

# Dungeons AND ZOMBIES



EDEN STUDIOS PRESENTS A SHY/VASILAKOS PRODUCTION

# Dungeons and Zombies™

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# CHAPTER ONE

“GAH! You bit me!” Carlos lopped off the zombie’s head, tore it free, and cast it aside. He’d never known pain like the thousands of burning needles now shooting into his brain. For a second he was blinded by it, which almost cost him as more zombies pressed in. Carlos recovered in time to throw a high kick, catching a zombie in the face.

Things were bleak. There were hundreds of them, everywhere. The mausoleum was their only hope. Carlos could only trust they’d all make it. He hacked his way towards Karrak. To his left and slightly ahead, Xavier adopted the same plan. If they could regroup, they might get out of this.

Suddenly, a booming voice split the air. “By the power of Mitra, back to hell!”

A blast of flame cut a clean path up the hill. As the zombies were forced back by the flames, Carlos could see Bennik, hands stretched forth, flames issuing from his fingertips. After a few seconds, the flames died down, and the dwarf dropped to one knee.

“That’s it,” Bennik said. “I’m spent.”

“Let’s go!” Karrak cried. Diminutive Squeaks scrambled off of the minotaur’s shoulders so Karrak could carry the dwarf up the hill. Within seconds, Carlos and Xavier were there and the party made for the mausoleum. Behind them, the zombies shambled closer, but with their lumbering gait they had little chance of catching the companions.

“Just wait till I find out who’s behind this,” Carlos grumbled. “I’m going to shoot him in the face with my crossbow.” He shivered with a sudden chill as the words left his mouth.

As though in answer to Carlos’s challenge, a flash of lightning lit up the sky and illuminated a tall figure standing atop the mausoleum. The man wore a black cloak and looked down at the group with malicious glee. His features were gaunt and pale, and unholy light gleamed in his eyes.

Carlos sneered and drew his crossbow. “No, wait!” he cried. “Don’t jump! We’re gonna shoot you down!”

The man laughed, whipped his cloak around . . . and vanished.

“You should’ve saved the quip and just shot,” Bennik croaked from Karrak’s elbow.

“Bite me,” Carlos said, and shivered as the door to the mausoleum creaked open before the party.

“Put me down, you blasted cow,” Bennik cursed at Karrak. “I’m strong enough to walk on my own.”

## DELVING DOWN

“Out of the frying pan, and into the furnace,” Xavier said, tying his hair behind his elven ears as the companions entered the darkened building. The door swung shut behind them with an ominous bang.

\* \* \*

Bennik’s eyes slipped into the infrared spectrum, allowing him to see the patterns of heat in the room. The others weren’t so fortunate; Karrak and Xavier could see a few feet with their night-vision, but it was too dark for that to help much. There was a shuffling of packs rummaged through, Xavier whispered an incantation, and the room was bathed in the light of torches held by Carlos and Squeaks.

“Much better,” Karrak said. The sound of his voice echoed off the stone walls and startled everyone. The room was far larger than it looked from the outside, and featureless, save two iron doors on the far wall.

“At least we’re out of the rain,” Squeaks said.

“I’m not so sure that’s a plus, all things considered,” Carlos said. “Anyone else notice that this place is a lot bigger inside than out?”

“I don’t want to talk about that,” Karrak said.

“A hot bowl of stew and a lusty companion would be perfect right now,” Xavier said.

“For once, my friend, I’m in total agreement with you,” Bennik muttered. “Which way?”

“One looks as good as the other at this point,” Carlos said. “We’ve really no way of telling if there’s a better way.” He shrugged. “Let’s go left.”

Karrak tugged at the left door and it swung open. He took a deep breath and stepped through. Carlos went next, Squeaks at his heels. Before Bennik and Xavier could follow, however, the door slammed shut. Bennik pulled, yanked, kicked, and cursed to no avail.

“Wonderful,” he said. “Now we’ve lost them.”

Xavier tugged on the right hand door, which opened easily. “Seems we’ve been separated deliberately,” he said. “The question is—was it the gods or whatever evil power runs this place?”

“I’m going with the evil power,” Bennik said, and uttered his umpteenth prayer to Mitra, for good measure. “Not much other choice. Let’s go.” And he clumped into the darkness. The elf followed, close at Bennik’s back. Neither flinched when the door closed behind them.

\* \* \*

Squeaks pulled at the door, squealing. Carlos, then Karrak, then the two of them in tandem also tried. The door wouldn’t open. Further along, a narrow staircase beckoned them, but Karrak wasn’t willing to just leave without his friends. He gave one final, great yank, and let out a growl. “Dammit!” he spat, took a few steps back, and lowered his head for a charge. Carlos held up a hand to stop him.

“Probably not a good idea, Karrak. You’ll just hurt yourself. I think we’ve been deliberately separated from Bennik and Xavier. Our road lies ahead, not back. We can only hope that they’re okay and that we’ll meet up later.”

Karrak didn’t like it, but Carlos was good at being cool under fire and was probably right. Karrak pawed the ground, snorted, turned, and climbed the staircase. Squeaks looked ready to burst into tears. Carlos laid a hand on her shoulder.

“It’s going to be okay, Squeaks. We’ll get through this, and we’ll find them. C’mon, let’s go.”

A sudden chill crept up Carlos’s spine and he realized he’d broken out into a sweat. His arm burned. He ran his fingers over the bite mark and shuddered again. Have to see a cleric when this was all over.

The staircase wasn’t long and ended in a solid wooden door. Karrak shot a glance over his shoulder, reassuring himself that Carlos and Squeaks were still there, and tried the handle. The door swung open with a loud creak. The minotaur took a deep breath which was echoed by his two companions, and stepped through, sword in hand.

The square room was about twenty feet to a side, decorated by a red velvet curtain along the right wall and a wooden table and benches in the center. The rock walls looked solid and well kept. Torches burned in sconces along the walls and candles burned on the table. Carlos shivered again and Squeaks looked up at him in concern.

“You okay, Carlos?”

He waved his hand. “I’ll be fine. I may have come down with a bug, but it can wait till we can get to a healer.”

“You’re sure?”

“I’m sure. We’ll get out of here, I’ll get healed, and we’ll head for the local tavern. I’m so hungry I could eat a horse.”

“So now what?” Karrak asked.

“Now we see what’s behind that curtain,” Carlos said.

As though on cue, the curtains parted and a familiar figure stepped forth. He flipped his black cloak away from his fine traveler’s garb, and leaned upon a cane topped with a silver wolf’s head. Teeth glittering in the dim light, he grinned and bowed.

“So,” he said to Carlos, “Still going to shoot me down?”

“You bet,” Carlos said, and in one fluid motion he dropped his swords, drew his crossbow, and let fly.

\* \* \*

Bennik huffed. He cast a sidelong glance at Xavier and said “I’ve said it before, I’ll say it again—good things don’t happen to us.”

“Bad luck? It must change eventually. Let’s figure out how to get out of this cursed place and find the others.”

A short, narrow staircase stretched up before them, ending at a large wooden door. The elf and dwarf made their way up the stairs, where Bennik threw the door open with little regard for what lay in wait on the other side. As the dwarf stomped through the door, Xavier started channeling Essence again, building his reserves.

The room was dimly lit by torches and black candles. Mirrors stretched across the wall to their left. Directly across the room stood a marble altar with a statue of a giant, four-armed, fanged woman behind it. Rubies gleamed in the statue's eyes, and gemstones adorned its knuckles. A priestess stood at the altar, incense burning in a dish on her right. The fumes stung Bennik and Xavier's noses, and made their eyes water. The priestess held aloft a jeweled, kris-bladed dagger, offering unseen sacrifices. Her eyes were rolled back and she swayed in ecstasy.

"Kali," Bennik growled.

"Who?" Xavier said. "Her?"

"No. The statue. I'm betting she's a high priestess."

The priestess' eyes snapped back and she lowered the dagger. She smiled wickedly at Bennik.

"Greetings, Priest of Mitra," she said. "I have been expecting you."

"It was you who brought us here?" Bennik said.

"No, the Mother of Life and of Death called you here to meet me."

"Please," Xavier said. "She's not my mother."

"You would do well, dwarf, to silence your impertinent elven friend, before I take displeasure with him."

"You'll have to go through me first," Bennik said.

"Come," the priestess said. "Let us talk."

"I've nothing to say to you."

"Surely you've no fear of a conversation with a rival priestess?"

"I never said I was afraid."

"Then where is the harm?"

Bennik chewed on his lip for a moment and cast a glance at Xavier, who shrugged. Finally, the dwarf stomped to the altar. He had to crane his neck to look the priestess in the eyes, but did so with a dignity and defiance that belied his small stature.

The priestess calmly drew the blade of her knife across her palm, and held it up for Bennik to see. A thin line of blood leaked onto her wrist. The smell of incense was dizzying. Something was very wrong. Bennik raised his sword to strike, but the priestess thrust her hand forward and cried out, "*Osak'aro Aashlem D'khashiyn!*"

A strangled cry sounded behind Bennik and he glanced back. Xavier lay upon the ground, stiff as death.

"Harlot!" he cried, spinning back to the priestess.

"He is not dead," she said, holding up her bloodied palm once again. "But he could be. I hold his soul in my hands. Will you gamble with that, or hear me out?"

# All Flesh Must Be Eaten™

Bennik frowned and turned his sword point down, hands folded over the hilt. “Speak,” he said simply.

“Do you see this?” she cast a loving glance at her blood-soaked palm. “This is all that my goddess asks of us, a small sacrifice for absolute power!” She turned and caressed the statue—a trail of black blood marked its surface.

“You’re going to have to do better than that,” Bennik said. “I have yet to hear of a god who doesn’t make such promises, and yours has overrun our world with demons.”

“You don’t understand. But you will . . . when you join me.”

Bennik laughed, a booming and stony sound few humans ever heard from a dwarf. “You’re as insane as you are lecherous.”

“That is the second time you’ve referred to me as wanton,” she said. “I will not let it pass a third. Your other three friends are about to die at the hands of a zombie lord under my command. I can choke the life out of the elf there with a mere thought. I would advise you to mind your manners.”

“What do you want with me?” Bennik hissed.

“Join me. Kneel and pledge your allegiance to Kali and together we shall take her message to the dwarven nations. Together we shall raise an army to rule the world! Do this, and I shall set your friends free. Do it not, and you all die, here and now . . . starting with the elf.”

Bennik growled. Her promises all rang clear in his mind. A small sacrifice and his friends would be free to go. Trembling, he came around the altar and dropped to one knee. His sweating hands wrung the grip of his sword. He bowed his head and whispered, “Milady, I would ask one favor of you.”

The priestess laid her hand on his head and asked, “What boon would you ask?”

“I would ask that you burn in hell, braggart!” He cried and slashed out with his sword.

He wasn’t quick enough. The priestess jumped back from his swing, suffering only a minor cut but dropping the kris-blade. Her eyes turned as black as night. “So be it,” she said, an unearthly echo in her voice. “The elf dies.”

Xavier howled in agony before a blast of white-hot flame enveloped his entire body, consuming it in seconds. Bennik cried out in rage and sorrow, and spun on his enemy.

“I warned you,” she said. “All you had to do was kneel, but you have chosen the path of destruction instead, for you and your friends.”

“I think they’d all rather die than see me kneel before you,” he hissed. “Come, bitch-priest! Let us see who wins the day!”

“Yes, let us see!” She stepped backwards, into the statue, which shifted and groaned. The stone glowed and oozed around her, engulfing her as fast as the flames had consumed Xavier. As the statue embraced her, a look of nirvana spread across her features.

She was gone, and the statue stepped forward, flexing its four arms, which groaned and banged deafeningly. It swung once, catching Bennik with a glancing blow that launched him across the room. He hit the wall and slid down, then climbed to his feet. He was dizzy, but kept sword in hand to face down the deific horror that charged him.

“Mitra help me now,” Bennik muttered, prepared for his final battle.

\* \* \*

Carlos launched a bolt for the zombie lord's heart. The monster stood completely still but for its forearm, which snapped upward and caught the crossbow bolt. He raised the bolt and examined it, then looked to Carlos.

"Nice shot," he said. "Too bad it's never that easy."

The creature whipped the bolt back at them. Squeaks let out a scream and clutched at the bolt embedded in her shoulder. She fell backwards—there was a sickening *crack* as her head struck the ground.

Carlos looked at her, horrified, and a single thought entered his fevered mind: *We're out of our league here.* He dropped to one knee, letting his crossbow skitter across the floor, and took hold of his twin blades again, intending to charge the zombie lord.

His gaze was drawn to Squeaks, lying so still on the ground. So helpless . . . so innocent and sweet.

"Squeaks . . ."

On the other side of the room, Karrak was pawing the ground and snorting, glaring at the zombie lord. "You're going to pay for that."

"Am I? And who is going to make me?"

"You're far outnumbered," the minotaur said.

"And how do you count that?" the zombie lord said, gesturing at Carlos.

Karrak gasped. Carlos's skin had turned a sickly yellow blotched with red, his gaze blank and staring, all semblance of humanity gone. His chomping jaw was buried in Squeaks's shredded throat.

"By the gods!" Karrak cried. "Carlos, stop!"

Something registered in the zombie at the sound of its former name, and it lifted its blood-soaked face from its meal. It cocked its head to the side in curiosity, and examined the warm creature calling to it. Fresh meat. It lumbered clumsily towards Karrak, who stumbled backwards in terror.

"You did this to him!" He screamed at the zombie lord, "Turned him into this thing!"

"Actually, one of the undead outside did this to him. Have you noticed the bite on his arm? I simply hastened the process."

Karrak squinted at the Carlos-zombie. There was a festering wound on its arm, and Karrak cursed himself for not noticing earlier. "I'm sorry, Carlos," he said and charged. The minotaur bowled over the pitiful creature, catching the zombie in his meaty fist and slamming its head into the wall with all the force he could muster.

Carlos dropped to the floor, a wet trail of blood and gray matter on the wall. Karrak looked at the body, wracked with sorrow. Suddenly, a mighty blow struck the back of his head, sending him reeling. He struggled to focus through the spinning haze, and saw the zombie lord standing over him, brandishing his cane.

“All you’ve done, minotaur, is to trap his soul in the netherworlds. None shall rest so long as Ahriman and Kali rule. Congratulations; you’ve sent your friend to Hell and you’re going to follow him.”

Karrak’s head thudded back to the floor and lolled to the side, his jaw slack, unconscious. The zombie lord smiled and called to Squeaks. “Arise, my child.”

Squeaks’s eyes popped open, glazed and yellow. The new zombie pulled itself to its feet slowly, head hanging to the side, barely supported by its torn throat. But the spine was intact; she was functional. The zombie lord patted his creation and it purred like a kitten. He led her by the hand to Karrak and she rolled her eyes between the two, hungry but questioning.

“Yes, my pet. It’s time for you to feed. It’s time for you to . . .”

The zombie lord’s eyes popped wide and blood spewed from his mouth. The Squeaks zombie fell back as its master staggered away, a short sword driven clear through his chest. Karrak stood, wiped his blood-soaked hand on his tunic, and sneered.

“Next time, make damned sure your enemy is truly down before you gloat.” He charged, lowering his head as he did. The zombie lord lunged clumsily to the side, trying to dodge. But the impalement had weakened him, and Karrak struck, twisting his head to drive one horn through the collarbone, and the other through the zombie lord’s face. With a flip of his massive shoulders, Karrak ripped the zombie lord’s head off and sent it across the room to splatter against the wall above Carlos’s body.

He then turned his attention to Squeaks, still looking feral and hungry, but terrified. A single tear rolled down his cheek as he walked towards her, his hands out gently.

“Squeaks,” he said, “come here. It’s okay. Come on.”

The zombie took a few halting steps towards Karrak, who reciprocated, careful to remain unthreatening. When the distance closed, Karrak reached out to caress Squeaks’ pallid cheeks. Suddenly, her nose twitched and the confusion was replaced by animal hunger. Her jaws opened and closed impotently, her head lolling on few tendons holding it in place.

With a sob that echoed throughout the room, Karrak tore his friend’s head from her shoulders and watched through a haze of tears as her body collapsed to the floor. He stood there for a moment, staring at the head in his hands, then dropped it and collapsed to the floor, his head buried in his hands.

“Indra’s clouds, what have I done?”

Through all he’d endured in the arenas of the human empires of the world, he’d never seen anything as brutal as the events of this day.

A quiet thumping from behind the velvet curtains brought the minotaur to his senses. This wasn’t over yet. There was still Bennik and Xavier to find. Karrak prayed that they had fared better. He retrieved his sword, walked to the curtains, and threw them open to find a tinted window into another room. His heart leapt when he saw Bennik, scrambling about the room on the other side of the glass. Xavier was nowhere in sight. Had the same fate befallen the elf as Carlos and Squeaks? He began feeling about the glass for a switch, some sort of lever that would operate a hidden door and grant him access to the room.

Another movement caught Karrak's attention and he snapped his gaze back to the other room. Bennik wasn't alone—an enormous four-armed statue of fanged woman charged the dwarf. Bennik shifted his sword from his right to his left hand and back again, bouncing on the balls of his feet in a battle stance across the room.

Karrak took one last look for levers or switches, then muttered, "To Hell with it." He hopped backward and charged, shoulder down and face away from the mirrors to shield it from flying glass. He hit the window and it shattered, sending the minotaur spilling into the room beyond. He pulled himself to his feet and nodded at Bennik. The statue was between the two of them.

\* \* \*

Bennik bounced in a fighting stance. If he had to die, let it be with honor and with Mitra's name upon his lips.

Suddenly, the mirror on the far wall shattered, and an enormous form tumbled into the room. Bennik's heart sank at the thought of another enemy entering the fray, then leapt for joy as the familiar minotaur pulled himself to his feet, sword in hand, and nodded to him.

"Karrak! Where's Carlos and Squeaks?"

"Dead," the minotaur said. "along with the Zombie lord murderer. Xavier?"

"Dead. This abomination's priestess!"

"Then let's send it screaming to Hell with them!" Karrak bellowed and charged.

"He's direct, I'll give him that much," Bennik muttered and charged as well.

The Kali-thing allowed its foes to complete their charges. Chips of stone flew as their blades struck, but the avatar didn't even flinch. It picked up Bennik and Karrak by their throats and hurled them effortlessly across the room in opposite directions. Bennik bounced to his feet quickly; Karrak slower. The Kali-thing strode towards Karrak, but the dwarf was there, scaling its back like a mountain goat. He dodged and wove around the flailing arms, and hacked away with his sword. He scarred the stone face to an unrecognizable husk, but couldn't slow the beast. Desperate, he struck at the eye-rubies. A shock ran through the dwarf's body and a blinding light threw him again across the room.

The statue grabbed Karrak with all four arms and caught the minotaur in a crushing bear hug. The sound of snapping ribs echoed and Karrak coughed, blood spewing from his snout.

Bennik pulled himself to a sitting position and clutched at his own ribs. He closed his eyes in desperation and prayed. "Mitra, please. I have called upon you many times this day and you have not failed me yet. We cannot face this goddess alone. Help me!"

*The knife*, a childlike voice said in Bennik's mind. *The knife . . . and the eyes.*

"I've already tried the eyes!" Bennik said. "I couldn't—!"

Then the jeweled hilt of the priestess's kris blade caught the gleam of the torchlight. The dwarf skittered across the floor, snatched the blade up, and looked upon it with wonder. Such a thing of beauty . . .

No time. He looked back to the statue where Karrak rolled his eyes towards Bennik, pleading. One of the minotaur's arms was free.

"Karrak!" Bennik cried and tossed the dagger to his friend.

Understanding registered in the minotaur's eyes; he was used to fighting for his life. This was just another arena for him. He reached out and caught the dagger by the hilt.

"The eyes!" Bennik cried and Karrak looked at the leering face. The rubies gleamed, reflecting the candle and torchlight in a spectrum of stars.

"Got . . . you," Karrak coughed and drove the dagger into the statue's left eye. An explosion sang out and the construct fell towards the altar. Karrak flew several feet the other direction. Still, he held tight to the dagger. As the Kali-thing stood once again, Karrak noted the black void where its one eye used to be. "So that's your weakness," he said, and a flip of his wrist sent the knife soaring across the room, into the statue's remaining eye.

The Kali-thing stood tall and froze, arms wide. It stood for an eternity of seconds, until a rumbling began deep inside. Cracks spider-webbed up the statue's legs, to its torso, then out through each of its arms to the tips of its fingers and back, finally over its chest, throat, and ravaged face. Another moment of silence and the monster exploded in a shower of rock shards. Karrak and Bennik hit the floor and rolled up to protect themselves.

It was over. A film of dust settled over the devastation. The two friends groaned and dug their way out of the rubble. The horror, loss, and victories of the day were too much to bear, and both of them burst into laughter and tears.

"I suppose," Karrak said, "We should find our way out of here."

"Aye," Bennik agreed. "And bury our dead."

"Well," a bright, feminine voice said between coughs, "This certainly was a show!"

Bennik and Karrak turned their faces to the doorway, where stood a young, dark-skinned girl with tightly braided black hair. She wore a neatly tailored tunic and shining bronze breastplate. A sword bounced at her side, but she seemed far too young to be an adventurer. Though little more than a child, an aura of sheer power radiated from her.

"Okay," Bennik said, "I've had about enough. Who are you?"

"Look into my eyes," she said, "and know."

Bennik glared into the girl's dark eyes for an instant, an embarrassed fear washed over him. He took a knee and said, "Prithee forgive me, M'lord!"

"My lord?" Karrak said, awed. "You mean this is...?"

The girl smiled. "Most know me as Mitra."

"I thought Mitra was male!" Karrak said.

"I am whatever I wish to be." She turned to Bennik. "And you, my servant, have done well."

"Excuse me, lord, but how have I done well? I've lost three dear companions this day!"

"No," Mitra said. "You've sacrificed three rather than betray me. Such conviction brings hope that one day the forces of darkness may yet be defeated. Rise."

Bennik stood, trembling. "Still, I wish there were another way."

“Be at peace. I do not allow my warriors to suffer needlessly. Their deaths were not preordained, and for your service today, I grant you this one boon. Awaken and remember.”

\* \* \*

Bennik sat bolt upright, covered in sweat, and reached madly for his sword. He hit the cold, stone floor with a thud and stood, rubbing his rump through his nightshirt. He . . .

Wait, his nightshirt? The dwarf looked around feverishly. The room was dark, but it was clearly his own. He was at the inn, and the sun rose over the peaks in the distance. What in Mitra’s name was going on?

\* \* \*

“Helluva dream,” Carlos said, sitting with Xavier, Squeaks, and Karrak. He dug at his plate of eggs and mutton, pouring back gulps of mulled wine and talking with his mouth well full. “I mean, I’m still hungry. I’ve never been this hungry before. I dreamt that I was . . .”

“ . . . a zombie?” Squeaks finished.

“I told you to stay out of my head.”

“No, I dreamt the same thing. I was a zombie after you died.”

“Wait,” Karrak said. “I did as well! There was a mausoleum. We got separated—”

“And I was consumed by fire from a priestess of Kali,” Xavier put in. “What forces cause us to share this dream?”

Bennik joined the group. “It wasn’t a dream.”

“Of course it was,” Carlos said. “It had to be a dream. We’re all alive.”

“By the grace of Mitra. You owe him your lives.”

“We’ve been over this before,” Xavier said. “Do not proselytize to me, dwarf!”

Bennik tossed a jeweled, kris-bladed dagger, and two large rubies upon the table. They skittered to a halt directly in the center. The group stared, awestruck.

“We have a mission, now,” Bennik said.

The rest of the meal passed in silence.



## Introduction

Everyone engages in fantasy, especially gamers. The typical gamer takes great pleasure in the escapism involved in creating a fictional character—be it one based upon a pre-existing figure from his favorite film, TV show, or book; or one purely of his own creation—and engaging in imaginary stories in which that character plays a central role. In its most basic sense, that’s what fantasy is. It’s just pretend. Anything that isn’t real qualifies as fantasy.

But that’s obviously not the “style” of fantasy to be found here. No, this book is concerned with dark labyrinths and mystical temples; warriors with sinewy arms straining as they twirl their bloodied blades and wade into hordes of enemies; or warrior women who hack their way through dank dungeons to rescue the hapless prince of a small kingdom, because honor or the promise of wealth demands it.

This book is dedicated to what is popularly known as Heroic Fantasy, or Swords and Sorcery. And since this is *All Flesh Must Be Eaten*, there are hordes of undead in the mix, just for good measure.

The Heroic Fantasy tradition has been around ever since the early days of humankind. It began with the ancient myths and legends primitive humans created to explain where their sun came from, and why the leaves turned red and yellow during the autumn. Tales told around fires late at night and scrawled in pictures on cave walls depicted the deeds of great heroes prevailing against immeasurable foes. Through these tales ran the constant theme of hope that we could rise above the trials and tribulations laid upon us by nature and the gods above. The characters became iconic: warriors, witches, wizards, gods, and monsters. From these tales arose the great heroes of legend: Hercules, Perseus, Gilgamesh, Thor, Beowulf, and hundreds of others.

Eventually, Western society evolved and no longer gave much credence to these myths and legends, and the old gods died. Humans as a race, however, never lost or forgot the need for heroes, and for escapism into magical and wondrous worlds, and so fantasy continued. In the 1970s the genre leap into the realm of pen-and-paper roleplaying games. These games gave birth in turn to a new resurgence of Heroic Fantasy literature, and the science fiction sections in local book stores became “Sci-Fi/Fantasy” sections. It has been that way ever since, and Heroic Fantasy literature and games show no sign of going away.

So what happens when this classic genre is turned upside down and crossed with zombie survival horror? Welcome to *Dungeons and Zombies*. This ain't your grandma's fantasy.

## Chapter Summary

**Chapter One: Delving Down** includes these opening remarks.

**Chapter Two: Swords, Sorcery, and Shambling** details character creation for Heroic Fantasy Cast Members, new Qualities and Drawbacks, and Metaphysics, as well as some new rules and tips on fantasy Deadworld design.

**Chapter Three: Dead Gods and Demon Lands** presents the first of four Deadworlds, this one based upon the gritty pulp fantasy tradition of Robert E. Howard and Fritz Lieber. Evil, ancient, and forgotten gods overrun a world with demons and undead as the heroes stand alone against an overwhelming darkness.

**Chapter Four: Dawn of a Dead Age** is modeled after literary fantasy in the tradition of J.R.R. Tolkien. It tells the tale of an ancient evil rising in the South and sending his armies of undead to conquer the peaceful lands of the North.

**Chapter Five: Death of the Round Table** gives a new spin on the beloved legend of King Arthur. In this reality, Arthur's knights never found the Grail; Mordred and Morgana beat them to it and corrupted the sacred relic. Together they have raised a massive army of the dead to sweep over Britain and lay siege to Camelot. If they aren't stopped, the tides of darkness will cover the entire world.

**Chapter Six: The Eastern Dead** is Oriental in style, and perhaps best suited for crossover play with another *AFMBE* sourcebook, *Enter the Zombie*. It concerns an incursion of the dead from Jigoku, an Asian conception of Hell.

**Chapter Seven: The Tomb of Doom** presents the kind of dungeon universal to fantasy roleplaying games and computer games. Venture down the hall, open door, kill monster, take stuff. After all, you can't have a book called *Dungeons & Zombies* without including a dungeon.

## How to Use *Dungeons and Zombies*

*Dungeons and Zombies* is structured like most *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* supplements. Chapters One and Two are for both players and Zombie Masters, and include rules for using the game in a fantasy context.

Chapters Three through Six detail different fantasy Deadworlds and are intended for the Zombie Master. Chapter Eight is something a bit different. It's a ready-to-run dungeon adventure, complete with bad guys, plotline, and detailed rooms. Think of it as plug-and-play material.

While we obviously can't stop nosy players from taking a peep at the later chapters, they run the risk of ruin the fun for all players if they look too deeply. Then again, there may be some info in those chapters that a Zombie Master wants his players to have. Players should check with the ZM before peeking at these last five chapters.

## Conventions

As with every *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* sourcebook, *Dungeons and Zombies* uses the following conventions.

### Text Conventions

This book uses different graphic features to identify the type of information presented. This text is “standard text,” and it is used for general explanations.

Certain text is set off from the standard text in this manner. This is sidebar text and it contains additional, but tangential information, or supplemental charts and tables.

Other text is set apart in this way. It details Supporting Cast or Adversaries that may be used in Stories at the Zombie Master's discretion.

## Dice Notations

This book uses several different dice notations. D10, D8, D6, and D4 mean a ten-sided die, an eight-sided die, a six-sided die, and a four-sided die, respectively. A number in parentheses after, or in the middle of, the notation is the average roll. This number is provided for those who want to avoid dice rolling and just use the result. So the notation D6 x 4(12) means that players who want to skip rolling just use the value 12. Some notations cannot provide a set number because their result depends on a variable factor. For example, D8(4) x Strength is used because the Strength value to be plugged into this notation varies depending on who is acting.

## Gender

Every roleplaying game faces a decision about third person pronouns and possessives. While the male reference (he, him, his) is customarily used for both male and female, there is no question it is not entirely inclusive. On the other hand, the "he or she" structure is clumsy and unattractive. In an effort to "split the difference," this book uses male designations for even chapters, and female designations for odd chapters.

## Measurements

This book primarily uses U.S. measurements (feet, yards, miles, pounds, etc.). For those using metric scales, rough conversions can be done by multiplying miles by 1.5 to get kilometers (instead of multiplying by 1.609), equating meters to yards (instead of 1.094 yards), halving pounds to get kilograms (instead of multiplying by 0.4536), and so on. If a Zombie Master feels she needs more precision, she should take the U.S. measurements provided and apply more exact formulas.

## Inspirational Material

A comprehensive list of fantasy literature, films, and television would take up an entire library. Jet down to a video or bookstore in your area, and check out the "Sci-Fi, Fantasy, and Horror" section to see for yourself. Listed below are just a few books, films, and TV shows that you might enjoy.

### Books

*The Annotated Dragonlance Chronicles*, by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc., October 2002

*The Coming of Conan the Cimmerian*, by Robert E. Howard, published by Ballantine Books, 2003

*The Icewind Dale Trilogy Collector's Edition*, by R.A. Salvatore, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc., 2001

*Lankhmar: Tales of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser*, by Fritz Lieber, published by White Wolf Publishing, Inc., 2000

*The Lord of the Rings*, by J.R.R. Tolkien, published by Houghton Mifflin, 2003

*Dhampir, Thief of Lives*, and *Sister of the Dead* by Barb and J.C. Hendee, published by Roc Books, 2003-2005

*Sabriel, Lirael and Abhorsen*, by Garth Nix, published by Eos, 1997-2004

*Silverthorn*, by Raymond E. Feist, published by Bantam, 1993

### Movies

*Conan the Barbarian* (1982)

*Conan the Destroyer* (1984)

*Lord of the Rings Trilogy* (2001-2003)

*Red Sonja* (1985)

*Willow* (1988)

### Television Series

*Hercules: the Legendary Journeys* (1995-1999)

*Xena: Warrior Princess* (1995-2001)

*Roar* (1997)

## About the Author

Jason Vey has been writing as long as he can remember, and playing roleplaying games since the age of five (he rolled dice when told to, and had no idea what was going on). He never did take to the “literary” prose of Eddings or Tolkien; he was drawn more to the gritty works of Howard and Saberhagen, and to the down-to-earth feel of Margaret Weis, Tracy Hickman, and R.A. Salvatore, and it was these authors he sought to emulate in his own storytelling. He continued writing throughout high school and moved on to pursue a degree in fiction writing from the University of Pittsburgh. His first wide-circulation publication came from Palladium Books, an article followed by a sourcebook. This is his first work for Eden Studios and he is thrilled to be contributing to the **Unisystem** line. Jason is 29 years of age and lives in Pittsburgh, PA with his girlfriend Julie and a psychopathic cat. He hopes to continue to leave his mark on games and fiction in the years to come.

