell

(KODT #6: *Wherever You Go - There You Are*).

I received several replies noting that the smell of "magic markers" do tend to have this effect upon porphyria sufferers. Effects can include dizziness, headaches, confusion, fatigue, illness and skin rash.

I myself have never experienced this, but am allergic to the smell of garlic; the most severe effect of a similar nature that I can report is the fact that common painkillers are ineffective in treating porphyria, and instead can cause almost psychotic hallucinations.

Furthermore, although porphyria

is a congenital disease, at least one form can be acquired; I have heard that some vampire-obsessed gamers, upon learning of this "vampire" disease, poison themselves in an attempt to contract it and become "real" vampires (*the damned fools!*) I recall that Dave was invited to join a vampire group, way back in the early days of the strip; this raises the question, in my mind at least: does Dave have porphyria?

A character development of this nature would also go some way towards explaining his "hack" obsession - he is not really a bad gamer, he is venting his frustrations at a hostile, uncaring society that refuses to accept his illness.

For more information on porphyria, please check out the following links:

<http://www.medicad.com/porphyria.html>

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/health/newsid\\_347000/347735.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/health/newsid_347000/347735.stm)

<http://www.invisibledisabilities.com>

<http://www.uq.edu.au/porphyria>

Thank you for your time.

Scott Wylie Roberts  
Roleplaying Action Group Leader  
Vice-President, The Gamers Guild  
<http://play.at/theguild>

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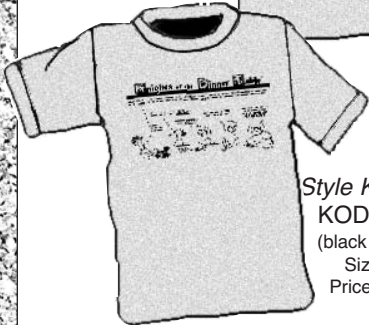
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This is a complete game. Everything you need (including counters) is included in the 126 page, hard-bound book. If you're an old war-gamer like me, it may even give you an excuse to pull out all those old WWII figs from the closet.

**Brian's Rating:** Brian's Rating: Come get some!



**CHEBACHE**

Pardee Games • Email: [PardeeGames@lightlink.com](mailto:PardeeGames@lightlink.com)

**W**hat is Chebache? *CHEckers, Backgammon, CHEss*. It is defined as: "The new strategic board game combining elements of checkers, backgammon and chess and bridging the gaps between them." Wow, my first thoughts were, "That's a bold statement." However, lets take a closer look at this game.

Like the classics, Chebache is designed for two players. My first impression was that Chebache was most like backgammon. The board has 18 movement points on it for each player, and to win the game a player must move his or her 12 pieces to the finish space. Movement is controlled by rolling two dice in backgammon form. However, after playing a few games, I realized that Chebache is much more than a simple spin-off of backgammon like I first thought.

At the end of your movement phase you are allowed to make use of a checkers-style jump move. I honestly overlooked this very strong move. When combined with stacking your pieces, it is possible to move up to four pieces a great distance along your path to victory with this jump move.

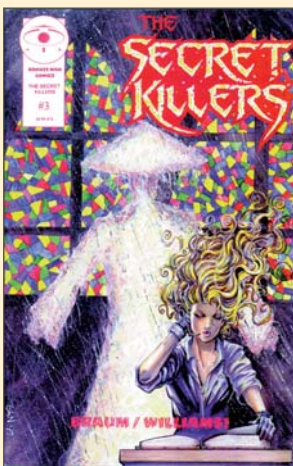
Perhaps the best part of Chebache is the chess elements of the game. Each player has a King piece. The King is a double-size piece that counts as two pieces when trying to capture your opponent's pieces. Also the King can move forward or backward along your path. Other pieces can also do this from any of the *(turn/pivot)* spaces on the board. Also much like chess you must be careful with your King because it can be taken control of by your opponent and then used against you. The last major chess element are the Chebache zones. Just like check and check-mate, you can try to win the game by getting your opponent's king trapped in Chebache.

If you enjoy chess or backgammon, then you should get plenty of game play out of Chebache, and it would be well worth adding to your game collection.

**Brian's Rating:** Highly Recommended (and then some)



**THE SECRET KILLERS** Bronze Man Comics. • [exit@bronzeman.com](mailto:exit@bronzeman.com)







**T**his is an independent comic written by Dan Braum. I picked up the first 4 issues at DragonCon and after reading through them I was impressed by the concept and the story. The author describes the series as a cross between the X-files and the adventures of Indiana Jones. The main character, John Rah, and his associates travel the globe in an effort to debunk myths and find the truth behind local legends. In effect, they kill secrets, hence the title of the book. Makes perfect sense once you read one issue but apparently there has been some confusion that the book is about hitmen or something so with issue #5 they are renaming it "Exit from Shadow."

By any name this is still a pretty cool independent comic. What the protagonists often find is that the local legends are not always off base and they sometimes have extraordinary explanations. Even so, John Rah's mission is to expose them to the world as he hunts for clues to his own secret past. Some people might be turned off a bit by some of the artwork. It's not awful by any means and a true comics fan shouldn't let that deter him one bit from enjoying the book overall. I really hope these guys stick with it and find the support that they deserve.

**Brian's Rating:** Check it out and support independent comics publishers.



# FADING SUNS

	Fading Suns second edition #202
	FS Screen #203
	Lords & Priests #243
	Passion Play: Live action roleplaying #242

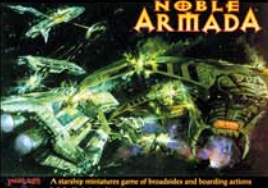
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	Hawkwood Fiefs #236		Al Malik Fiefs #238		Hazat Fiefs #241

FS Players Companion #229/Weird Places #227/ The Dark Between the Stars #230/ Merchants of the Jumpweb #231/Children of the Gods #232/ Sinners & Saints #233/ Sinful Stars: fiction #234/ Legions of the Empire #237/ Byzantium Secundus #275

Coming Soon:

War in the Heavens: Hegemony #244 (November)  
Li Halan Fiefs #245 (Winter)

# NOBLE ARMADA

	Noble Armada starship miniatures game #500
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	Known Worlders painted miniatures #507
Coming soon: Boarding Parties #508	

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	Carnage battle game #900
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	New: Orb of Power/ Benny the Bouncer #903
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Also: Skullbrawl #901

# COMBAT ZONE

	Combat Zone #1000		Face Off: Grimm's Troopers vs Gutter Gang #1001
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# WHY STAR WARS IS BETTER THAN TITANIC

Submitted by Tom Seeling

- The Titanic is big, but it doesn't have hyperdrive.
- Yoda could've used the Force to lift Titanic out of the water.
- Leia is a princess, a senator, a freedom fighter, and Jedi material. Rose is just marriage bait.
- Ewoks throw better parties than either first class or steerage.
- When flying towards the Titanic, Wedge couldn't say, "Look at the size of that thing!" and 'really' mean it.
- It would be much scarier to get chased around the boat by a raving madman with a lightsaber as opposed to a handgun.
- Titanic is egalitarian by portraying poor people as sympathetic characters. Star Wars is egalitarian by promoting bug-eyed amphibians to Admiral.
- Said bug-eyed amphibious Admiral does NOT lose his ship.
- We know Cal is the bad guy because he sneers at the poor and treats his fiancée like property. We know Darth Vader is the bad guy 'cause he strangles people & blows up planets for fun.
- Yeah, Leo can dance, but can he fly an X-wing? [*Is this a scary premonition: Anikin DeCaprio?*]
- Rose braves icy water to rescue her man. Leia braves Jabba the Hutt.
- There are always enough escape pods in Star Wars.
- Do you know what the Empire does to self-proclaimed "kings of the world?"
- If Luke were handcuffed to a pipe in a sinking ship, he would use the Force to get the key.
- Nothing has the same sting as "I'd rather kiss a Wookiee."
- Han is frozen in carbonite and turned into a wall ornament. Leo simply freezes.
- Han Solo would've steered clear of that stinkin' iceberg!
- We knew the boat was gonna sink. But who could've anticipated, "Luke...I am your father.?"
- Stormtroopers blast big holes in stupid minor characters; everyone in Titanic was a minor character.
- When Star Wars was proclaimed coolest movie of all time by half of planet earth, George Lucas did not make a fool of himself at the Oscars.
- Titanic morals: 1) gamble, 2) cheat on your husband, 3) pose nude for pictures, 4) premarital sex is OK if you're infatuated, 5) let undesirables drown.
- Star Wars morals: 1) fight evil, 2) do good, 3) respect all life even if it's ugly and slithers, 4) rescue princess, 5) save planet



## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*Eric: "I may have more time to game in the near future. There's a rumor going around that my company is going to do some major laying off before Thanksgiving."*

*Josh: "Oh...I'm sorry to hear that. So you think you'll be effected?"*

*Eric: God, I hope so. I'm bustin' to play D&D 3E."*



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WAR IN THE HEAVENS:

# Hegemony

The enigmatic, alien Vau civilisation was old when mankind was in its infancy

They have an ancient prophecy of war on an untold scale that will rend the heavens asunder

Has the time come?



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HEY DAVE, WHAT'S WITH THE GET UP?

OH, IT'S MY NEW VAU MANDARIN OUTFIT. TURNS OUT THESE GUYS AREN'T THE WUSSES WE THOUGHT THEY WERE.

SO, MR. KNOW-IT-ALL. HOW'S IT FEEL TO BE DAVE'S ERRAND BOY?

THEY JUST NEEDED A LITTLE PUSH IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION FROM SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE INS AND OUTS OF VAU SOCIETY. I LEARNED ALL ABOUT IT IN THE NEW *WAR IN THE HEAVENS: HEGEMONY* BOOK.

HMMRRRRFFF!  
BEGINNER'S LUCK.

CAN I BE ON YOUR SIDE?

I'D BETTER GET MY HANDS ON THAT BOOK - QUICK!

I KNEW I SHOULD HAVE PAID WEIRD PETE THAT HUSH MONEY TO HAVE HIM KEEP THIS NEW RELEASE A SECRET FOR JUST ONE MORE WEEK.

