

# WRITTEN ON THE DUNGEON WALLS

BY MICHAEL MARTÍNEZ



THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO ALL OF MY FELLOW FRIENDS AND D&D PLAYERS: DERICK CHOI, NICK GEIER, ANDY GRABOWSKI, THAO HO, AND CHRIS LUK. THIS BOOK IS ALSO DEDICATED TO THE QUEEN OF DARKNESS FOR HER UNDYING FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING OF MY NERDINESS.

AND IF YOU PLAY D&D OR ANY OTHER ROLE-PLAYING GAME, THIS BOOK IS ALSO FOR YOU.



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## FORWARD: THE EARLY YEARS

I STARTED PLAYING DUNGEONS & DRAGONS FRESHMAN YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL WHEN MY FRIEND ASKED ME IF I WANTED TO JOIN HIS CAMPAIGN. UNTIL THEN, I HAD ASSOCIATED IT WITH THIS GIRL WHO TALKED ABOUT IT ALL THE TIME AND WHOM I HATED WITH A PASSION. I DON'T KNOW WHY I STARTED. I GUESS I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FUN.

MOST PEOPLE DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT I GET OUT OF THE GAME. I'M HONESTLY NOT SURPRISED. MOST PEOPLE DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND WHY WE DON'T JUST PLAY VIDEOGAMES IF WE GET SUCH A KICK OUT OF KILLING MONSTERS AND COMPLETING QUESTS. IT ISN'T JUST BECAUSE WE SUCK AT COMPUTER GAMES. I PROMISE.

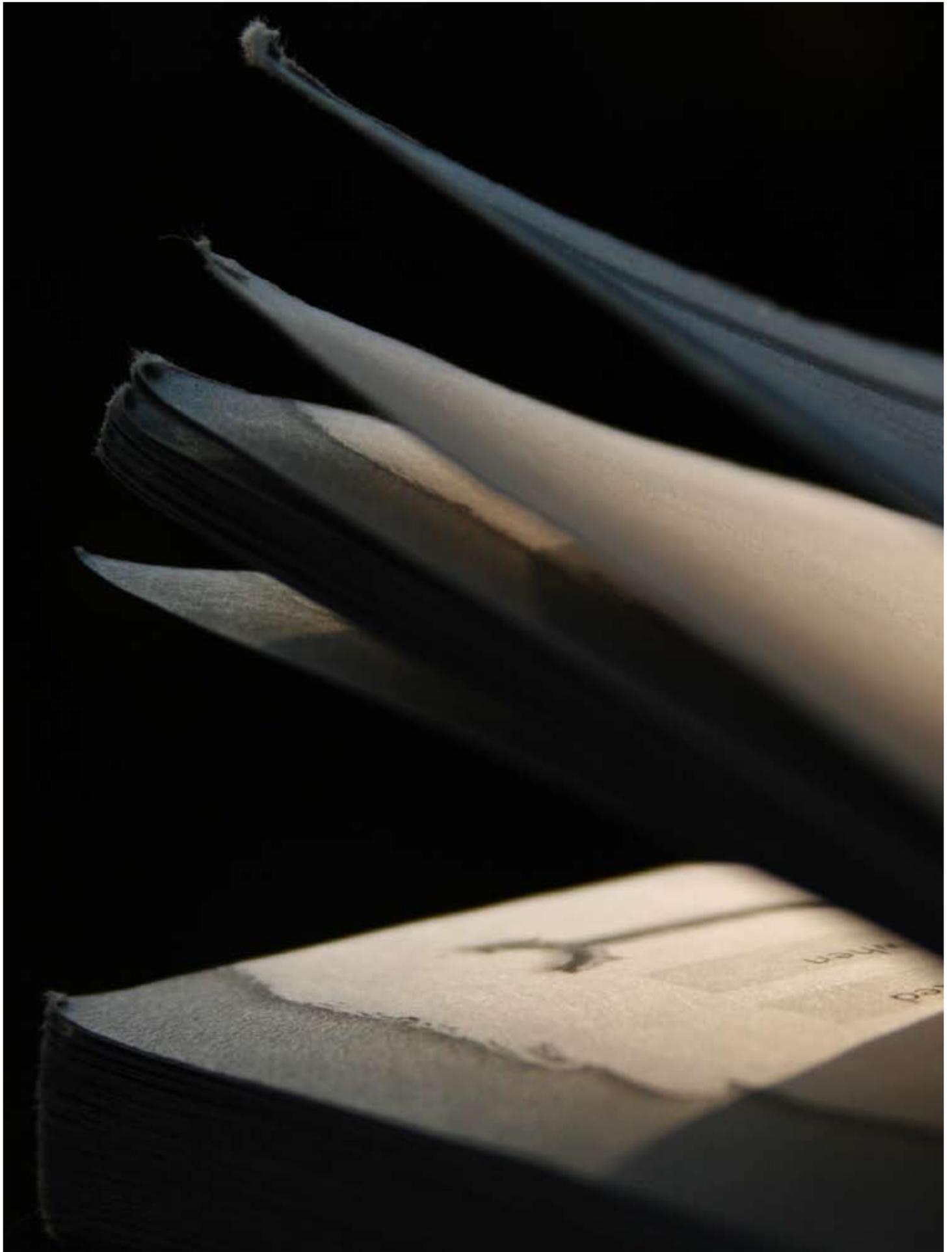
THE FIRST TIME I PLAYED D&D, I WAS PLAYING UNDER THE INCOMPETENT DIRECTION OF MY FRIEND ANDY. IT WAS HIS FIRST TIME EVER AS A DM, DUNGEON MASTER. AND THAT WAS PRETTY BAD. I MEAN, REALLY BAD. WE WERE PLAYING WITH KIDS IN THE FOURTH GRADE WHO HAD THE ATTENTION SPANS OF CHIPMUNKS WITH ADD. AND SOME OF THE OTHER PEOPLE ALSO HAD A HARD TIME TAKING ANYTHING SERIOUSLY.

LIKE OUR FRIEND WHO PLAYED A HALFLING WERERAT (WHICH IS LIKE A WEREWOLF EXCEPT HE TURNED INTO A GIANT RAT) WHO WAS ALSO A ROGUE. AND THEN CHOSE PROSTITUTE AS HIS PROFESSION. AND PLAYED A CHICK. THAT WAS AWKWARD, TO SAY THE LEAST.

DURING THAT FIRST CAMPAIGN, I PLAYED AS A MALE, HUMAN ROGUE WHOSE NAME WAS TENARI DARELLAN. WITH TENARI, I SPENT MORE TIME THINKING OF HIS BACK-STORY THAN I DID ACTUALLY PLAYING THE GAME. ALTHOUGH THIS BOTHERED MY DM, IT WAS SO MUCH FUN FOR ME, THAT I WENT OFF AND CREATED SECONDARY BACK-STORIES FOR ALL OF THE SECONDARY CHARACTERS IN THAT CAMPAIGN. ALTHOUGH I LEARNED NEXT TO NOTHING ABOUT PLAYING THE GAME OF D&D, I REALIZED THAT I HAD JUST FOUND A GREAT OUTLET FOR MY CREATIVE ENERGY.

AFTER THAT CAMPAIGN FELL THROUGH, OUR FRIEND WHO PLAYED THE HALFLING WERERAT STARTED HIS OWN CAMPAIGN WHERE I PLAYED A MALE, HALF-ELF SORCERER WHOSE NAME WAS LADISLAUS CORELARETH. WITH



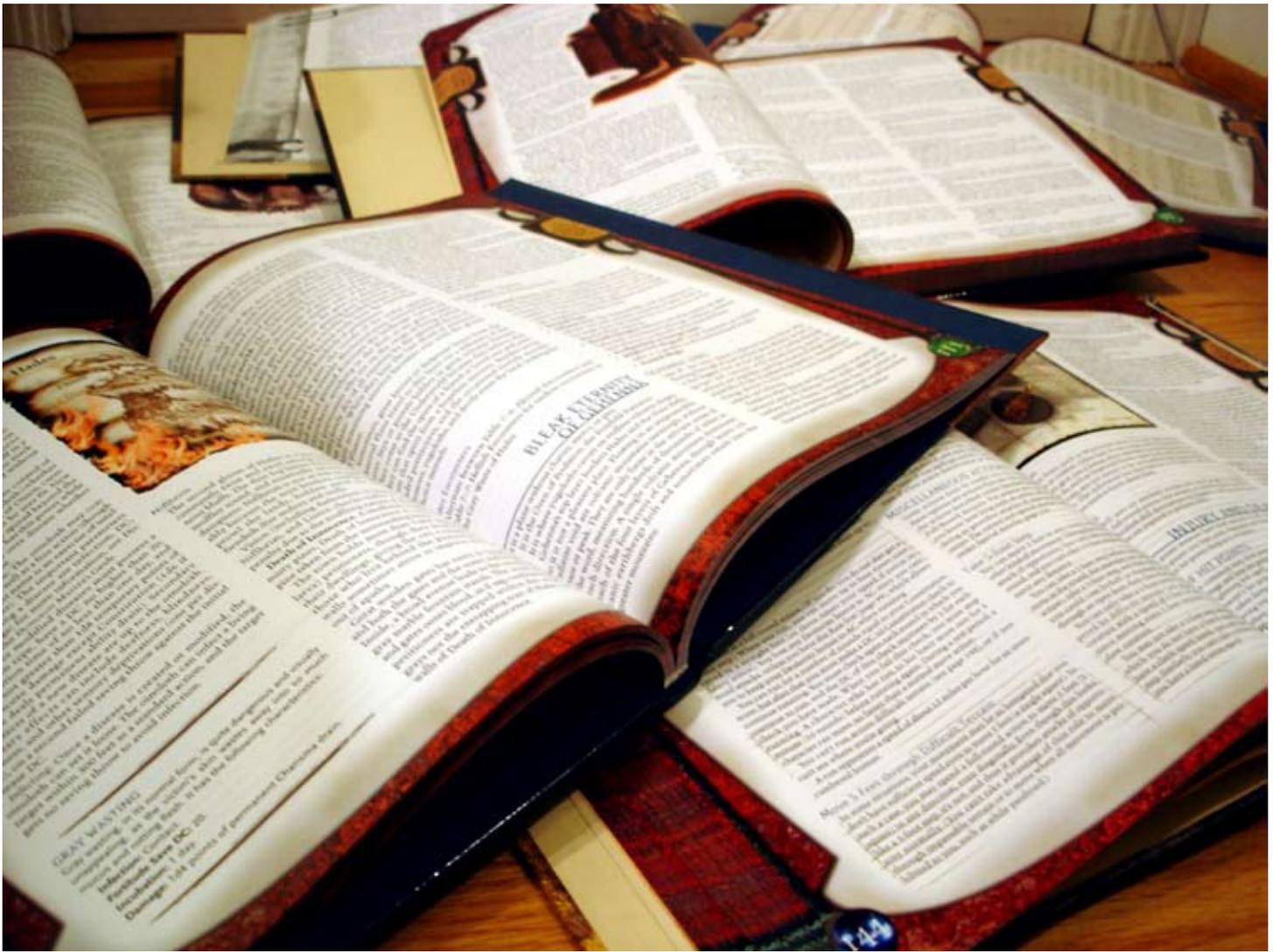


LADISLAUS, I REALLY WENT OVERBOARD ON THE BACK-STORY. I HAD THE MOST ANGST-RIDDEN CHARACTER IN A FIFTY-MILE RADIUS. IN FACT, I PUT SO MUCH INTO HIS BACK-STORY, THAT I'M STILL WORKING ON IT NOW, AND IT'S ABOUT TWO YEARS AFTER I CREATED HIM.

AFTER SEVENTH LEVEL, OUR DM GOT BORED AND STARTED A DIFFERENT CAMPAIGN, AND THIS TIME I PLAYED A MALE, DWARF FIGHTER WHOSE NAME WAS YESLEK VALMORD. TIRED OF HAVING CAMPAIGNS SHUT DOWN ON MY CHARACTERS, I RESOLVED NOT TO CREATE A BACK-STORY FOR HIM. IT WAS PROBABLY ONE OF THE MORE POINTLESS CHOICES I'VE MADE WHILE PLAYING THE GAME, BUT AT LEAST I DIDN'T GET SO ATTACHED TO HIM THAT I FELT MISERABLE WHEN THE CAMPAIGN QUICKLY DIED.

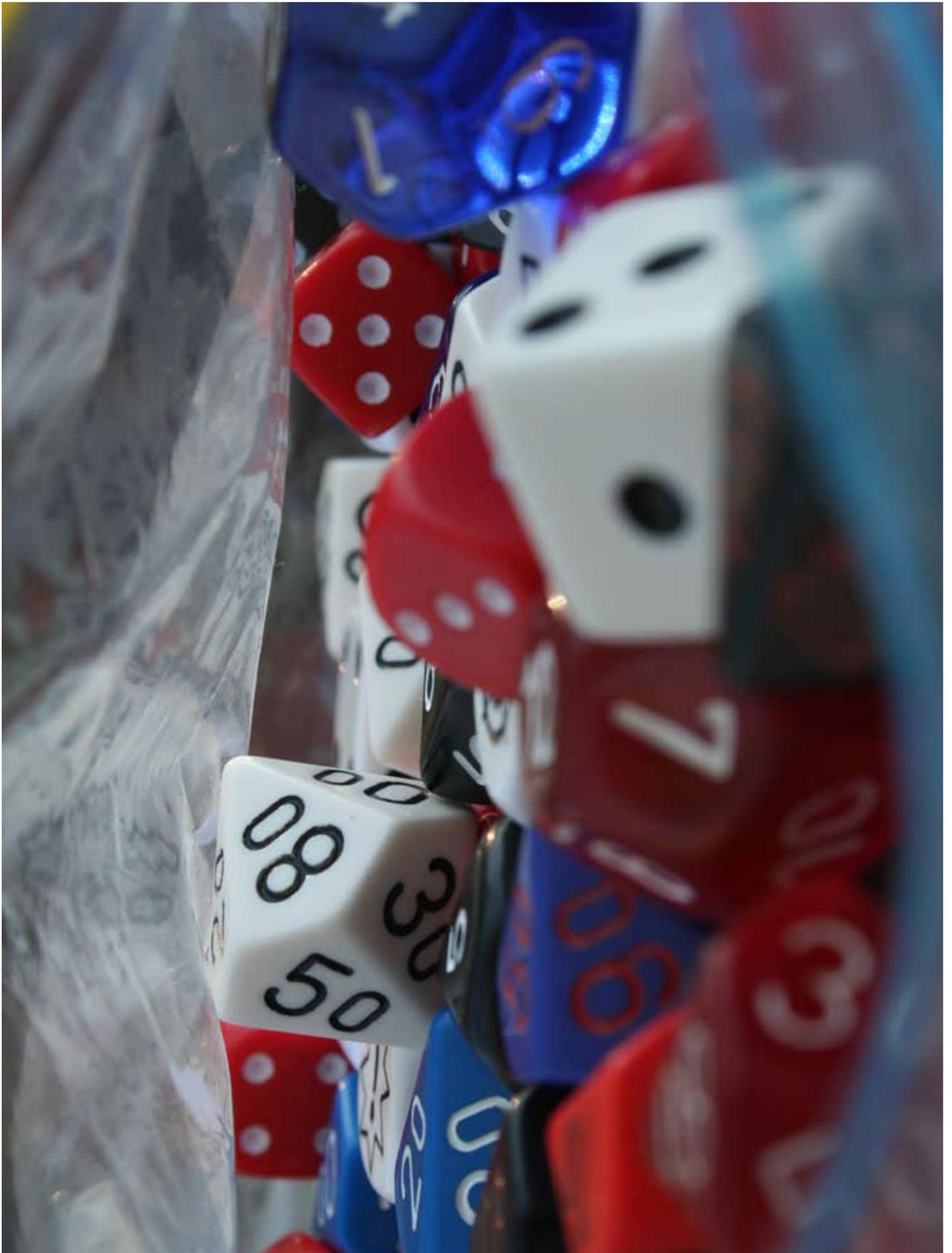
AFTER THAT, I NEVER EXPECTED TO PLAY D&D AGAIN.





BUT OBVIOUSLY, MY EXPECTATIONS WERE HAPPILY WRONG AND I REMAIN EVER-FAITHFUL, EVER-ADDICTED TO THIS GAME AND ITS VARIANTS. IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN HOW D&D WORKS TO SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T PLAY, SO I'M NOT GOING TO TRY. I AM GOING TO TRY TO EXPLAIN WHY I PLAY D&D INSTEAD OF DOING SOMETHING "PRODUCTIVE" ON THE WEEKENDS. WHY I'M ADDICTED. WHY I'M INSPIRED.

AND IF, FOR SOME ODD REASON, YOU FEEL INSPIRED TO GO OFF AND START A CAMPAIGN OF YOUR OWN, MY BLESSINGS AND BEST WISHES GO WITH YOU. THIS WORLD COULD ALWAYS USE A FEW MORE PLAYING CHARACTERS.



# CHARACTERS



AFTER MY FIRST THREE D&D CAMPAIGNS, MY INVOLVEMENT IN D&D SOMEWHAT DWINDLED. ANDY, HOWEVER, MANAGED TO BEFRIEND SOME OTHER PLAYERS, AND I WAS SOON PLAYING EVEN MORE THAN I WAS BEFORE.

SUMMER AFTER SOPHOMORE YEAR, ANDY GOT INVOLVED IN A CAMPAIGN DMED BY A GUY NAMED THAO. I FOUND MYSELF BECOMING MORE AND MORE DEPRESSED AS I REALIZED THAT I WASN'T GOING TO BE ABLE TO JOIN, BUT TO MY SURPRISE, ANDY ASKED THAO TO LET ME JOIN, AND I ENTERED THE GAME WITH A LEVEL OF EXCITEMENT AND JOY ONLY SEEN ON THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL.

I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO CREATE A NEW CHARACTER SO I REUSED LADISLAUS, TWEAKING HIM A BIT TO FIT HIM INTO THE CAMPAIGN. HOWEVER, SHORTLY AFTER I JOINED, THAO QUIT THE CAMPAIGN AND STARTED A DIFFERENT ONE. I SWITCHED BACK TO YESLEK, CHANGING HIS CLASS TO CLERIC INSTEAD OF FIGHTER AND REMAINED STAUNCHLY DETERMINED NOT TO CARE ABOUT HIM. BUT I WAS PLEASANTLY SURPRISED WHEN OUR OTHER GROUP MEMBERS STARTED ASKING ABOUT BACK-STORIES.

APPARENTLY, THIS WAS EXPECTED OF ME. I WAS THE ONLY PERSON WITH A CREATIVE DRIVE STRONG ENOUGH TO ACTUALLY WRITE ANYTHING DOWN, WHICH IS FAR HARDER THAN IT SEEMS. ESPECIALLY WHEN THIRTEEN PAGES COVERS ONE HOUR OF THE CHARACTER'S LIFE.

I'VE BEEN A WRITER SINCE THE SEVENTH GRADE, WHEN ONE OF MY CLOSE FRIENDS CARELESSLY CONVINCED ME THAT WRITING WAS FUN. BACK THEN, MY WRITING WAS PRETTY TERRIBLE, BUT I LIKE TO THINK IT'S IMPROVED SOME SINCE THEN. AND ALTHOUGH I DON'T ACTUALLY WRITE DOWN EVERYTHING ABOUT MY CHARACTERS, I'VE THOUGHT IT ALL OVER IN MY HEAD TO THE POINT THAT I KNOW WHAT MY CHARACTER'S UNCLE ATE FOR BREAKFAST THE DAY THAT THE MAGIC SCHOOL WAS BURNED TO THE GROUND. BREAD AND JAM WITH A MUG OF COFFEE.

ANDY STARTED DMING AGAIN, LEADING A CAMPAIGN THAT WAS BASED ON D&D, BUT WAS UNDER THE D20 MODERN SYSTEM. THE CAMPAIGN WAS SET IN A PSEUDO-SOVIET UNION CAMPAIGN. EXCEPT IN THE FUTURE. SORT OF. WE HAD MODERN GUNS, BUT THERE WERE HUGE, FLYING BATTLESHIPS TOO. AND MAGIC. MY CHARACTER WAS A MALE, HUMAN ZEK, BASICALLY A POLITICAL PRISONER OR, AS SOME OF MY FRIENDS AFFECTIONATELY CALLED HIM, A GULAG SLAVE. HIS NAME WAS EVGENI DEKANOSOV.

WHY DID I CHOOSE TO PLAY A PRISONER? THE ANGST, MOSTLY. ANGST PROVIDES WONDERFUL ROLE-PLAYING OPPORTUNITIES. REMEMBER THAT.

I GET RIDICULOUSLY INTO THE ROLE-PLAYING OF MY CHARACTER AND TO DO THAT, I HAVE TO HAVE EVERY MINUTE DETAIL OF THEIR LIFE PLANNED OUT TO THE POINT THAT HE WOULD REMEMBER IT. IN ANDY'S NEXT CAMPAIGN, USING THE D20 FUTURE CAMPAIGN SETTING, I PLAYED A MALE, HUMAN STRONG HERO, WHICH IS BASICALLY A FIGHTER. HIS NAME WAS JAK IVY AND HE HAD A FULLBLADE, WHICH IS BASICALLY A SWORD THAT'S SIX FEET LONG. ROLE-PLAYING JAK WAS FUN FOR TWO MAJOR REASONS. HIS EYES CHANGED COLOR DEPENDING ON HIS MOOD AND HE WAS SCHIZOPHRENIC.

THE DEAL WITH JAK WAS THAT WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER THE OTHER KIDS REFUSED TO BE

### HEROIC CHARACTER SHEET

Character Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Alignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Background: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Hair: \_\_\_\_\_

Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_

Complexion: \_\_\_\_\_

Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

Skills: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Abilities: \_\_\_\_\_

Skills and Proficiencies: \_\_\_\_\_

Equipment: \_\_\_\_\_

Inventory: \_\_\_\_\_

Spells: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Features: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliations and Enemies: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Traits: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROFESSIONS**

Acrobat	10%
Alchemist	10%
Artist	10%
Barber	10%
Blacksmith	10%
Cartographer	10%
Chef	10%
Cleric	10%
Cobbler	10%
Druggist	10%
Engraver	10%
Farmer	10%
Fletcher	10%
Goldsmith	10%
Healer	10%
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Physician	10%
Reverend	10%
Scribe	10%
Scholar	10%
Soldier	10%
Tavern-keeper	10%
Tinker	10%
Wagon-maker	10%
Warder	10%
Witch	10%
Zealot	10%

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**SKILLS AND PROFICIENCIES**

Acrobatics	10%
Animal Handling	10%
Artistic Ability	10%
Athletics	10%
Blunt Weapons	10%
Charm	10%
Climb	10%
Concentration	10%
Deception	10%
Disguise	10%
Endurance	10%
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Leadership	10%
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Religion	10%
Ride	10%
Social	10%
Stealth	10%
Survival	10%
Swimming	10%
Tactics	10%
Thievery	10%
Vigilance	10%
Warfare	10%
Wisdom	10%
Wrestling	10%

**TARGETING CAPACITY**

**CONTAINERS**

**LANGUAGES**

**HEALTH**

HP	100
MP	50
SP	20
TP	10

**EXPERIENCE**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

**CLASS FEATURES**

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FRIENDS WITH HIM BECAUSE OF HIS EYE-CHANGING MUTATION. TO COMPENSATE, HE “CREATED” VARIOUS INVISIBLE FRIENDS WHO HE TALKED TO. THIS ONLY MADE MATTERS WORSE, CALLING THE ATTENTION OF THE VARIOUS ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY, ALL OF WHOM TRIED TO “FIX” HIM WHICH, OBVIOUSLY, ONLY MADE MATTERS EVEN WORSE, IF THAT’S POSSIBLE TO BELIEVE. THIS GOES ON UNTIL HE’S TWENTY-TWO AND THEN HE SETS OFF WANDERING.

AS A CHARACTER, I DIDN’T TALK MUCH AND GAVE UPDATES CONTINUOUSLY AS TO WHAT COLOR MY EYES WERE AND WHETHER OR NOT I WAS MUMBLING TO MYSELF. MY FRIENDS GREW FRUSTRATED AS THEY ASKED MY CHARACTER WHO HE WAS TALKING TO AND HE ANSWERED THEIR QUESTIONS WITH A SILENT STARE AND PALE GREEN EYES. IN SHORT, HE WAS KIND OF CREEPY, AND THE CAMPAIGN DIDN’T LAST VERY LONG ANYWAYS, EVEN THOUGH I ENJOYED IT TREMENDOUSLY.

ANDY EVENTUALLY STARTED UP A WORLD OF DARKNESS CAMPAIGN WHICH IS FROM A TOTALLY DIFFERENT ROLE-PLAYING SYSTEM (BASED ON THE D10 INSTEAD OF THE D20, EVEN THOUGH THAT PROBABLY MAKES NO SENSE AT ALL). WE WERE ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN A SMALL, SUBURBAN TOWN ACROSS LAKE MICHIGAN FROM CHICAGO. MY CHARACTER WAS MALE AND HUMAN, AND FOCUSED IN KUNG FU BECAUSE I FELT LIKE IT. THERE WEREN’T CLASSES IN THAT GAME, BUT I WAS ROUGHLY EQUIVALENT TO THE FIGHTER OF THE PARTY.

HIS NAME WAS ARJAN LEE AND HE DID WEED, WHICH WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY ROLE-PLAYING CAREER. EVERY SO OFTEN, I MADE A POINT TO HAVE HIM LIGHT UP A JOINT, EVEN WHEN WE WERE IN HIS FRIEND’S MOM’S CAR. THIS AMUSED MY FRIENDS BUT OTHERWISE ACCOMPLISHED NOTHING, AS DO MOST DRUG HABITS. ANDY RECENTLY DROPPED THIS GAME.



AT THIS POINT, CHRIS DECIDED TO START UP HIS OWN CAMPAIGN, AND THIS WAS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT DISTILLED D&D. NO SUGAR ADDED. NOT LIKE WE NEEDED IT ANYWAYS. CHRIS FORCED ME INTO PLAYING A GIRL, AND MY CHARACTER WAS A FEMALE, HUMAN FAVORED SOUL, WHICH IS BASICALLY A CLERIC. HER NAME WAS LIERA. THE POINT OF ME BEING FEMALE WAS FOR THE BACK-STORY THAT CHRIS WAS USING, WHERE I WAS A PRINCESS IN A DIFFERENT KINGDOM, BUT BANISHED FOR HAVING A LOVE AFFAIR WITH SOMEONE OF A LOWER CLASS.

I WAS ALSO THE ONE TRUE CLERIC LEFT IN THE LAND AND MY QUEST WAS TO BRING THE GODS BACK. WHICH IS OH SO TREMENDOUSLY EASY, AND CONSIDERING HOW WE REALLY HAVEN'T PLAYED THAT MUCH OF THAT CAMPAIGN, I REALLY CAN'T SEE US GETTING CLOSE.

ANDY, INSPIRED BY OUR GAME OF REAL D&D, DROPPED THE D20 FUTURE CAMPAIGN AND STARTED UP HIS OWN D&D GAME, WHERE I REVERTED TO THE ORIGINAL YESLEK, THE FIGHTER. I HAD A BIT MORE BACK-STORY ON THIS ONE, BUT NOTHING REALLY NOTABLE. IF NOTHING ELSE, I'VE LEARNED THAT I HAVE A VERY DIFFICULT TIME COMING UP WITH BACK-STORIES FOR DWARVES.

OUR FRIEND DERICK HAS DECIDED TO START UP HIS OWN D&D CAMPAIGN NOW, WHERE I'M PLAYING A MALE, ELF BARD WHOSE NAME IS VILMAR TATHAR. HE GOES ALL THE WAY BACK TO TENARI'S BACK-STORY WHERE HE WAS A SECONDARY CHARACTER WHO I FAVORED AND EXPANDED UPON. HIS ANGST COMES FROM THE FACT THAT HE HAS A MUTILATED EYE. MUTILATED EYES ARE HARD TO DRAW, SO I GIVE HIM REALLY LONG BANGS AND THAT SOLVES MY PROBLEMS. WHEN IN DOUBT, HIDE THE EYES.

I REALLY DON'T KNOW HOW DERICK'S CAMPAIGN IS GOING TO WORK OUT, ESPECIALLY SINCE HE FAVORS A TOTALITARIAN-STYLE GOVERNMENT AND HE'S STARTING US OUT AS CONSCRIPTS IN A GIANT WAR. THERE ARE ROCKS BEING THROWN AT US. BIG ROCKS. LIKE THE SIZE OF A TRASH CAN AND ABOUT FORTY TIMES AS HEAVY.

I HAVE NO CLUE WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NOW. ANDY HAS PLANS FOR A NEW D20 MODERN CAMPAIGN, BUT WHO KNOWS WHETHER THAT WILL WORK OUT, OR EVEN START IN THE FIRST PLACE. THE UNHAPPY SITUATION I FIND MYSELF IN IS THAT ALL OF MY DMS HAVE VERY SHORT ATTENTION SPANS, ATTENTION SPANS MUCH TOO SHORT FOR THE TIME-CONSUMING DEMANDS OF A FULL CAMPAIGN. WE'RE PLAYING IN TWO CAMPAIGNS AT ONCE RIGHT NOW AND DERICK'S WILL MAKE THE THIRD.

I DON'T KNOW IF ANY OF THIS WILL WORK OUT. TO SOME EXTENT, I DON'T EVEN CARE IF IT DOES. I'LL KEEP STARTING NEW CHARACTERS IN NEW CAMPAIGNS AND I'LL BE LUCKY IF I CAN EVEN WRITE DOWN A TINY FRACTION OF MY BACK-STORIES. I PROBABLY GET MORE INSPIRATION OUT OF THESE GAMES THAN ANYTHING ELSE. MY DMS WOULD LIKE TO THINK OTHERWISE, BUT THEY ALL KNOW IT'S TRUE.

IF I HAVE THE PROPER INSPIRATION, IT REALLY DOESN'T MATTER WHAT I DO. A STORY WILL FORM. IT MIGHT TAKE THREE YEARS TO GET ON PAPER, BUT IT WILL FORM, AND THAT'S ALL I'M REALLY LOOKING FOR RIGHT NOW.

LADISLAUS  
BY MICHAEL MARTÍNEZ



EVGENI  
BY MICHAEL MARTÍNEZ



ARJAN  
BY MICHAEL MARTÍNEZ



Arjan Lee



JAK  
BY MICHAEL MARTÍNEZ



LEIRA  
BY MICHAEL MARTÍNEZ



VILMAR  
BY MICHAEL MARTÍNEZ





ESTHER  
BY NICK GEIER





TARSIEN  
BY NICK GEIER

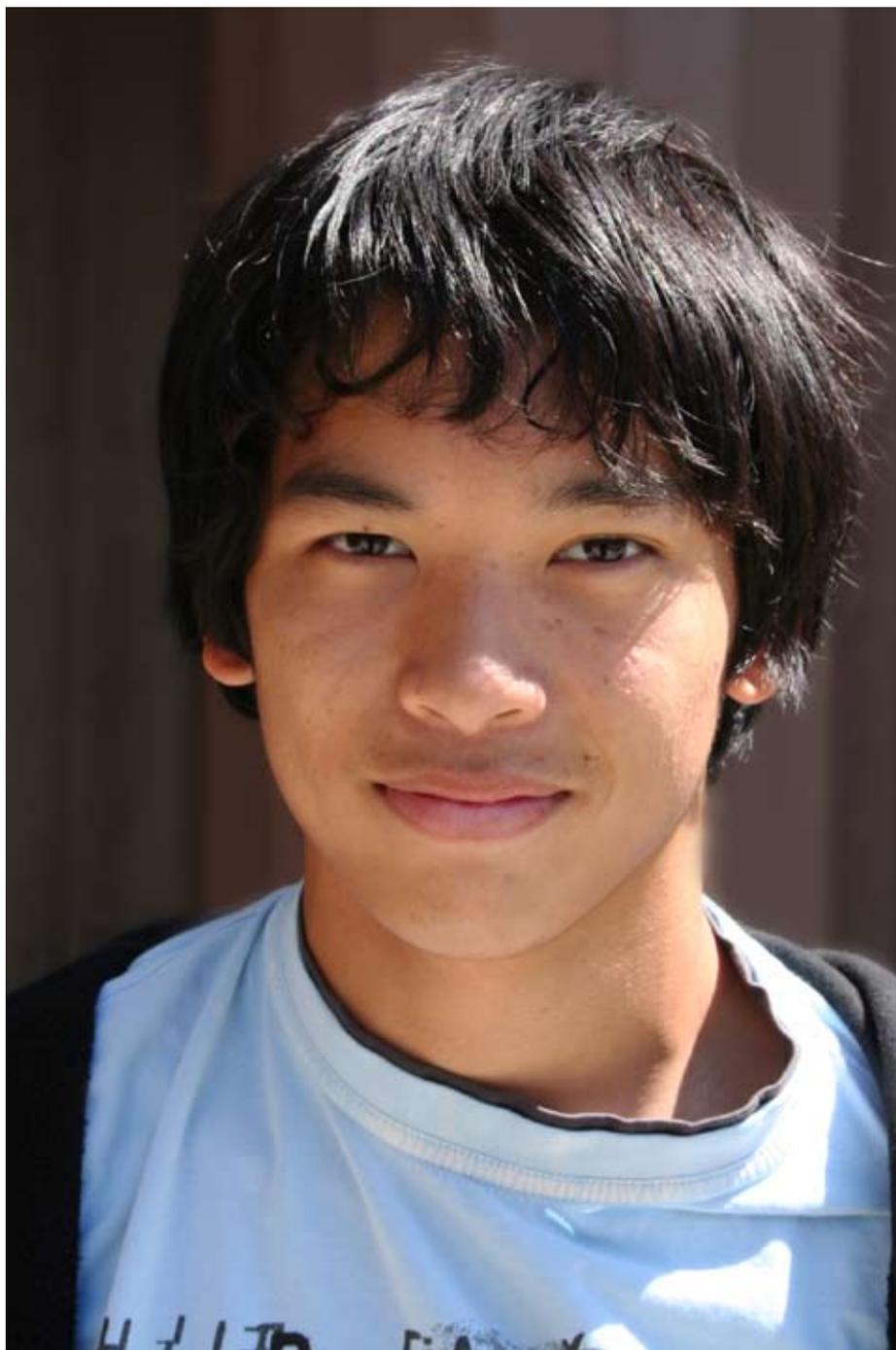


# PLAYERS



ANDY GRABOWSKI, AGE SIXTEEN, WAS INTRODUCED TO D&D IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, BUT ONLY STARTED PLAYING SERIOUSLY SINCE HIS FRESHMAN YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL. HE STARTED HIS CAREER AS A DM FOR HIS FIRST EVER CAMPAIGN BECAUSE NO ONE ELSE WANTED TO. AFTER A VERY LOUSY FIRST CAMPAIGN, HE MORE OR LESS ABANDONED DMING, PLAYING IN VARIOUS OTHER CAMPAIGNS UNTIL JUNIOR YEAR, WHEN HE STARTED A D20 MODERN CAMPAIGN. ANDY HAS STRAYED AWAY FROM PURE, UNDILUTED D&D, DMING (OR GMING, FOR GAME MASTER) THE AFOREMENTIONED D20 MODERN CAMPAIGN, A D20 FUTURE CAMPAIGN, AND A WORLD OF DARKNESS CAMPAIGN, WHICH IS BASED ON A TOTALLY DIFFERENT GAME PLAYING SYSTEM. HE RETURNED TO D&D, HOWEVER, IN A CAMPAIGN THAT IS STILL GOING AND IS PLANNING A D20 MODERN CAMPAIGN FOR THE NEAR FUTURE.





THAO HO, AGE SEVENTEEN, WAS INTRODUCED TO D&D IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WHERE HE PLAYED ONE VERY SHORT-LIVED CAMPAIGN (OF SORTS) WITH ANDY. HE STARTED PLAYING SERIOUSLY DURING HIS SOPHOMORE YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL. THAO STARTED DMING THE SUMMER BEFORE HIS JUNIOR YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL, AND THEN DROPPED HIS FIRST CAMPAIGN AND STARTED A SECOND, THIS TIME WITH PIRATES. NEITHER LASTED ALL THAT LONG, BUT THAO HAS PLANS TO START UP ANOTHER D&D CAMPAIGN THE SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR. RIGHT NOW, HE PLAYS IN EVERYONE ELSE'S CAMPAIGNS, INCLUDING ANDY'S EXPERIMENTS WITH D&D VARIATIONS AND OTHER SYSTEMS. THAO'S CHARACTERS ALL SEEM TO HAVE A PENCHANT FOR DRINKING.



CHRIS LUK, AGE SEVENTEEN, STARTED PLAYING D&D THE SUMMER BEFORE JUNIOR YEAR, IN THAO'S FIRST CAMPAIGN. BEFORE THAT, HE STARTED READING VARIOUS NOVELS USING D&D AS A BASE FOR THEIR STORYLINE IN THE SUMMER BEFORE SOPHOMORE YEAR. THESE NOVELS WERE BASICALLY WRITTEN ABOUT CAMPAIGNS THAT VARIOUS PLAYERS HAD GONE THROUGH, AND INSPIRED CHRIS TO EVENTUALLY START HIS OWN CAMPAIGN, BASED HEAVILY ON ONE OF THE NOVELS. BESIDES DMING THE ONE CAMPAIGN, WHICH IS STILL GOING, CHRIS PLAYS IN EVERYONE ELSE'S CAMPAIGNS AND READS D&D-BASED WEBCOMICS. HE HAS ALSO MASTERED THE ART OF CHARACTER CREATION, PRACTICALLY MEMORIZING ALL OF THE BOOKS AND THUS BEING ABLE TO FIND THE MOST OBSCURE LOOPHOLES TO MAKE EXTREMELY POWERFUL CHARACTERS. CHRIS LAUGHS AT EVERYTHING.



DERICK CHOI, AGE SIXTEEN, STARTED PLAYING D&D THE SUMMER BEFORE HIS JUNIOR YEAR, ALSO IN THAO'S FIRST CAMPAIGN. BEFORE THAT, HE HAD PLAYED VARIOUS COMPUTER VERSIONS OF THE GAME, SUCH AS NEVERWINTER NIGHTS. DERICK LIKES COMBAT MORE THAN HE LIKES ROLE-PLAYING, UNLESS HE'S DOING POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS. HE ALSO LIKES PLAYING COMPUTER GAMES MORE THAN INTERACTING WITH OTHER PEOPLE, BUT WE DON'T HOLD THAT AGAINST HIM. DERICK HAS RECENTLY DECIDED TO START HIS OWN CAMPAIGN, AND NO ONE REALLY KNOWS WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN WITH THAT SINCE HE'S NEVER DMED BEFORE. THE PROPOSED SETTING IS SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF A LARGE WAR, IN WHICH ALL OF US HAVE BEEN CONSCRIPTED. ALTHOUGH HIS PROPOSED PLAN SCARES SOME OF US, WE'RE GOING TO WAIT AND SEE.



NICK GEIER, AGE SEVENTEEN, WAS FIRST INTRODUCED TO D&D SOMETIME IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WHERE HE WAS ALSO IN THE SAME PSEUDO-CAMPAIGN AS ANDY AND THAO. AFTER THAT, HE STARTED SERIOUSLY PLAYING HIS SOPHOMORE YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL. NICK HAS NEVER BEEN A DM BEFORE AND ISN'T SURE IF HE EVER WILL BE IN THE FUTURE ALTHOUGH HE HAS THOUGHT ABOUT IT. NICK SPENDS A LOT OF TIME ON CHARACTER CREATION, ALWAYS PAYING CAREFUL ATTENTION TO EVERY DETAIL ABOUT HIS CHARACTER. HE IS ALSO A VERY GOOD ARTIST AND DRAWS SKETCHES OF HIS CHARACTERS AND, AT OTHERS' INSISTENCE, SETTINGS IN THE CAMPAIGN. NICK IS A LITTLE MORE INTO THE ROLE-PLAYING ASPECT THAN MOST AND HAS PUT QUITE A BIT OF THOUGHT INTO HIS CHARACTERS' BACK-STORIES.



MICHAEL MARTÍNEZ, AGE SIXTEEN, HAS PLAYED D&D SINCE HER FRESHMAN YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL WHERE SHE WAS ONE OF THE MORE DEDICATED PLAYERS IN ANDY'S FIRST CAMPAIGN. THE ONLY GIRL IN NEARLY ALL OF THE CAMPAIGNS SHE'S PLAYED IN, MICHAEL HAS ATTEMPTED TO FIT IN BY ROLE-PLAYING AS GUYS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY. THE ONE EXCEPTION WAS WHEN CHRIS INSISTED THAT SHE PLAY AS A GIRL FOR THE SAKE OF HIS CAMPAIGN'S BACK-STORY. MICHAEL SPENDS MORE TIME ON CHARACTER BACK-STORIES AND SKETCHES THAN SHE DOES ON THE TECHNICAL ASPECT OF CHARACTER CREATION, EVEN WRITING DOWN HER CHARACTERS' BACK-STORIES. SHE IS ALWAYS HOPING THAT THE NEXT CAMPAIGN WILL HOLD MORE ROLE-PLAYING OPPORTUNITIES.



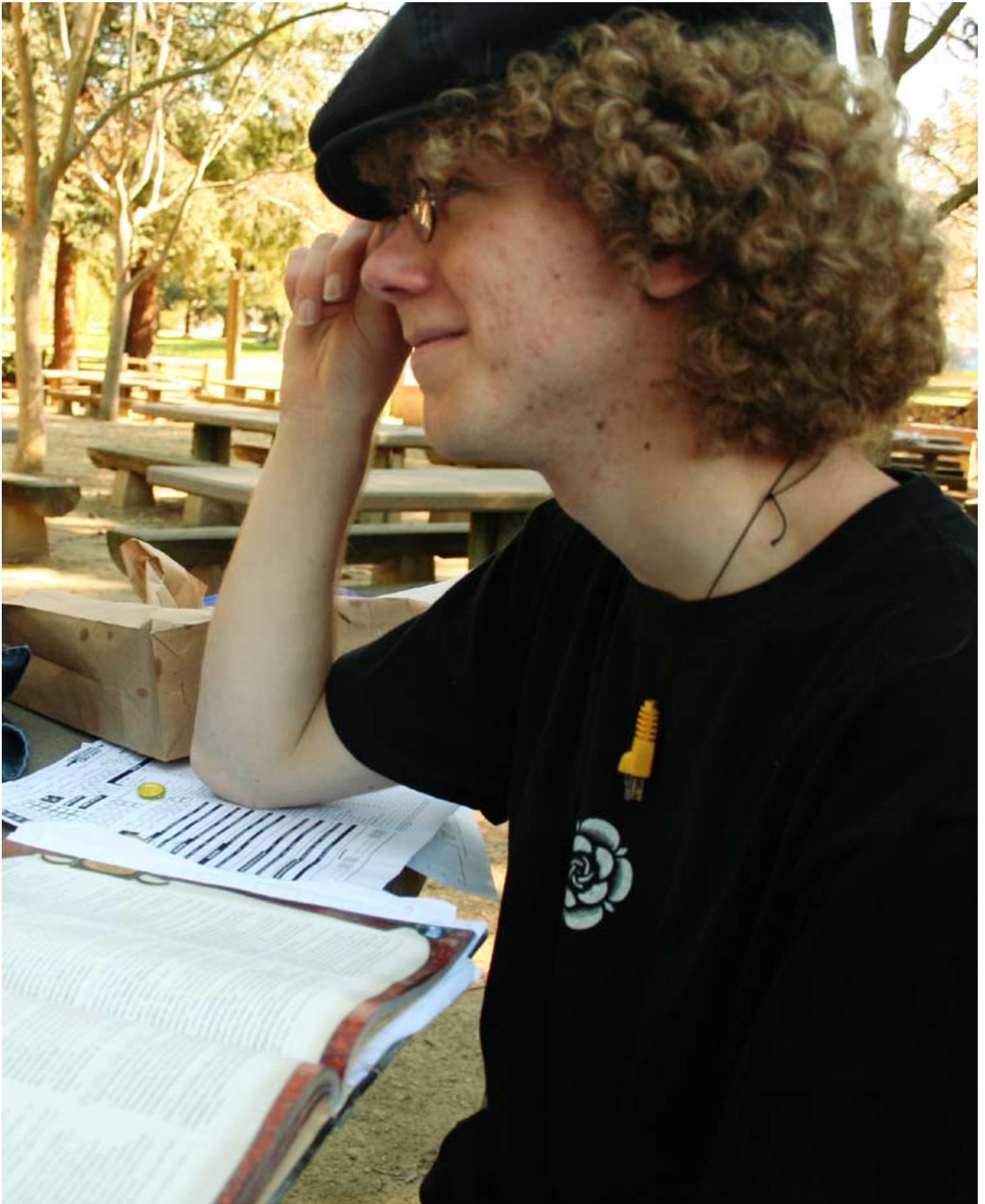


“MY GUY  
HAS TO  
GET  
DRUNK.”

-THAO HO









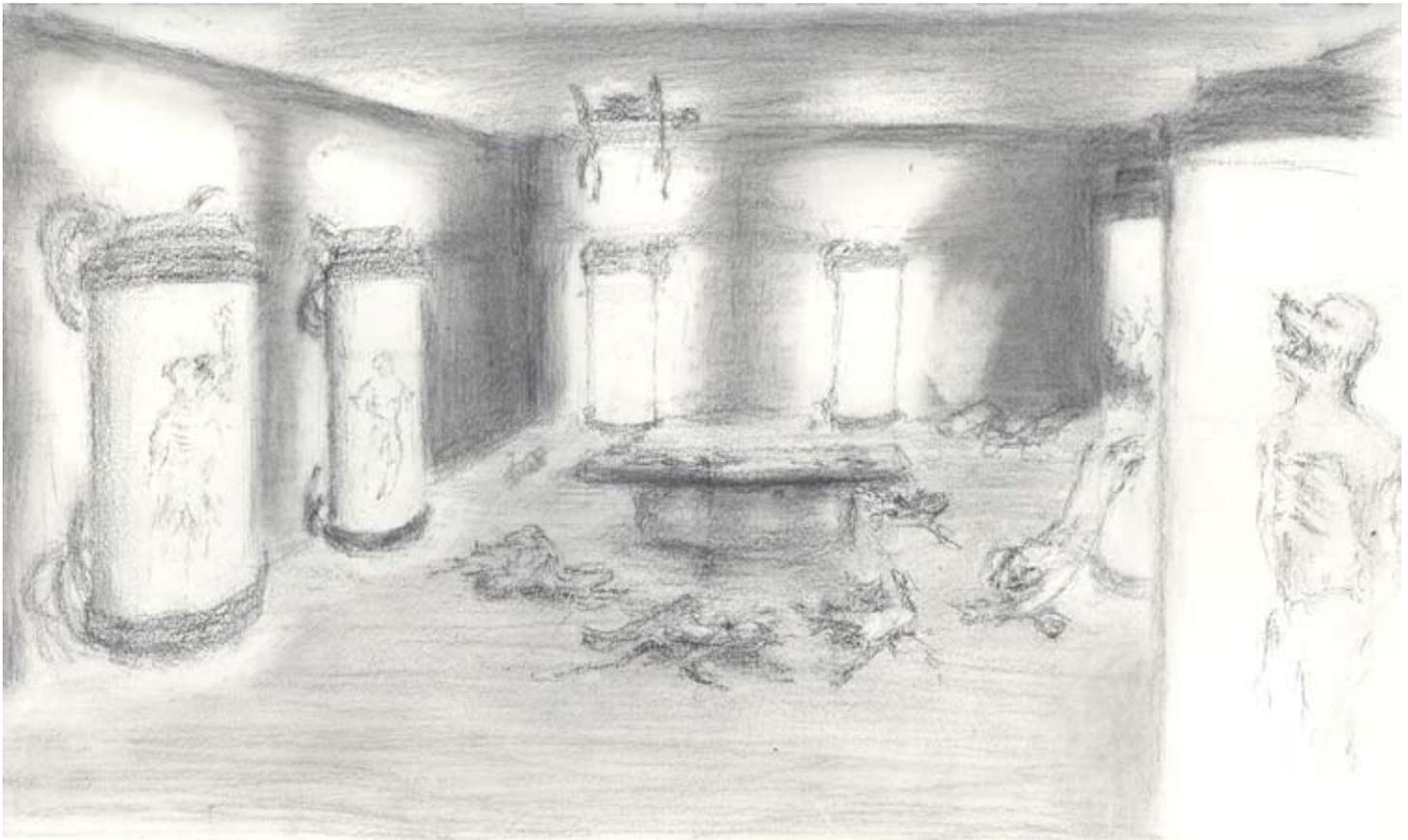
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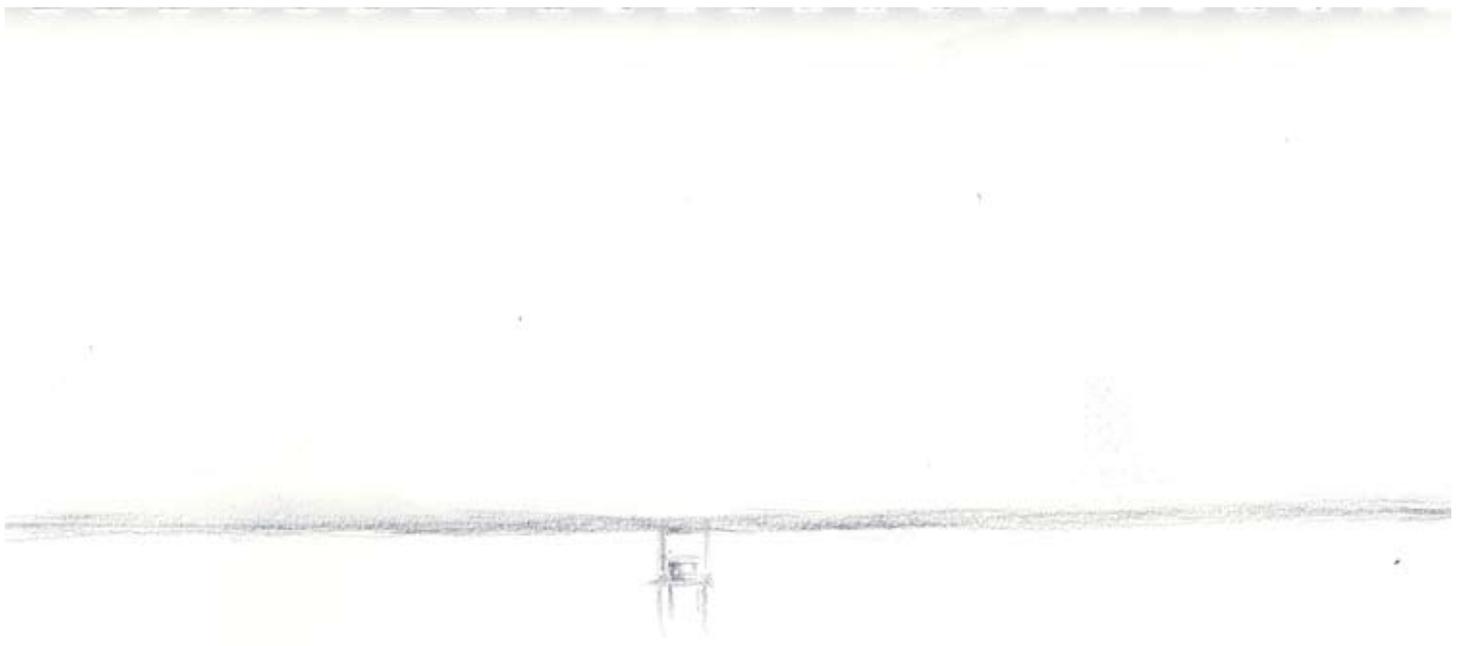




THIS IS THAO'S HOUSE, ONE OF OUR FAVORITE PLACES TO HOLD GAMES. THERE'S ALWAYS LOTS OF FOOD (CHIPS, COOKIES, PIZZA, ETC.) AND THAO'S PARENTS DON'T MAKE US PAY THEM BACK ANYTHING. ALTHOUGH THEY PROBABLY WILL AFTER THEY READ THIS. THE ONE DOWNSIDE IS A SHORTAGE OF SODA. AND BY SHORTAGE, I MEAN THERE ISN'T ENOUGH FOR MORE THAN ONE CAN EACH, WHICH IS LESS THAN WHAT SOME OF US NEED TO STAY AWAKE AFTER SCHOOL.



NICK GEIER WAS NICE ENOUGH TO DRAW SKETCHES OF SOME CAMPAIGNS WE'VE PLAYED. THIS PARTICULAR SKETCH IS FROM ANDY'S WORLD OF DARKNESS CAMPAIGN, WHICH, SADLY, IS NO LONGER CONTINUING. IN THIS SCENE, OUR PARTY HAS BEEN EXPLORING THE ABANDONED MENTAL INSTITUTION OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FOREST (YES, IT'S A HORROR STORY) AND HAVE FOUND IT CONVERTED INTO A MAKESHIFT SCIENCE LAB. HOWEVER, EVERYONE INSIDE HAS BEEN BRUTALLY KILLED BY SOME KIND OF ANIMAL. IN THIS ROOM, WE'VE DISCOVERED THAT SCIENTISTS HAVE BEEN BREEDING WEREWOLVES IN LARGE TANKS, BUT WERE KILLED ATTEMPTING TO DISSECT ONE THAT WASN'T PROPERLY SEDATED BEFOREHAND.

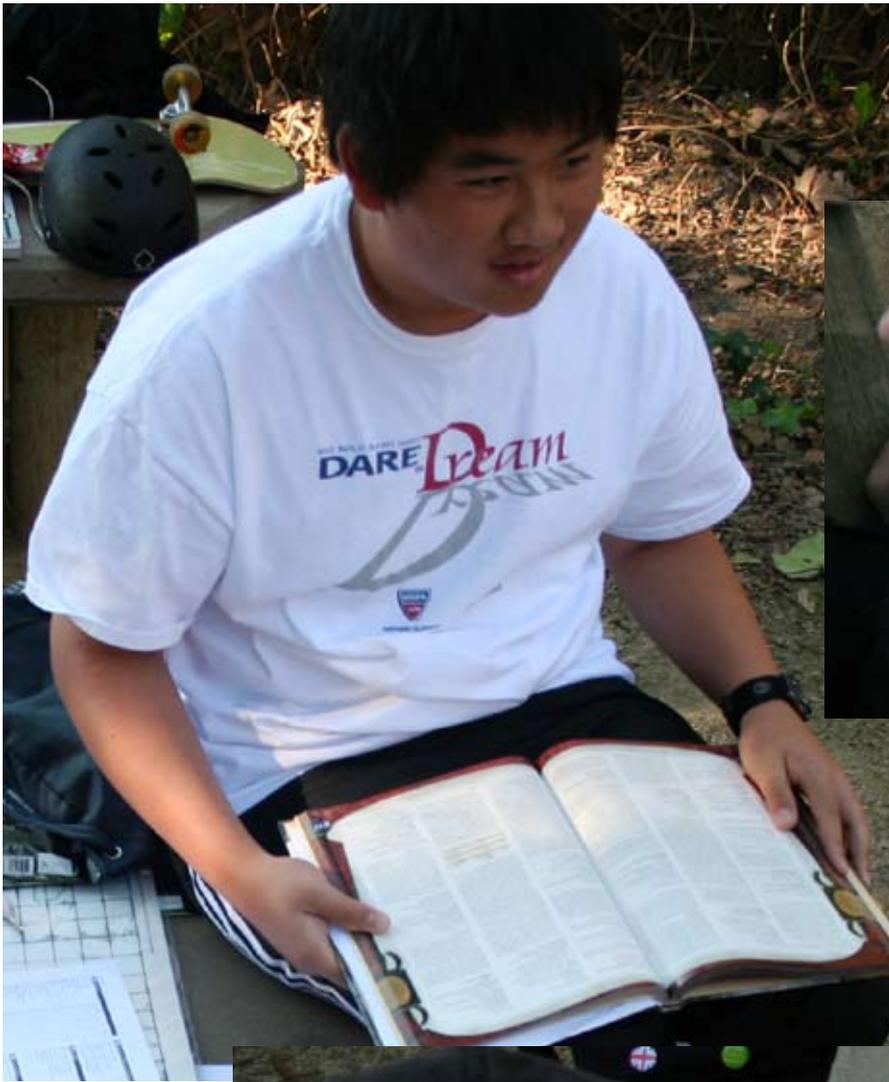


IN THIS SKETCH, NICK DREW A SCENE FROM THAO'S FIRST CAMPAIGN. OUR PARTY HAD JUST STEPPED THROUGH A DIMENSIONAL DOOR (A DOOR THAT LEADS TO AN ALTERNATE DIMENSION) AND FOUND OURSELVES IN WHAT SEEMED TO BE A ROOM, BUT WAS INFINITELY HUGE. WALLS, FLOOR, AND CEILING WERE ALL TOTALLY WHITE. IN THE CENTER WAS A SINGLE CHAIR, WITH A SMALL BOX ON TOP. NOT KNOWING WHAT ELSE TO DO (AND REALIZING THAT THE DOOR WAS GONE) ANDY DECIDED TO LIFT THE BOX OFF OF THE CHAIR...





HERE, I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD HOST, BUT AT THE LAST MINUTE, FOUND OUT THAT MY LITTLE BROTHER'S DEATH METAL BAND WAS COMING OVER TO PRACTICE. SINCE THEY'RE USUALLY HOSTILE TO D&D PLAYERS, WE DECIDED TO RELOCATE TO CUESTA PARK WHERE WE DODGED RABID SQUIRRELS, TALKED ABOUT THE GOOD OLD DAYS WITH AGING PARK RANGERS, AND POLITELY DECLINED SOME HAMBURGERS THAT WERE GRACIOUSLY OFFERED TO US BY A LARGE FAMILY HAVING A LOUD PARTY NEXT TO OUR TABLE. SUFFICE TO SAY, WE NEVER WANT TO PLAY THERE AGAIN.



# ROLE-PLAYING



EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT D&D.

BACK IN THE EIGHTIES, PEOPLE WHO PLAYED D&D WERE CONSIDERED SUICIDAL, HOMICIDAL, DEVIL-WORSHIPPING, DANGERS TO THEMSELVES AND TO SOCIETY. WHOLE ORGANIZATIONS (NAMELY BOTHERED ABOUT DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS, OR B.A.D.D.) WERE FOUNDED ON THIS PRINCIPLE.<sup>1</sup> BUT TIMES HAVE CHANGED AND NOW THE PEOPLE WHO PLAY D&D ARE CHIEFLY CONSIDERED NERDS, HARMLESS LOSERS WHO HAVE NOTHING BETTER TO DO IN THEIR FREE TIME THAN TO ROLL DICE AND TALK ABOUT SUCH OBSCURE CONCEPTS AS “AC” (ARMOR CLASS, NOT AIR CONDITIONING) AND “FEATS.” NO ONE REALLY UNDERSTANDS THE GAME OR WHY PEOPLE PLAY IT AND FRANKLY, NO ONE REALLY CARES.

BUT IF YOU WERE TO ASK SOMEONE WHO PLAYS D&D ABOUT THE GAME, THEIR RESPONSE WILL AUTOMATICALLY FALL INTO ONE OF TWO CATEGORIES: COMBAT OR CHARACTER. COMBAT IS CRUCIAL TO THE GAME. YOU GO THROUGH DUNGEONS AND FIGHT DRAGONS. OR GOBLINS, ORCS, KOBOLDS, TARASQUES, DIRE BADGERS, LICHES, GHOSTS, EXTRAPLANAR BEINGS, HUMANS, DEMONS, WATER ELEMENTALS, GELATINOUS CUBES, ETC. IN OTHER WORDS, COMBAT IS CENTRAL TO D&D. RANDOM ENCOUNTERS USUALLY HELP MOVE THE PLOT ALONG AND WITHOUT COMBAT, VERY LITTLE CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED.





HOWEVER, CHARACTERS ARE SO MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THAN COMBAT, NAMELY BECAUSE IF THERE AREN'T CHARACTERS, THERE ISN'T A PLOT. ANDY IS THE FIRST DM I PLAYED UNDER AND WHO I STILL PLAY WITH IN HIS, AND OTHER DMS', CAMPAIGNS. HE EXPLAINED IN AN INTERVIEW, "YOU HAVE TO GET INTO THE HEAD OF THE PERSON WHO YOU'RE PLAYING BECAUSE OTHERWISE YOU CAN'T ... PLAY THEM IN COMBAT. SO WITHOUT ONE THERE CAN'T REALLY BE THE OTHER IN A GOOD D&D GAME."<sup>2</sup> ALTHOUGH I WOULD SAY THAT WITHOUT CHARACTERS, COMBAT IS POINTLESS. COMBAT MOVES THE PLOT ALONG, BUT THE CHARACTERS HAVE TO GET TO THE COMBAT POINT OR, IF THEY'RE ESPECIALLY CUNNING, DANCE CAUTIOUSLY AROUND IT. AT TIMES, THE PLAYERS GET SO INTO CHARACTER THAT THEY LOSE ALL TOUCH WITH REALITY AND THE WORLD AS IT EXISTS BEYOND THE BATTLE GRID. THE CORE OF D&D IS THE ROLE-PLAYING, THE ACTING, THE ATTEMPT AT A BELIEVABLE ESCAPE FROM THE MUNDANE TEXTBOOK REALITY THAT SO MANY ADULTS TELL TEENAGERS TO CALL LIFE.

ANY TEENAGER WITH HALF A BRAIN WOULD AGREE THAT SEVENTY PERCENT OF THE TIME, SCHOOL IS A WASTE, AND THAT DOESN'T INCLUDE THE LUNCH PERIOD. EVERYONE, YES, EVERYONE, WANTS TO ESCAPE FROM THEIR REALITY AND THEY ACCOMPLISH THAT EITHER BY WATCHING MOVIES AND TV, LISTENING TO MUSIC, READING BOOKS, DRAWING, WRITING POETRY, PLAYING VIDEOGAMES, SURFING THE INTERNET, OR SLEEPING. SOME PLAY D&D AND ESCAPE INTO A FANTASY WORLD WHERE THEY AREN'T FAILING ENGLISH AND RUNNING A SEVENTEEN-MINUTE MILE, BUT RIPPING THE HEADS OFF EVILDOERS AND BEING SHOWERED WITH GOLD PIECES FROM THE LOCAL VILLAGE'S INHABITANTS. I MEAN, I'M NOT FAILING ENGLISH, BUT THAT STILL SOUNDS BETTER THAN CLASS.

CHARACTER CREATION ALLOWS A TYPICALLY MEDIOCRE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT TO BECOME A VERY STRONG, VERY LARGE, VERY AWESOME TWENTY-FOUR YEAR OLD HALF-ELF PALADIN, SMITING EVIL WITH A SWORD THAT'S SIX FEET LONG FROM ATOP A SHINING, WHITE WARHORSE. AND IF SMITING DOESN'T FLOAT SAID HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT'S BOAT, THERE ARE DOZENS OF OTHER RACES, CLASSES, WEAPONS, AND STEEDS TO CHOOSE FROM. THAO, ANOTHER DM I'VE PLAYED UNDER AND WHO I PLAY WITH AS A FELLOW PLAYING CHARACTER (PC) IN MULTIPLE CAMPAIGNS, HAS PROBABLY BEEN PLAYING LONGER THAN I HAVE. "MY FAVORITE CHARACTER I MADE WAS A BARBARIAN NAMED JIM. HE'S A BIG GUY. HE'S KIND," THAO SAID, DESCRIBING A CHARACTER HE CREATED FOR AN OLD CAMPAIGN. HE CONTINUED, "THERE'S REALLY NOT MUCH TO SAY ABOUT JIM. HE HAS A ONE-SYLLABLE NAME. HE BREAKS THINGS."<sup>3</sup> THE INFINITE POSSIBILITIES ARE MORE THAN APPEALING TO ANDY. HAVING PLAYED ROLE-PLAYING GAMES ON THE COMPUTER BEFORE GETTING INTO D&D, HE KNOWS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE A LIMIT AND THAT IT'S KIND OF NICE TO FORGET THAT THEY EXIST FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS. IT'S THE FEELING OF FREEDOM THAT'S SO APPEALING TO ANDY, THE FEELING THAT HE CAN BE OR DO ANYTHING HE WANTS BECAUSE NOTHING, NOTHING AT ALL, CAN STOP HIM.

AND ALTHOUGH INFINITY AND CONTROL ARE BOTH APPEALING INCENTIVES, MOST PEOPLE WHO PLAY HAVE DEEPER REASONS TO START. THEY GO BEYOND THOSE WHO START SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY WANT TO HANG OUT WITH THEIR FRIENDS AND THEY DON'T REALLY HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO DO ON THE WEEKENDS. THEY HAVE AN IMAGINATION THAT'S CHEWING AT THE BIT EVEN THOUGH THE RACE IS OVER. THEY HAVE AN EVERLASTING SPRING OF CREATIVITY THAT'S PERPETUALLY BUBBLING AND OVERFLOWING FROM THEIR ALREADY CROWDED MIND INTO THE INFINITY OF THEIR EXISTENCE. NEEDING TO POINT THIS FLOW IN A SEMI-LOGICAL DIRECTION, THEY TURN TO D&D, A GAME THAT WELCOMES THE CREATIVE MIND, UNLIKE THE THOUSANDS OF COMPUTER GAMES THAT WERE CREATED FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF BEATING THE NEXT BOSS. THE THOUGHT AND CREATIVE ENERGY THAT D&D REQUIRES IS A WELCOME EXERCISE IN IMAGINATION FOR THOSE WHO PLAY IT. SEEKING EITHER AN OUTLET FOR THEIR IDEAS OR AN ESCAPE FROM THEIR LIFE, HIGH SCHOOL TEENAGERS ENTER THE WORLD OF D&D AND FIND A PARADISE THAT THEY ONCE THOUGHT UNATTAINABLE.

THAT'S WHY I PLAY D&D. I STARTED BECAUSE I THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE FUN AND I WANTED TO HANG OUT WITH MY FRIENDS, BUT IT TURNED OUT TO BE ONE OF THE MOST PERFECT MEDIUMS FOR SELF-EXPRESSION. TWO AND A HALF YEARS LATER, I FIND MYSELF ADDICTED AND INVOLVED IN FOUR DIFFERENT CAMPAIGNS UNDER THREE DMS AND FROM TWO (PERHAPS THREE) DIFFERENT ROLE-PLAYING SYSTEMS. WHEN I'M BORED IN CLASS, I THINK OF BACK-STORIES FOR MY CHARACTERS, BACK-STORIES THAT SPAN FORTY-FIVE PAGES AND A MEASLY TEN YEARS OF A TWENTY-ONE YEAR OLD CHARACTER'S LIFE. AND WHEN THINKING JUST DOESN'T CUT IT, I DRAW. I DRAW MY CHARACTERS, THEIR FRIENDS, THEIR FAMILY, THEIR ENEMIES, THEIR ACQUAINTANCES, THEIR LOVERS, THEIR NEIGHBORS, THEIR SCHOOL TEACHERS, AND THEIR CURRENT GROUP (PARTY) MEMBERS. I DRAW MY CHARACTERS AS I IMAGINE THEM, FROM AGE FIVE TO THIRTY-TWO, AND SCRAWL WHAT COMES TO MIND ABOUT THEIR LIVES, WHAT SONG LYRICS DESCRIBE THEM, WHAT THEIR FAVORITE COLORS ARE.



I'VE THOUGHT AND SOMETIMES WRITTEN EXTENSIVE BACK-STORIES THAT HAVE INCLUDED REASONS FOR ADVENTURING INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, REVENGE ON A CHILDHOOD FRIEND, A NEED TO PROVE ONESELF, A QUEST FOR A LOST LOVER, A CONSCRIPTION IN THE LOCAL MILITIA, AND A LIFETIME OF WANDERING FORCED UPON A MISUNDERSTOOD, SCHIZOPHRENIC MUTANT. JUST IN EXCRUCIATINGLY HIGH LEVELS OF DETAIL. GRANTED, I PUT A LITTLE MORE EFFORT INTO MY CHARACTERS THAN MOST PEOPLE WHO PLAY, BUT I TEND TO HAVE A WILDER IMAGINATION.

FOR ME, D&D HAS NOT JUST PROVIDED AN OUTLET FOR MY IMAGINATION, BUT ALSO INSPIRATION FOR MY CREATIVITY, A WELL FROM WHICH I DRAW MORE IDEAS DAILY. IT PROVIDES ME WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE ANOTHER WORLD, ANOTHER PERSON, ANOTHER LIFE. IT PROVIDES ME WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE IN ANOTHER WORLD, AS ANOTHER PERSON, IN ANOTHER LIFE. IT PROVIDES ME WITH THE ULTIMATE FORM OF ESCAPISM.

I DON'T WANT TO BE A TEENAGER SOMETIMES. MOST TEENAGERS DON'T WANT TO BE A TEENAGER EVER. PARENTS DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU, TEACHERS DEMAND TOO MUCH OF YOU, AND FRIENDS DESERT YOU AT THE DROP OF A HAT. HIGH SCHOOL IS THE ULTIMATE DRAMA. AND NOT JUST A DRAMA, EITHER. I'M TALKING SOAP OPERA, HERE. THIS LASTS FOUR WHOLE YEARS, WHICH MAY NOT SEEM LIKE MUCH WHEN YOU'RE EIGHTY-YEARS-OLD, BUT WHEN YOU'RE ONLY SIXTEEN, THAT'S A WHOLE QUARTER OF YOUR LIFE.

AND WOULDN'T IT BE SO NICE TO FORGET ABOUT THE SATS, COLLEGE, SCHOOL, CHORES, AND MY LITTLE BROTHER WHO THINKS D&D IS PROBABLY THE DUMBEST GAME EVER INVENTED, BESIDES POKÉMON? WHEN I PLAY D&D I CAN SOMETIMES FORGET THAT I'M A TEENAGER IN HIGH SCHOOL WITH LITTLE TO NO CONTROL OVER MY LIFE AS I CURRENTLY LIVE IT. THE ONLY WAYS I COULD GET THE LEVEL OF CONTROL I WANT ARE EITHER BY RUNNING AWAY AND BECOMING A HOBO ON THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO OR GROWING UP. THE FIRST REALLY DOESN'T PRESENT ME WITH ANY CONTROL, AND THE SECOND TAKES TOO LONG. D&D IS THE NEXT BEST THING. ACTUALLY, D&D IS THE BEST THING.





WHEN I PLAY D&D, I HAVE TO THINK ABOUT WHICH WEAPON I'M GOING TO USE WHEN WE ENTER THE NEXT BATTLE. WHEN I PLAY D&D, I HAVE TO THINK ABOUT WHO'S GOING TO BLUFF THE PARTY INTO THE MAYOR'S OFFICE, OR, IF WE'RE ALREADY IN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE, WHO'S GOING TO ARGUE TO GET THE MAYOR TO INCREASE THE BOUNTY ON THE KOBOLD HEADS WE JUST HAULED IN. WHETHER OR NOT THESE THINGS ARE ANY BETTER OR WORSE TO THINK ABOUT THAN MY MUNDANE TASKS IN REAL LIFE IS DEBATABLE, BUT WHAT IS DEFINITELY TRUE IS THAT I ENJOY THINKING ABOUT THESE THINGS. I ENJOY THINKING ABOUT MY CHARACTER'S LIFE BECAUSE I KNOW THAT NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE OKAY. AND IF NOT, ANGST IS GOOD TOO. IT'S MORE INTERESTING TO READ OR HEAR ABOUT THAN HAPPINESS. IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE IN A STORY, AS LONG AS THE ANGST IS BOTH INTERESTING ENOUGH TO APPEAL TO OUR MORBID CURIOSITY AND BELIEVABLE ENOUGH SO THAT WE DON'T JUST ROLL OUR EYES AND ZONE OUT PART-WAY THROUGH THE ANGST-RIDDEN PROLOGUE TO THE CAMPAIGN.

WHICH LEADS ME BACK INTO THE STORYTELLING ASPECT OF DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS. AS DUNGEON MASTER KATE HILL, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE MACALESTER GAMING SOCIETY (AS OF 2006), EXPLAINED, "I LOVE THE SPONTANEITY, THE CREATIVITY... BASICALLY, YOU'RE WRITING A NOVEL ON THE GO ABOUT SEVERAL OF YOUR FRIENDS."<sup>4</sup> THAO AGREES AS WELL, SAYING, "I WANT TO CREATE A STORY. THAT'S THE MAIN THING IN A CAMPAIGN; IT'S TO CREATE A STORY THAT OTHER PEOPLE HAVE TO LIVE IN."<sup>3</sup> I'M NOT A DM, SO I'M WRITING A NOVEL ABOUT MYSELF, WITH SEVERAL OF MY FRIENDS PLAYING BACKUP ROLES. AND I'M NOT

JUST WRITING A NOVEL; I'M LIVING IN AN ALTERNATE REALITY. A REALITY WHERE MY CREATIVITY REIGNS SUPREME.

I CAN DO THINGS IN D&D THAT I COULD NEVER DO IN REAL LIFE. IN D&D, I CAN GO UP TO SOME RANDOM GUY IN THE STREET AND BEAT HIM UP. IN REALITY, I HURT MYSELF PRETENDING TO SLAP SOMEONE. IN D&D, I CAN SNEAK INTO A CASTLE STRONGHOLD AND STEAL MOUNTAINS OF GOLD. IN REALITY, I CAN'T EVEN OPEN THE DOOR TO MY OWN HOUSE. WITH THE KEY. IN D&D, I CAN SAVE THE WORLD, TALK TO THE GODS, AND FIGHT WITH TRAITOROUS KINGS. BUT IN REALITY, I STILL HAVEN'T FINISHED MY MATH HOMEWORK, AND IT'S ALMOST ELEVEN THIRTY.

WHEN I PLAY D&D, I DON'T NEED REAL LIFE.

<sup>1</sup> ROBINSON, B. A. "ROLE-PLAYING GAMES: ATTACKS BY CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIANS." ESSAY, 1996. RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE.ORG. 5 APR. 2007 <[HTTP://WWW.RELIGIOUSTOLERANCE.ORG/D\\_A\\_D2.HTM](http://www.religioustolerance.org/d_a_d2.htm)>.

<sup>2</sup> GRABOWSKI, ANDY. PERSONAL INTERVIEW. 7 MAR. 2007.

<sup>3</sup> HO, THAO. PERSONAL INTERVIEW. 18 MAR. 2007.

<sup>4</sup> MALIK, JAMAL. "DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: IT'S NOT JUST FOR LOSERS." MAC WEEKLY. 12 MAR. 2006. 5 APR. 2007 <[HTTP://WWW.THEMACWEEKLY.COM/ARTICLES/20060309/FEATURES/215](http://www.themacweekly.com/articles/20060309/features/215)>.



# NOTES



BEING A DM IS HARD.

I WOULDN'T KNOW. I'VE NEVER BEEN ONE. BUT MOST OF MY D&D FRIENDS HAVE BEEN ONE (OR ARE PLANNING TO, IN DERICK'S CASE). ANDY'S OUR MOST ACTIVE DM, HAVING PRESIDED OVER FIVE CAMPAIGNS. THAO, ONLY DMING TWO, PUT HOURS OF EFFORT INTO HIS CAMAPAIGN, TYPING HIS SCENARIOS BEFOREHAND. WHERE ANDY WOULD AD-LIB, THAO WOULD PREPARE EXTENSIVELY. ANDY'S CAMPAIGNS ARE GOOD FOR ACTION AND A LITTLE MORE FIGHTING. THAO'S WERE GOOD FOR THE THOUGHT THAT WE HAD TO PUT INTO PLAYING THEM. WHAT I'VE MANAGED TO COLLECT IS AN ASSORTMENT OF THEIR NOTES FOR VARIOUS CAMPAIGNS.



“ IF YOU’RE THE  
DUNGEON  
MASTER, YOU  
CAN DO  
ANYTHING.  
THAT’S WHY I’M  
THE DUNGEON  
MASTER.”

-ANDY GRABOWSKI

## Hunter Killer

combat robot "Meatgrinder" M-G-8 CR 10

hp 55 Str 23 Fort +2  
 Init +4 Dex 10 Ref +2  
 Speed 30ft Con - Will +2  
 Def 17 Int -  
 touch 9 Wis 10  
 CF 17 Cha 1  
 BAB +5  
 Cmp +15

Atk +10 mlee (1d6 + 1/2 claw)  
 +4 range (3d8 base rifle)  $\uparrow$   
 +4 range mini-r. launcher 150ft  $\uparrow$   
 Adv Teer Gun 10/10/10/10

climb +10 Fireflush 3d6  $\uparrow$  200ft

climb +12

Search +4 - SS/22 I

Spot +8 SS/40 II

SS/23 III

-7

4/0

## AGU Gun Droner

Large Adaptive Robot

hp 40 Int 11 Str 23  
 Speed 25ft Dex 12  
 Def 16 Con -  
 touch 15 Int -  
 CF 15 Wis 12  
 Cha 1

Atk +6 mlee 3d6 chainsaw  
 +1 range 2d8 SAW  $\uparrow$  200/200  
 30ft

+1 range MGL Mark I  $\uparrow$  60ft  
 30ft  
 frag 3d6  $\uparrow$  70ft  
 smoke 4d10 70ft  $\uparrow$  20ft  
 per. magnet

5 spot

5 hear

5 maneuverability

5 hide

- Personal Fire Arms Proficiency

- Evolve Prof. Chainsaw

- Make Smoke Prof.

- Legs Multiple

- Alumisteel Armor +5 Equiv. -1 speed

- Dex upgrade x2

- Wis upgrade x1

- Skill Prog. x4

- Feat Prog. x3

hp 40

hp 40

hp 40

## Gargoyle Fast J

hp 108 CR 7

Init +4 Str 11  
 Spd 50 Dex 16 Fort +0  
 Fly 75 Con 18 Ref +10  
 Def 22 Int 6 Will +8  
 touch 18 Wis 10  
 CF 16 Cha 6

BAB +6

Grp +6

Atk +16 mlee (1d4/claw)

10 H. Anti-tank Rifle 3d8  $\uparrow$  20  
 50ft

Hide +9

Listen +4

Spot +4

Move Silent +8

- Multiattack

- Weapon Fines (claw)

- Personal Firearms Pro.

- Point blank shot

- Double tap

Talents • Evasion • Increased speed

Large AB

6/-

H Anti-tank

22-6

5 hex 10mm rounds

has iron sights

~~108~~ 52 hp

~~108~~ 22 hp

~~108~~ 20

~~108~~ 26

⑤

## Death Class Mechs

- Large Mechs

+8 str

-1 atk + Defenc.

100hp

reach 10ft

Speed 30ft

hardness 10

Def +3

Helmet

Back

left arm ASX Dragon

right arm Wall eye Rifle

shoulder Enigma Sensor Suite

Torso Sixth

Boots

- Enigma Sensor

range 150ft cone shape

- Alumisteel

- ASX Dragon Flame thrower

30ft cone 400 Fire Ref +13

- Wall eye Adv. Rail gun

100ft 3d12 ignore first 15pts of hardness

- Dra plastic Armor +3 equivat bonus

③

### Bar tender

LL Sec. Guard CR1

hp 14	Str 14	Feat +1
Init +1	Dex 12	Ref +1
30"	Con 15	Will +0
Def 16	Int 13	
touch 13	Wis 10	
ff 15	Cha 8	
Wrap +3		
Atk +3 (1d3+2 brass)		
+2 PA 470	126040w	208 7.44
		1000

③

### Black Marketer

hp 13	CR 1
hp 14	
ff 12	
ff 13	
Wrap +1	
atk +1 (1d3+1 brass)	
+3 (2d6/ Springfield Bureau Mod. FBI	
	8/8 SWAT
Search +4	.45

③

### Eneel Body Guard

Mid LV contract killer

hp 39	Feat +4	
Init +3	Str 12	Ref +6
30"	Dex 16	Will +3
Def 19	Con 14	
touch 19	Int 10	
ff 16	Wis 11	
DABH	Cha 8	
Wrap +5		
Atk +5 (brass knuckle/1d3+1)		
+7 (OTs -20 Gnom/2d8)	scyl 5/5	
+7 (olt 40mm S-shot made launcher		
Beehive 4d10	2000	3/5
Frag 2d6	<1000>	3/5

- = Quick Draw
- = Point Black shot

Hide +10  
M. Silently +10  
Height of ha-3 +11

③

### Dante Mid Black Marketeer

hp 40	Str 12	Feat +5
Init +1	Dex 13	Ref +3
Speed 30ft	Con 15	Will +3
Def cur 16	Int 15	
touch 14	Wis 10	
ff 15	Cha 8	
DAB +3		
Wrap +4		
Atk +4 (1d3+1/ol/ ammo)		
+4 (stan gun/1d3/elec)		
+6 (2d6/Glock 17)		
+6 (1d8/Steyr TMP)	4142	4000

②

### Super killer Merc

hp 39 str 17 Fort 5  
 Init +2 Dex 14 Ref +4  
 speed 15 con 14 Will +3  
 Defense 20 Int 10  
 touch 20 wis 12  
 ff 20 Cha 8  
 BAB +6  
 Grp +10  
 Atk +10/5 melee (1d4+3/1d20/knife)  
 Full Atk +10/5 (block 20/2d6)  
 +12/+7 (OICW)

X hp 37  
 v 10 39 → 23

PAT Arms OICW  
 +7 Equip +2 2d8 M430 70ft  
 +2 str +1d6  
 +1 Atk +2 Burst Shell  
 3d6 → Reflex 14

### Mid Merc

hp 70/8+14  
 hp 45(30) Fort +6 (+3) str 15 (+1) Dex 14 (+1) Con 12 (+1) Int 10 (+1) Wis 12 (+1) Cha 8 (+1)  
 Init +4 Ref +5  
 Spd 25 Will +3  
 Def 20  
 touch 15  
 ff 15  
 BAB +6  
 Grp +8

melee +9 1d4+4. at unarmed  
 +5 1d4+4 knife  
 ranged +10/5 2d6(1) block 20  
 +10/5 2d6(1) HK MPS  
 +9/4 4d6 frage Male

### Equip Index

R Targetly Optics +2 mana M Rope +4 str +2 Def  
 +1 to Damage on MPS & block +4 hp  
 +1 mana

④

### Over Rat Moreau Merc

Strong 1 / Strong Ordinary 2 CR 2  
 Hp 18  
 Init +2 str 11 Fort +4  
 Spd 25ft Dex 18 Ref +2  
 Defense 17 Int 12 Will +1  
 touch 15/ff 15 Wis 12  
 BAB +3  
 Grp +3  
 Atk +5 melee (1d4 / 1d20 / knife)  
 Full Atk +8 range (2d6 / HK MPS) +8 range (1d6 / block?)  
 +9 range (4d6 / Frag G)  
 Skills: Dmg +4 Move Silently +7  
 Hide +7

- Night Vision goggles  
 - Shirts - Frags x 2

- 40mm Rotary made Launcher

1 18 -9  
 2 18  
 3 18  
 4 17 -5  
 6 10

T -26  
 #1

5x Carrion Crawl brain Juice 13 instant Paralysis / -  
 2x Dark Rever powder 18 mg shot 2d6 con / 1d6 con + 1d6 S  
 1x Sassone leaf residue 16 contact 2d12 hp / 1d6 con  
 2x Arsenic 13 insect 1 con / 1d6 con  
 3x Crippling Vine 13 contact 1d4 str + 1d4 con / -

4x Flash Pallet set radius 15  
 blinded 1 rnd  
 dazzled 1 rnd

3x Stone breaker Acid ingras hardness  
 oily stone 3d10 1st rnd  
 2d10 2nd rnd

Ring of lock picking +5 open lock  
 Knock once per day

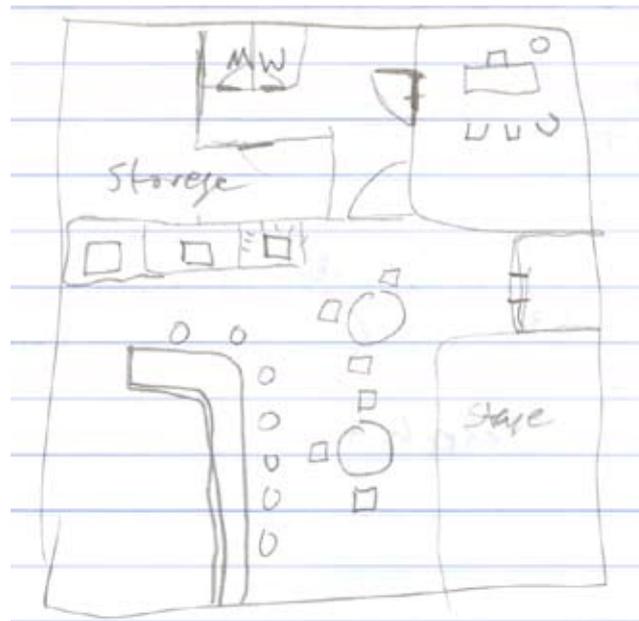
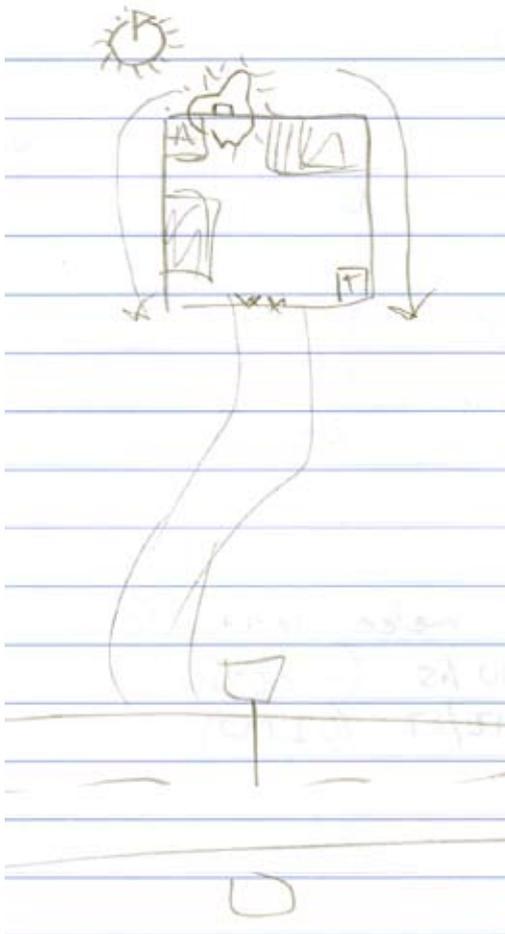
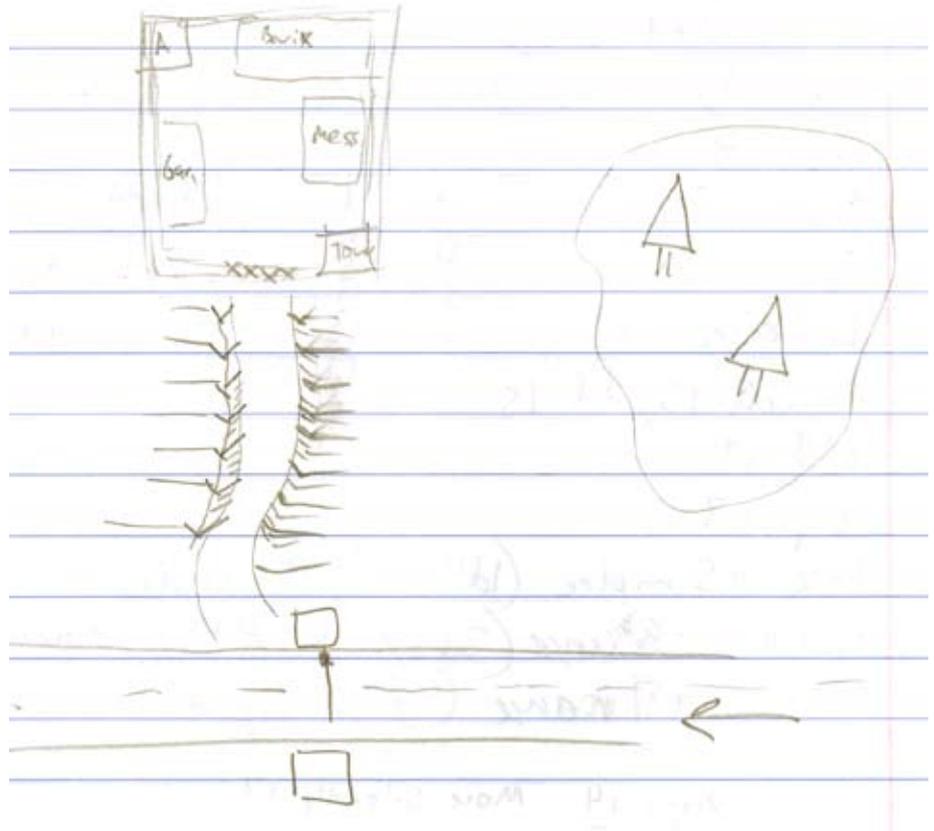
male 20  
 - water skin 5  
 - trail food x5 10  
 3 vials of cure 1st wound  
 1d6 +5  
 1 vial of cure 2nd wound  
 2d6 +10

x2 draw

Arrows 2 draw  
 2 Crippling Vine

22  
400

ANDY'S MAPS ARE HASTILY DRAWN DURING GAMES FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF TELLING US WHERE EVERYTHING IS SUPPOSED TO BE. FOR BATTLES, HE DRAWS BIGGER MAPS WITH A WET-ERASE MARKER ON A LARGE GRID.



“I WANT TO  
CREATE A  
STORY.”

-THAO HO



Welcome to the City of Passing. Passing is a large city known for its trade, which is said to be simply the mostly the most diverse in all the lands. Cultures mix here graciously, so one finds himself often confronted with entirely different people. The main thing that separates the cultures in this world is the difference of technology. Located north of *Passing* is a series of countries that have large development in the magic of science. They have spent a great deal of time and development in the past 100 years on the development of weaponry. The most famous article of their advancement is the production of a bizarre weapon called the *gun*. Fancy looking, but easy to use, guns have lead to magic becoming increasingly rarer in the lands of the north in terms of combat and training. Other advancements have sparked the development of steam powered engines and the creation of extremely easy to use explosives. On the other hand the lands of the south have been doing things much more traditional. Magic is still a big part of life for those who can afford the luxury of learning it. But the nature of magic requires a great deal of money and time which the vast majority of common folk cannot afford. But in the prosperous regions magic is used in every part of everyday life.

So today you find yourself in between both worlds and in the city of passing which is located in the country of Strange Mountain. The reason you are here is different for each of you. The reason you fight is different for each of you. You come each come to the town as complete strangers. So now you know the background the story may begin.

Ready?

Begin.

NPC Ranger p.122  
25 hp  
17 AC  
mwk longsword +8 1d8+2  
2 weapons (+ shortsword)  
+6/+6 1d8+2 and 1d6+2 (2 more if human)  
favored enemy (human)  
weapon focus  
weapon focus  
5/7/2

Leader Fighter  
34 hp  
21 AC  
greatsword +8 2d6+ 5  
weapon focus  
weapon specialization  
power attack  
improved initiative  
6/2/2

find on the body of fighter is a bunch of data regarding the king  
King of Strange Mountain is named France  
Map of nearby castle, Castle of James which is a hotel for rich people points out ways to sneak into castle  
King will stay there tonight and for the next few days  
Catering schedual of the cook  
See date Dec. 14 handwritten in big red letters and circled...

Whacha gonna do?

Guards at entrance and at kitchen

If get inside hotel spot oddly quiet Spot 20 to find body of body guard hidden in garbage.  
Later spot 15 to notice blood  
Hotel room 1214

Inside room the bodies of bodyguards are dead everywhere

The city of Passing is a very large city. And out of a rather odd coincidence you all find yourselves in the exact same restaurant, Azian Food, at 3 o'clock Dec 14 eating a very delicious meal. The restaurant is empty except for yourselves and the cook. Then after a little while a group of roughly 6 men of men walk in in a very noisy fashion; one man steps out from the group and begins to talk to the cook. 2 other men casually sit by all available entrances. The cook and the man mutter in a whisper. Then they stop. There is an awkward silence. Then the cook makes a run for it. Quite a dramatic run, really. Right about now everyone is quite distracted from their delicious meal. One man at the entrance grabs the cook and another pulls out a knife and stabs him. Twice. Three times. And then one of them says in a calm tone, "kill the witnesses."

GET EVERYONE'S SPOT

3 Rouge p.123 DMs guide lvl 4  
20 hp  
15 AC  
+1 short sword +6 1d6 +2  
mwk shortbow +7 1d6  
evasion  
uncanny dodge  
weapon focus  
dodge  
improved initiative  
sneak attack +2d6  
fort +2/ Reflex +7/will +1

NPC elf sorcerer p.124  
17 hp  
14 AC  
ranged +5  
6 cantrips  
6 lvl 1 spells magic missile 2 1d4+1 missiles  
3 lvl 2 spells melf's acid arrow, touch attack 2d4 and again for 2 round  
toughness X2  
2/3/5

Session 2

You go to the desert south of south east of passing. It's hot. The escort shows you the way while at the same time provides food and water. You travel for a day without event. On the second day you as you are next to a sand dune, 3 orcs wearing bold red clothes stumble over a sand dune. You see them. They see you. An awkward silence. Roll initiative.

When one is left. The escort should be dead.

Wander around a while... see figure from a distance comes closer. It's a guy in camo with a gun hung over his shoulder. PCs should ask for his help if they do he joins party saying he is on he way there too, but is very suspicious. "It's major to you." Or should I say paranoid. The wizard is named Jin.

Leads them east to a cave.

"The wizard of Jin seldom leaves his home so often hostile people have a tendency to hide out in the maze on the way to his home. Be cautious."

It's pretty bright in the maze because of the eternal burning torches that are in every 5 feet of the cave. It doesn't seem to actually be a maze but rather the remains of a mining station gone dry. You walk following the man, and every once and a while you come into clearings. After a while you reach a clearing (30 X 30) start to hear the echoing of footsteps resonate in the tunnel behind you. You hear voices:

"I thinkz they went this way..."

The Major says, "Did you happen to run across some orcs on the way here?"

"Did they happen to wear a lot of red?"

annoyed.

"Well we better get ready."

3 orcs

1 leader orc (last one standing)

after soon come across a great doorway

walk across a little see a gigantic red dragon sleeping. It begins to move it's head as if to wake up.

The major walks to the dragon. Grabs his gun backward like a bat. And swings it extremely hard right onto the dragons head.

"HELLOOOO? ANYBODY HOME!" He does it again and again. The dragons is now awake. And looks at you.

"Who dares awaken me at this hour?!"

He makes a mighty rawr right in front of the major. He doesn't flinch. The dragons says it again. And then raws again. But in mid row he just stops with his mouth stuck in the air and just freezes. A few seconds pass by in this rather odd position. Then the dragon

disappears. It just blinks away. In it's place is a small manhole. It opens up and a small gnome crawls out. He is old with a thin asian style white beard. He has cloths filled with pockets. He has an old face with some foggy goggles on his forehead. He walks in with a large homely smile filled with wrinkles.  
"Well, if it isn't the Major. What brings you to here?"  
"I've come to pick up my equipment. Oh and these people wanted to speak with you."

The box? How did you come across it?  
Stolen!? Did you know who did it?  
This isn't good.  
I don't know what's in the box. My passion is in illusion and tinkering, not divination. But I can tell you the odd circumstances that I came across the box. Years ago when I was still young I found myself obsessed with the study of the planes. Then I came across this odd plane that has been long forgotten. I call it template. Then I tried an extremely bold experiment, to bring a part of the plane into one of my rooms. You see the plane of template is a unique plan quite simply because it is incomplete. It is the remains of a plane a deity simply abandoned. I figured it was a perfect thing to study. But when I performed the experiment I came up with something odd. I'll show you.

Leads them through a hallway. There are red doors, green doors. Green doors are safe, red are dangerous. You pass a black door surrounded by runes, we don't go into black doors. Then you come across a white door. You enter and find yourself in a vast expanse of white. There is a chair. "I found the box on the chair."

The ground starts shaking. Well I don't recall this happening...

Door disappears. Jin tries to fix it. Fight guy that comes out of ground. Yay.

If attack guards make a lot of noise and ruins surprise later.

If goes through garbage disposal... there are 2 humans chatting in the room nearby. Should kill quickly and quietly if not will scream and run away. Either way confronted by main room. Room upstairs locked.

1<sup>st</sup> secret door a large room (obviously enchanted to be made much bigger) filled with odd experiments and vials... inside find a man with a lab coat working with a monster that seems to be a crudely shaped humanoid made with decaying flesh sewn together.

"What are you doing here!?"  
"You don't want to do that, there is some vials that, when broken will kill us all..."

COVER +4 to ac +2 to reflex saves against non area spells

1= fort 15 1d4 strength damage  
2= reflex 20 2d6 fire damage.... Puppy?  
3= fort 15 1d4 wisdom  
4= will 18 dazed for one round (everyone)  
5= nothing  
6= fort 15 1d4 intelligence  
7= reflex 20 half 3d6  
8= thousands of butterflies fill the room... no visibility for 2 rounds then disappear

He cast a spell and the monster awakens...

Fight ranged spells have 50% chance of breaking table stuff. Yay.

### Session 3

Find yourself once again in the room with a piece of template. There isn't much in this world except a small metal chair lying on its side after Andy apparently threw it across the room. You are standing in a circle surrounding the place where a rather odd looking man exploded by his own fireball. Jin speaks, "Well, I've never seen that happen before... He's been sleeping underground this whole time..." He turns and looks at you. "I guess there is more to this plane than I thought there was... but if he why did he choose to wake up now?" With a few complex hand motions and dramatic words he makes the door reappear.

Once again you are confronted by a door. It's interesting how often doors have changed your adventure....

Anyways, when you open the door you don't see the inside of the wizard's house. You see a place outside filled with small blue houses and with lots of grass. There are lots of small people everywhere. They are Halflings wearing worn peasant clothing, you notice that they tend to wear a lot of blue. Everyone seems to be working, running, or doing something.

Leave door. Right before Andrew exits, he feels a hand on his shoulder. He turns around...It's the man with the hat. He throws throws backwards. Suddenly you hear giggling....

The man with the odd glasses and the tux appears... right in front of Jin. He pushes the surprised Jin backward through the threshold and quickly walks through the door and closes it.

### Talk to Halflings

First few look frightened an continue with their work  
Then one looks around then whispers, "You best not be seen. The discipline committee will punish us if they find outsiders. Quick come with me." Points at nearby yoda sized house.

Somehow you all fit.

Tyranny, they are slaves to an evil sorcerer...

We are in uncivilized lands but many refer to us as the lost region of the north.

Well I hear the sorcerer has a large amount of magic treasure locked away...there is bound to be something that would lead you home.

Could you rid us of the sorcerer and free us?

Lives in Fenced up mansion over there.

Well most of the House is magically protected...but... I think there is a weakness in the garbage disposal.

Second leave confronted by 3 extremely weak human guards touch attack 2 damage electric.

See mansion... it's very large and surrounded by a spiked fence. (climb 15 1d6 damage on fail). The front door is guarded by 2 well armored guards staring into space.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Session

Wake up.

Tis not the same place you once were. There is not lab, there is no mansion. You find yourself waking up from a deep slumber surrounding by worried blue faces.

Are you ok?

The maid found you guys unconscious on the laboratory and called for you help. Back in a house outside the mansion.

Your resistance and courage has inspired us to help in the battle. Besides, it's our battle and we must fight it.

Ask Derrick to lead them.

Lost element of surprise, mansion is now surrounded by undead.

### Incident with puppy

50 men (1<sup>st</sup> lvl commoners) will fight plus 5 elitist (lvl 3 fighters)  
armed with slings 1d3 and sickles 1d4  
women and children and elderly will not fight (175)

Mansion is surrounded by roughly 50 humanoid skeletons they appear to simply be waiting. Staring in your direction. The door opens and you see the sorceress walk outside (will save 15 find out it's an illusion). She is asian, has extremely messy and long black hair, pale skin is wearing expensive- looking oriental dress.

You people never quit do you? No, I won't give it back, you might as well give up I've grown quite weary of this conversation.

The Byrd's didn't send you? Then why are you here?

\*Laughs\* I can't believe I thought you were a threat. I have more important matters to attend too. Attack us if you want to, but if you want to continue living your pathetic lives you shouldn't.

### Disappears

A skeleton always kills a Halfling. It takes 3 hits to take down a skeleton, or 6 sling shots. After a while can just run inside.

There is a wall of fire inside that does 6 points of damage automatically so Halfling cannot enter

### 2<sup>nd</sup> questionable room

You enter a dark room. You look at the floor "do not enter broken trap." You hear a rather odd humming sound... a black portal opens up in the ground and 3 skeletons come out of the ground...

After kill 3 more come out...

After that they are all cleared... the humming stops and you hear a sound... thank you for visiting undead land!

As approach upstairs window, hear talking through door (listen 10)

-I've come to take what you have stolen from us (man's voice)

-I didn't steal it, I merely borrowed it during one of Rio's tea parties and he didn't seem to notice it missing. (Sorceress's voice)

- That's too bad, the point is you have hidden somewhere in this god forsaken mansion a little box that we must have in our possession in 5 days. We have waited to long and patiently to fail now. We'll be back soon. (Man's voice) Door opens

It's another man with a tuxedo. He is a tall man, he has black hair kinda like vache the stampee style. He has the clear kinda like reading glasses on his eyes. His right sleeve is missing and is wrapped in bandages with a little knot on his hand with excess bandage trailing off.

-Excuse me.

He quietly walks downstairs.

- You're here to kill the Sorceress aren't you? Well, Good luck with that.

Watch out for your arrogance, it could get you killed one day.

I have a feeling we will fight each other on equal footing one day, I'll be waiting. People call me Aggro, I am the 3<sup>rd</sup> member of the byrds, what's your name?

Go up stairs. Find an extremely large room. Find sorcerer sitting on throne. She is wearing a black arcane robe with messed up frizzy brown hair. Her skin is pale.

Why are you here?

Why have you come to kill me?

This place is mine... dare you threaten me!?

Don't do this

Fine you wanna fight...this is my house and you fight by my rules... snaps fingers 2 bearded devils come out of the ground in front of her. P.52

1d8 for rules

1= no weapons (weapons become to heavy to use)

2= no armor (armor ac gone)

3= no spells ( no spells)

4= BURN! (2d6 to everything close reflex 15 negates)

Go back to mansion to look at body. (Just as I thought) The witch puts her small hands on the sorceress's eyes and mutters something... suddenly there is light, when the light disappears the Child is holding a box, the box. I believe this is yours...

Lets find out.

Turn the Crank, whoever is holding the box has a vision

Back in the land of white. You see the chair but this time a man is sitting on it. He is wearing a rather plain tee-shirt, and some jeans. His face is hidden by a mask much like that of Gaia.

Long ago in a place not so far away. The world ended. But there was no one there to witness it. Only me. I saw how worlds end quickly and silently without warning. And so I created the box. Only I understood and soon will you. One question.

The box contains something that can challenge the end and create a beginning. The end of the world, a world, all worlds. The first dilemma. And a set of rather odd coincidences.

Pauses

Lastly a gift...

Out of vision.

Witch points out yellow brick road to The Wiz.

The door appears next to it. Andrew and Mr. Pockets come out.

We did it! High five!

Forest

5= Get out! ( everyone strength check 15 or pushed back 20 feet)

6= Stop! (no one can move more than 5 feet)

7= No fighting (no violence heals 2d4)

8= Die! (nothing)

room is filled with images of her which one is the real her

12 images in random places on is real

make 11 will saves (dc 20) each successful gets rid of one.

Hitting one gets rid of it

After last blow she starts to stagger and smiles

-Funny, I knew I was going to die today, just not like this.

After she dies, find a small bag on her body.

You open it and turn it upside down

Coins start coming out of it and just keep coming out. Then stuff starts coming off

Find 2100 platinum pieces

18 potions of cure light wounds (1d8+5)

6 potions of cure moderate wounds (2d8+10)

1 bracers of armor +2 (4,000)

3 cloak of resistance +1 (1,000)

1 wand of magic missile (9<sup>th</sup> caster lvl) 6,000 50 charges

1 +1 mace

1 gloves of dex +2

1 gauntlets of ogre strength +2

2 periapt of wisdom +2

After fight leave...

See Halfling gathered around a something... it's a little girl (6 years old) with pigtails and silver hair standing next to an extremely tall woman. The woman is wearing a big brown overcoat and holding an umbrella over her head. She has a wrinkled face with grey hair combed back and in a little bun. She is wearing a mask and is staring into space.

Are you the people who saved these poor souls?

I am a witch from far from the North and I thank you for saving these people... I have been trying to free them from this slavery but the sorcerer is very tricky and had spoiled all my attempts to help these people.

This is my mother, her name is Gaia, she is the spirit of the land but she hasn't spoken for such a long time. You could say she is a god... but she isn't very well known.

I would like to thank you again for helping these people... is there anything I can do to help you?

Welcome to the city of Lacrosse. It's a very large city composed of 2 parts. The rich people part and the not so rich people's part. The people's part is surrounded by a grand wall and people can only enter by invite only.

At dusk you guys meet back at the square. Derick for some reason doesn't show up. You guys wait... and night comes quickly and uneventfully. Soon after dark the streets are empty as people retreat back into their warm and humble homes. Then the beggar comes into the square cautiously with his trademark flask of "medicine". He walks towards you quickly.

Quick we must find a place to hide. The mercenaries are on the run again, this time twice in number, and I think I saw a wight with them...

Call me what you like I don't bother with names.

Leads to alleyway...

Here is a secret passage to the other side of the wall... ever wonder what's on the other side? It's a forgotten path that used to be used by black market people and thieves. It's dangerous, but hey I made it across once... When I escaped...

We don't have much of a choice let's go... I'm not too fond of death...

Listen check (15 listen) hear a bunch of people (20?) coming this way... (remember he wants non-human specimens)...

Enter dungeon...

1- chest, already open, empty (search lever 20 disables trap 2)  
2- reflex 20 pit trap 1d6 gets first 3 in marching order search 24 disable 20  
find 3 orcs at bottom (damn, right after we killed the skeletons!) p. 204 in MM  
hp 8  
ac 13 touch 10  
falchion 2d4+4 (+5 melee)  
masterwork heavy crossbow  
find unconscious man

3-when walk on 3+ darts come out +10 ranged 1d4+1 damage search 14 disable 20

4- razor wire +10 melee 2d6 search 22 disable 15

5- chest with masterwork greatsword

6- pit 2d6 deep

7- 2 skeletons appear

after find yourselves in an empty house. It's very large and seems very old and unkept outside of window you see an old rusted sign outside the house saying for sale.

Man

-my name is Monte

I am cleric of

I found out about the path way

I am seeking a scientist whom I seek revenge on

## AFTERWARD: CREATIVE GAMING

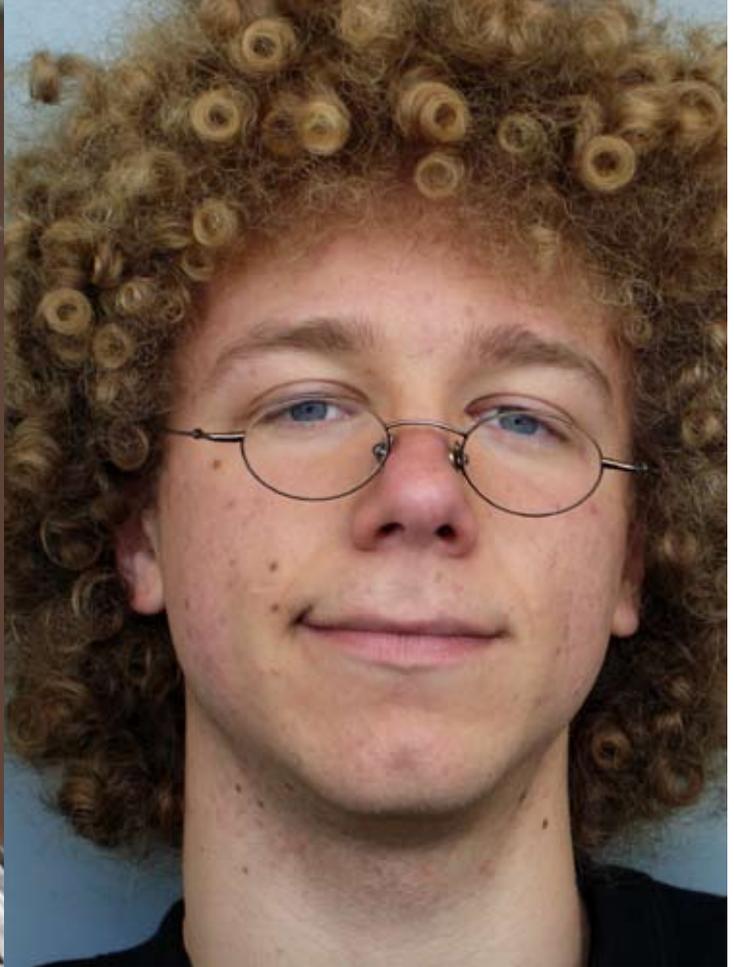
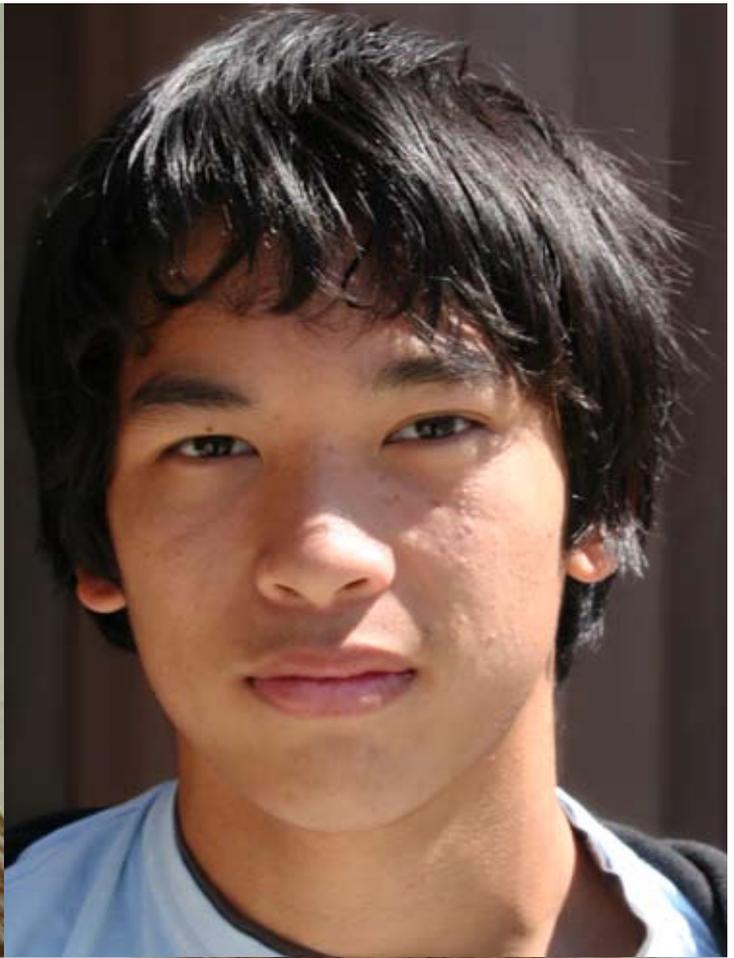
THERE REALLY ISN'T MUCH MORE I CAN SAY ABOUT D&D WITHOUT EXPLAINING THE RULES. WHILE THIS WOULD SURELY BE ENTERTAINING FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED, IF YOU REALLY CARED THAT MUCH, YOU WOULD GO OUT AND PURCHASE THE CORE RULEBOOKS FOR YOURSELF. THEY ARE KIND OF EXPENSIVE, THOUGH. MAYBE YOU COULD DOWNLOAD THE TORRENTS.

I'D LIKE TO THINK THAT AFTER READING THIS, YOU'VE FOUND SOMETHING INTERESTING ABOUT THE GAME, OR ABOUT CHARACTERS, OR MAYBE ABOUT ME. I REALLY DON'T KNOW. PERHAPS YOU JUST LOOKED AT ALL THE PRETTY PICTURES. I'D LIKE TO THINK THAT YOU GOT SOMETHING SPECIAL OUT OF THIS BOOK, THIS TOME, MAYBE, IF IT WERE ONLY A LITTLE BIT BIGGER.

IF YOU'VE READ THIS AND FELT MOTIVATED TO START YOUR OWN D&D CAMPAIGN, TO JOIN SOMEONE ELSE'S CAMPAIGN, OR TO CREATE A CHARACTER OF YOUR OWN, JUST FOR KICKS, I'LL FEEL A LITTLE BETTER ABOUT MYSELF. IF YOU'VE READ THIS AND FELT INSPIRED TO DO SOMETHING CREATIVE WITH YOUR LIFE, TO DRAW A PICTURE, TO WRITE A STORY, TO SING, I DON'T KNOW, I'LL FEEL A LITTLE WARMER INSIDE. ALL I REALLY CARE ABOUT AT THIS POINT IS CREATIVITY: CREATIVE INSPIRATION, CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES, CREATIVE OUTLETS. IF YOU'VE READ THIS AND FOUND ANY ONE OF THOSE, I'LL FEEL A LITTLE SUNNIER THE NEXT TIME I ACTUALLY LEAVE THE HOUSE.

BUT IF NOTHING ELSE, IF NOTHING ELSE, I HOPE YOU'VE LEARNED THAT D&D ISN'T JUST FOR NERDS. D&D IS FOR THE CREATIVELY INCLINED, THE CREATIVELY MINDED, AND THE CREATIVELY ENDOWED, D&D IS A HAVEN FOR CREATIVITY WRAPPED UP IN SOME IMAGINATION AND DIPPED IN FUN. D&D IS ONE OF THE MOST AMAZING GAMES I HAVE EVER PLAYED, AND THE ENERGY I LEAVE WITH AFTER A GAME IS MORE RAW AND CHARGED THAN ANY OTHER ENERGY I HAVE EXPERIENCED. IT IS AN INTENSE, DRIVING NEED TO SHARE MY CHARACTER WITH SOMEONE ELSE. A NEED TO SPREAD THE STORY, SPREAD THE WORD, SPREAD THE INSPIRATION AROUND AND LET EVERYONE HAVE A DRINK. IT'S A BIG CUP. I DON'T THINK IT WILL RUN OUT ANYTIME SOON.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FIRST I HAVE TO THANK MY FELLOW D&D PLAYERS WHO LET ME INTERVIEW THEM AND FILM THEM AND PHOTOGRAPH THEM RELENTLESSLY. THEY ARE (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): DERICK CHOI, NICK GEIER, ANDY GRABOWSKI, THAO HO, AND CHRIS LUK. ALSO, A SPECIAL SHOUT-OUT TO ANDY AND THAO FOR LOANING (OR GIVING) ME THEIR DM NOTES. THANKS AGAIN TO NICK FOR DRAWING LOCATION SKETCHES FOR ME AND LETTING ME BORROW SOME OF HIS CHARACTER SKETCHES.

THANKS TO THE PARENTS OF ALL OF US D&D PLAYERS. THANKS FOR LETTING US PLAY AT YOUR HOUSE. THANKS FOR GIVING US FOOD. THANKS FOR UNDERSTANDING THAT WE AREN'T SATANIC AND HOMICIDAL. THANKS FOR DRIVING US FROM ONE HOUSE TO THE NEXT. THANKS FOR YOUR LOVE AND SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING. SPECIAL THANKS TO SHARON FINGOLD, MY OWN MOM, FOR HELPING ME COME UP WITH IDEAS AND BEING GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE OF EVERYTHING I DO, DESPITE HOW CRAZY IT IS.

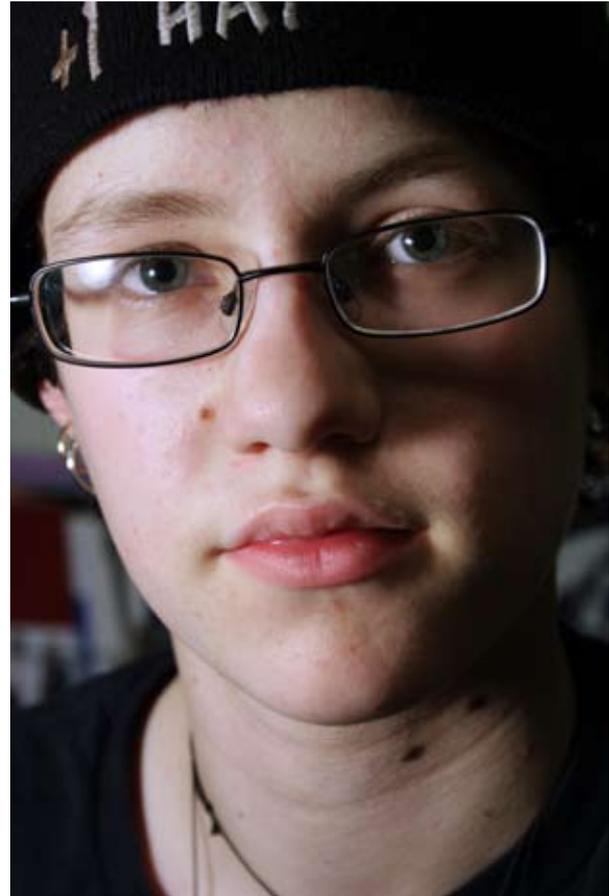
THANKS TO ELIZABETH PEDINOTTI FOR LETTING ME KEEP THE CAMERA FOR THREE WEEKS IN A ROW AND GIVING ME ADVICE ON PHOTOS WHEN I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT TO FIX. THANKS TO GORDON JACK FOR HELPING ME WITH MY PAPER, WHICH IS EMBEDDED SOMEWHERE IN THIS BOOK. THANKS TO SUE KEFAUVER FOR HELPING ME WITH MY CORRESPONDING DOCUMENTARY AND HELPING ME SORT OUT WHAT I WAS ACTUALLY GOING TO BE MAKING A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT IN THE FIRST PLACE.

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MICHAEL MARTÍNEZ IS CURRENTLY A JUNIOR AT MOUNTAIN VIEW HIGH SCHOOL WHERE SHE SPENDS THE FIRST HALF OF HER DAY IN EAGER ANTICIPATION OF THE LAST HALF. IN THE AFTERNOONS SHE ATTENDS FREESTYLE ACADEMY WHERE SHE'S HAD PROBABLY THE MOST FUN SHE'S EVER HAD IN A CLASS. MICHAEL HOPES TO SERIOUSLY PURSUE HER CREATIVE WRITING AND POSSIBLY DRAWING AFTER HIGH SCHOOL. AN ANNOYING FRIEND WITH A BIZARRE SENSE OF HUMOR, MICHAEL ENJOYS PLAYING D&D WITH FRIENDS AND REALLY NOT MUCH ELSE IN HER FREE TIME. SHE'S BEEN EXTRA SLEEP-DEPRIVED FOR QUITE A WHILE NOW, AND EVERY YEAR LOOKS FORWARD TO A SUMMER OF SLEEP.



ARJAN DANCING  
BY MICHAEL MARTÍNEZ