

## Cheap Newspaper Vol. 10

WNP Press, December 20<sup>th</sup>

### Latest News

Have you noticed that our latest news are usually just a bunch of meaningless sentences, containing general stuff and no news at all?

Well, this time it's gonna be different. We've got so much news to toast, you'll be happy all week!

First of all, Cheap Newspaper is out. (oh, my! isn't that a treat?) But that, of course, you know.

Also, Happy New Year is coming up! That, of course, is also quite a known fact.

And in conclusion, the Latest News section in our paper is usually just a bunch of meaningless sentences, which you just saw happen.

### Text Adventures - are we going retro?

In the world of computer games, where third generations of Quake, Doom and Warcraft have set high standards, text based games are somewhat in the shadow of attention. Indeed, it is difficult to even consider playing something that was popular in the 80s and had no pictures in it when we've got pixel shaders technology, texture wrapping and 3D modelling developed to the perfection, so that soon human eye wouldn't be able to tell the difference between nature and it's digital realization.

Yet, it is clear enough that with the appearance of television books haven't become something unnecessary and theatre can't be destroyed by the popularity of cinema. Of course, it is sometimes easier to turn on the TV then to read a book, using pure imagination, but it is a choice that a person made throughout the whole of our history and TV versus reading is just a modern form of the question.

The same with text adventures.

#### **What are they?**

Basically, text adventures (or Interactive Fiction, IF for short) are somewhere between

books and computer games. You get to read a story and lead your character through it by making choices and solving puzzles. In some games there is more action and less reading, in some you get to read more. There are even games where you hardly interact at all!

That, of course, makes game designers to be people of certain sort. While in modern computer games the storyline is usually an addition and you can play fully without knowing, for example, why exactly orcs hate humans or why the Doom character ventures through scary levels, shooting off monsters, in IF games the storyline *is the game*. So you have to be a good writer and have an interesting story behind the game.

The interaction with the game world is realized by inputting simple commands, like TAKE BALL, TALK TO SAM, UNLOCK DOOR, ASK MARY ABOUT BOB. A well crafted game should predict a good deal of player's input and make the game react to all sorts of commands. A good designer will try to make the game as obvious to play, so that a person not common with IF genre would

easily understand what to do.  
Here is an example.

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### **Shady Corridor**

The corridor stretches to the north and its walls fade away into the darkness. To the west you see a heavy wooden door with a sign on it.

>go west

There is a door on your way.

>open door

The door appears to be locked.

>read sign

The sign reads: "Merlin".

>inventory

You are carrying:  
a golden key

>unlock door with key

You unlock the door.

>go west

### **Merlin's Chamber**

You are in a small room with no windows. Looks like it has been uninstalled recently. You notice a black cat under an old table.

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So, as you see, the puzzle is pretty obvious. Of course, the key could have been hidden somewhere, but a good game will feature logical puzzles that are difficult enough to make you interested, but easy enough so not to make you frustrated or bored. It is an art, of course.

One of the big parts in text adventures is the atmosphere. Well written room descriptions, interesting NPCs (non player characters), the storyline, events and puzzles may make an IF playing experience an unforgettable one. Imagine a journey into the depths of the mysterious underground world or a dazzling exploration of the doomed castle full of magic and knights and treasures! Whole wonderful, rich worlds await you, bounded only by the boundaries of your imagination!

The name of this article is "Text Adventures - are we going retro?". In my opinion, it is the same question as "Reading books - are we going retro?". IF games are a unique part of art and gaming and cannot grow old simply because they have no graphics. It is a great unexplored universe, just like your local library is, although it looks like an ordinary one-storey building with those objects which in their majority have no pictures.

The only way to find out whether it is your kind of entertainment or not is to try it out. Please, visit the IF Archive at <http://www.ifarchive.org/> for further information and games themselves!

You may start by downloading Frotz 2002 (interpreter) and use it to open files with extensions \*.z3, \*.z5, \*.z8 and such - story files (the games).

Happy adventuring!

## Christmas Gamin'

Every holiday brings us its own special atmosphere and its own special attributes. Since computers have now become big parts of our lives, they should be well equipped with proper Christmas games.

Basically, I just want to write about two holiday games and the other is more of a very winter game.

The first one is called **Passage 3, Xmas Edition**. You can get it from [http://gamehippo.com/download2/download2\\_773.shtml](http://gamehippo.com/download2/download2_773.shtml) for free. While you are at it, I'll tell you the rules and, oh my, they are simple and so much fun!



All you have to do is create lines of tiles. New tiles should be placed against tiles that have the same color or/and same picture. That helps connect segments of different colors. Gray color matches any tile. Also you get special tiles that are not only pure gray, but variations of colors, so that you can use these to connect different colors too.

The second one is called **Christmas Shaft** and it is one of the most addictive games I've ever bumped into. You play a role of Santa himself and your goal is to jump from lifts that go up to lower lifts. If you don't jump down in time, you will be squashed against the ceiling. Also, there are two kind of lifts - when you jump onto the red lift, it takes you health away, the blue ones add points to your health. If your health ends, you... guesswhat? Yup, you die and start over again. If you miss a lift and accidentally fall, you die too.



There is a high score table and it's a cool small game to compete against each other. Get the game here for free: [http://gamehippo.com/download2/download2\\_1660.shtml](http://gamehippo.com/download2/download2_1660.shtml)

Another good game for Christmas playin' is the famous **Tux Racer**, the Linux penguin :) Although it is well-known, it is a good thing to constantly remind people about it. The game has an official page at <http://tuxracer.sourceforge.net/index.html>, which sadly isn't updated for many years, but the game is still available for download.

In this game you control a funny penguin, which slides down icy hills on his belly, collecting herring. The practice mode is so much fun, while the race mode is quite difficult to master. The graphics are beautiful and if you master the speeding up and jumping high, you will experience a lot of great feelings, hovering in mid air! There are many things to tweak, like time of day and weather, some things (snowing, for example) are 'not yet' implemented, but it seems that the game will never be finished.



However, it is 100% playable the way it is. Music was created by a very good musician from Trax In Space. I was astonished when I found it out!

Both these games will add to the holiday atmosphere of your home. Shortcut these babies to your desktop and let your whole family play!

## Alien Software Interview

June 4, 1998

*This interview was not held by Cheap Newspaper. We merely copied it from Internet for the reason that Alien Software has been disassembled some time ago. However, their games are very nice, warm, talented and simply fun to play. You can get their games for free at <http://www.interactivitiesink.com/aliensoft/>*

Alien Software is a small developer which has created and released two console-style shareware RPGs, Neophyte: The Journey Begins and Koplion's Story. When Vault Network Editorial Director Jonric went looking for some background information on these games, he discovered a unique and very interesting corporate story - interesting enough that he got in touch with Alien to learn more.



**VN:** Hi. Let's start by introducing everyone.

Mike Young: I'm Mike Young, Producer and Designer. I can also introduce Sven Dixon, Lead Artist, Level Designer, and Assistant Designer, and John Corwin, Lead Programmer and Assistant Designer.

**VN: Great! Please tell me about Alien. When and how was it formed? Who are the key people?**

Mike: Alien Software is a small company of about seven people led by Dr. Wayne Moore. Almost all of the employees of Alien Software are high school students who are earning school credit - and some money - by working here. I'm one of the few adults. John and Sven both worked on The Journey Begins as part of their high school studies. John is studying Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon now, Sven is doing work here, and both are helping the new students.

John: Alien Software was formed in 1995 by Dr. Moore. We got the idea for making an action/adventure RPG from Sven and myself.

Mike: The key people are the three of us, Dr. Moore, and John Hicks, another Programmer and Assistant Designer.

**VN: How did you get into games, and particularly into creating games? And John and Sven, do you know yet if you want to work in the industry?**

John: I've been playing games since I was 4, starting with the Commodore 64.

Sven: I had an Intellivision. And yes, I plan on staying in the games industry.

John: I've been programming game-related stuff since I was 13. This is my first paying job in the game industry. I'd like to move into other areas of programming, but I'll probably still write games in my spare time.

Mike: I've been programming since I was 16, and have been in the games industry for about three years now. I've worked on Icebreaker by Magnet Interactive Studios for the PC and 3DO, and Callahan's Crosstime Saloon for Legend Entertainment.

**VN: Any particular games come to mind that have influenced Neophyte and Koplion's Story?**

John: The Legend of Zelda.

Sven: Lunar 1 and 2. The Secret of Mana.

Mike: Those games definitely had an influence on Neophyte. Sven has played almost every console RPG in existence and is in charge of the look and feel of Neophyte. We're trying to keep it fairly honest to those games, while at the same time making Neophyte its own game with its own special features, story, and game play.

**VN: So what's it like creating games? Do you still have time to play?**

John: I don't have time to play games now.

Sven: I play a lot of Quake, but I've slowed down considerably.

Mike: They still seem to find the time to play Quake at least a couple hours every day. :) I'll try a little of everything. Lately, I've been playing Worms 2. It's so cute the way those guys blow each other up.

**VN: Any comments on the current renewal of interest in RPGs? And on the future?**

Mike: What we've seen happening is that the kids who grew up with the old Nintendo machines are now in college or getting jobs and they all have PCs. We're hoping to catch a wave of nostalgia. Of course, we're really happy that RPGs are starting to catch on again, and hope that the trend continues.

John: I dread the day when RPGs will be nothing more than an interactive movie.

**VN: Let's talk about your two games. Where did the ideas for Neophyte and Koplion's Story come from?**

John: We all worked together on it.

Sven: I came in after The Journey Begins had started and tried to influence it toward more of a console-type RPG. It had started as more of an old Sierra-style adventure game.

Mike: I'd like to see a marriage of the two genres: an RPG with more adventure elements in it. That's why Koplion's Story has more adventure game puzzles to solve in it than a typical console style RPG of the same length. We're going to still have a lot of monster killing and action-oriented puzzles too, but that will have to wait for the new engine under development to be finished.

**VN: Tell me about the new one, Koplion's Story. What's the main storyline? How is it related to Neophyte: The Journey Begins?**

Mike: The final Neophyte will focus on a team of four characters. We plan on releasing four shareware episodes each introducing a different character. The Journey Begins introduced Thael and Koplion's Story introduced Koplion. Koplion's story focuses on a monastery on a different continent than The Journey Begins, but still shares a similar history and villain. The main plot is somewhat linear - there are certain places you cannot go until you solve certain puzzles - but we've introduced three optional side plots in the form of ghosts haunting the monastery. These ghost puzzles can be solved in any order, or even not at all, if the player wishes.

**VN: What are the game's main features?**

Mike: The features are those of a typical console RPG. For Koplion's Story, we added magic, tiles which move you, a better graphics engine, and an alternate interface puzzle. The final game will also have some

limited internet connectivity, a 3D scrolling world map, and a number of other features.

**VN: OK, how about the characters? Do I have any choice of the kind of character I play? Can I customize my stats? Is it level- or skill-based? And is it possible to "max out"?**

John/Sven: You play Kopllo. You can't customize.

Mike: Our new engine will allow you to change your character's name. You'll still start out with the same stats and items, though.

John: Development is level based. It's highly unlikely that you will max out your character.

**VN: What's the game world like?**

Mike: Kopllo's Story is but a small part of the final game. The final game will allow you to travel over all four continents, and a bit further. Kopllo's Story and The Journey Begins each show you one location on one of the continents. The final world will be huge.

**VN: What's combat like?**

Sven: Real time.

John: Real time combat is more exciting than turn-based.

Sven: It's more fun.

**VN: How about quests or missions? Special items? How much of a role does magic play?**

Mike: Magic was introduced in Kopllo's Story.

John: In the final game, magic will play a significant part.

Mike: The game focuses, in part, upon four very powerful items: The Artifacts of Gorus. There will be many different lesser special items and weapons, and quests and missions. Kopllo's Story shows that to some degree with the quests of the three ghosts.

**VN: How about the technical side of the game? What kind of game engine are you using? Did you develop it yourselves? What are the system requirements?**

John: We're developing the new game engine ourselves using C++ with the graphics core written in assembly. The game will run in 640x480x16, and will feature real time alpha shading, blending, cool transitions, and shadows.

Mike: The current engine was written in Delphi (object oriented Pascal). It is pretty amazing all things considered.

**VN: So what's up next? Where does development stand on the full Neophyte?**

Mike: As John said, the new engine is in development and will be used for our next shareware episode due out in the fall. The full Neophyte is on schedule and should be out there next summer.

**VN: Why the switch from shareware to retail distribution for the full Neophyte? Do you have a publication deal yet?**

Mike: Right now, Alien Software is completely owned by another company. We want to become our own company and to do that we have to make money. The shareware episodes are being designed as publicity for the final game. We are working with Interactive Marketing Solutions on getting funding and finding a publication deal.

**VN: Great. Where can our readers download your games and find out about registration?**

Mike: They're available from our website at <http://www.aliensoft.com/>. We hope everyone enjoys them.

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Interview source:

<http://rpgvaultarchive.ign.com/features/interviews/aliensoft.shtml>

### **Digger - Back and Digitally Remastered**

In 1983, the same year when McDonald's introduced the McNugget and Microsoft introduced Microsoft Word, Windmill Software released a game called Digger. All three events were of big historical significance and all three made this Cheap Newspaper volume possible: McDonald's is often our lunch, Word is where we craft all this and Digger is what this article is about.



Digger was originally released as hardware - a copy-protected, bootable 5.25" floppy disc for the IBM PC. To play it, you needed a 5.25" floppy drive and a CGA video card.

The game was a big success and it's one of those programmes which was many peoples' first gaming love.

The idea of the game is simple. You control digger, a vehicle which creates tunnels in the underground and collects emeralds. He is chased by nobbins, wide-eyed monsters, who sometimes turn into hobbins. Hobbins can dig through the dirt too and they look much more scary. You



can get rid of them by pushing bags of golds onto them or shooting them with a gun which then reloads for about 30 seconds. Once you kill all the monsters or collect all the emeralds, the level is clear and you proceed to the next one.

All is well, but computers develop quickly and soon enough CGA cards were changed to VGA, processors became faster and Digger couldn't be run anymore. There was absolutely no hope that Windmill would do something about it since the company nowadays produces different stuff and has left the gaming industry a long time ago.

Fortunately, a person named Andrew Jenner looked closely into the matter and in 1998 remastered the game, making it possible to play it on modern computers. That gave birth to a whole new community of Digger fans, especially with the help of a new feature of recording and playing back your games.

Andrew set up a website <http://www.digger.org/> and conducted a Hall of Fame which features replays from the best players in the world. Sharing your experience and tricks turned out to be a lot of fun!

Time passes on, but the interest to Digger is still there, many more people discover the great game each day. Like such titles as Tetris, Alien Invasion and Arkanoid, Digger is a classic that simply doesn't age.

You can get a free copy of the remastered version from Andrew's site and while you are doing that, we are really proud to present an interview with the man himself. Read on for details!

#### An Interview with Andrew Jenner.

**LV: Hey, Andrew! Your project "Digger Back and Digitally Remastered" is a dream come true for many lovers of the original game. Tell us a bit about how it all happened, like - when did you play your first Digger game and how did you come up with the idea of remaking it?**

AJ: I remember vividly the first time I played it. I think it was in 1987 so I must have been about 8 years old. We had recently got our first family PC (an Amstrad PC1512 with CGA graphics, 2 5.25" 360Kb floppy drives, no hard drive and 512Kb RAM). Dad brought home some disks of pirated games that a friend of his from work had given him - lots of fun things like Willy the Worm, Beast, CoreWars and QBert but our favorite (the first game on the first disk, and the first one we played) was Digger. The colourful, cartoony graphics looked great but at first we didn't know what to do because there were no instructions. Then one of my parents suggested trying the cursor keys and my brothers and I quickly got addicted, passing level after level by collecting the emeralds and dodging or dropping bags on the monsters. We developed great strategies for which order to get the emeralds in in order to pass the level without crossing the paths of too many monsters. We probably got to level 4 or 5 doing that.

One day my brother was pestering me while I was playing the game, trying to distract me by pressing various keys on the keyboard and he happened to hit F1 - we watched open mouthed as this fireball came out of Digger's mouth, sailed across the screen and exploded against the end of a tunnel. Wow - all this time Digger had a weapon and we didn't know about it! Our top scores doubled very quickly after that.

As the years passed I learned more and more about programming - in BASIC 2, which came with the computer, at first, but later my parents gave me the Turbo C 2.0 compiler for Christmas and I carried the think reference manual around with me everywhere, learning the language! I wrote lots of fun stuff with that compiler, including a number of games

which used text mode (the fast and easy way to do 16 colour games on the PC1512). Eventually I started interfacing with assembly language routines so I could do fast high-resolution graphics and take full advantage of the 640x200x16 colour graphics mode the PC1512 offered.

I wrote a sprite editor so that my brothers and friends and I could design graphics for the games we wanted to write. I also liked to dump the binary files of games to video memory so that I could see the sprites they used. I somehow managed to extract the sprite data from Digger and import it into my sprite editor. It was then that I first got the idea of trying to modify Digger so that it used the 640x200x16 colour mode instead of 320x200x4 but nothing came of that idea.

In about 1994 we replaced the old PC1512 with a 486 with SVGA graphics, a 250Mb hard disk, 4Mb of RAM and 3.5" and 5.25" floppy drives. We transferred all the old software over but sadly some of it (including Digger) no longer worked. We had some fun making 32x32x16 colour versions of Digger's 16x16x4 sprites in my sprite editor and planned to make a VGA version of Digger. I got quite far but I was foiled when it came to the font. Digger had the ability to output its font in 3 different colours (red, green and brown) but to do that with my graphics routines I would have had to have 3 copies of the font in the game, one for each colour. That was unappealing to my sense of efficiency and would have meant I'd have had to use a larger memory model. I started to figure out a way to compress the fonts but didn't get very far and kind of lost interest and shelved the project for a while in favor of some other projects.

**LV: What was it like - remastering? Is it a hard job?**

AJ: Then in 1998 when I was at home from university for the Easter holidays I was looking for something to occupy myself and picked up the old Digger stuff again. I quickly figured out a way to permutate the colour planes in the font and wrote some efficient assembly code to display the font in the 3 colours needed (plus grey). Then I had some momentum. It took me just a few days to disassemble the Digger binary into a form in which it could be reassembled, replace the graphics routines with VGA ones and replace the timing routines. I added a little C stub to read the speed option from the command line but most of the game was still in assembly.

I got it all working and the game was as fun to play as it had ever been! When I got back to university I uploaded it to my website and told a few people on some of the retro gaming newsgroups about it. I did a web search and found a few people who were looking for Digger and emailed them about it too. The response was overwhelmingly positive and word quickly spread. People wanted to play with the old graphics and had lots of suggestions for other new features so I added those in too. One of the new features was game recording and playback. Originally this worked by recording each time graphics were drawn on the screen, including what and where. This made for very big files, so I wrote a file to compress them by stripping out all the information that would always be the same. Only a couple of recordings were ever made like that.

It was about then that a guy from Israel called Tomer Gabel contacted me. He persuaded me to decompile the assembly code into C to make it easier to add new features. (Actually he said he would share the work with me but I don't think he ever actually did any of it - once I got into the swing of it I could decompile routines quite fast so he may never have got the chance.) Once that was done, getting the game

working again was a much bigger job and wasn't finished until the summer holidays of 1998.

Over the years that followed I added lots of new features, got the game ported to various platforms (RiscOS, Unix and Windows - with the help of developers familiar with those platforms), set up the Digger website and answered lots and lots of email.

**LV: So, the new windig plays exactly the same as the original? Are there any new features?**

AJ: Yes, exactly the same down to the pixel and the frame. New features: Lots! Game recording, Gauntlet mode, 2-player simultaneous mode, keyboard redefinition and the level editor are the main ones.

**LV: And who is the original author of the game? Does he know about your project?**

AJ: The technical team at Windmill software consisted of 3 people: Rob Sleath, Bill Montgomery and Ray Ewan. I have been in email contact with Rob and he likes and approves of the Remastered Digger.

**LV: Looks like you've been in the center of the Digger community. How was it growing? Is it big today?**

AJ: It's hard to tell because not everyone emails me but since I first uploaded Digger I have had email from about 1 new fan every day. It has tapered off a bit in the past few years as I no longer have time to work on Digger, and the high-score table is no longer about skill but stamina.

**LV: Do you have future plans for windig?**

AJ: As I have told lots of people, one of these days I intend to fix all the bugs that annoy people so much and release one more highly polished version of Digger as we know it. Then maybe I'll evolve the game further. But I don't get much time for personal programming projects anymore.

**LV: Well, Andrew, thanks for the great interview and we wish you to continue your successful digging! Our last traditional question is this: do you think that cheap literature is good not only because you can read it, but also because it can be used to wrap stuff in it?**

AJ: Of course! We have a great tradition in my home country of England of wrapping our fish and chips in newspaper.

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Digger - Back and Digitally Remastered: <http://www.digger.org/>  
Andrew Jenner's personal webpage: <http://www.reenigne.org/>

## Da Greetings Column

Frank greets all his friends from Venezuela and a special one for Dafi. Louigi greets Alisa, mum, dad, Richie, Alex, Gunka, Sash, Mash, Mrs. Kevin Edwards, Mr. Kevin Edwards himself, Vika H., Vika T. (you are such a good friend!), Diman 'Flash' Bandurin, Slavik G., Boris (are you moving to Moscow?), Alex Ches, Ilya Baranov, Natasha K. (looks like we can't arrange a meeting in Moscow, can we? :P), Vitaliy "KOVIT" Kovalevsky, K. Bodiker, David Philipov, the rest from 1C, guys from Dimlight Aley: (2005 is a fruitful year for us, don't you think?) Cooth, Frank, Randor, obScene, Gopher, Xtatic, XnmE, Basil, Samppa, Party-San; Andrew Jenner, Thomas Mogensen (still trying to reach you), everyone at CTG (you are all great people), petheads all over the world, towies, fans of Sir Paul McCartney, Purple Motion, guys who he doesn't know personally: Elwood 79, awezoom, Suzanne Vega, Scooter (yeah, times passed, but you still are great!), Neil and Chris, Massa KR (are you still experimenting?), Paul and, of course, everyone who's reading CN!



-Short story

## Nonsense 4 chapter 1: orcs in space

It was the future.

As everyone knows, the future means sci-fi stuff, lasers, spaceships and aliens. Basically, orcs wouldn't want to miss any of it and so they didn't. Once humans build their first space shuttle and drifted away, the horde had their lead mages work on a flying dragon or whatever that would take it after their rivals. Mages did not succeed, however, creating a couple of big cosmic elephants and a space turtle, which all flew away and never came back. Mages were beheaded and other solutions searched for.

Other solutions included stealing some schemes from human scientists and creating an orcish version of a spaceship. By that time it was a

well known fact that a small human base was established on Daramina, a far away planet with unfriendly enviroment and climate.

The warchiefs decided to send the strong Dulup Hole horde to Daramina and kick humans out of their base.

However, most of the horde fell sick and it was a big question whether they would be up for the big battle. Indeed, can you imagine twelve hundred orcs in a space shuttle when they are more used to the steady ground beneath their feet?

-I don't get it, - said Gulper, slowly walking the cold metal floor and grabbing the wall as if afraid to fall, - wasn't it supposed to be Christmas or something? What are we doing here? We'll never get back before spring. And that means - no Christmas gifts! I hate this weightlessness...

-Oh, bugger, - nodded Slything and was suddenly pulled in by a door in the wall. Gulper stood there for some time and then just stumped on.

Slything found himself in the machine room. For some reason, walking here seemed to be easier and he didn't feel that sick anymore.

Actually, he felt rather happy among all these mysterious devices with colored buttons on control boards, monitors, tubes and engines. He noticed a lever, gripped it and pulled up.

There was a blinding flash and Slything was thrown against the far wall. He passed out and came to consciousness only a few minutes later. He strongly felt that something had changed. After a while, it seemed obvious that the ship was travelling with a much faster speed. Desiring to fix his mistake, Slything pushed the lever back down, but it turned out to be the wrong lever and there was another flash and another blow, which threw the orc out of the machine room back into the corridor.

Slything landed straight upon Gulper, who almost reached the end of the corridor, but was pulled back by blows which shook the whole spaceship.

-I don't get it, - said Gulper, trying to get from under his mate. - I thought it was going to be a nice trip, like those on normal ships. How come I can't get to the pub the second day?

The pub was lovingly called "Pig and Whistle" with a nostalgic design to it. The ship's corridor system was a large maze and locating the pub while being sick was not a trivial task.

The visitors of the pub were just climbing back onto their chairs, looking around. The blows from the machine room alerted the chief engineer, who located his mug and was beginning to think that it may be a good idea to start thinking of heading to the machine room and checking it all out.

Meanwhile, brother pilots Jamz and Blurpz looked hard into illuminators, watching stars and galaxies pass by with an enormous speed. Something was definetely wrong.

-Chucker, Chucker, what's up in the machine room? - said Jamz into the microphone, at the same time reaching out to scratch his back.

-Yeah, I'm in charge of the machine room, - there came a reply.

-Wazzup, Chukman? Any problems?

-Why?

-We're out of known speeds, man - look out the windows!

-I'm in the "Pig and Whistle", Jamz, and I ain't got no mood for your dumb riddles.

-Okay. - Jamz passed the mic to his brother.

-Chucker? - said he.

-Is that you, Blurpz?

-Yeah, that's me, you lazy ass! Get your fat bottom into the machine room and I'm waiting for your damn report in two minutes!

-Alright, boss!

-I'm not kidding, Chucker! If you don't hurry up, we'll all go to hell! We're flying at a damn high speed!

Chucker woke up at last, threw his mug away and started for the machine room.

Meanwhile, Gulper and Slything got lost absolutely and were on their way to the G section, which was especially designed to store packs of garbage and throw them into outer space at regular intervals.

-Hey, look! It is a G Section! - exclaimed Gulper, looking at stairs leading down.

-Yeah? - asked Slything.

-G must stand for...

-Um?

-Well, it must stand for something. Like 'grav'. - Gulper wasn't exactly sure what 'grav' meant, but in his mind it had a most positive association.

-Okay, - he said, pushing Slything before him, - go and see what's down there.

Slything obeyed.

Nobody knows what chain of amazing events took place, but two minutes later both Slything and Gulper were packed into a transparent garbage bag and pushed outside by a robotic hand.

-I am not sure things took the right turn, - said Gulper thoughtfully and Slything nodded.

Slowly, the bag started drifting away from the spaceship. While doing that, it gave it's prisoners a hope of being saved by gracefully travelling across the "Pig and Whistle" windows.

-Guys, guys! This is us! - yelled Gulper, with Slything echoing his cries. Actually, both felt a certain amount of pride, regarding their adventurous situation.

The ship inhabitants, however, were preoccupied with other things. By the time Chucker made it to the door, everyone grew on a panic, for Chucker fleeing from a pub is indeed a strange and suspicious sign.

The other problem was the invasion, which took place on an opposite side of the ship. It was held by two purple creatures, who laserbeamed through the metal wall and let in a couple of hundred rats. Rats weren't real, but mere robot models with knives in their mouths. At first the orcs didn't understand a thing and about fifty of them were killed. At last they realized that it wasn't a hawks and a real battle started.

Jamz tried to contact Chucker once more, but it was no use - the chief engineer got lost and was somewhere in the corridors, swiftly going the wrong way.

Blurpz tried to be patient:

-Chuckman!

-Yo.

-The monitor shows you are on the wrong track.

-Okay.

A pause.

Blurpz:

-Chucker! Turn around, dammit!

-Okay, Blurpz, it wasn't me who dated Suzy. It was Ricky. Get of my back, man!

-If you won't get your damn ass into the machine room, we'll all die, you freak!

-It's gonna happen if it's gonna happen. Nothing's gonna happen if it's not gonna happen, Blurpz.

-Okay, - said Jamz, switching off the microphone. - I'll venture there myself. Gimme the map.

-Who was that asshole who designed this ship? - murmured Blurpz while searching in his desk. - Here you go... Hey, what's that?

He saw two orks in the illuminator. They seemed to be travelling across outer space in a garbage bag.

-Jamz!

But his brother was already on his way, bumping into corners and shut doors. Soon enough Jamz discovered that the same asshole who designed the ship must have designed the map too, for some time later he found himself in an unknown part of the ship. According to the map, most of the ship was composed out of yet unexplored parts.

Meanwhile, the rat army experienced problems and half of it was destroyed and the other half ran away deeper into the ship. The third half, though, managed to kill a couple of orcs and fled through the hole in the wall. Later that hole in the wall was solemnly called The Hole In The Wall and under that solemn name figures in orcish history books to the present day.

Ricky led a rescue team that followed rats, but both the rats and the rescue team got lost in the endless corridor maze. They were followed by a team of wooden siege tanks, 235 archers carrying 3157 bows, 6 dragon riders, 1 dragon, a warchief, a second in command chief, a third in command chief, a fourth in command chief and a demolition squad consisting of 5 people, all inevitably confused by the system of corridors and lost. Seventy four years later a dragon with a very old orc on top of it was seen in the Y section, but nobody knows whether it was the same dragon.

Gulper and Slything silently watched their ship shrink into a dot as they swiftly flew away from it. Now all they could see around were far away stars and dark emptiness.

-I don't get it, - said Gulper. - I thought that every flying device should have a control board. How come this one doesn't?

-Because it is a garbage bag? - suggested Slything.

-No, you dummy! - shouted Gulper, slapping Slything and making him rotate and push the walls of the bag. That made the bag change it's direction.

-Alright! - said Gulper. - You see, mate, everything can be controlled once you take time to think.

And he started slapping Slything around, making the bag change it's trajectory every second. Eventually, the garbage bag turned towards the ship and three hours later got in through The Hole In The Wall.

Later there was even an Institute created which calculated *facteur de probabilite* of such a movement and an algorithm of Correct Slapping. A popular method called Slapping Optimization is used in orcish shuttles to this very day.



But let's get back to our story.

Two purple creatures organized the third half of the rat army and entered the ship once more. They ventured deep into the ship and got lost.

That same minute Blurpz was on the mic, helping Jamz to get to the machine room. Soon Jamz got there and found Chucker inside.

-How did you get here without a map? - exclaimed Jamz.

-I didn't get here, - said Chucker calmly.

-What?

-I was brought here.

-By whom?

-By THEM.

Jamz turned his head to where Chucker was pointing and a scream of horror came out of his throat.

Blurpz, blown away by this, was alarmed deeply:

-Wazzup, bruda?

-...

-Bruda?

A weak voice replied:

-Blurpz, THEY are inside the ship.

-Who?

-THEY.

-Oh.

Blurpz scratched his head. It was obvious he didn't know what to do.

-And what do THEY want?

Now it was Jamz's turn to be confused.

-Hell knows, - he answered and turned to Chucker:

-What do THEY want?

-THEY want NOTHING.

-Do we have that?

-NO.

A heavy blow shook the ship and everyone lost their balance, falling down and making much noise. The main engines also seemed to be damaged by this. The second blow tossed one of the engines through the wall into the conditioner system and the third blow finished the engines off completely.

The ship stopped.

Gulper was looking at the ceiling and philosophizing, with Slything nodding to him. Both were under tons of metal debris, but still calm and brave as they are.

Jamz and Chucker slowly made it to their feet and found out that THEY were gone.

But noone knew what happened except for Blurpz, who saw the first cosmic elephant land onto the ship, then the second and at last a turtle. Giant animals slowly travelled the outer walls of the ship until some time later they all fell inside through The Hole In The Wall and got lost in the maze.

That, boys and girls, is a true story of what happened to the first space enterprise of the orcs. Later the ship was remade into an unofficial space station "Dulup Hole", which we will come upon in later stories. Stay tuned!

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## Do you know that:

- Carl Bruisner discovered that if you put an audio cd in beer, you may afterwards hear weird sounds during playback;
- you can actually achieve nothing by trying to teach C++ paradigms to a frog;
- if you bought a sample cd of poor and lousy samples, the situation can be altered by putting the cd into a glass of milk. You may reduce low quality to milky quality!
- if you take a cherry pie, some toothpaste, soap, water, ice cream, a pair of old shoes, a cap, a pair of apples, ten chocolates, vanilla tart, bread, cottage cheese, four tomatoes, twenty two cucumbers, three gallons of coffee, tea, coca-cola, fanta, sprite, wine and a glass of milk, put that all into a large bucket and mix into one solid mass, you'll get a perfect sample of refuse;
- if after reading Cheap Newspaper you get a feeling of cheap humour, you can join the Cheap Humour Club (CHC) and joke your life through! Instructions on joining through private e-mails.



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