

Going by the Book



WE HAD NOTHING BETTER TO DO THAN TAKE THE OLD FOXBORO ROAD, AND NEITHER OF US FELT LIKE WALKING... THE BOSS WAS IN ONE OF THOSE **MOODS**. HE WANTED ME AROUND, BUT HE KNOWS THAT PEOPLE AND ANIMALS GET NERVOUS IF THEY CAN SEE ME...

...PERSONALLY, I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY.



LOOK, **BOSS**, YOU'VE NO REASON AT ALL TO BLAME YOURSELF! IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, AND ANYWAY, YOU GOT OUT WITH EVERYTHING YOU HAD WHEN YOU LEFT THE UNIVERSITY.

...EXCEPT AN APPRENTICE.

CAN I HELP IT IF YOU HIRE THE **INEPT**?

THAT **DAMN** APPRENTICE! OF COURSE HE LEARNED MORE ABOUT THE TRADE THAN HE SHOULD'VE, BUT SOMEHOW, HE NEVER PICKED UP THE FINER POINTS OF APPLIED SORCERY.



LIKE MOST WIZARDS, THE BOSS DIDN'T DEPEND ON *MAGIC* ONLY FOR HIS LIVELIHOOD. THE BOSS HAD SIX SILOS FILLED WITH *GRAIN*, FOR SERVICES RENDERED DURING THE HARVEST SEASON.



WE COULDN'T USE IT ALL, SO WHEN *WINTER* CAME HE'D SELL IT IN THE HILLS FOR A WICKED *PROFIT*. BUT WE DID USE *SOME*, AND GUESS WHO HAD TO CLIMB INTO THE *SILO* TO GET IT?

OF COURSE IT WASN'T NECESSARY TO GO ALL THE WAY TO THE SILOS FOR GRAIN. ALL YOU NEEDED WAS *SAND*, A FEW KERNELS AND THE RIGHT WORDS, AND *PRESTO!* YOU HAD ALL THE GRAIN YOU NEEDED!



TRUBLE IS, THE SPELL'S EXTREMELY *DANGEROUS*... REQUIRES *SOME* BADASS *DEMONS!*

NOW MAYBE IF THE BOSS'S APPRENTICE HAD SAID THE *WORDS* WITH THE RIGHT *INFLECTIONS*, OR MADE THE PASSES WITH HIS HANDS COUNTER-CLOCKWISE INSTEAD OF CLOCKWISE, IT WOULDN'T'VE BEEN TO HARD TO *CLEAN-UP* AFTERWARD.



BUT YOU *NEVER* USE CONTAMINATED SAND, IN A *DEMON* SPELL.

HE NEVER KNEW WHAT TO EXPECT... HE NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO CANCEL THE SPELL... HE NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT HIM! *PITY!*



DEMON CONTRACTS ARE *RISKY* THINGS, AND A SPELL CAN COME *APART* UNDER THE REVENGE OF SPITEFUL DEMONS IF THE SPELL ISN'T CORRECT TO THE *LETTER*. THANK GHU THEY'RE A LOUD BUNCH!





OH NO!
MY SILOS!

WELL, WE GOT OUT OF THERE *FAST*,
TAKING THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT
THINGS THE BOSS HAD, HIS BOOK, HIS
BOD AND HIS HAT, IN THAT ORDER
OF IMPORTANCE!



IT WAS A HELLUVA SHOW!

TRUST A DEMON TO BE THOR-
OUGH! WHEN NO TWO STONES
WERE LEFT STANDING TOGETH-
ER, THEY SIMPLY DISMISSED
THEMSELVES, OR SO WE THOUGHT!



WE SAW ONLY TWO OF THE
SILOS BURNING, SO THERE
MIGHT'VE BEEN SOME GRAIN
LEFT. GUESS WHO HAD TO
DO THE CHECKING!

THE FIRST ONE WAS A SNAP
... BURNED TO A CRISP!



THE SECOND ONE WAS FULL
OF MOLTEN LEAD. *CLASSY!*



BURNING SLIME...



RATS!



I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* WAS
IN THE FIFTH SILO...



...AND I REALLY DIDN'T WANT TO
FIND OUT ABOUT THE SIXTH.



HEY, THERE'S A NICE PLACE... SIGN SAYS 'OVER FOURTEEN BILLION SERVED'!

MAYBE A NIGHT IN AN INN, WITH A FEW TRICKS FOR THE NABES MIGHT BOOST THE BOSS' SPIRITS.



AW, C'MON BOSS, YOU KNOW THE SUIT ITCHES LIKE CRAZY.

JUST TO PLAY IT SAFE, I SUGGEST YOU TAKE ON A MORE 'HARM-LESS' APPEARANCE.

I'M JUST ASKING YOU TO DO IT FOR THEIR SAKE...

OKAY OKAY, JUST FOR A FEW HOURS! THE THINGS I DO FOR YOU THOUGH!



YEAH, ME AND MY BRIGHT IDEAS!



IT WAS ALL PRETTY TAME STUFF, ALL IN EXCHANGE FOR FOOD AND LODGINGS. BUT THE BOSS WAS FEELING BETTER, AND THERE WAS EVEN A BIT OF SPICE IN HIS PERFORMANCE. HE WAS GETTING HIS CONFIDENCE BACK, IN FULL FORCE.

ALL I GOT WAS HALF A SAUCER OF STALE MILK, AND SOME TWIT PULLING MY TAIL!

Y'KNOW, SOMETIMES I WONDER WHY I GO THROUGH SO MUCH FOR THE BOSS. MOST DEMONS WOULDN'T PUT UP WITH HALF THE CRAP I DO LIKE HANGING AROUND IN A TIGHT ITCHY SUUUUIT? HMMM...



WELL, IF IT ITCHES, YOU JUST GOTTA SCRATCH.



WHAT A NIGHT! OOOH, THAT WAS A MEAN LADY, I THINK SHE BROKE MY ENTIRE BODY TWICE! GROAN, I FELT BETTER AS A CAT!



THE BOSS SEEMED CONTENT... BUT THERE ON THE TABLE, OPEN AND UNGUARDED, WAS HIS BOOK!



A SORCERER'S BOOK IS FAR MORE THAN JUST A COLLECTION OF SPELLS. IT'S A KEY TO *POWER UNRESTRAINED*, PLATFORM FOR DANGEROUS EXPLOITS AND UNIMAGINABLE COMMANDS.



BUT IT IS ALSO BOUND TO ITS OWNER AND WOE TO ANY WIZARD WHOSE BOOK FALLS INTO UNFRIENDLY HANDS.

FOR A MOMENT I HAD IT! A DEMON'S DREAM INCARNATE! TO CATCH HIS COMMANDER OFF GUARD WITH HIS BOOK IN MY POSSESSION I'D BE FREE TO ROAM AND WRECK AND...



WHAT AM I DOING?! AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TODAY, I'D DO THAT TO HIM! HE HASN'T GOT A FRIEND IN THE WORLD! I COULDN'T DO THAT TO HIM, HE'S SO NICE TO ME.

BESIDES, I SAW THE CHAPTER IT WAS OPEN TO... RENEGADE DEMON HUNTING. HE'S GONNA NEED *HELP!*

SOMEBODY TOLD ME ABOUT A MUTILATED HORSE IN A WHEAT FIELD NEARBY. OUR LITTLE *"MISTAKE"* MIGHT'VE DONE THAT, AND WE'VE GOT TO CLEAN UP THE MESS WE'VE MADE, QUICKLY!



HAVE YOU EVER HUNTED DEMONS BEFORE, BOSS?

WELL... I'VE BEEN BONING UP ON IT...

WHEN A DEMON IS DISMISSED HE RETURNS TO HELL AND AWAITS FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS. BUT OCCASIONALLY SOME DEMONS GO A.W.O.L. AND "AHEM" DEPRIVED OF SANCTUARY IN EITHER HEAVEN OR HELL, THEY MAKE THEIR WAY ACROSS THE WORLD, WREAKING HAVOC WHENEVER THE CHANCE PERMITS...

BUT THE ONLY WAY TO DESTROY A HOST OF DEMONS IS TO KNOW THE NAME OF THEIR LEADER. HIS REAL NAME. HIS *TRUE* NAME.



I KNOW THAT.

I MIGHT HAVE A WAY OF FINDING OUT OUR MISTAKE'S *TRUE* NAME. IT'LL TAKE ME ABOUT A DAY TO MAKE SURE.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

FOR THAT MATTER, NEITHER DID I...

THEY DON'T DUPLICATE RECORDS ON THE META-PHYSICAL LEVEL, SO I HAD TO GO TO THE CELESTIAL LIBRARY. IT MIGHT TAKE ME A WHILE, BUT I'D FIND WHAT I'M WAS LOOKING FOR.

BY THE WAY, DEMONS CAN GET INTO HEAVEN ON A VISITOR'S VISA.



FORTUNATELY, I ONLY HAD TO GO AS FAR AS THE "M'S" IN THE BOOK OF SUMMONINGS.



AS USUAL, THE TWIT PICKED A WINNER...



MARRKAGO! TRUE NAME OF GARRCH, THE DESPOILER OF GAUL, A REALLY MEAN DUDE. OUGHTA MAKE A FIRST CLASS DEMON.

APPARENTLY, THE BOSS HAD GONE OUT AND HAD LEFT ME A NOTE. I WAS EXPECTING TROUBLE...



... I GOT IT.



I TOOK A SHARP RIGHT AT THE MUTILATED HORSE, AND THERE WAS THE BOSS... AND ABOUT 40 DEMONS! WHAT'S WORSE, THEY HAD THE BOSS' BOOK!



OH WHAT A NICE LOOKING BOOK! DID YOU LOSE THIS?

I COULDN'T JUST GRAB THE BOOK... NO, A LITTLE TACT WAS CALLED FOR.

WELL, IF IT ISN'T THE WIZARD! NICE SEEING YOU AGAIN, OH, DON'T SPEAK! I KNOW HOW GLAD YOU MUST BE TO FIND US ALL HERE WAITING FOR YOU.



ALLRIGHT! I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO, YOU OVER-STUFFED GOBLIN, BUT IF IT INVOLVES THAT WIZARD OVER THERE... I DO IT FIRST!

WHOOOPS! WELL, EXCUUUUSE ME!

MARRKAGO!



IT WORKED! THE BOSS WAS FREE. AT TIMES I'M BRILLIANT! BRUISED, BUT BRILLIANT.



IT MUST'VE BEEN A CLASSY SPELL-ONE MINUTE THE GREEN BAY PACKERS WERE TAP DANCING ON MY FACE, THE NEXT MOMENT I'M UNDER 40 EMPTY SAUSAGE SKINS.



ONCE AGAIN PROVING THE OLD AXIOM THAT A BOY'S BEST FRIEND IS HIS DEMON.

END