

Do Not Pass Go

BY JOLLY BLACKBURN

LATER THAT SAME NIGHT...

THE **BLIZZARD** RAGES ON!!

ANY THOUGHTS OF **PUSHING** ON THROUGH **GNAW BONE PASS** HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY THOSE OF **SIMPLY** TRYING TO SURVIVE.

FOR THE **WIND** IS CRUEL AND **MERCILESS...**

DETAILS: How to use the scroll, what to do if you get lost, etc.
PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT: THE GAME RULES
USE FIRE, CHARMS
USEFUL Numbers: 1-800-555-1234
Domestic: 421-782-1234
MISC: 421-782-1234

IT **TUGS** AND **TEARS** AT YOUR **FLIMSY** TENT LIKE AN **ANGRY CHILD** AT HIS MOTHER'S **APRON**.

THE **BITTER COLD** GRIPS YOU TO THE **BONE**.

IT'S **INESCAPABLE** AS THE TEMPERATURE CONTINUES TO **PLUNGE**.

TURNING YOUR SKIN **RIGID** AND **PURPLE** AS THE FIRST SIGNS OF **FROST BITE** SET IN.

GEEZUS... WE'RE GETTING OUR **ASSES** KICKED -- BY **WEATHER**.

DAMN!

I GUESS THIS **EXPLAINS** WHY THAT **BAR KEEP** LAUGHED IN OUR **FACES** WHEN WE TOLD HIM WE WERE HEADIN' UP THE **GNAW BONE**.

HE **DID** SEEM AMUSED.

I THOUGHT HE WAS JUST TRYING TO **SELL US UP** ON EXTRA **BLANKETS**.

HRMMMMPH... INCREMENT WEATHER. THE GAMEMASTER'S JAIL HOUSE SHIVE...

HE CAN PRODUCE IT AT **ANY TIME** AND THE PLAYERS ARE **DEFENSELESS**.

I DON'T THINK IT'S GOING TO LET UP BOYS -- WE'RE IN A BIT OF A **PICKLE** HERE.

GEE -- YOU THINK? HEY **SPELL JOCKEY...**

WHAT ARE YA **WAITIN' FOR?**

HUH...? WHAT IS IT?

RUN YOUR **SPELL TACTICALS**.

IT'S **SITUATIONS** LIKE THIS WHERE A **MAGIC USER** CAN TRULY **SHINE**.

TIME TO EARN YOUR **KEEP**.

OH... RIGHT.

REMEMBER -- **PROBLEM SOLVE IT!!**

RANK THE THREATS BY **SEVERITY** AND **POSSIBLE OUTCOMES...**

THEN **ADDRESS** THEM IN **THAT ORDER...**

THE **SECRET OF SPELL MASTERY...?**

FINDING THE **BEST** SPELL FOR ANY GIVEN SITUATION **QUICKLY**.

WHICH CAN BE **DIFFICULT** FOR A **FIRST LEVEL** MAGE -- CONSIDERING HIS **LIMITED** SPELL ARSENAL.

IT'S ALL ABOUT **ADAPTING** THOSE SPELLS IN **NEW** AND **UNEXPECTED** WAYS...

BY BEING **CREATIVE**.

OKAY...
LESSEE...
THE **COLD** --

THAT'S OUR **BIGGEST** PROBLEM.

FOLLOWED BY THE **SHELTER**...

THAT'S GOOD. ATTA BOY.

NOW **THINK** THROUGH THOSE **ALTERNATIVE-USE** SPELL DRILLS I RAN YOU THROUGH...

HMMMM...

THINK!!

LET THE **RIGHT** SPELL BUBBLE TO THE TOP.

HEH!!

I THINK I'VE GOT IT!!

B.A. I CAST '**MORGANSHEEN'S PORTABLE BRAZER**'

IT CREATES A SMALL **BRONZE** BOWL FILLED WITH **BURNING EMBERS**...

IT'LL BURN FOR 4 TURNS!!

IT'S ACTUALLY FOR **COMPONENT PREPARATION** BUT IT SHOULD GENERATE SOME MUCH NEEDED HEAT.

OH, **GOOD CHOICE!!**

WELL DONE.

PERSONALLY...?

I WOULD'VE GONE WITH "**SECKAM'S HOVERING ORB OF RADIANT ENERGY**" BUT...

YEAH BUT **SECKAM'S ORB** ONLY LASTS FOR 6 ROUNDS...

AAAAHH...
TRUE ENOUGH.

BUT WHEN **SIMUL-CAST** WITH "**SLOW BURN**"...?

AND **DOUBLING** UP ON THE **REQUIRED** MATERIAL COMPONENT EXPENDITURE...?

THOSE SIX ROUNDS SUDDENLY BECOME **SIX HOURS!!**

IT'S A **LOOP HOLE**...

BUT **ONE** THAT'S NEVER BEEN CLOSED WITH OFFICIAL **ERRATA**.

HAS THE ADDED BENEFIT OF **LIGHT** -- THE EQUIVALENT OF 2.5 **TORCHES** PER TURN IN FACT.

AAAAH, DAMN.

THAT'S BRILLIANT.

MIND YOU THAT'S AT 75 PERCENT OF THE MATERIAL COMPONENT COST FOR **MORGANSHEEN'S BRAZER**

SO YOU'RE GETTING **MORE BANG** FOR YOUR BUCK AS WELL.

-SIGH-

I GUESS I STILL HAVE A LOT TO LEARN.

I **TOTALLY** MISSED THAT.

NO, NO, YOU **DID** GOOD. REALLY.

SOMETIMES IT JUST BOILS DOWN TO **PERSONAL** LOBBING-STYLES.

WHICH YOU'LL **REFINE** WITH EXPERIENCE.

NOW...

WHAT ABOUT THE **TENT**..?



MOMENTS LATER...

NICELY PLAYED, DAVE.

YOUR **'MISER'S GRIP'** SPELL HELPS **SECURE** THE **TENT PEGS** IN THE **ICE**.

AND YOUR **MEND** CANTRIP TOOK CARE OF THE **GAPING HOLE** TORN IN THE **TENT** BY THE **WIND**.

WE'RE **HUDDLING** UP AROUND THAT **BRAZER** B.A.

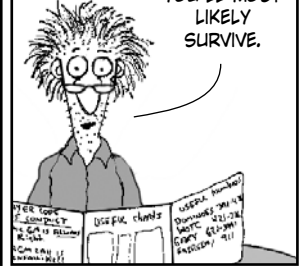
NICELY EXECUTED, DAVE.



THE **RISK** OF **EXPOSURE** HAS BEEN **GREATLY** DIMINISHED.

IT'LL BE A **MISERABLE** NIGHT TO BE **SURE**..

BUT ONE YOU'LL MOST **LIKELY** SURVIVE.



LATER STILL...

YOU **AWAKE** NEXT MORNING TO AN **EERIE** SILENCE.

THE **HOWLING** WIND IS GONE -- REPLACED BY A **NEW DAY'S** SUN AND THE **PROMISE** OF BETTER WEATHER.

ALL OF YOU SLEPT **FITFULLY**.

BUT **DAVE** IN PARTICULAR.



EL MARDICO'S SLEEP WAS FILLED WITH STRANGE **DREAMS**.

OF IMAGES **FRIGHTFUL**, **VIVID** AND **COMPELLING**.

YOU DREAMT YOU WERE **RUNNING** THROUGH THE **FOREST**, DAVE.

TEARING AT THE **RAW FLESH** OF A **RABBIT** WITH YOUR **TEETH**.



OF BEING **CHASED** BY UNSEEN **PURSUERS**.

THERE WERE MOMENTS WHEN YOU WERE **PEERING** OUT FROM SOME **HIDING PLACE** IN THE **BUSHES** -- THE **SOUND** OF YOUR **BEATING HEART** FILLING YOUR **EARS**.

THEN IMAGES OF A **NET**.

MUFFLED **SCREAMS**. **CONFUSION**.

AND THEN A **DARK CAGE**.

WHAT THE **HELL**...?



I'M HAVIN' **NIGHT MARES**?



YOU AWAKE IN A **COLD SWEAT**...

FEELING THAT THERE IS SOME SORT OF **SIGNIFICANCE** TO YOUR **DREAM** --

THAT THEY WERE NOT JUST **RANDOM** THOUGHTS AND **IMAGES**.



DUDE -- I **WARNED** YOU ABOUT EATING THOSE **DEEP FRIED 'MYSTERY MEAT'** SNACKS BACK AT THE **TAVERN**.

I ONLY **CHEWED** MINE A COUPLE OF TIMES AND **SPIT** THE DAMN THING OUT.

CHICKEN MY ASS!

BUT I HAD 'EM TOO.

I **DIDN'T** HAVE ANY **DREAMS**.

WHAT **GIVES**...?



RUNNING THROUGH THE **FOREST**...? I **WONDER**...

WELL THE **GOOD NEWS** IS WE'RE ALIVE.

AFTER **DIGGING** OUT OF THAT **AVALANCHE** AND THEN **FIGHTING** OFF THAT PACK OF **SNOW JACKALS** I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK WE WOULDN'T MAKE IT.

SUCKS THAT WE **LOST** MOST OF OUR **PROVISIONS** IN THE **SLIDE**.

OKAY B.A. -- SO TELL THE TRUTH. YOU **BURNED** OFF A **GROUP COUPON**

-- AM I RIGHT?

GREAT...

WE **STILL** GOT THE **DAMN THING** HANGIN' OVER OUR HEADS THEN.

OH WE'RE **SCREWED** I TELL YA.

WHAT'S WITH THE **CRAZY DREAM**?

KILLER STORM. RAVENOUS JACKALS. WHICH WAS IT? WE'RE IN THE **CLEAR** NOW.

RIGHT?

SORRY, BOB. DIDN'T PLAY A **COUPON**.

WHO THE **FRICK** CARES?

LOOK -- WE GOT **BIGGER** PROBLEMS.

I **HATE** TO SAY IT BUT WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO **TURN** BACK AND RETURN TO **ORZURN PAA'SHEEK**.

TURN BACK...? ARE YOU **NUTS**?

I HATE THAT **STINKIN' MUD HOLE**.

THOSE **WOLF HUNTERS** CREEP ME OUT.

I'M **PRETTY** SURE THERE WAS SOME **'BAD TOUCHING** GOING ON THAT NIGHT WE **SLEPT** ON THE **TAVERN FLOOR**.

UNFORTUNATELY BOB'S RIGHT, DAVE.

WE **LOST** OUR PROVISIONS.

AND WHO **KNOWS** WHEN ANOTHER **STORM** COULD HIT?

NOT TO MENTION WE'RE DOWN ON **HIT POINTS**.

EXACTLY -- WE SHOULD **REGROUP**.

OH MAN -- THIS IS GONNA **BLOW!**

WE BETTER **HURRY...**

A **LOT** OF THE **VILLAGERS** WERE STARTING TO **PACK** IT UP AND MOVE **DOWN** SLOPE FOR THE **WINTER**.

AND PROVISIONS WERE **ALREADY** IN **SHORT** SUPPLY.

ALL RIGHT -- LET'S DO IT THEN.

ONLY **KEEP** A **SHARP** EYE OUT -- WE CAN'T **AFFORD** ANY MORE TROUBLE.

I STILL WANNA KNOW WHAT'S UP WITH THAT **FRICKIN' DREAM**.

I'LL TAKE **POINT**.

OH THIS IS GONNA BE GOOD...