

**Dungeons And Dragons = No date for the prom...Or does it?**

*Staring up at the great Dragon before him, the mighty wizard Grandenwald took hold of his ancient staff and pointed it towards the gray sun. The glorious staff, comprised of only the most exquisite and rare golds and jewels, began to glow as Grandenwald cast the holy spell of resurrection.*

*“Oh ancient beings!” Grandenwald called out towards the never ending blue sky, his tattered emerald robes billowing as the mighty winds began to pick up. “I call upon thee! I beseech thee! My final quest is upon me! Please! Return the souls of my fallen brethren!! Let us battle together one final time!!” A great flash of ruby light erupted from the tip of the staff, blinding the great Dragon and causing it to bellow a mighty roar. Grandenwald did not flinch as the great beast drew its head back in preparation to launch what would be known as its mightiest ever breath of scorching devil's hell fire at the small but mighty wizard. Grandenwald held firm. As death reared its head in the form of the Great Dragon, a scream of terror filled the air.*

*“GRANDENWALD!” The mighty wizard caught sight of a familiar red headed maiden with blue eyes, glistened over with fear, her pale skin, flawless even after death, rushing towards him in partially shredded white robes, the rest of group following close behind her. This maiden...Twas Fiona! His one true love! The answer to this lonely*

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*wizard's hearts duet! And she was back from the grave, free from hell's eternal grasp!*

*Free to-*

“Wait-wait-wait-wait, **wait**.” Cornelius had slammed his hands down on the table, effectively knocking asunder his deck of cards. Melvin looked over at his roommate from the other side of the table with a questioning glower.

“Yes *Fiona*?” he asked a bit **too** smugly, twirling the mini replica of Grandenwalds staff between his slippery, caramel greased fingers. Melvin had greasy, red hair that clung to the sides of his pudgy face, plaguing him with acne. He had slight sunburn on his arms, which was mysterious, as he usually donned sleeved shirts beneath his plaid, green vest. He was shorter than Cornelius, yet he was wider, and slightly faster. Unlike the rest of the nerds he shared the high school with, he was not bespectacled, and had the most money of the entire clique. He was the reigning DnD champion, as well as the final word on biochemical, biophysical, and metaphysically accurate transmutations. In other words, he was their king. Nerd royalty.

Cornelius was almost the exact opposite. He was a whole foot taller than his king, with short, dark hair and chocolate skin. He was as thin as Melvin was fat, and was terribly near-sighted. He was a child of theater, a natural talent, a born star...And a drama queen to boot. Cornelius pushed his glasses further up the bridge of his nose, as they had fallen when he had suddenly stood up to

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confront the 'mighty' wizard. He cleared his throat, picking up a small, five inch tall version of a young red-headed woman with a kind smile and warm blue eyes, and held it protectively against his chest.

“‘*Hell's eternal grasp*'?!?” How **dare** you! Fiona is a *holy priestess*! She can't go to hell!” Melvin shook his head with a mocking smile.

“Tch. So you say, but Fiona's been *awfully* sinful today.” Melvin added a bit of an inflection to his words as he spoke. Cornelius looked scandalized.

“Lies!! She's done nothing but heal the sick and revive the dead! She even saved **your** sorry behind once or twice!” Melvin smirked knowingly, ignoring the snickering Cornelius's accusations had earned him.

“So that may be..But she has also made a nearly fatal deal with the Goblin King has she not!?” The surrounding nerds continued to snicker and make whispered gossip as Cornelius raked his mind for a rebuttal.

“She was *dying*! And so was Antergof, Melongriery and YOU I might add!” Many more whispers. Melvin's eyes seemed to glisten with an evil not unlike the evil sorcerer he and his nerdy brethren were on a quest to defeat .

“What good did her 'sacrifice' do in the long run? Most of us are dead all over again due to *your* obligation to serve the goblins.” Cornelius paled. “**And** you made the deal to include that your life also be spared. Hardly considered 'pure intentions' on the priestess's part wouldn't you agree Fio-**na**?” Defeated, Cornelius sank back into his seat dejectedly, solemnly placing his game piece

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back on the large playing board. This particular board itself was painted to resemble a rocky, barren wasteland, most of the goblins, gremlins, trolls and other villains lain slaughtered across it's depressing surface. Smirking triumphantly over his small victory, Melvin cleared his throat. "Now then travelers," he spoke to his fellow nerds as well as the bereft Cornelius. "Let us continue our story..."

*Free to join him forever. Free to grow old with him. His love was at his side in an instant, and flung her arms around his neck once she reached him.*

*"Oh Grandenwald! I feared we would always be parted!" Grandenwald wrapped his arms around her and held her close, smelling her hair. Sweet strawberry. And soon..Soon after the great Dragon was defeated..He would take his dearest Fiona as his bride-*

"EXCUSE ME?!?!" All eyes were on Cornelius once again as the nerd made another angry outburst, his voice a bit squeaky. "**BRIDE**'?!?!?" His face red, Cornelius looked about ready to burst. Melvin sighed.

"What's the matter now Fiona?" Cornelius grabbed the mini Fiona again and huffed indignantly, shoving her in his pocket.

"Fiona will NEVER marry you! **NEVER!!**" he exited the room in a huff, slamming the door behind him, ever unaware of the victorious grin on Melvin's face.

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Cornelius was far too easy to mess with.

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Outside of the library, were the nerds had gathered to play their tri-weekly tournament, Cornelius fumed, angrily kicking up the flowers and dirt planted outside the building. The air was frigid, almost like breathing in ice, and the sky was wide and cloudy, blocking the moon and stars so the only light came from the buildings. Cornelius ran on pure rage, attacking the Toad Lilies with reckless abandon. He hated Melvin. He hated his smug smile and 'know it all' manner of speech. He hated his perfect grades, and high level DnD cards. He hated his Lost season three DVD that he'd won off Cornelius in a card game. He hated his clothes, his hair, his girlfriend, his perfect replica of the solar system which *'Didn't include Pluto anymore because Pluto isn't a planet Cornelius. Didn't you know that?? Hmmm??? HMMMMMM???'*

“AGGGHHH!!! SON OF A BI-” Cornelius screamed at the top pf his lungs. Screeching until his throat began to burn in protest. He was miserable within his own clique, his own social ranking. This went deeper than DnD. And in Nerd World, that was down right blasphemy.

“Oi..You tryin' 'a wake the dead? Half the damn city heard that shit.” Cornelius froze mid-stomp when the familiar voice of Jake Morris hit his ears. Turning on his bare heels, the unhappy nerd took in the sight of his kindergarten playmate turned jock. Jake was even taller than Cornelius, built solid like the

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rugby player he was. He was blonde naturally, but dyed his hair a new color every three months. It was dark blue for the next two weeks, and anyone who laughed got their face mashed thoroughly into the pavement. Cornelius and Jake had been friends once upon a time, before the girls in their school started developing in all sorts of interesting places and the hos got more important than the bros apparently. Puberty had kind to Jake, but cruel to his general sense of moral, not to mention his grades. Coughbarelypassingcoughcough. Cornelius straitened up, trying to look as formidable as possible in his green and pink, watermelon pajama pants and loose 'Shut your Pi-hole' t-shirt. His sandals had been left inside, forgotten in his anger.

“Jake,” he began, repeating the periodic table of elements in his head to remain calm. A jock had infiltrated Nerd World. So naturally, Cornelius was a little more than freaked out. “Wh..What are you um..doing here?” Jake Morris cocked a brow, looking his old friend over. Feeling a tad self Concious, glanced towards the library door, wishing suddenly that he was back inside, tacking Melvin's crap, instead of out here with a guy that had kicked his ass for breathing a few months back, and was probably out hunting for a punching bag. Cornelius wondered briefly how quickly he could make it to the door..Calculating the speed of Jake's fist, subtract the fact that God hates him etc, etc..

“Hey.” Jake broke the silence in one sudden, commanding tone. “You

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look like shit.”

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'Well that was elegant...' Cornelius thought bitterly. Jake took a step closer, scrutinizing over the small details.

"'Sgot somethin' to do with Melvin right? I hate that little freak." There was a moment of silence. Eventually, Cornelius realized that Jake was talking about the weasally bastard he'd just stomped away from.

"You..You remember Melvin?" he asked incredulously, shocked that Jake even remembered how to breath, let alone some obscure childhood memory like your bestfriend's mortal enemy. Jake looked a bit insulted.

"Duh. He was in the same class 'till fourth. He spilled water on you the first day of school. Told everyone you pissed your pants."

'Juice.' Corn mentally corrected, though he was still pleased that *somebody* belived him that Melvin was evil.

"He hasn't changed at all." Cornelius motioned to the library, groaning. "He thinks he's the shit."

"He's in my math class." Jake rolled his eyes at the memory. "Always talkin' about algorithisms and Pos..Pos..itio..Postal Negotiations." Cornelius tried not to laugh in Jake's face.

"'Algorisms?'" he corrected smugly. "And I believe you mean '*Positional notation*'." Jake scoffed.

"Same difference."

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“Not really. Positional notation is the generalization of-“ Jake glared at him.

“Oh shut up.” Cornelius snickered. “Smart ass.”

“That’s my job. So um..” The nerd remembered that Jake was out of place here at the library. “Why are you here Jake?” The jock sighed.

“Tad’s being an ass. Knocked his girlfriend up so he’s throwin’ a fit.” Tad Finkley was the coach, and the jock equivalent of Melvin. “Also uh...My little brother started gettin’ into all this nerd crap. ‘Epic missions’ and dragons and whatever. So I uh..” he cleared his throat... “I need someone to translate all this bull for me..and since Tad put me on the bench I figured I’d find one now.” Jake turned away awkwardly. “You doin’ anything?” Jake’s little brother Chris was inside right now, rpging as the one of the goblin minions. He was immune to Melvin’s cruelty, which made him special. Cornelius thought about it, a sudden urge to ditch his ‘so called’ friends and get his old life back. He bit his lip.

“Not really...I mean...I’d rather do anything than go back inside and deal with Melvin.” Wow..Cornelius was shocked at his own words. He’d relaxed a bit, the mere idea of abandoning his misery lessening his initial unease. He’d get serious shit for going with Jake. But he didn’t care. “Sure. I’ll teach you.” Jake relaxed.

“It’s not like I’m gonna play it or anything, I just wanna know what the



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heck he's saying. So let's get out of here." Corn paled.

"Leave?"

"Well I'm not staying here." Suddenly Corn wasn't so sure anymore..

"It's just...He'll send the rest of them after me if he thinks I'm betraying the group.."

"Who?"

"Melvin."

"Oh my God.."

"It's not my fault! He's had it out for me since we met! He wants me dead!"

"He likes you." Said Jake.

"Who likes me?" Jake rolled his eyes.

"The DnD freak we're talking about. You didn't notice?" Cornelius grimaced.

"Jake..That is NOT humorous in the least. He likes making me miserable. Not me myself." Jake shook his head.

"Naw man..It's definately you. It's uh..That shit they said in primary school...Um...Boys tease the girl they like? Something like that..." Cornelius felt naucious. Dear God...As if his life couldn't get any worse. To think Melivn had been. Ugh..He wanted to throw up. "You alright man?"

"Absolutely not. I'll DIE before I go out with that greasy, pizza faced, fat

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ass braggart!” Jake smirked, impressed at the outburst. Cornelius resumed

murdering the toad lilyies., cursing loudly. “Of all the nasty things! I hate him I HATE him!” he paused to take a breath. “I mean damn! Even **you’re** way higher on my list than he is! And YOU punched three of my teeth out!” Jake’s eyes widened a bit. Another silence followed Corn’s confession. They stared at each other. Seconds passed...Minutes... Eventually, Jake cleared his throat.

“So uh...A couple of the guys broke into coach’s beer cooler. You wanna um..Come with me? You can explain that DnD crap.” Happy for the change of subject, it took Cornelius all of two seconds to decide where he wanted to be. So what if he was in his pajamas? He was about to ditch Melvin epically. Smiling at Jake for the first time in years, he stepped forward.

“Sure. And by the way. It called a ‘quest’ not a ‘misson’.” Jake scoffed.

“Same difference. Nerd.”

“Super senior.” He rebounded playfully as they walked towards the boys dorm. Melvin watched from the window, a pained expression on his face.

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*Grandenwald watched as his Fiona trekked into the unknown with the goblin king. Was the battle lost? He’d let her out of his sight for but a moment, only to be swept away, back into hell with the evil he’d sought to destroy. He was alone without his love, and had no desire to continue without her by his side. Lowering his wand dejectedly, Grandenwald made no move to protect himself from the dragon’s flame.*

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to the **prologue**: <http://www.collectiveconscious.com/chaucer/!!stuwork/9delmonchar.pdf>