

**TOC**  
of  
**Minataur Tails**  
The Second Book  
in the  
**Dragon Bound**  
a.k.a Dra@g©n B©und a.k.a  
a.k.a **The D-B©und Adventuring Series** a.k.a  
starring  
**Ruby FireHaven**  
and so on and so forth

as conceived, written, and enchanted by

**Celli**  
the  
**Happy Go Lucky Celaphopod**

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and in the Earthen Vortex

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*Commemorative Internet Edition*

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*Happy Birthday to the LeeZards*

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*Editing, Translated to the English, and in general Debugged & Deburred*

by

**Brett Paufler**

Brett@Paufler.net

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Minataur Tails  
Book I - Minataur Tails  
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Minataur Tails

Being the name of this here magnificent tome.

The C©pyright Page

In which we ask, can c©pyright warnings be c©pyrighted?

This work is protected by transvortex copyright protection. Notwithstanding any local copyright, if you steal this intellectual property, you will have to answer to Celli the Happy Go Lucky Celaphopod, Dragon Bound Publishing, and The Dragon -- and not necessarily in that order, because let's face it, as red in the face as Celli might get if you cheat him out of so much as a copper, he isn't the one who's going to hunt you down and eat you for a light -- in-between -- meal snack. The Dragon however, just might... or that is to say, he could if he wasn't such a terribly nice guy.

The views, dialogue, and actions related herein are those of the individual characters involved and in no way reflect the opinions of Dragon Bound Publishing or me, the author, Celli the Happy Go Lucky Celaphopod. I mean, seriously, if you're going to hold me responsible for everything I write, what's the point?

For Back Cover

A statement from The Dragon about this Earth Vortex Edition:

*"This paperback edition, and no other, has been published with my consent and cooperation. Those who approve of courtesy (or at least, wish to remain amongst the living) will purchase this edition, and no other."*

## Errata for the Earthen Vortex

Some folks wonder why good old (and I do mean old, as in ancient) JRRR Huffy Puff's widow never thought to sue us over our use of the name: Mt D©©M. Um, simple reason, Mt D©©M is Mt D©©M's actual name and y©u can't c©pyright actual l©cati©n names. But then, perhaps that doesn't satisfy, so let me give you the long winded explanation -- complete with all the sordid details.

Not only is Mt D©©M called Mt D©©M, it's also called Crag Haven, Crag Rock, Crag View, and basically every other iteration of Crag Blank that there is by the Orcs; Rock This and Rock That by the Goblins; Mt Russell on Earth by the Humans (along with a few more slanderous derivations); and countless other names throughout the Realms including Dragon's Mount, but let's face it, the only folks calling Mt D©©M Dragon's Mount these days are tourists who don't know any better on account of how they're simply reading the name off the outdated maps they bought back home, which, by the by, is why you should update your cartographic collection with an official Mt D©©M Collector's Map as printed by D-Bound Publishing Group. (TODAY! DO IT TODAY!) But then, I digress (as I pretty much always do), because, let's face it, most locals simply call Mt D©©M H©me and leave it at that.

Um, so are we clear so far? Have I given you enough history, backstory, and/or other useless information? I mean, basically, Mt D©©M could easily be called that Pile of Rocks a Mile High with a Million and One Names; but then, that's sort of unwieldy and if you name a place something as long and unwieldy as that, it's just a matter of time before someone finds a shorter nickname for it -- you know, something catchy that somehow manages to convey a lot of relevant information about the place in just a few short words. And voila! Before you know it, folks are calling the place

Mt D©©M even though it has nothing (absolutely nothing) to do with that other (arguably more famous) place in the first place.

Ah, but then it does (have something to do with that other place in the first place). And that's where things get interesting. I mean, who do you suppose first thought of calling Mt D©©M, Mt D©©M? That's right. Adventures! Adventures, who (coincidentally enough) were winding their way back home from the Ring Wars. Of course, it's highly unlikely these particular adventures saw anything close to "action" in said same Ring Wars and we know this because they named Mt D©©M after the rainclouds that surround the summit around midday. I mean, let's face it, that isn't exactly what Mt D©©M is known for, now is it?

No. It is not.

Anyway, the thinking goes that these so called "adventurers" thought the overcast sky sort of looked all ominous and Dark Warlordish and how they imagined the real Mt D©©M might look, on account of how they never actually saw the original Mt D©©M up close and personal (having never seen it and/or any real "action" in said same Ring Wars). Anyway, no doubt, these "adventurers" started throwing their gold around the Dungeon Café (as adventurers -- even "adventurers" -- are want to do), buying rounds on the house and whatnot, and if they wanted to call the place Mt D©©M, well then, Mt D©©M it was. And then, since it is a sort of catchy name and all, by the time they moved on (as adventurers -- even "adventurers" -- are want to do), the name had taken hold and entered the local lexicon (even if at first it was simply an inside joke about how stupid some "adventurers" -- yes even adventurers -- are).

And I guess that would be the end of that, except at some point we realized that the real reason good ole Puffy Stuff's Widow wasn't suing us over the use of Mt D©©M was because she was making a mint off the confusion... and the t-shirt royalties specifically: 'My Dark Liege fought his way to the top of Mt D©©M and all I got was this lousy T-shirt' and that sort of tripe. And, although that might have been fine and dandy as far as that

sneaky, good for nothing Stuff ‘n Puff hag of a widow was concerned, if there’s one thing you will know about Dragon Bound Publishing Group (Limited Ltd.) by the end of this here magnificent tome of (adventuring and/or and inclusive of “adventuring”) knowledge, it’s that around here we will do just about anything for a royalty check. And if that means changing the name of Mt D©©M to Mt D©©M, well then, Mt D©©M it is -- and that’ll be two silvers a t-shirt, thank you very much (embossed lettering or matching beanie cap six-pence extra, if you please).

## Table of Contents

Where you are. (Oh, and just by-the-by, the first chapter is particularly good, so after you’re done reading the TOC, may I be so bold as to suggest that you start reading the story right there at the very beginning, like both I and Gra’gl intended.)

## Book I - Minataur Tails

I split each of my books into four sub-books... because I get paid by the book. But then, all of those sub-books are included in this here omnibus. (If you bought the omnibus, that is. Or then, maybe you were lucky enough to get an original edition wherein all the books were printed together. But then again, you probably didn’t, because if you did, it’s highly unlikely you’d be reading this here TOC, which was only added much-much much-much-much later). Anyway, the point is (if there is a point, which I personally doubt), who wants to buy four books when they can get away with only buying the one? Or buying the omnibus when they already have the original?

Who?

Collectors, that’s who! (For all of it.) Gra’gl bless them (not that Gra’gl blesses anyone, but whatever). Man, I sure do love collectors. Not only do I get them for the four individual books, but for the five if you include the omnibus and six if you include the rare original. But then, who’s counting?

Me!

That's who!

All the way to the bank.

Anyway, all those lovable collectors can't seem to help themselves and so they buy every version of every edition that we put out (so you just know we're going to keep on cranking them out as fast as we can). Anyway, both the original and the omnibus as well as the first sub-book of this here book all go by the name of Minataur Tails. And that might seem simple enough, but I'm just getting warmed up. Truth of the matter is, I'm sort of proud about how absurdly complex I've managed to make my book numbering system. It's so complex, in fact, that a full explanation of it will have to wait until another time. For the moment, suffice to say that even though Minataur Tails is technically the second book in the Dragon Bound (a.k.a. Ruby, a.k.a. D-B©und) Adventure Series, for marketing reasons it's the first book that most folks read. The rationale for that marketing decision should be easy enough to understand. Minataur Tails is, by and far, if not the very best book in the series, certainly the most popular, so whenever we enter a new dimension, we like to sell Minataur Tails first (as a sort of advance copy). And then, sell all the other books that come after it in chronological order (Book III being The K'fr Road: to Ve'kahn and Back Again and the second book we sell, Book IV being Crazy George Takes a Holiday and the third book we sell, and Book V being Rigor Pass 1866: The Manna Boom Years, which even though it's the fifth book in the series is the usually the fourth book we sell). And then, we circle around back to the start and start pushing the first book in the series (The Dragon Bound Quartet, the book that started it all), release it as a 25<sup>th</sup> Silver Anniversary Special Edition (regardless of the exact localized timeframe involved) and hope that it's been so long since anyone's read the others that they start reading the series all over again and buy another complete set before they realize we've already played this trick on them a time or two before.

Of course, if the first book had absolutely anything at all to do with the rest of the series (or if the second, or the third, or fourth -- or any of them for that matter -- had anything to do with the rest of the series), we could never get away with such a blatant marketing scam. But the books pretty much stand alone and are complete epics in and of themselves, so we can and we do.

### Appendix A - The Ranting

In which Celli the Happy Go Lucky Celaphopod establishes what us artistic types like to call the “Voice” of the story. In this particular case, that voice would be Celli’s. And if by the end of this chapter (or this TOC for that matter) that “voice” isn’t coming through loud and clear, then something is most definitely wrong with your hearing.

### Chapter 1 - Introducing Buddy

In which the lead character is replaced. I mean, come on! We just did a whole chapter trying to introduce Minne and we never even got past his name. Talk about a conceited guy. So, who needs him?

### Chapter 2 - Jerk First - Minataur Second

In which Buddy shows what a rat-bastard that Minne is by demonstrating what Minne would have done if Minne were still in the story and doing the scene. Or in other words, Buddy pounds a defenseless Centaur senseless for the sheer joy of it while breaking a few other laws too numerous to mention here. (I mean, I got to leave you some reason to buy the book and read the actual chapter, right?)

### Chapter 3 - Acting!

Of course, that last chapter didn’t actually happen. Buddy didn’t really just brutally savage a Centaur (or break a few other laws too numerous to mention here, but which have been related in excruciatingly graphic detail in the main text for your edification

and/or general amusement). So, um... where was I? Oh, right. Are you wondering how we managed to explain away all the brutality of the preceding chapter? Well, my friends, it's has an awful lot to do with that little something we like to call 'Acting!' You'll see a lot of that in the chapters to come -- professional, high quality 'Acting!'

Chapter 4 - It's a sequel. What about Ruby? What about Grt?

Your Exasperated Editor.

In which it is explained that even though this is a sequel, pretty much everything that happened in The Dragon Bound Quartet -- including both the ban on weapons and the ban on K'fr -- will either be explained again... or if that's not too terribly convenient, said facts will be conveniently explained away. You know, just like in your typical Garg novel. (Hey, I learn from the best.)

Chapter V - Manna, Magic, & Ribbons

Not to be confused with the infamous Chapter 5, Chapter V explains why earlier editions of Minotaur Tails are prized by Gnomes the world round. Or to put it another way, Chapter 5 was previously too long, so I chopped it down to size, and then because that made the chapter too short, I decided to add this here bonus chapter to fluff the word count back up to where it had been before, explain what I'd taken out, and offer to sell the missing information for gobs and gobs of gold should the reader so desire (i.e. if the reader should happen to be a Gnome).

Chapter 5 - Mr. Thwartbridge the Junior, a.k.a. Mr. Thwartbridge

Like most girls her age, Ruby is learning algebra. Unlike most girls her age, Ruby gets to bring Grt -- her pet drag-goon -- to algebra class with her. It's one of the many perks of being Consort, don't you know. Oh, and if you still think this chapter is long and boring (even after all the revisions that have gotten the Gnomes so riled), it's simply because learning algebra is an inherently long and boring endeavor. It just is. Facts be facts. I



mean, Ruby certainly thinks so, which is why towards the end of it all, she casts a spell on her eyelids, so she can close them and watch TV. Too bad the only reception she can get is for the local news.

#### Chapter 6 - Professionalism

Jeannette Stevens -- Elf, anchor woman, possible future mother of my children -- has like this giant crush on me. It's shameless. Anyhow, she clearly has a hard time concentrating whenever I'm around, so I pretty much have to cover for her during the entire news broadcast, which is why this particular chapter seems so pointless.

#### Chapter 7 - The Hard Part is Making it Look Easy

In which the N@z-Gh©uls are introduced as the story's major nemeses? Or should that be, nemisi? I guess algebra isn't the only thing I should have paid more attention to in school. Anyway, the N@z-Gh©uls are on a rampage. They killed a bunch of Sm©rks™ and Tr©ll-Tr©lls™, which no one will ever miss. But then, the pertinent point is that they're on a killing spree, so who knows who or what will be next? Clearly, someone has to stop them. And this being a Dragon Bound Adventure, that someone will be Ruby, Consort to The Dragon... because basically, that's what being Consort to The Dragon is all about -- that and going to snazzy end of book parties.

#### Chapter 8 - A Rare Moment of Silence

Unlike the rest of the story, in this here chapter, the author breaks the fourth wall and talks directly to the audience. That would be me (quite literally, standing in the spotlight), talking to you (wherever you might be, probably in some dank dark hole, but that's just a guess, so I could be wrong). There's also a Sm©rk™ involved, but as he doesn't have a talking role, he's more like a prop and there's probably little point in mentioning the poor guy here.

## Chapter 9 - Just Do Them!

After reading this chapter (sponsored by Nifty Shoes, I might add), it should come as no surprise when later in this very same adventuresome tome, Jeannette manages to secure a restraining order against the Celaphopod. She doesn't mean it, of course. It's just a gag, a part of the plot. But there it is. Also, when she gets home, Jeannette discovers that someone has broken into her home.

## Chapter 10 - Minataurs!

Now, this is where things get fun. Jeannette thinks that it was Minne who broke into her apartment, so she gets all naked in -- like -- a prelude to romance. But since Minne got axed in the second chapter, there's -- like -- very little chance that she's going to find Minne waiting for her in her bedroom. And I mean -- like -- Boy! Is she ever going to be surprised when she finds out who it is! And the laughs and guffaws will -- like -- almost certainly follow.

## Chapter 11 - The Ol' Switch-a-ro

There's lots of good stuff in this chapter. So much so that it's hard to summarize it gracefully like I normally do. So I'll just list out the important stuff and we'll let your imagination do the rest. First, Crazy George is crazy. I mean, like, crazy, insane, and out of control. He's not the type of wizard YOU (and I mean, like, YOU, dear reader) want to cross. I say this only because Crazy George has naked pictures of Jeannette Stevens (as extracted from this chapter and the previous) posted on his website; and so, this may be the one time you may want to make an exception and pay for content on the web... because Crazy George is, like, a crazy, insane, and out of control grudge holding wizard. Oh, and Buddy does an amazing job of acting like he's strung out on K'fr in this chapter. I mean, he's got it down cold -- flat out and solid.

## Chapter 12 - Nellie

Odd fact, Jeannette and I never formalized our love. It may have had something to do with that restraining order? Who knows? Nellie and I -- on the other hand and subsequent to this writing of this production -- did in fact become something of an item. Of course, you would never have suspected as much from the way I abuse her during this story. Me? I figure Pixies must live by the motto: keep your friends close and enemies closer. 'Cause we be plenty close about now. Anyway, if you want to learn more about Nellie, read the chapter. It's all about her, and me, and her boyfriend at the time, and the cops that finally come in response to Jeannette's emergency call to the police that she placed a few thousand words back.

### Chapter 13 - Hu'at!

Just in case you're curious, Hu'at is the Goblin word for anything that is edible that is not also a Goblin. So basically, if you're not a Goblin, you're a Hu'at. That's the first point. The second is that there are not very many Goblins working for the Rigor Pass Police Department. Not very many, at all. Actually, only the one. And the good folks down at the RPPD are doing everything they can to get rid of that one. So, it's like either a testament to his dedication or a testament to the Rigor Pass PD's general ineptitude that he's still on the force. I hear he made Captain, recently. Of course, that doesn't change the fact that he's still a Goblin or that his Goblin brethren consider him a Hu'at. But then, in truth, Hank (the aforementioned Goblin Police Officer) is a bit character of no lasting importance. And most of this chapter takes place out on patrol with Larry Magma -- dedicated police officer and fanatic toy collector. Oh, and just by-the-by, that last will figure prominently in the story later on. But for now, best to simply enjoy the ride.

### Chapter 14 - Joy Ride: Rigor Pass

The story has been way too conventional thus far, don't ya think? Well, I did. So when it finally came time for Larry Magma to give chase to our renegade Minataur, Larry pulls into a video game

arcade and plays the scene out on a console version of Joy Ride: Rigor Pass. Here at Dragon Bound Publishing we live and breathe for cross-marketing promotions. That's probably why Larry spends so much time gathering Easter Eggs and exploring hidden levels while he's playing Joy Ride. Gra'gl knows, it has nothing to do with the story... that is until you realize that for the duration of this chapter, playing Joy Ride: Rigor Pass is as close to either a plotline or a story as you're likely to get.

Chapter 15 - Where? Here. That's Where!

A Minataur is apprehended and brought to justice. Remember kids, crime never pays. Never. (This chapter brought to you by the RPPD -- where the violence is never gratuitous and the perps are guilty until proven innocent... or however they say that.)

Chapter 16 - On a Pixie's Wings

But then, let's not get carried away with that whole justice thing, because in this chapter, Buddy's partner in crime slips away through the dark of night and straight into the next book in the series. Will Nellie be able to save Buddy? I guess you'll just have to continue reading the next book in the series to find out.

###

Book II - Getting Dizzy

Wherein the story sort of spins out of control and some of the characters get to go to Dizzy Land, so it's sort of a pun. True. Not a very funny pun. But then, I find that very few puns actually are.

Appendix B - The Ranting Part II

In which the author relates his experiences at Con-in-my-Head, while simultaneously explaining the vast differences between his characters -- the NAS-gh©uls™ -- and anything that overrated JR Huff 'n Puff guy might have come up with. Really, if I could go back in time and publish my work before him, I would. And then,

I'd be the one suing that untalented poser of a hack for copyright infringement! That would show him!

#### Chapter 1 - On the Farm

Once she realized she'd be going on another adventure, Ruby rushed home to get ready, which meant getting dressed and then taking a bath (in that order). The reason, of course, was that Ruby was taking a Hazen Crot bath -- which although was and is the very best type of bath known to mankind and the envy of beauty salons the Realms round -- during aforementioned bath, Ruby did sort of look like she was trying her very best to disguise herself as a Bog Troll and thereby get out of going on any adventure. (Hint: it didn't work.)

#### Chapter 2 - Just Follow Your Nose

This here story features pancakes -- smothered in syrup and all sorts of other exotic spices. They taste great and smell wonderful and by following said odor-ific-ally (if that's a word), Nellie managed to locate Ruby.

#### Chapter 3 - Mmm! Pancakes (Got Yours? I Got Mine!!!)

Pancakes will play a major role in this story as will The Dragon -- not a dragon, but THE Dragon. Seriously, you drop that first capital letter once (just once, mind you) and The (as in THE) Egomaniacal Dragon makes you write The Dragon, The Dragon, The Dragon like a thousand times. So, it's The Dragon of THE Dragon Bound series. Or in other words, it's his series -- The Dragon Bound series -- and he (being The Dragon) would like you to know it.

#### Chapter 4 - On the Wings of a Dragon (Who was in no way related to Crazy George.)

George is not The Dragon. The Dragon is not George. George can't fly. The Dragon can. End of story. Or rather, it's not so much the end of the story, as the beginning, or a rebeginning, as we

recap the story and reiterate that the Seven Realms are in Dire Straits... or would be, if the Dire Straits was an actual place on any map that I know of. But then, if the name's not in use, maybe that's what we should call the black blight of evil that's oozing across the Seven Realms: Dire Straits? Catchy, huh? Well, we've got to call it something.

#### Chapter 5 - Somewhere in a Vortex Far, Far Away...

...they don't make fun of idiotic plot devices, but here at Dragon Bound Publishing, we do. In the previous chapter Ruby and the gang rode on The Dragon's back, checking out the evil wave of destruction that was washing across the Seven Realms as they debated whether to call it the Dire Straits or not. In this chapter, they do a bombing run in one of those Falcon X-Wing Fighter thingies and give the NAS-gh©uls™ a flavor bomb with a little surprise. (Still, unclear? Of course, you are. But then, if you weren't, it wouldn't be a surprise.)

#### Chapter 6 - A Fitting Punishment

I have been told reading this chapter is the real punishment, but those folks don't appreciate the nascent pleasures to be had by a full grown Celaphopod who is finally able to integrate a few choice roleplaying game locales from his misspent youth into a feature length novel. (Read it and weep, Stavemar the 'not so' Forgotten.)

#### Chapter 7 - Pete & Bo Peep

Pete is a Paladin sworn to aid any and all damsels in distress. Little Bo Peep is a ten-foot tall cross-dressing Cyclops who has lost her sheep and does not know where to find them. I think the premise speaks for itself.

#### Chapter 8 - A Very Special Episode

I may hate the Rat, but even I have to admit he puts out a quality product. And of all the things he's done, my absolute favorite is...

(hint: read the chapter.) OK. But then, since I am genetically incapable of keeping a secret, I will say the episode in question involves Grug, a spear, a broken vase, and the now infamous line, “Mom always said, don’t throw spears in the house.” And then of course, there’s the Rat -- vile evil creature that he is.

## Chapter 9 - Trade Secrets: Locked in Time

OK, so everyone knows that TOCs are where your clever authors (like me) place corrections, errata, and all that other stuff that would involve extensive rewriting of their story if not put somewhere but would be too cumbersome to insert elsewhere. (What? You think a book just “fact checks” itself and residual magical ambiguities resolve themselves of their own accord? Oh, how I wish that were the case, but it’s not.) So, anyhow, it would appear that I may have maybe smoked a wee tad bit of K’fr while writing Minataur Tails. And though I don’t condone that sort of behavior (especially in others), the fact remains that facts be facts. And it’s pretty clear in retrospect, after all the spells have cleared, the “magic” has dispelled, and (most importantly) I’m off the K’fr (for good this time, I swear), not all of the facts that seemed like facts at the time were indeed actual facts in the way that most folks understand facts to be, you know, as in truthfully verifiable facts that exist in the real, mundane, non-magical world of their own freewill, volition, and accord. But even so, if you look at it the right way (backwards, forward, and upside down all at the same time, sort of like a wizard might -- twisted inside and out), I’m pretty sure you’ll agree it makes a sort of sense (then and now and quite possibly in the future, which is exactly the sort of time shift ambiguity this chapter is all about in the first place... or even the end place), so I don’t know why I’m writing all this here, now, at this particular junction in time, but then I sort of do.

You see, I feel the need to clarify (unequivocally without qualification or ambiguity) that Ruby is a real live human girl (an actual person) who just sort of happens to play a character in a book. And however it may seem at the time (now or in the future-

past or in some past that you'll read in the future), it's definitely not the other way around. Which is not to say that Ruby doesn't play the part of a character in a book (who just so happens to be based on a real person, the one and aforementioned Ruby) because in fact, she does... and is... and maybe always will be... a character in a book who just so happens to be based on herself -- immortalized as it were. Which when you stop and think about it means I maybe had it right way back when I was writing this thing the first time around! And it makes sense, after all! Even with all that K'rf! Wow! I am good! So clever in fact that I don't even understand it myself at times (one of those times being now -- only mere moments later). Anyway, are we all clear? Like mud you say? Well then, that might just make us even. But I'm just going to blame it on a strand or two or residual magic that didn't get properly stowed away. I mean, you know how the effects from that wild-stuff sometimes lingers around -- long after the party is over, you thought you'd put the cork (or the Djinni, as the case may be) back in that bottle, and laid the enchantment to rest. So anyway, give it a little time and I'm sure the confusion will wear off... eventually. Or maybe it will suit you (like it does me). If so, I pray you wear it well.

(And I know this TOC entry seems long, but trust me, for some folks the chapter itself seems to go on, like, forever. Mu-ha-ha-ha! Hack. Hack. Cough. Cough. You have been warned.)

## Chapter 10 - A Plot Gone Cuckoo

Remember way back in Chapter 1 when we replaced Minne with Buddy? Well, that was a mistake -- mainly, because we'd already paid Minne a hefty advance. And then, because as it turns out, Minne is the better actor... on account of his much greater experience and having played similar roles in the past. (And if this is still unclear, please reread Chapter 9. Heck, even if this is crystal clear, please reread Chapter 9. I'm sure I'll still need a little more time to review that Rat's contract and catch up with the crew -- truth is, years later, I still do.)



## Chapter 11 - Sanchez, A Working Gnome

If Minataur Tails wasn't a farce, I'd have a real hard time explaining the rationale behind chapters like this. As it is, at the time, with the magic a'flowing and the K'fr a'blowing, it all made a perfect sort of sense and I could have (or would have) sworn that this is more (or less) exactly what Ruby had said happened during her stay at Dizzy Land. Or then again (perhaps like most everything else in this book), I just sort of made things up here and there and pretty much whenever I felt like it. But if I did, you certainly can't expect me to own up to it, now. So maybe I should just make the most outlandish claim I can at this juncture and say that this chapter sets the tone for the rest of the book -- sets the bar, as it were. I mean, there's magic in them there pages. (Everybody says so.) And this is where it all started. And if it all started in Dizzy Land, then you know what I say: that's just a coincidence.

## Chapter 12 - ABE-1-2-3

The Dragon Bound series has introduced a lot of firsts in fantasy literature and one of those firsts was the introduction of a morbidly depressed robot. Believe it or not, ABE-1-2-3 started the trend. Also, I invented the letter 'A'.

## Chapter 13 - Digital Current

Minataur Tails was originally published as a serial in Digital Currents. We even gave them an exclusive interview. But then, here it is again. So, maybe that interview wasn't really all that exclusive, after all.

## Chapter 14 - The M-Team

I pity the fool who doesn't remember the M-Team. As I pity the fool who uses K'fr, beats up old ladies, or sells copies of my books second hand on the black market. And then, of course, there are Goblins & Orcs. I just sort of pity them on general principles.

## Chapter 15 - The Big (Fight) Scene

This is Minne's favorite chapter in the entire book. But Buddy, he might not be so fast to agree, seeing as how he gets the snot kicked out of him. In fact, he's so beat up about it, it takes him a few thousand words to recover.

## Chapter 16 - Here Now the News

It's odd sometimes how you can read a chapter and then read it again and still have no idea what it's about. Or I suppose, it's just odd to me. My editor says he feels that way all the time and has come to expect it from my writing.

## Chapter 17 - Today's D©©m: Bringing You the Gloomy News First

As melodramatic and suspenseful to the reader as it might be to allow the NAS-gh©uls™ to continue their vortex leveling rampage towards Mt D©©m, a lot of innocent folks could get hurt that way; and then, Ruby might have a hard time finding said bad guys. So being the good sports that they are, the NAS-gh©uls™ agreed to wait for Ruby at her parents' house on the condition they could eat all the pancakes they wanted whilst they waited.

## Book III - The NAS-gh©uls™

It's sort of ironic that this book is called The NAS-gh©uls™, seeing as how the NAS-gh©uls™ pretty much sit the entire book out eating Ruby's mother's pancakes. But there it is. And we did have to call the third book something.

## Appendix C - And now a word from the Celaphopod

In which Celli's wallet, comics, and valuable Depression Era postage stamp collection are returned to him.

## Appendix C-1 - You Can't Keep a Good Rant Down

And since the first rant went so well, the Celaphopod decided to do it again. Some say to even greater effect. Others, closer to the action, beg to disagree.

### Chapter 1 - Interrupt My Rant will You?

The NAS-gh©uls™ change their name to Death Riders, dress up like your typical ne'r-do-well motorcycle gang, and descend upon Ruby's mother's (Rachel's) cottage and demand "Pancakes! Now!"

### Chapter 2 - Live to Ride -- Ride to Live (or is it) Live to Shop -- Shop to Live (or maybe it's) Live to Sell -- Sell to Live

Paul -- of Paul's House of Pancake Ingredients -- is a dear sweet friend of mine who sends me a cross-promotional royalty check on a fairly regular basis. So, this one's for you Paul: an entire chapter devoted to buying Pancake Ingredients at Paul's House thereof. (And they said it couldn't be done. Ha! Pay me enough and I'll write about anything.)

### Chapter 3 - A Little Gem of a Chapter

Short, sweet, and to the point. The author may have indulged in a wee-bit of the K'fr whilst crafting this magnificent tome... and at times it shows. Not so much in this chapter, but it's there. You have been forewarned. Anyway, as a sort of lost-effort containment practice and because he's sick and tired of his characters doing whatever they want anyhow, Celli just sort of hands control of the plot to Ruby at this point. And since telling a good yarn is actually a lot harder than I make it seem, I suspect there might be some sort of steep learning curve involved.

### Chapter 4 - Zeppelin's of Lead & Other Ill-Conceived Atrocities of Heavy Metal Fame (a.k.a. A Short Commuter Flight)

And of course, by the aforementioned steep learning curve, I mean, one little aeronautical mistake and our hearty adventures find themselves falling to their death like the proverbial band of rocks.

## Chapter 5 - The Book Club

Um, guess what? The gang didn't die. False alarm. Just like the end of every chapter in every Garg novel I've ever read, the last was just a bit of melodrama and theatrics for comedic effect. So, after a short, nearly uneventful flight, the gang wound up at the Citadel in time to join Katrinita's weekly book club meeting. Not that they participated in said discussion, but they could have if they had wanted, having inside information and all. Oh, and kudos to you if you can figure out what book Katrinita's weekly book club was discussing that week... and every week.

## Chapter 6 - The Library -- Mu-ha-ha!

There something about the type of person who would host a book club that draws them to libraries. I don't know what it is. But Katrinita seems to think that's where the gang should head off to next. But both you and I know that really they shouldn't. Libraries are scary places -- full of bewildering information and seedy characters, which in truth, is just another way of saying the gang runs into Crazy George there. I mean, is it just me, or is he not just exactly the type of guy you'd expect to hang out in the library -- crazy, homeless, and full of dangerous idea... like reading a book to discover the next plot twist. Crazy, I tell you! Crazy!

## Chapter 7 - Dusanne Vendette

This chapter is brought to you by the fine folks at MSAF, the makers of Myth-Alloy. Dusanne Vendette is the name of a mechanical construct, which was fabricated out of Myth-Alloy many-many, many long years ago. And of course, this magical warhorse has absolutely nothing to do with the rest of the story, so I'm guessing that's why we named the chapter after him, while Bones, who is a similarly constructed skeletal robot who just so happens to play a more or less central role in the rest of the story (being the chief nemesis and all), is simply ignored and looked over. Oh, and if you're looking for Bones motivation in the pages

to come and why he turned evil, one need look no further than that whole shunted to the side and overlooked thing. He really hates that. Eats him up inside. But enough about Bones, standard skeletal warlord, yada-yada, and all that. Not only is Dusanne Vendette the ideal battle steed, he breathes fire, as well. Cool, huh?

#### Chapter 8 - Duk'ah

Duk'ah means quite literally, 'stuff happens'. Don't really feel like writing a TOC entry for this chapter, so deal with it. (That being an example of Duk'ah, though maybe not a very good one.)

#### Chapter 9 - Time Drifts By

In which the characters read books. It's sort of cerebral, that -- when you stop to think about it -- characters in books, reading about characters in books, who are reading about characters in books, and so on and so on and so on until your mind just sort of goes 'Duk'ah' and you have achieved blessed enlightenment -- otherwise known as that empty state of bliss when your mind goes totally blank and you become one with the all that is nothing: this then being a sort of serendipitous juxtaposition to the great big heaping pile of Duk'ah that was the last chapter.

Chapter 10 - Birth -- School -- Work -- Death. What about Play? Sick of reading, Ruby decides it's time for a break. And what better place to take a break than the beach? Only problem is how to get there? And truthfully, that is perhaps the major drawback in writing adventure-logs (i.e. constant travel). Seriously, at times, it feels like I'm writing a straight travelogue. Maybe I'll call my next book How to See the Seven Realms on Less Than Three Coppers and Single Strip of Manna a Day. Has a certain ring to it if you ask me.

#### Chapter 11 - The Cove

I've long maintained that adventurers don't spend enough time at the beach, so we all spent the day surfing, lazing around building sand castles, and discussing philosophy -- the last indicating that this is one of the silliest chapters in the book... if not all of literature.

#### Chapter 12 - Da Bunga-low

Garg has his cave. I have Da Bunga-low. Truth of the matter is I'd forgotten my toothbrush (K'fr and/or story notes, take your pick). So I'd wanted to go home and retrieve (them/) it before we went any further. And yeah, this really is how I live. Read it and weep -- for me, for you, for whomever. And then, if you love me, send gold, lots and lots of gold.

#### Chapter 13 - Self Referential Social Interactions

Sometime, I should tell you about my imaginary friends, but smack dab in the middle of a storybook adventure is neither the time nor the place.

#### Chapter 14 - the cove (a little earlier)

The Celaphopod lives by the beach, which of course means, you have to drive down a harrowing mountain road from his house to get there. And after a trip like that, the gang felt it was best to spend another day at the beach. "Yippies!" a certain young draggoon may have been heard as to squeal in delight at the news.

#### Chapter 15 - Will Write for Food

Truthfully, I will... as long as said food is served on a silver platter that I get to keep... or it's Lam Chowsees. I love that Lam Chowsees.

#### Chapter 16 - H'wy

Hw'y is one of the gods of old. And his dominion is safe travel, so it was only a matter of time before Ruby ran across one of his shrines. Oh, and Crazy George picks up a Disgruntled Thrall

concert T-Shirt during their visit there. Not that that's important to the plot, but I get paid by the plug, so it is to me.

#### Chapter 17 - Verde Grun

Verde is a dear sweet friend. In the Elvin, his name means -- and follow along with me closely here, because this part is tricky -- "Verde Grun." Get it? What a joke? In the Elvin, his name means Verde Grun because that's his Elvin name. What? Not funny? Fine. Don't laugh. But just to prove I don't hold a grudge, I'll tell you what his name really means: 'Deep Green', 'Very Green', or something like that. Really, who knows? I suppose them Elves know. But they're not saying -- or at least, they're not here to say, which is the important part. Anyway, whatever his name means, he's a T'Ree -- as in an honest to goodness T'Ree -- which might just sort of explain his militant environmentalism.

#### Chapter 18 - Mr. Thwartbridge the Senior (a.k.a. Max)

Ruby knows her algebra, spent a whole chapter studying the wretched subject back in Dizzy Land, so the only reason she meets up with Mr. Thwartbridge at this juncture is because we'd already paid him... and because he's been known to brew a mean cup of tea just around this time of the day. And that could have been the chapter right there, but believe it or not (and perhaps just to show off my marketing acumen), I managed to fit a full-fledged ad for Toe-Trekkers into this chapter -- all the more impressive, because flip-flops (even Toe-Trekker flip-flops) have absolutely nothing to do with mathematics or anything else even remotely related to the plot.

#### Chapter 19 - The Skull T©wer

What does a skeletal warlord call his secret lair? Skull Tower, that's what. And, no the locale has nothing to do with that other Skull Tower... or that other-other Skull Tower... or even that other-other-other Skull Tower. Though, I'll admit quite freely that it might have something to do with that other-(etc.) Skull Tower. But

even then, it's more of a name coincidence thing than anything else. Truth is, there's a lot of Skull Towers out there. This just happens to be the one where Bones resides. And don't even start in with how every skeletal warlord you've ever met is called Bones. Most of the time, it's just their nickname.

Chapter 20 - If You Tell Two Cobalts, And They Tell Two Cobalts, And They Tell Two Cobalts, And So on, and so on.

Apparently, it's easy to get all the Cobalt extra's you need at two coppers a piece. And rather than letting Crazy George waste the pesky midgets en mass with a fireball, Ruby agrees to become their prisoner, provided they in turn promise to do their homework once the chapter is over and it's time to go home, which they do... and then don't, so go figure.

Book IV - Screaming Greenies™

The exciting conclusion to the Minataur Tails story arc, named after one of the best-selling toys of all times: Screaming Greenies™.

Chapter 1 - What No Rant?

In which the author skips the rant that he usually does at the beginning of his books and thereby catches the characters unawares as they snack and take a break when the action resumes ahead of schedule; which just sort of goes to show, you weren't missing anything during any of the other rants, either.

Chapter 2 - Dem Bones

When we can't get someone to fork over the gold upfront (fools that they aren't), we can be persuaded to work on commission here at Dragon Bound Publishing. And this would be one of those them there times. That pretty much explains why Bones spends his big scene shilling the Bones Evil Genius Action Figure™, complete with pull string vocals, 127 points of articulation, and patented Bone Crushing Grip of Death™.



### Chapter 3 - One Down

And after we finish up here, there are only three other vortexes left for Ruby to repopulate from the N@z-Gh©uls senseless rampage. (What this story is theoretically about, if you'll remember). And that means, Ruby is almost done... or so it would seem.

### Chapter 4 - Dragon Bound, Now with More Advertising

We're sell-outs. Deal with it.

### Chapter 5 - Stevie Jean, PI

Sadly, Jeannette Stevens quit her job here at Dragon Bound Publishing in order to pursue her bliss and become a private detective. Lucky for us, the transition left her desperate for cash and willing to work cheap... cheaper than if she'd simply kept working for us in the first place. Sometimes, truth IS stranger than fiction.

### Chapter 6 - One Good Lead

At one time, the Lady Ruby had three vortexes that were in need of repopulating, at the end of this chapter, there are only two.

### Chapter 7 - Sm©rking™ USA

And no fair peaking ahead, guessing, or simply reading the chapter title to figure out which vortex gets repopulated next.

### Chapter 8 - Results for the Digital Current, Help Ruby Save the Screaming Greenies™ Contest

This last vortex was the hardest for Ruby to repopulate. Why, you may ask. Let's just say that Screaming Greenies™ are named for two things. The first is their color. And the second is the sound they make when little boys 'play' with them by strapping them to fiery explosives. "Oh, for the love of Gra'gl. No! No! Help me! Help me! H-E-L-P! M-E!" Seriously, the little buggers have got amazing lungs.

## Chapter 9 - A Job Well Done

Some folks say we went too far in the last chapter. Some folks say we didn't go far enough. Neither group seems overly keen on sending me any money for my efforts, though. So frankly, who cares what they have to say.

## Chapter 10 - The Path to Adventure

A chapter in which nothing actually happens, so I just sort of made stuff up at random. On the plus side, it's purely optional, so don't read it if you don't want to. It's nothing more than a flimsy string tying Chapter 9 and 11 together... much like any other chapter in this book, I guess.

## Chapter 11 - Troy the Toy Man

Ruby and Grt make a promotional appearance at Troy the Toy Man's Toy Store. Unlike most of the rest of the story, no effort is made to disguise that fact that this is pure, 100% marketing and cross-promotion. Looking to buy one of those Bones Evil Genius Action Figures™, complete with pull string vocals, 127 points of articulation, and patented Bone Crushing Grip of Death™, then my recommendation: stop by Troy the Toy Man's Toy Store and tell them 'Ruby sent me,' for 10% off your purchase. Just saying.

## Chapter 12 - Gelato

The Lady Ruby visits a toy museum, eats some chocolate chip mint ice cream, while Grt opts for something closer to Tutti-Fruity, and the next thing you know she's completed the terms of her quest and the story is over. Trust the Lady Ruby, Consort to The Dragon, to be able to manage all that at a tourist trap sightseeing destination far off the beaten path while eating an ice cream sundae, no less.

## The After Hours Story Appendixes

It's almost like getting a bonus book thrown in for free -- you know, if you hadn't already paid for it. Unlike this TOC, which is completely free if you know where to look for it...

#### Appendix D - Party Preparations

Tired from her adventures, Ruby makes her way home where we join her while she takes another one of those Hazen Crots baths -- mainly so we can get in some last minute marketing. And in case I haven't made this clear before, Ruby takes her baths fully clothed these days. Perhaps that's because I have a nasty habit of walking in on her... or maybe that's just because that's how those Hazen Crots baths work. I mean, how else are you supposed to clean your clothes?

#### Appendix E - The Red Carpet

There was a cast party. Malted milks were served. I may have had one too many. Things were said that were later regretted. The tabloids ate it up. The story stayed in the headlines for weeks to come. Some may call it unsavory. Some may call it a sign of the times. Personally, I call it free marketing.

#### Appendix F - The Party

Any excuse for a party is a good enough excuse for me. Though, I'd learned my lesson and stayed away from the malted milks this time.

#### Appendix G - The Dragon Bound Vortex Give Away

What to do with a spare vortex no longer needed at the end of a story arc? Give it away. That's what I say.

#### Appendix H - The Players

In which we thank the small players, the folks that made it all happen, except for those Hobblings -- still hate those Hobblings.

Appendix I - This book comes with the Sm©rk™, Happy Ending Seal of Approval  
It's true. It does.

Appendix J - Dragon Bound Classifieds

Or in other words, here at Dragon Bound Publishing, paid advertising comes first, last, and everywhere in between. Send me money, and if the price is right, I'll find a way to put you and/or your product in the next edition. I mean, how do you think Minataur Tails doubled in size from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> edition, anyhow? It's not like the base story changed. So, send gold. I can be bought.

*As can the publishing rights for Minataur Tails in the Earth vortex. For further information regarding this exciting franchise opportunity, please contact:*

*Brett@Paufler.net*

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