

*I am pleased to present
for your general edification and amusement
the first chapter of
Celli the Happy Go Lucky's
award winning
Minataur Tails*

Appendix A - The Ranting

What some (including me) consider to be one of the greatest chapters in all of literature. So much so that it's sort of dangerous for me to read this particular chapter, because invariably whenever I do, I have an insatiable desire to continue and read the rest of the book... and we all know what a time killer that can be. But then, truthfully and in all honesty, that's a compulsion I hope you'll soon come to share. And in the end, what this posting is all about. So, after you're done (and if you're in the industry), please feel free to request the rest of the manuscript. You won't be disappointed.

Minataur Tails
Celli the Happy Go Lucky Celaphopod
Appendix A
The Ranting

Minne was a Minataur. It wasn't an original name, but by some quirk of fantasy literature it was a rule that a character's name had to start with the same letter as the type of creature he, she, or it was. As such, Minne's brothers were Marlin, Mark, Monty, Mike, Mickey, and so forth. He came from a large herd. But Minne knew his name was the best and so did the author, the award winning author of the much beloved Dragon Bound series, Celli the Happy Go Lucky Celaphopod.

Since Minne was the best possible name there was for a Minataur character, Celli was sure the name had already been used countless times before. He'd even done a cursory name search at his local library. And sure enough, Minne the Minataur had already been involved in a whole series of adventures. He was well represented in the Alphabet Book of Mythical Creatures squeezed in between Oliver the Orphan Orc and Paul the Persnickety Pegasus. OK, sue us. Neither Celli nor Minne were very good with words or things alphabetical. The point is Minne was an obvious name for a Minataur, so obvious that his mother (Mary) and father (Marvin) had hit upon it right away. It was the type of name that easily bespoke of his coming fame, rip roaring adventures, and growing fan base. It was the type of name that would be ludicrous to protect with vain attempts at legalese.

No, Minne the Minataur^{©™}(Patent Pending) was a good name. It did not matter that Minne the Minataur^{©™}(Patent Pending) had been previously used by Arthur Dumcraven in his best selling epic trilogy Minne the Minataur Adventures or that before that Ernest Tiltensbark had crafted his seventeen book children's book franchise around a similar named creature, Min'ne the Minataur. What mattered was that Min'n'e the Min'at'a'ur was first used as an example in a third century epic poem entitled Copyright Legal Defenses -- Avoiding the Pitfalls: Using the '

to your Advantage. H'o'm'b'e'r had believed in the ' and that epic poems should have names of epic length.

Some felt Minne could have had a better name. There was a conflicting school of thought in fantasy writing, which held that every name of any character no matter how small, tiny, or insignificant their role should have a memorable name. A name like Art'gun'haven 'Cra da La Doo'n. However, the disadvantage of such a ridiculously long winded name will immediately become obvious if one ever tries to read The Adventures of Art'gun'haven 'Cra da La Doo'n & Art'gan'huvn 'Cro do La Daa'n. Never mind that you, dear reader, will never be able to tell the two title characters apart, neither could the rest of the cast. But even that is not the best example of this particular pitfall. It seems that somewhere between the first and second book in The Lithal'tr'n Chronicles, the Faire Damsel Marla forget that the name of her true love was Blah-Blah Met'e, and so spends the rest of the Chronicles (all six books, plus the short story collection) tending the, um, "gardens" of Met'e's arch nemesis Ma'ta.

No dear reader, trust me. As romantic as Art'gun'haven 'Cra da La Doo'n sounds, you probably will never read it all the way through more than once, and I personally am willing to guarantee that you will never say it correctly. Much is made of little know facts in fantasy literature. And this I will tell you outright, there is no fact more little known, obscure, or patently worthless than the knowledge that among the hoofed creatures (Minataurs and Centaurs especially) that an apostrophe in a name denotes a missing letter. So try as you might, you'd never be able to guess whether Art's true name is Art'e'gun (yada-yada) or Art'le'gun (etc.). And let's face it, as long as we're being honest, isn't Art a better name for an Ant, an Aardvark, or an Anterior Armored Anthropoid anyway? Art the Anterior Armored Anthropoid -- it has a certain ring to it, don't you think?

So let it go. Minne was a Minataur and should I ever start calling him Min'ne, you will know it's solely on the advice of my lawyers.

This, of course, is all just a long way of saying Min'ne was a Minataur and that this book will be about Min'ne. But I suppose calling the book Minataur Tails pretty much gave the game away in the first place. So really, let's not belabor the point here any further.

Minne was -- if you'll be so kind as to let me repeat myself -- a Minataur. What does this Minataur look like you may ask? And believe me you will ask. I cannot begin to tell you how much fan mail I get. Everyday the mailman brings yet another bag, I read every letter, which is to say I open every envelope and check for small bills and checks, but hey I'm a writer not a reader, so if you want someone to read your letters...

The thing is Crazy George has been staying at my house for a while. He says he needs a break. His new wife is a real demon; but then, he knew that going in, so I'm not really sympathetic. The point is, if I seem a bit distracted, that's why. That and the K'fr. But we'll get to all this in a bit. It's a long story. One hundred thousand words, to the letter, but this isn't one of those Garg novels. First off, a Garg novel is only 75,000 words. I on the other hand provide a full 100,000 words. It's like getting 33.3% more for free -- in much the same way that a Quadrillogy packs a third more action than some stupid overrated trilogy. Hey! Come to think of it, I'm going to have to talk to my publisher and see if we can't put that on the cover.

But more important than all that, what I'm saying here is that you can be patient. I'm going to tell you the entire story, because unlike a Garg novel, the book isn't just going to end at exactly 75,000 words. Garg isn't going to be walking down the streets of Rigor Pass and

suddenly fall into quicksand. I don't even want to go into what's wrong with that. He's not from this vortex in the first place; and let's be honest, Garg is more of a Doom Crag Mountain type guy. But even if we are willing to accept that Garg was in Rigor Pass because that's where the mysterious letter came from, I just don't buy that he fell into quicksand. The point isn't that it's called cement in the story. The point is that it happens at exactly 75,000 words. You be the judge.

Garg was disoriented in the large metropolis. His keen hunting instincts overpowered by the myriad sights, sounds, and smells. It had taken him longer than he had expected to trace the mysterious stranger to the building he now stood in front of.

Garg, also, felt naked without his club. This might explain why he did not see the orange construction cones, the flashing barricades, or the shouts from the construction crew. One momentary little misstep and Garg found himself sinking down into a pool of cement. Quicksand, he thought. He should have known better.

Will Garg escape the dangers of the quicksand cement?
Will the mysterious stranger once again escape Garg's grasp?
And what will happen to Laura, who he left in the department store dressing room?

Find out in the next exciting installment of GARG!, available at better retailers everywhere.

In case you're wondering, the answers are Yes, Yes, and Laura will go to the shoe department and won't even notice Garg is missing for the first three chapters of the next book.

The point is (and there is a point and that's) that you will get the full 100,000 words from me, maybe even a 1,000 more if that's what it takes... or my editor tells me I need to fluff it up a bit. Maybe he said something like:

Get with the Program.
You're a thousand words short. Fluff it up somewhere.
Your Editor

And maybe I decided the thing to do was add a chapter at the beginning of this here book (where nobody would notice), and just sort of tie it in seamlessly as I ranted on mindlessly, complaining about the Garg novels (in particular) and other hack literature (in general).

The previous sentence aside, it is not my intent to delve any deeper into my personal dissatisfaction with the linear narrative structure of the Garg novels. The point is, was, and ever shall be that after I sift the mail for money, checks, and similar valuables, I occasionally read a letter or two. Usually they go (ahem, hint, hint, hint) like this:

Dear Esteemed Author,
You are great. No. Great isn't the right word. You are fantastic, wonderful, and superb. I just wanted to write a quick letter to let you know what a great, fantastic,

wonderful, superb job you are doing. I hear you have been nominated for the N© Bell Peace Prize for your work in ridding sword and sorcery novels of swords.

I applaud your efforts. But do you think this turn of events will affect the value of my weapons replica collection?

Ha, Ha. You can use that joke if you want to.

Anyway, enclosed is a crisp new hundred gold note I had lying around. It's just my little way of saying good work.

Sincerely,

Your Money Sending Fan

I value correspondence with my readers, especially the ones who send cash, so I wrote back.

Dear Money Sending Fan,

I fear the value of your collection will be greatly reduced. Please keep in mind that I am not a licensed Movie Paraphernalia Collection Adviser, so you may want to seek the counsel of an appropriate professional, but yes the value of any non-Grt, Ruby, Crazy George, or other Dragon Bound collectable is sure to plummet.

Sell the swords. Buy genuine Dragon Pendants™. They double as digital watches. And their value is sure to explode.

Thank you,

The Worlds Greatest Author

At other times, the correspondence goes something more like this:

Dear Esteemed Author,

Wow! What a novel. Great, fantastic, superb, and excellent are just a few of the adjectives that come to mind. I do have some questions though.

- 1) On page 56 where Ruby does (some mind-numbingly obscure reference that no one in their right mind could possibly care about), wouldn't it have made more sense if she had done (a well thought out solution that points out numerous holes in some book I may have had something to do with and hence will not be repeating here)?
- 2) The same thing happens on page 61, 63, 89, and 101. Is this deliberate?
- 3) I can't locate the Garg novels anywhere. Do you have the publisher's address?

I have included three crisp hundred gold notes for your time and effort in answering these questions. When will the next novel come out?

Sincerely,

Another One of Your Money Sending Fans

To which I replied:

Dear Another One of My Money Sending Fans,

I am impressed by your grasp of the subtleties of my books. I am honored that you would spend so much time digging deeper into their true meaning.

The answers to your questions are:

- 1) Yes
- 2) Yes
- 3) Yes

And soon, just as soon as I add those last few thousand words that my editor wants.

Thank you,
The World's Greatest Author

Now, I published the first two letters just so you would get an idea of what my usual fan mail looks like. The next few letter writers didn't send any money, and so didn't get a personalized reply that they could have sold on Manna-Bay for untold gobs of gold. Their loss.

Yo!
Why you no describe what Goblin look like?
Garry the Goblin

Hey!
What dat Orc look like?
Orin the Orc

Don't you read my Comments!
You need to describe your creatures better.
What the heck does a Gnome look like?
What's the difference between a Troll and an Ogre?
What exactly is a Depth Fiend?
And if I wanted to pick up a hot Elvin chick, would I be better off going to the
Dungeon Edge Café or Lucky's Tavern?
Your Editor!

These are exactly the type of letters I don't respond to, but I seem to get so many of them -- especially from that editor guy -- that I thought it might be a good idea to just briefly go over what the different creatures look like.

Ready?
OK.

Minne looks exactly like a Minataur. Let me say it slower. Maybe it will help. He looks exactly like a Min-a-aur.

Just kidding. I can just see my editor pulling his hair out over that one. Look, you want to know what Minne looks like, right? Well, look on the front cover. Right there in full color glossy oil or whatever they use in your dimension should be a picture of Minne by some famous and talented artist. And that's what a Minataur looks like. Duh!

But just in case you're the artist and don't know what to paint, let me help you out. Minne has the body of a man and the head of a bull. He stands over seven feet tall, and tends to wear cowboy boots, blue jeans, and plaidish shirts.

Sadly, that's where the easy description ends, because sometimes Minne has horns, and sometimes he doesn't. That's because, he can change what his face looks like at will. So, you could say that he had big horns, a grizzly beard, and eyes full of hate and you'd be right, or you could say that he had the face of a two month old calf, all sweet, soft, and tender and you'd also be right. That face changing ability is about it for Minne's magical powers. Well, that and his ability to track through the vortexes. But how to explain that last? Oh, here. Suppose Minne wanted to go from, um, say, just off the top of my head, from Rigor Pass to the Realms of Chaos. Well he could do that by way of Mother Goose Land or any other vortex he wants to visit on the way.

Gee. That's not a very good description of vortex tracking, is it?

Look, just trust me on this. I'm not saying it will get any clearer, but if things start to get weird around Minne (the scenery changes, the plot goes to H\$rlk in a hand basket, or something like that) just assume Minne is vortex hopping and you'll be in pretty good shape.

So are we all OK with Minne, then? We all know what he looks like? And that he's rude, self serving, and of royal blood, which isn't so much a magical ability, but something useful and central to the storyline in it's own right. Oh, and I guess while I'm at it, I should say that the ladies tend to go for Minne in a love to hate him, hate to love him sort of way.

And there's Minne.

Believe it or not, if I didn't have to respond to the editor's other inquiries, we could get on with the story. It's a good story full of twists, turns, and K'fr dealing Minataur's; but for reasons of suspense, I will not elaborate at this point on exactly which Minataur in the story will be smuggling K'fr in his saddle bags because he has diplomatic immunity on account of his having royal blood in his veins, but for the love of Gra'gl, I'm hoping you can figure it out on your own.

But like I said, before we get to that, first I have to respond to the editor and let you know what a Troll looks like.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, so if you want to know what a Troll looks like, turn on the TV.

-- Click --

See there you are. No, that's not a troll. That's Jeannette Stevens, the award winning anchor for the Mt. Doom News. She has her own news program now, The Jeannette Stevens Weekly Report. She's everything Dark Portent could ever possibly want in an Elf and more. She's blond, beautiful, career minded, and incredibly smart. Don't ask me how she got mixed up with Minne.

-- Click --

No. Those aren't Trolls either. This is the Bash Toe Horde. I love this episode. Mom and Dad go to a Separatist Rally and while they're out, Grug throws his spear in the house and breaks a vase.

"Mom always said, don't throw spears in the house."

What? You've never heard of the Bash Toe Horde? You know, personally, I hate it when an author writes some stupid song or poem and then inserts it into his story -- usually on some ultra-weak pretext. In fact, I usually just skip over them. So if you don't care for song parodies, feel free to ignore this bit. Also, I've got to apologize, I'm coming down with a bit of a cold, and so my voice is a little hoarse. Anyway, here it goes:

The Bash Toe Horde. The Bash Toe Horde.

It's the story of an Orcin Lady
Who was bringing up three very horrid girls
All of them had wiry hair like their mother
The youngest one in barbs

Da-na-da-da

It's the story of a Goblin called Bash Toe
Who was bringing up three very lovely cubs
They were four warriors living all together
Yet they were all alone

It goes on, but you get the point. Who would have thought mixed species marriages would have made it onto primetime TV, and a Goblin/Orc marriage at that? Good thing they never had any joint offspring! Makes me shudder just to think about it.

But, enough of that.

-- Click --

Here we go: This Ole' Lair. See Handy in the hard hat, he's a Troll. Ever looking for somebody to get some real work done, you'll be looking for a Troll. That guy in the white shirt standing next to him is an Ogre -- bigger, dumber, and not as helpful. And all the guys on the site that the camera never quite focuses on, those guys are Gnomes.

-- Click-Off --

So I hope that settles it. In just a couple pages when the story starts and I introduce Jeannette into the plot line, I don't want to get any letters complaining about how I didn't describe her. She's a major TV personality. Flick on the tube. Take an interest.

Dear Esteemed Noble Author,

You are my personal Hero. I live to be like you in every possible way. As such, I don't own a TV.

Enclosed is a small stack of gold coins to express my gratitude. What does a Gnome look like?

Sincerely,

Your Very Rich Fan

OK. If you're going to put it that way, I can be more helpful. You know that hot chick that you want to date, but can't work up the nerve to ask out? Odds are she's an Elf. That football player that isn't so smart? If he's on the first string he's an Ogre, if he's on the second string he's a Troll, and if he's the water boy, he's a Gnome.

Come on, explore your world. That guy behind the Manna King counter is a Gnome. But the guy wearing the manager's shirt is a harder call. He could be anything. The guy who took your money when you bought this book? He's definitely a Gnome, unless of course he's an Elf slumming it, or an uppity Orc, or a Goblin with literary pretensions.

Look, you must know what an Orc looks like. They are everywhere. They must have given political immunity to a million Orcs when they used them as extras in that Lord of the Kings debacle (a.k.a. the movie).

Suffice to say, if you don't know the difference between an Orc and a Goblin at this point, you're not even trying and you probably wouldn't even listen if I tried to tell you.

Dear Reverend Lord of the Written Word,

Enclosed please find the deed to my house, keys to my car, and a check to cover any tax consequences said gifts might bring.

I work at the docks and so I work next to Orcs, Goblins, and Trolls. My boss is an Ogre and the manager is a Pit Fiend.

The thing is Gary the Goblin has buckteeth and wears a do-rag on his head, while Gomez is more traditional and prefers facial scars and fur clothing. They are two distinct individuals originating from separate clans, each making their own separate way in the world.

It would be helpful when reading if you would describe each specific Goblin, Troll, etc, so I could get a better feel for each unique character.

A Formerly Rich Fan

A car and deed to a house? I can make time in my busy, lazing on the beach schedule, which us authors like to call "working on the plot," to personally respond to such a letter.

Dear Formerly Rich Fan,

Due to the demands on my time, I am unable to maintain a correspondence with all of my fans. Should your monetary situation change, please feel free to contact me at that time.

In regards to your statement that not all Goblins are alike, you are wrong. The full descriptor of a Goblin can be found in the word 'Goblin'.

If you had known this fact, I am sure instead of being a Formerly Rich Fan, you would now, in fact, be a Rich Fan.

Sincerely,

Worlds Greatest (and Now Wealthiest) Author

PS. The car needs washing, if you would come by next week and clean it that would be nice. I'll be at the beach Wednesday afternoon, so that would be the best time.

And I think that's it for the filler.

We are now down to the wire, almost at the start of the book.

Isn't it exciting? Me, I can hardly wait.

99,987, 99,988, 99,989, 99,990, 99,991, 99,992...

And now, without further ado, our feature presentation: Minataur Tails.

As you can see, the story is so well set up, here, in the very first chapter, that it almost writes itself from here on out. Anyway, request the manuscript, you won't be disappointed.