

THE BAG WARS SAGA

THE KODT DEVELOPMENT TEAM IS
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WITH BARBARA BLACKBURN AS THE "+1"

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CRIES FROM THE ATTIC™

Editorial of a madman



BAG WURLD: THE BACK STORY

A few weeks before I sat down to write this editorial, the decision was made to expand the trade paperback you hold in your hands to 112 pages (114 with the material we crammed onto the inside covers) – a move that was made when it became abundantly clear the 'saga' just wasn't going to fit within a span of 96 pages.

How did this happen?

I first began pulling this "compilation" together over two years ago (more on that word "compilation" in a moment). It's something readers of **Knights of the Dinner Table** have been asking for a long time, for up until now the "Bag War" strips were spread over three issues of **KODT** and five volumes of **Bundle of Trouble** (where they appeared as bonus material) – appearing in episodic fashion over the course of several years over a decade ago.

Having them all pulled between two covers seemed like a good idea, and it seemed like it would be a nice little side project I could knock out between issues of the regular comic. It didn't take long for that train to go off the proverbial tracks.

The story you are about to read started innocently enough back in 1996 in **Knights of the Dinner Table #4** – as a simple three-page gag strip about a nameless dragon with a portable hole. Based on a story idea submitted by a reader, it had a nice brief set-up and more importantly a good punch line. End of story.

Or at least that's where it would have ended, had I not hooked up with what later became known as the "D-Team."

At **GenCon 1997** as we sat in our hotel room reflecting back on a long day working the **KenzerCo** booth, Dave, Brian, Steve and I found ourselves doing what gamers invariably do when they get together — exchanging tales from the table.

If memory serves, that was the night Dave Kenzer first told me the story about a player he once had who'd trapped an army in a bottle.

"Man they were so pissed whenever he let 'em out to fight..."

That led me to sharing the story of a player who attempted to build a house inside a Bag of Holding, later adding an animal pen where he planned to keep chickens and cows and how in my campaign you could enter one bag and exit from another.

Someone in the room that night muttered, "Dude - there's a strip right there!" and I jotted down notes as ideas were tossed around.

A few months later when I was working on **KODT#14**, I sent up a roughly blocked-out idea about a group of hirelings trapped in a Bag of Holding and keeping the players' valuables hostage (we all worked out of our homes back then and tended to brainstorm by email).

In the flurry of emails that followed, Brian Jelke suggested tying it into a previously published strip about the dragon and the Portable Hole. They led to someone else suggesting using the hirelings and henchmen from the **Balance of Terror (KODT #8)** strip as the victims (including a Sergeant Barringer) who'd been placed in the bag.

Someone else (Steve, I think) struck upon the idea of expanding the list of items in the bag that appeared in the previous strip and having Brian reading it.

Somewhere along the line, **Barringer's Rebellion** (as the strip would end up being named) took on a life of its own. As the ideas flowed I could barely keep up as far as getting them on paper and in strip form.

One of my fondest memories of that strip was how the list of what was in the bag kept expanding to include items that were referenced in earlier strips (like a gazebo hide and five green towels).

The story may have ended there had I not driven up to Chicago in the fall of 1999 to stay with Steve Johansson for two weeks.

We were scrambling to get new product on the press, namely the expansion set of the **Monty Python and the Holy Grail** collectible card game (aptly called **Taunt You a Second Time**), but also something called **Bundle of Trouble volume #5**, which just so happened to include **KODT #14** (and **Barringer's Rebellion**).

I'd been working on a strip called **Troll Story** at the time, in which Bob keeps getting attacked by regenerating troll meat. I couldn't find a good ending for it and pulled it out to brainstorm with Steve. Somewhere during those note-taking sessions we decided to tie the strip in with **Barringer's Rebellion** – and thus was born the idea for the **Bag Wars**.

By the time Dave, Brian and even my wife, Barb, had added their ideas to the mix we realized it would take several volumes of **Bundle of Trouble** to tell the entire story.

Make no mistake — the book you hold in your hand is no simple "compilation" of previously published material. Think of it as a Director's Cut.

All of the original material (which was hastily laid out in the rush to meet a monthly publishing schedule) has been more carefully re-storyboarded and laid out with new art.

They've also been 'reimagined' — not with a crowbar mind you — but gently massaged. Because the original strips were written in episodic fashion over the span of several years and many issues (usually with a looming deadline hanging over our heads), there were gaps in the story and a few inconsistencies (for example, the character Sara was playing changed several times).

We took this opportunity here to make the story more cohesive. Many of the original strips have been expanded by several pages revealing new details and covering events that were glossed over in the original.

Best of all — there are almost thirty-five pages of never-before-seen material, including the Knights' epic struggle against Rot Gut the swack iron dragon (the original owner of what would later become known as **Barringer's Bag**.)

To complete things we've included the infamous "**J-Doc**" (**The Jackson Document**) as well as a **Cast of Characters** – with bios on some of the key players in the **Bag Wars Saga**.

I've always been fond of this particular story arc, and having had the opportunity to look back and reflect on the creative process that went into its making I can see why. It wasn't something knocked out on a weekend sitting alone at a computer.

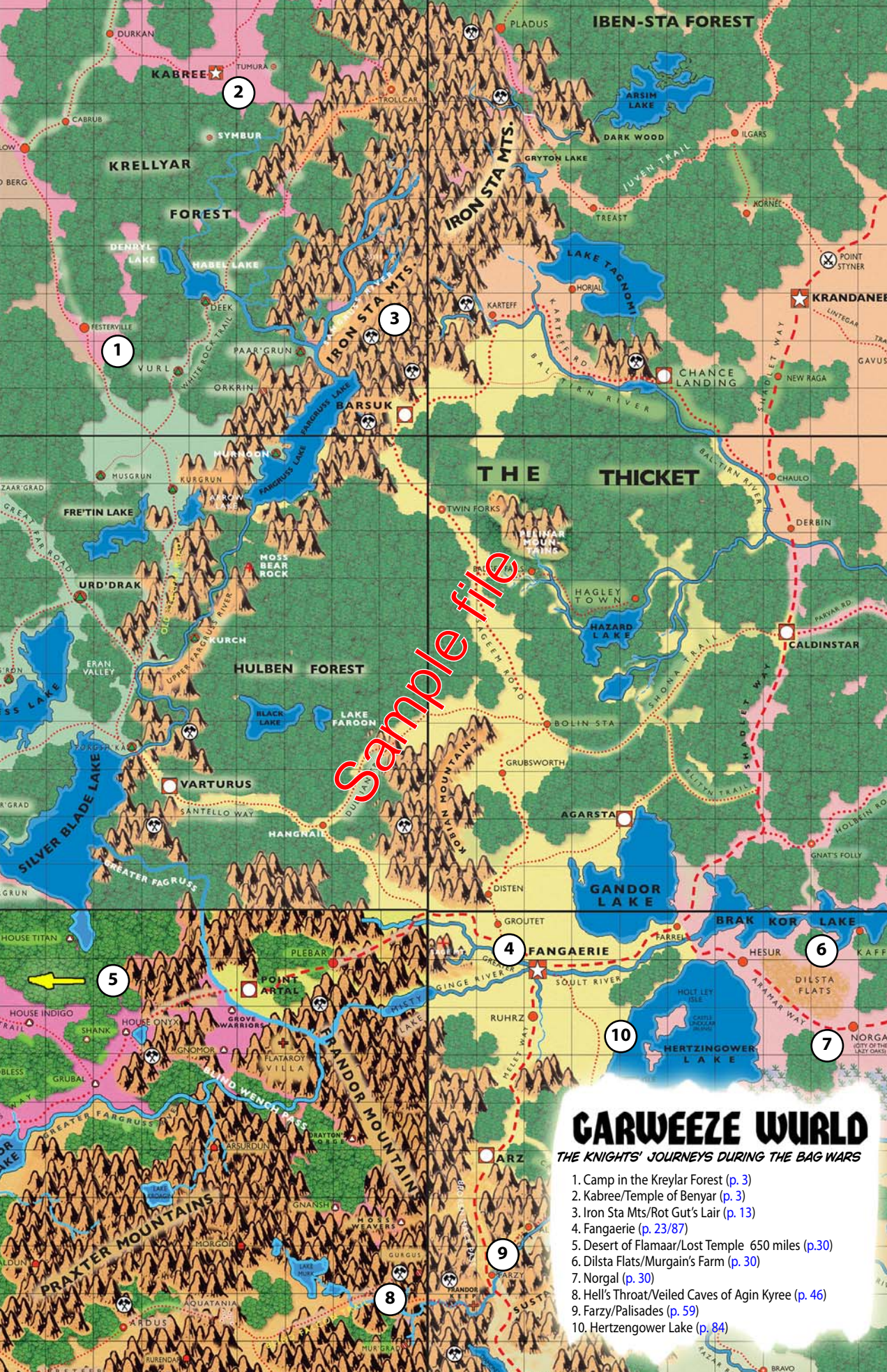
It was a journey of several years that involved working with good friends and making each other laugh (not a bad way to make a living). My only hope is that you enjoy reading it as much as we did writing it.

Game on!

Jolly R. Blackburn

Jolly R. Blackburn

May 17, 2010



GARWEEZE WORLD

THE KNIGHTS' JOURNEYS DURING THE BAG WARS

1. Camp in the Krellyar Forest (p. 3)
2. Kabree/Temple of Benyar (p. 3)
3. Iron Sta Mts/Rot Gut's Lair (p. 13)
4. Fangaerie (p. 23/87)
5. Desert of Flamaar/Lost Temple 650 miles (p.30)
6. Dilsta Flats/Murgain's Farm (p. 30)
7. Norgal (p. 30)
8. Hell's Throat/Veiled Caves of Agin Kyree (p. 46)
9. Farzy/Palisades (p. 59)
10. Hertzengower Lake (p. 84)

A Coming Storm

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

LOTUS' JOURNAL

Year 201 Day 27

LOCATION: Fringes of the Krellyar Forest

The party is resting up just southeast of **FESTERVILLE**. Knuckles' intelligence gathering expedition in the town has proven fruitful.

After pressing a few palms with coins he has learned **RHAUTGHUT**'s new lair is somewhere in the **IRON STA MOUNTAINS** further east - in an abandoned **DWARVEN MINE**. Yet another false lead? We will soon find out.

Or at least I hope -- for the army of mercenaries we've hired for the purpose are growing impatient and have begun demanding payment. Each day we awake to find another half-dozen or so have fled ranks during the night.

Sergeant Barringer has been doing his best to keep them in line but more and more he's been voicing the grievances of his men and has become more and more difficult to manage. I fear he's built up a resistance to the **CHARM POTION** we've been putting in his water.

18 months of chasing the bastard has drained our resources and worn our spirits. Even **EL RAVAGER** and **JUSTINIA** have begun suggesting we give up the **QUEST**. Never, I say.

"He tasks me - he heaps me - I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate - I will wreak that hate upon him."*

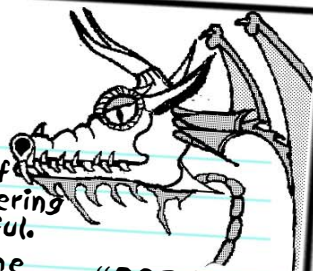
I pray to the **GAWDS** that at long last our months of hounding the **Swack-Iron Dragon** are at an end and that we will finally engage in **Spell against Spell**. **Dragon's Breath** against **Sword and Shield**. **Victory or Defeat** -- that it **ENDS** tomorrow.

We only wait for **JUSTINIA**'s return from **KABREE** - she has gone there to the **Temple of Benyar** to see if she can secure **NEW RECRUITS** from among her faithful.

Finding new meat to **REPLENISH** the ranks hasn't been easy. With so many local towns paying **RHAUTGHUT** a yearly **TRIBUTE** to avoid his harassments, they are reluctant to cooperate in our war against the Dragon.

Nay - they have even resorted to working **AGAINST** us.

RHAUTGHUT is considered to be a **GAWD** by many. A powerful **CULT** has risen up around him and they serve as his eyes and ears.



"ROT GUT"

SCRIBBLE
SCRIBBLE

* Brian is quoting the book **Moby Dick** here. The fact he sees himself as Captain Ahab and Rot Gut as his Moby Dick might be telling.

OKAY GUYS — AS THE **SUN SINKS LOW** BEHIND THE **IRON STA MOUNTAINS** IN THE DISTANCE, THE **LONG SHADOWS** OF THE **KRELLYAR** SLIP ACROSS YOUR CAMP.

THE SOLDIERS BEGIN TO LIGHT THE **NIGHT FIRES** AND THE **AROMA** OF FRESHLY COOKED "**LOTUS STEW**" BEGINS TO **WAPT** ACROSS THE **FIELD**.¹

THE **PEACEFUL SILENCE** OF THE CAMP IS BROKEN AS **SERGEANT BARRINGER** RETURNS WITH A GROUP OF HIS **ELITE SOLDIERS** FROM **DRILL PRACTICE**.²

HE CALLS THE OLD **CADENCE SONG** "**MARY STOLE MY HEART WHEN SHE SEWED MY WOUNDS**" AS THEY APPROACH.

KEWL BEANS -- I BREAK DOWN MY **CROSSBOW OF SLAYING** AND GIVE IT A **GOOD OILING**.

THAT REMINDS ME -- THE **TRIGGER GUARD** BROKE WHEN I **FUMBLLED** DURING THAT **OGRE ENCOUNTER** TODAY -- I'M GONNA GO AHEAD AND **FIX IT**.

IT'S GOING TO REQUIRE A **FORGE** TO MAKE A **NEW** ONE FROM **SCRATCH**, BOB.

NO PROBLEM -- I'LL TAKE IT TO **MAD MAN WILLIE'S TENT**.

HE'S GOT A **PORTABLE FORGE** AND THE **SKILLS**.

I'M BRUSHING DOWN **CHELSEI!**³

B.A., I MADE AN **ENTRY** IN MY **JOURNAL**. I'M **SMOKING MY PIPE** NOW.

SO **SARA** -- ANY LUCK GETTING **NEW MEAT** IN **KABREE?**

YEAH -- WHEN YOU GETTIN' **BACK?**

WE GOTTA **ROLL** IF WE WANNA CATCH **ROT GUT**.

WHAT DID THAT **NOTE** B.A. PASSED YOU SAY?

SORRY GUYS. WE'RE NOT IN **COMMUNICATION**. I'M NOT ALLOWED TO **SHARE** ANY DETAILS.

WELL THAT **SUCKS**.

THERE ARE **WAYS** OF GETTING AROUND THAT YA KNOW...

FINGERS INNOCENTLY SWEEPING BACK A **STRING** OF HAIR.

TAPPING MY FOOT UNDER THE TABLE. ONCE IN **STATING YES**. TWICE **NO**.

A **COUGH** AND A **KNOWING** GLANCE.

SIGNALING...?

SORRY, **BRIAN**. THAT'S JUST NOT ME.

TSK, TSK... WHAT A **SHAME**.

YOU HAVE SUCH **POTENTIAL** AS A **PLAYER**.

BUT YOU INSIST ON **SABOTAGING** YOURSELF.

HE'S RIGHT, **SARA**.

PART OF A **PLAYER'S** JOB IS TO **THWART** THE **GM** AND HELP THE **PARTY** AND OTHER **PLAYERS** GET **AHEAD**.

WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO **DRILL** THAT INTO THAT **THICK SKULL** OF YOURS SINCE **DAY ONE!**

I GUESS I'M JUST **STUBBORN** THAT WAY.

I HATE TO **INTERRUPT**, BUT BACK TO THE **ACTION** AT THE **CAMP**...

BOB, YOU ARE **WALKING** TO **MADMAN WILLIE'S TENT** WITH YOUR **CROSSBOW** WHEN YOUR **ATTENTION** IS DRAWN TO THE **DARK ROLLING** CLOUDS IN THE DISTANCE.

JUST AS YOUR **AUGUR** PREDICTED... A **STORM** IS MOVING IN.

BUT NOT ONE **BORNE** BY **WIND**, **THUNDER** AND **LIGHTNING** AS YOU HAD **ASSUMED**...

BUT OF **HUGE LEATHERY WINGS** BEATING THE **NIGHT AIR** CARRYING **DEATH** AND **DESTRUCTION** TOWARD YOUR **CAMP!!**

¹ **Lotus Stew** — A concoction of saw dust, tree bark, potato peels and rat meat that Brian invented as a cheap way of feeding the large army the party amassed. A "Murgain's Rack of Spice" spell fools the palate into thinking it's fine cuisine. However, it doesn't improve the stew's nutritional value.

² **Sergeant Barringer** — See "Balance of Terror" from **Bundle of Trouble volume 3** to learn how Sgt. Barringer, Mad Man Willie, Ferret Faced Freddy and Boot Strap Harry (as well as Gilead) came to be in the employment of the Untouchable Trio +1.

³ See "Cows of War" from **Bundle of Trouble volume 1** for Chelsie's origin.

ROT GUT...?!!!

LOOKING TOWARD WHAT YOU *THOUGHT* WAS RUMBLING THUNDER YOU SEE **ROT GUT** HIMSELF DESCENDING FROM THE *CLOUDS!*

WHAT THE...
GAA!!!

FIRP!!
I DISBELIEVE!!

OMIGAWD!!

SOUND THE ALARM!!
CALL OUT THE MEN!!

TO ARMS!!
TO ARMS!!



CRAP!! JUST MY *LUCK* -- I TOOK OFF MY FRICKIN' *ARMOR* AND LEFT IT BACK AT MY TENT. I'M IN MY *SKIVVIES* HERE.

B.A., I LOAD MY *CROSSBOW OF SLAYING* WITH A *BOLT OF WYRM SMITING*.

SORRY, BOB.

YOU DIDN'T BRING YOUR *BOLT POUCH* WITH YOU.

AND YOU ALREADY INDICATED YOU HAD BROKEN YOUR *CROSSBOW* DOWN FOR *MAINTENANCE!*

GAAAK!!

DRATS! AND I'M NOT THERE.

I'M MISSING THE FIGHT.

MOUNTING *CHELSIE* HERE, B.A.!!

B.A. I HAVE *WINDLE FINE-FELLOW* HERE. I CAN REACH MY *SCROLL CASE* AND *COMPONENTS!**

AS THE *DRAGON* DRAWS CLOSER YOU SEE THAT HE IS *CLUTCHING* SOMETHING *HUGE* IN ITS *TALONS*.

A FEW *WING BEATS* LATER HE IS NEARING THE *EDGE* OF THE *FOREST* AND YOU *REALIZE* WHAT IT IS...



TWO LARGE, *THIRTY-GALLON* *OAKEN CASKS*.

AS HE *SWEEPS* OVER THE CAMP HE *RELEASES* THEM -- ONE *DIRECTLY* HITTING THE TENT WHERE THE *ARMS* ARE STORED. THE *OTHER* HITTING THE TENT OF THE *UNTOUCHABLE TRIO!*

THE *DRAGON* SWOOPS THROUGH THE CAMP AND *BANKS* TIGHTLY, SWINGING ROUND THE *TREE TOPS* AND LINING UP FOR *ANOTHER* RUN.

OAKEN CASKS?

WHAT GIVES?

HE'S BRINGING *WINE* TO THE *PARTY?*

UH OH -- THOSE SEEM TO BE PRETTY *PRECISE* TARGETS...

HOW DID HE KNOW?

UM... *WINE* ISN'T THE *ONLY* THING THAT COMES IN *CASKS*, YOU *IDIOTS...*

RUN!!



* Windle Fine-Fellow: an NPC hireling and Black Lotus' personal scroll caddy.