

## **RPG a Day 2020**

There are a few posts missing from this one...

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 1 Beginning**

This has to be my favourite beginning to a campaign I've ever run. I wanted to run the old Stormbringer campaign called "Rogue Mistress". But rather than using the Stormbringer rules I decided to use the old DragonQuest rules. This is how the first session went...

"The campaign began with the players becoming aware of their status as disembodied souls floating in some sort of liquid filled globes in a stone hallway that dead-ended in a deep pool. The souls glowed providing the illumination in the hallway. In the pool which was filled with a clear liquid could be seen ugly, malformed beasties some in the form of octopoids and some in the form of vaguely centipedal creatures. An unknown period of time passed in which they all had vague dreams of past lives.

After a period of time passed the souls became aware of a pair of what they somehow recognized as a pair of imps. The imps came bearing fishing rods. As they prepared to start fishing they accidentally knocked one of the globes off the wall spilling the contents into the pool. One of the creatures immediately gobbled up the glowing soul and started acting erratically. It seemed to be taking control of the fishy creature but before it could take complete control one of the imps reached in and snared it. The pair devoured it and discovered that the soul had changed the flavour of the creature and made it delicious.

They immediately began taking the globes down and tossing the souls into the pool. The players sunk to the bottom and two were devoured by octopi and three were devoured by the centipede creatures. They were able to take complete control of the creatures and discovered that they could somehow communicate with each other. The imps in the meantime had left. They decided to work together and the octopi stretched their tentacles up to grasp the edge of the pool. The centipedes then crawled up their bodies and pulled the octopi out.

With the octopi riding the centipedes they made their way down the long, seemingly unending hallway. After sometime passed in this fashion they encountered a pair of imps. A swift and bloody battle ensued in which one of the unarmoured octopi died but both imps were killed. One of the centipedes swallowed the octopi's soul and they discovered that they could share the body. After devouring the imps they carried on eventually finding a door. Going through the door they found a large room full of biers. On top of each was a seemingly lifeless body. These bodies, all humanoid, came in both genders and several species, human, elves, dwarves, orcs and even giants.

The souls all exited their invertebrate forms and choose new bodies. Leaving their now disoriented former bodies behind they headed toward another door in the room opposite the door they'd come in. They went through this door and found a study. The study's walls were lined with shelves holding books, scrolls and tablets. The theme seemed to be death as pretty much all the fixtures were made of bones, human and otherwise. At the far side of the room before large windows overlooking a very alien landscape was a desk behind which a small ass was standing. Next to the ass, perched on a stool, was a beautiful naked female with tiny horns in her hair and large bat-like wings. "Welcome to my realm," said the ass."

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 2 Change**

Change? What's changed over the years? I don't play anymore. I just run things. I prefer that. What else has changed, half my players live on another continent so we were using a hybrid VTT/table-top set-up before COVID forced a total VTT approach. It's great to play with the old gang but I'm not a huge fan of VTT. Too much extra work involved and then you're the helpless hostage of technology. It does mean everyone gets home faster though.

Other changes include less tolerance for complexity and lots of rules. This is hampered by a continuing irritation with poorly organized/written contradictory rules causing continual re-writes/house rules. It gets tiring. I also find myself annoyed by the differences in GMing style I use at cons as opposed to my house campaigns. I am way more flexible and easy-going at conventions. In my house campaigns I seem to drive the action and push against player actions I don't like. Not good, need to work on that.

And of course it was only at university and single that I could roleplay Friday and Saturday evening and all day Sunday. Doubt I could manage weekly these days. In fact it's been a while and looks to be longer still.

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 3 Thread**

Thread? Um, not something I'm great with. Long term planning? Not so much. Making shit up on the fly, yeah I think I'm pretty good with that. But to have a glowing thread of theme holding the entire campaign together? Hasn't happened so far. But my players still seem to be enjoying themselves. The closest I think I've come was in my last Gloranthan campaign.

The campaign was meant to be a continuation of a third edition RQ campaign that originally started in the early nineties and had ended in the early 00's. The characters were adapted to the new system and got experience for all the years that had passed in Glorantha. The idea was to have them help the Dog Boy unite the Balazarings and throw the Lunars out. Well the Dog Boy was an entry level character so he needed some seasoning. The rest of the player characters were for the most part fairly competent rune levels so I decided to throw a bunch of

high level old scenarios at them to season Dog Boy. There was reasons for why they did each scenario and they did pretty well but there wasn't really a tread there.

And then someone made a joke about the bad guys joining forces (they hadn't managed to kill any of the major bad guys in the scenarios). So of course the bad guys united and went after the party and it all ended kind of messily. They all survived and the bad guys lost but what thread there was got cut and that was that.

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 4 Vision**

Ugh. Vision? Like a vision statement? Looking to the future? Okay how about strictly literal. I've been playing/running RPGs since 1981. For the bulk of that time it's all been face-to-face with the gang sitting around the table. And that of course has been the biggest part of it, getting together with the guys, eating snacks, telling bad jokes and rollin' some dice. Many of my gaming buddies moved away so the group got smaller. But a couple of years ago we started playing with a friend in Singapore. Just through audio services like Discord mind you, no video. Then we added a friend in Edmonton and never managed to have enough bandwidth that we didn't drop connections, etc.

Recently the Edmonton friend dropped back out and a friend in Tokyo joined n. Again, strictly audio. But then I was introduced to Roll20 and we started using that for the game map so the far away players could see it. The Winnipeg group still met face to face and I used an overhead projector to display the map so everyone could see it. And then of course our friend Covid came around and everyone sat at home and played on Roll20. (Other than my son of course). Still audio mind you so no vision. (Well I could see my son of course). We have enough problems with keeping the audio connection going so I'm reluctant to try video as well. Not being able to see people lessens the whole experience (and don't get me started on using the auto-roll feature on Roll20. What's wrong with real dice?) I'm not convinced that using video would enhance the set-up that much but what can you do? So for me at least no vision = less fun.

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 5 Tribute**

Can't honestly think of anything new so here's a link to the tribute page I set up on Greg Stafford's passing: [https://oliverbernuetz.neocities.org/tribute\\_to\\_greg\\_stafford.html](https://oliverbernuetz.neocities.org/tribute_to_greg_stafford.html)

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 6 Forest**

Forest? Forest. Umm. Honestly struggling to even come up with a RPG connection to forest. Interestingly most of my campaigns have been either RuneQuest or Call of Cthulhu. The Call of Cthulhu stuff I've run hasn't really involved forests and since most of my RuneQuest stuff has

been set in Prax it hasn't exactly been overly forest related. There was a long stretch in Balazar so there were some forests there. Not much. Okay going way, way back I did run ElfQuest. It's got wolves and elves. Surely there were forests? That was a long time ago mind you.

On a tree related note I still prefer paper gaming aids. Harder to look stuff up but easier to browse and the battery never dies and you don't have to turn anything on. Probably have at least a copse's worth of trees there.

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 7 Couple**

Couple, sigh again with the ambiguity. My gaming group has been fairly consistent members-wise in the 00's and 10's. The same gang I met in university back in the early days of the 1980's minus a few members who have moved away to greener pastures or who have sadly passed away. The group has been almost entirely male. For a time in the 90's before he moved away to Alberta our group did include the wife of one the gang so there was briefly a couple. (My own wife even tried to develop an interest in role-playing but it just wasn't her thing). So very briefly in the early 90's there were two couples in our gaming group. But as I said RPGs were not to my wife's taste. We did play for a few years with my friend and his wife but their marriage ended and a while later he himself moved to Alberta. That ended our, oh so brief experiment with couples. Since then the group has grown through the use of technology to include a couple of the old gang who now live in Asia. My son has also been added to provide some fresh blood to the scene.

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 8 Shade**

Huh, shade, eh. Let's try some stream of consciousness stuff. Do I use shade in my games? My bad guys tend to be pretty bad. Nope, shade is doing absolutely nothing for me. I don't usually shade in my games. It's all old school bad guys.

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 9 Light**

I try to keep it light and fun. We're mostly in it for the jokes and banter. Or at least I am. If we're not having fun what's the point. It's nothing to take that seriously. The memories that last are pretty light (or at the worst schadenfreude). Two memories from my friend Doug's DragonQuest campaign. One light the other more laughing at the miseries of others, you know schadenfreude. It was a long time ago so memories are somewhat hazy. Early on one of the players was playing a giant and another played a Halfling. We were fighting someone and for some reason the giant trampled the Halfling. He rolled a critical hit result. Being ghouls we all started chanting for the worst possible critical results. There's more than one mind you but certain types are only possible with specific types of weapon. For whatever reason we all went

with 98-100 crushing blow to the pelvis. I believe some chanting was involved and sure enough that pelvis was crushed. A cheer went up and that poor player was mighty pissed.

Terrible example, not light at all. The next is lighter. We were trying to find a treasure. The only clue we had was that it was the weight of a small boy. We searched and searched and found bupkus. Finally we came across a channel marker in a cave. We looked at it and suddenly homophones claimed another victim. We tore that poor buoy to shreds and the GM laughed and laughed. Cannot remember for the life of me what the treasure might have been but I do remember the buoy.

On a related nautical note in an old RuneQuest campaign the party found another channel marker. This one floated and glowed and they wondered what other magical properties it might possess. They took it to Pavis and paid the local knowledge cult, Lhankhor Mhy a pretty sum of money to cast a spell on it that would reveal the item's magical properties. They paid for one casting which would reveal two properties of the item. The spell was cast and the priest consulted the god. The god passed on his knowledge and proclaimed that the item "floats and it glows". Still gets a laugh every time. (From me anyway).

Another RuneQuest example from the same campaign. One of the players had pissed of a local anti-nonhuman outfit by hanging out with trolls. They snuck into the players room at the inn where he was staying and hid a starving rubble runner (imaging a giant rat with armadillo armour). The player wasn't wearing any armour and only had a dagger so the rubble runner actually gave him some trouble as they battled. But the rubble runner succumbed and the indignant player hauled the dead rubble runner downstairs to complain to the management. He held it up to one of the maids who promptly said. "I'm sorry sir, we don't allow pets at Geos."

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 10 Want**

What do I want from an RPG? (Such wants are purely pie-in-the-sky I admit and are not directed at any existing RPG).

- Rules that are clear and organized in a sensible manner, for example if you have guidelines on how long a task takes why not include that in the description of the skills rather than in a separate section? Don't scatter them throughout a rulebook or worse put them in a different book.
- Rules that don't look like they've been cut and pasted from several old editions and knocked around until they're compatible.

- Consistency. If you need to roll low to do well in one instance don't have high rolls work in another instance.
- Don't contradict earlier examples of the rules later on in the same book for Pete's sake. Be consistent.

What do I want in a RPG Campaign? Fun, mostly though I have long wanted to create my own worlds (which is a heck of a lot of work) to use. Each attempt has sadly failed due to the amount of work involved and the lure of a shiny pre-fab world to use instead. They all had potential though. They included:

- Wind Pirates of Orlanth – this was a mash-up of the world of Glorantha and Napoleonic era naval combat. The lozenge had been destroyed and reduced to floating islands that floated in space. They were all connected by a figure eight shaped current of air that the ships sailed along. The players were Orlanthi villagers who had been abducted from their island and taken to Boldhome which had it's dangling undercity hanging from the bottom of the island. Nothing online at the moment.

- Lodriland – another Glorantha spin-off. This was set in a dome under a huge glacier where a group of people worshipped the fire god Lodril. It had a river of lava, ice demons and Reindeer people.

<https://oliverbernuetz.neocities.org/regions/lodriland.html>

- The Fourfold World – this wasn't Glorantha based but consisted of four separate worlds dedicated to different types of magic spirit, divine, sorcery and mysticism (okay, it wasn't entirely devoid of Gloranthan aspects). Each world had been part of a much bigger world torn apart by a magical war.

<https://oliverbernuetz.neocities.org/Fourfol.../theworld.htm>

That's the kind of stuff I want.

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 11 Stack**

I have stacks of gaming stuff. I like stacks, I like completeness but then again I don't. It's annoying to have to look through multiple books trying to find the rule/piece of information you need. And not everything is digitized so that's not necessarily an option. Stacks is cool but not always.



### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 12 Message**

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 13 Rest**

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 14 Banner**

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 15 Frame**

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 16 Dramatic**

Dramatic huh? I'm telling you I am struggling with most of these. Drama should of course be a big part of any campaign...right, sure it should. I'm not great with it. I think I'm pretty good winging it and inserting humour. Doing big dramatic things? No, that doesn't sound like me at all. Wish it did sometimes but oh well what can you do?

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 17 Comfort**

I'm not overly comfortable around people. I get twitchy if I sit too long sometimes (it's not a desire to move or exercise or anything like that, God forbid. It's more of a feeling that I should be doing something else). It rarely happens with people I know but I have a hard time sometimes meeting people for coffee or lunch as I get the feeling I should be doing something else. Having this feeling it surprises me that I enjoy running games at Conventions so much. My favourite games at cons are weird RPG settings. Systemless things like the [drelbs](#) where the

rules are barely there. (The most recent chapter involved a group of dogs competing with cats in a scavenger hunt). The last con I went to I ran a pretty straight forward Call of Cthulhu game involving the Winnipeg General Strike and a Superworld game set during WW II. They were both lots of fun. The year before I ran a CofC game where the investigators were the grandparents of the Scooby gang (including Scooby christened 23 Ski-doo). That was fun too. That's my comfort level.

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 18 Meet**

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 19 Tower**

Tower huh. Should be lots of towers in RPG scenarios, no? There was a lighthouse in Scotland in Shadows of Yog-Sothoth, a campaign for Call of Cthulhu released in 1982. That's a tower. (I'm pretty sure there was but you know 1982, almost forty years ago. I could go downstairs and check but you know I'm sitting). There was definitely a tower in the Borderlands set for RuneQuest also released in 1982 though I didn't run it then. I seem to recall my friend Jeff bought that one and gave it to me when he moved out of the country. I ran it much later in the 3rd edition and I'm not sure I used all the parts. Good stuff though.

Retirement towers in Sun County, yup used that scenario in my last RQ campaign. The party was investigating the tower on behalf of Count Vega trying to find something she could use to cement support among the sexist Sun County types. She'd gotten a divination suggesting something might be placed there. The party won and she got her gee gaws. Lots of towers in RPGs. I certain there are many, many more, all tons of fun. Here's to towers!



### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 20 Investigate**

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 21 Push**



## RPGaDay 2020 Day 22 Rare

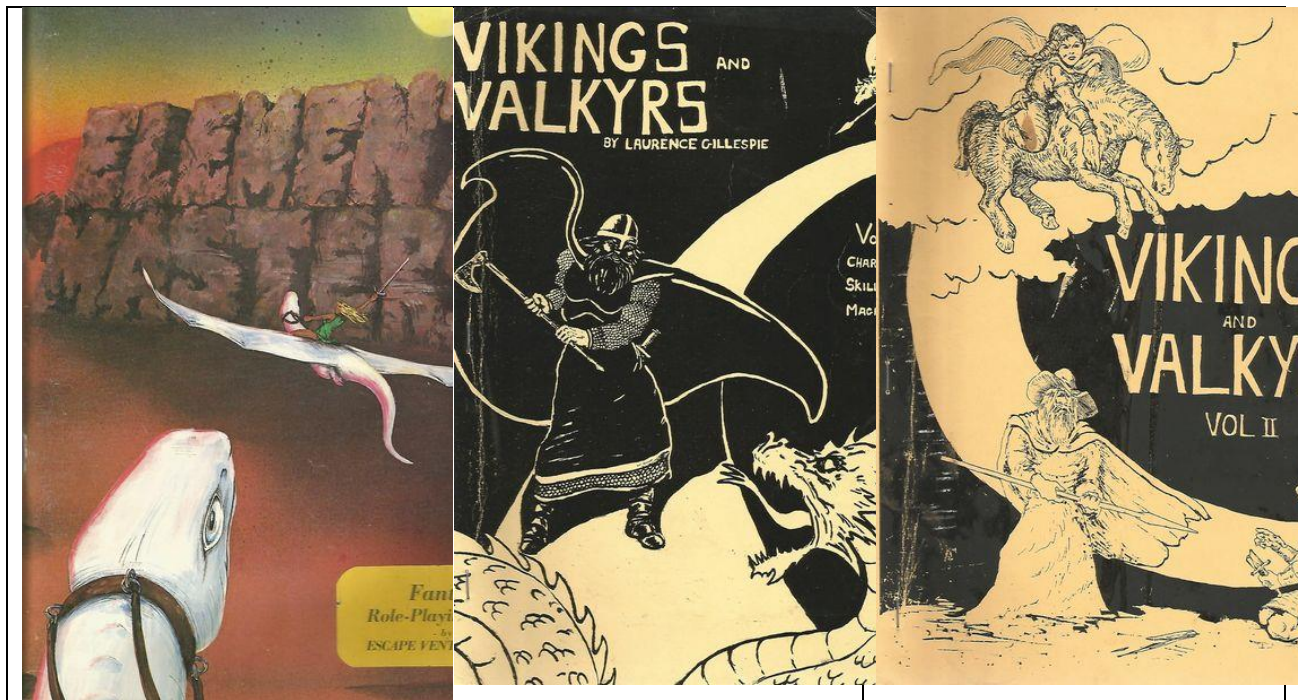
There have been so many RPGs over the years. I have a couple of fairly rare examples. Way back when I was involved with the gaming club at the University of Manitoba running the Wingames convention we used to get material as prizes. One year we got multiple copies of a game called Element Masters. This is the second edition. It's not that rare since quite a few websites seem to offer copies for sale. I honestly know nothing about it since I've never done more than perused the volume. This Wikipedia link does little to expand on that.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Element\\_Masters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Element_Masters)

A true rarity is a RPG that a friend of mine created called Vikings and Valkyrs. It's quite rare and I have a copy of each of the two volumes. It's a game set during Viking times that uses the Tunnels & Trolls mechanics.

Laurence did all the work himself, as far as I know and he did run some games using the system. I never got so lucky as to play in the game as he had pretty much stopped running before I entered university or I just never got the chance. Laurence was and is very knowledgeable about Viking times so the game was quite well done.

All I know is the covers are very evocative of seventies and early eighties cover art in those cases where you couldn't afford a decent artist.



## RPGaDay 2020 Day 23 Edge

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 24 Humour**

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 25 Lever**

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 26 Strange**

Strange? Hmm, I guess the strangest RPG I've ever run was Alas Vegas. Great concept, lost souls in hell, right in my wheelhouse. Instead of dice a tarot deck was used. It was in three acts and three different people were supposed to take turns running it. I ran all three acts which was probably a mistake. I don't think it was as clever as the author seemed to think it was but it was pretty good.

I've run games where I've not used any system, "Roll some D6 and tell me what you get." "A 13? Good enough!" I'm good with strange.

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 27 Favour**

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 28 Close**

### **RPGaDay 2020 Day 29 Ride**

My favourite RPG involved rides were always the two hour drive from Winnipeg to Brandon for the annual long running Prairiecon convention. This year was going to be the 41st but for reasons I don't have to explain it was rescheduled for next year. I haven't gone every year, in fact I suspect I've attended less than half. For the past five years or so I've been going to run sessions. Usually random stuff that I wouldn't do for my local gaming group. For example:

- A drelbs scavenger hunt of cats versus dogs.
- A Canadian version of The Laundry investigating weirdness at the maximum security occult prison north of the Arctic Circle.
- Mystification Inc. investigating misdeeds at the Starry Wisdom Golf and Country Club.
- Chicago gangsters investigating a gold mine in Manitoba with an eye to invest in it against the backdrop of the Winnipeg General Strike.
- A Canadian group of superheroes conducting an attack against the heavy water plant in Norway during WW II.

Lots of fun and the rides there provide an opportunity to do more in-depth catching up with my friend Darryl than I get to do at gaming sessions. And the ride back always involves a recap of the con's events and maybe even some planning for the upcoming year.

That's a ride I hope to make again in 2021. I wonder what I'll run?

<http://www.prairiecon.com/>

**RPGaDay 2020 Day 30 Portal**

**RPGaDay 2020 Day 31 Experience**