

Dice (4th Revision)

By

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EXT. MEADOW - DAY

An expansive sea of overgrown grass extends for miles in every direction. Parasitic INSECTS BUZZ about in search of sustenance. Magnificent green foliage thrives skyward.

GRASS CRUNCHES underfoot as three travelers trek through. An ORC man, an ELF woman, and a HUMAN man. The Elf studies a timeworn map and squints off into the distance. The Human wipes the perspiration from his brow.

The surrounding BRUSH RUSTLES. The travelers pause.

ORC
We're not alone.

Several HIGHWAYMEN emerge. The unsheathe their weapons and encircle the party.

ELF
Your powers of observation never
cease to amaze.

The travelers retreat into the middle of the circle, back to back. They exchange glances, a conversation without words.

A visceral, thunderous battle cry emerges from the Orc as he draws his axe and dashes into battle.

The Elf's hands come alight and fiery globes erupt from her palms.

The Human brandishes a dagger and disappears in a plume of smoke.

The Orc swings the blade of his axe down across the torso of one of the Highwaymen. He turns toward another and CRACKS the BACK OF HIS FIST across his mouth. Both Highwaymen crumble.

A STEEL BLADE WOOSHES through the air, but misses, dodged by its intended target, the Human. He swirls away from the incoming attack and slides his blade along the back of his attacker's knee.

The Highwayman lets out a blood-curdling scream, which grows muffled as the Human throws his hand across the Highwayman's mouth and slides the blade over his throat.

Two Highwaymen charge the Elf, all grace and subtlety abandoned. Her lithe fingers swirl in a circular motion as sparks and wisps of flames dance between them.

(CONTINUED)

The Elf thrusts her hand forward, fingers splayed and pointed toward her attackers. JETS OF FLAME CRACKLE as they smash into the Highwaymen and knock them flat, scorched holes burnt into their apparel.

Amidst the chaos, the Human steps away. He tosses his dagger to the ground and slaps his hands against his forehead.

HUMAN
OH MY GOD, SO BORED!

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Box after empty box of Dominos Pizza and drained cans of Mountain Dew litter the floor of a dingy, dimly lit basement.

Four young men, MILES (18), DAN (18), CRAIG (17), and TRAVIS (24), sit around a small fold-up card table, littered with crudely-etched graph paper maps and multi-sided dice.

MILES (ORC)
Dan, why do you always do that?

Dan, overweight with neckbeard for days, shoves the maps away from him.

DAN (HUMAN)
Highwaymen? Really? I'm level 13!
Some respect, please!

TRAVIS
Oh, well fuck me, right?

Craig, costume Elf ears attached to his own, skirts his chair away from the table to remove himself from the crossfire.

CRAIG (ELF)
(sotto)
Here we go...

MILES
Well maybe if you had played the rest of the campaign--

DAN
I don't want to play the rest of the campaign, Miles, because that campaign was fucking gay.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG
(sotto)
That's very rude.

DAN
hey, Craig, shut up. And those
aren't even Elf ears, they're
Vulcan ears. Learn the difference.

CRAIG
It's all I could afford!

The groups falls into an uncomfortable silence. Travis
shoves the screen off the table and slumps into his seat.

The group begins to pack up their respective pieces of the
game game.

MILES
(sotto)
There goes my Friday.

Dan stands up and slams his hands onto the table.

DAN
No! No way. My night is NOT ending
because Travis gargles dick as a
D.M.!

Dan storms away from the table and toward a cabinet against
the wall. He searches its contents for a moment, then
returns, something in his grasp.

A GLASS BOTTLE THUDS onto the table: 160-proof Devil's
Spring vodka, followed by four shot glasses.

Craig and Travis' expressions light up as they gather around
the bottle. Miles lets out a nervous laugh.

MILES
C'mon guys...I mean...Dan's Dad
will notice that's missing.

Dan pours the shots.

DAN
Fuck him. He's a fascist.

He slides the shot across the table to Miles. Miles stares
down at the drink and swallows hard. Hes eyes drift back up
and catch sight of Travis and Craig as they urge him on.

He grabs the drink with hesitation and they each raise their
glass.

(CONTINUED)

DAN
Let's get fucked up!

They each down their shot.

MONTAGE

Dan pours a second round for the group. Miles gags and grasps at throat.

MILES
Oh that's smooth...

The boys sit around the table, midway through another D&D campaign. Dan and Travis are yet again at one another's throats. Everyone speaks over the top of one another.

DAN
That's fucking bullshit, Travis!
Lionheart was stealthed! He was
invisible.

TRAVIS
And I rolled a twenty, Dan! So
sorry, so sad!

CRAIG
You could always roll for stealth
again...

DAN
Oh, okay, Craig.

Dan picks up the D20 and rolls it off his palm. He sweeps his arms across the table and sends the entire game to the floor.

DAN
Oh, what, where'd he go? He's
fucking invisible now!

Across the basement, Travis and Craig sit beside one another on a couch. Travis bawls, face buried in his palms. Craig has his arm around his shoulders.

Behind them, Dan shotguns a Mountain Dew. He chokes and begins to cough. Miles dances to the music.

Miles and Dan sway side to side as Dan attempts to pour them two more shots. Dan raises his glass in cheers and promptly vomits all over Miles and passes out.

Miles follows suit and falls unconscious. As he falls, he knocks into the table. A D20 skitters across the table and lands on a natural 20.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Sunlight filters through the filthy basement windows. Miles lays passed out in a heaps beside their game table. He stirs from his drunken stupor.

Miles grabs his head. A relentless METALLIC DRONE rings in his ears. He groans and grasps at his throat.

Dan slumbers in a puddle of dried vomit, shot glass still in his hand. Craig and Travis spoon on the couch: Travis the big spoon, Craig the little.

Miles strains to his feet and scratches at his scalp. He surveys the aftermath and turns to look at their table. He freezes.

The body of an Orc lays sprawled out across their game, a medieval fantasy dagger buried deep in his face. Crimson red pools beneath the corpse.

Miles stares. His eyes narrow and takes a deep breath. His calm demeanor fades in an instant and a series of terrified shouts exit his lips.

Dan groans and rolls over. He glares at Miles.

DAN

Lower the fucking volume...

Miles points to the body as his lips attempt to form breathless words. Dan sees the body and begins his own fit of shouts, which causes Miles to shout once more.

Their shouts awaken Craig and Travis, who begin to scream out of confusion and fear of the other's screams.

EXT. DAN'S HOUSE - DAY

SHOUTS and SCREAMS of terror and confusion penetrate the walls of Dan's modest home. A woman walks her dog past the house, a look of befuddlement and concern on her face. She quickens her pace.

INT. BASEMENT- DAY

The group stands around the table. Dan paces back and forth, arms crossed, hand tapping a nervous rhythm against his forearm. Craig looks as though he may break down and cry.

CRAIG

I'm not going to do well in prison,
guys.

MILES

No one is going to prison.

Travis nods.

TRAVIS

(re: Craig)

Yeah, you're going to be someone's
girlfriend pretty quickly.

MILES

No one is going to prison!

CRAIG

Maybe we didn't do this!
Maybe...maybe the die opened a
portal to a different dimension
and...and this guy fell through.

TRAVIS

Some guy named Angel sneaking into
your cot in the middle of the
night...

MILES

Guys, it's an Orc. Orcs aren't
real!

CRAIG

Oh, no, we killed a larper.

TRAVIS

Washing your back in the shower...

MILES

We didn't kill anybody!

CRAIG

We're all going to jail.

MILES

What part of "no one is going to
prison" are you not hearing?

(CONTINUED)

Dan ceases to pace. He runs his hand through his hair and attempts to speak. Words fail and he continues to pace. They fall silent.

TRAVIS

...Braiding your hair while you
sleep...

Miles punches Travis in the arm.

Dan pauses again and slams his palm onto the table. He motions towards the cadaver.

DAN

Can we focus a little less of
Craig's sex life and a little more
on the DEAD FUCKING BODY ON MY CARD
TABLE?!

Miles shushes him with authority. He sighs deep and stares at the body. His teeth nibble on his bottom lip, the gears in his head in overdrive. He turns to rally the troops.

MILES

Look, I'm just as scared as you
guys, but if we just stay calm and
think this through--

The DOORBELL RINGS. They turn in unison toward the ominous sign.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Miles cracks the door as far as the chain lock allows and peers out. A uniformed police officer, OFFICER MICHAELS (40), stands on the other side.

Miles' stares at the Officer, stonefaced.

MILES

One moment, please. I'm not decent.

Miles slams the door shut. An eyebrow arches over Officer Michaels' aviators.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Miles dashes to the basement door.

(CONTINUED)

MILES

The cops are at the door!

DAN (O.S.)

THERE'S A COP AT THE DOOR?!

MILES

Well Jesus Christ, Dan, tell the whole neighborhood!

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Officer Michaels raises his fist to knock but is cut off as the CHAIN LOCK RAPS against the wooden door. It swings open, Miles behind it.

MILES

What can I do for you, Officer?

OFFICER MICHAELS

I'm going door to door in search of a missing person.

Miles nods. His hand whiteknuckles the door.

OFFICER MICHAELS (CONT'D)

I'd like to come inside and ask you a few questions if you wouldn't mind.

Miles continues to nod in absent compliance. His entire arm begins to shake at the strength of the grip he holds on the door. Officer Michaels clears his throat.

Miles snaps back to reality. He opens the door fully and swings his arm toward the living room.

MILES

Right, sorry, yes, sure, come in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Officer Michaels sits on the couch. Miles sits across from him. Awkward silence holds an iron grip over the room.

OFFICER MICHAELS

So...as I said, we're investigating a local missing persons report.

Miles nods. He begins to nibble on his bottom lip.

(CONTINUED)

OFFICER MICHAELS
Did you happen to see or hear
anything suspicious last night?

A CRASH and THUD ruse through the hardwood floor.

DAN (O.S.)
OH FOR FUCKS SAKE!

Officer Michaels jumps at the suddent outburst. He looks to Miles for an explanation.

MILES
Sorry...my friends...Dungeons and
Dragons...you know how they get.

Another CRASH rises through the floorboards.

MILES
Reeaally into Dungeons and Dragons.

Officer Michaels gives an unsure nod and drops a manila folder onto the coffee table before him. He thumbs through the paperwork.

The Officer AD LIBS information on the missing person. Behind him, Travis peeks around the corner, clothes covered in blood.

Miles' eyes buldge out. He motions with his head back toward the basement.

Travis holds up a notepad, a message scribbled onto it.

"WE NEED YOUR HELP"

Miles shakes his head an again motions toward the basement. Officer Michaels looks up from his paperwork. Miles crosses his legs and grasps in chin. Officer Michaels pauses a moment but returns his attention to the file.

Miles looks back to Travis. He pleads with his eyes.

Travis flips the page to another message.

"CRAIG WON'T STOP CRYING"

Miles facepalms. He points to the basement and mouths "GO AWAY". Officer Michaels looks up. Miles pauses and tries in vain to turn his point into a stretch.

The Officer turns arounf and discovers Travis. His pauses, feigns interest in a pile of magazines, and slides back around the corner.

(CONTINUED)

Officer Michaels stands. He points in the general direction of the basement.

OFFICER MICHAELS

Are you sure your friends are okay?

Miles darts from his seat and drums a beat into his lap. He tries to corral the Officer toward the door.

MILES

Oh, sure, they're fine. But if I hear anything--

Officer Michaels shoves past Miles and heads in Travis' direction.

OFFICER MICHAELS

No, I think I'll take a look myself.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Officer Michaels storms down the staircase. He freezes at the bottom step, eyebrow arches in confusion.

Miles rushes down the stairs behind them.

MILES

It's not what it looks like!

He comes to a halt behind the Officer. A similar expression of confusion takes hold.

Craig strains under the weight of the corpse, its arm slung over his shoulder. Across from them stands Dan and Travis, dressed in make-shift Barbarian costumes.

Craig's arm hides behind the corpse's back, a dowel rod attached to it's arm. Craig raises the corpse's arm, a limp-wristed gesture at their "enemies".

CRAIG

You may have wounded my friend, but this battle is far from over!

DAN

Very funny, little Elf, but what good is a warrior who can't walk?

Craig smirks.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG
Not warrior...spell sword.

Travis and Dan step back. Their faces drop.

TRAVIS
Oh my god...

DAN
TAKE COVER!

Craig jerks his entire body and the corpse's arm begins to flail about it Dan and Travis' general direction. Craig shouts out the sound effects associated with each "spell".

Dan and Travis throw themselves behind a felled bookshelf in cover. Miles and the Officer watch the scene in disbelief.

DAN
He's too powerful!

TRAVIS
Retreat!

Dan and Travis stand and flee. Travis grabs a book from the shelf and lobs it at Craig to cover their retreat. The book whizzes through the air and smacks Craig square on the bridge of the nose.

Craig shouts out in pain. On instinct, he released the body and cups his nose.

CRAIG
OW! C'mon Travis!

Everyone in the room stands frozen, eyes fixed on the dagger buried in the corpse's back. Craig acts first. He throws himself to the floor and cradles the cadaver in his arms.

CRAIG
You've killed him. You godless monsters, you've killed him! Cut him down in the prime of life.

Everyone stares on in confusion. Travis raises his eyebrows, impressed by Craig's acting. Craig unleashes a loud, pained bellow of sorrow. Officer Michaels throws his hand onto the butt of his pistol in surprise.

CRAIG
Man of law, by the name of Holy Carhanna, apprehend those men.

BEAT.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG
BY ALL THAT IS HOLY, SEIZE THOSE
MEN!

The Officer draws his firearm and points it at Craig.

OFFICER MICHAELS
Alright, that's it. Just...everyone
put your hands on your hands up!
Now! Move, move move!

He corrals the boys into a small circle, each of them panicking.

MILES
Don't shoot! Don't shoot!

CRAIG
Please don't kill us!

OFFICER MICHAELS
I'm going to shoot everyone!

TRAVIS
Shoot Dan! We don't even like him!

Dan ceases to panic and turns to Travis in disgust.

Behind the chaos, the Corpse begins to move. It rises to its feet and begins a slow stalk forward.

DAN
Shoot me? Shoot me? See if you ever
get invited again.

Miles' eyes grow wide as he catches sight of the now alive Corpse. His lips flap, breathless.

The Officer follows Miles' eyeline over his shoulder and sees the Orc Corpse. The boys turn at his reaction and see the body up and about. They panic and scramble away.

Officer Michaels turns the pistol on the Corpse.

OFFICER MICHAELS
STAY WHERE YOU ARE! DON'T MOVE!

His words are cut off by a vicious backhand by the Corpse. Officer Michael crumbles. The Corpse turns on the boys and stalks toward them. Travis and Craig hug one another in fear. Dan shields himself. Miles stares in wide-eyed terror.

(CONTINUED)

The Corpse raises his hand, but before it falls, begins to laugh. The fallen Officer laughs as well. The boys watch in complete befuddlement. Miles begins to laugh a nervous laugh along with them.

MILES

Why are we laughing?

DAN

What in the FUCK is going on?!

The Corpse ceases his laughter and grows stern.

CORPSE

Watch your mouth, you little shit.
You're already in enough trouble.

Dan's eyes widen.

DAN

Dad?

Dan's father, ROBERT, rips away the latex portion of his Orc disguise.

ROBERT (CORPSE)

Thanks for your help, Ted. See you
at work on Monday.

TED (OFFICER MICHAELS)

Sure thing, Bob.

Ted nods and begins to ascend the staircase. He chuckles to himself as he mimics and mocks the boy's reactions. Dan shakes his head, bewildered.

DAN

But why--

ROBERT

I came home from ONE day away and
what do I find? The basement
trashed, my booze missing, and my
kid asleep in a pile of vomit. What
do you think?

The group averts their glance as they take a survey of the destruction around them. Dan's Dad raises a hand and points to the door.

ROBERT

All of you, go home.

(CONTINUED)

Miles, Travis, and Craig assemble their things and begin the walk of shame out.

TRAVIS

So not cool, Mr. B.

ROBERT

You're like 30, Travis. Get a job.

The boys exit the basement, only Dan and Robert still among the mess. Robert SLAPS Dan across the back of the head and motions toward the disaster area around them.

ROBERT

Clean this shit up!

EXT. DAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Miles, Craig, and Travis file out and begin to head their separate ways. Miles pauses and calls back to the others.

MILES

Hey guys...

They stop and turn to face him.

MILES

My place next week?