

"A Role Playing Game"

LIGHTS UP on four guys around a table: CILLIAN is at the head of a table, with a cardboard screen shielding some books and papers from the other players. PLONK, a small, quiet fellow, sits at the other end. Between them are TYGAR and GRINGUR. There are rather a lot of weapons around, and folks are dressed a bit Renn.-Faire-ish.

At the moment, everyone is watching Gringur, who holds a twenty-sided die. Gringur looks at Tygar, a bit confused. Tygar looks bored.

TYGAR

Roll the die, Gring.

He does so. Plonk heaves a sigh of relief.

CILLIAN

You've escaped the 1050  
requisition form.

Plonk and Gringur laugh.

TYGAR

Hey, is it sundown yet?

Gringur sighs.

CILLIAN

What's at sundown?

Gringur rolls his eyes.

TYGAR

(fake-casually)

The King's Guard has their Warrior  
Induction Ceremony.

GRINGUR

Mom wants him there early.

Plonk consults a map.

PLONK

(to CILLIAN)  
West.

CILLIAN  
You have found... a Xerox machine.

THE OTHERS  
(ad libs)  
Kill it! Stab it! Destroy it!  
Etc.

CILLIAN  
Okay, you're about to go hand to  
hand... but, there is a woman  
there making copies.

TYGAR  
Ha! Is she my type? Gringur's  
type? Your type?

CILLIAN  
That's... not really my thing.

TYGAR  
Oh, come on.

CILLIAN  
(matter-of-factly)  
I'm gay.

TYGAR  
Wha?!  
(beat)  
Really?  
(beat)  
You never said anything.

CILLIAN  
You never asked.

Beat.

Plonk shrugs.

PLONK  
I knew.

TYGAR

Well, it would have come up. Like  
two weeks ago? The office-  
Christmas-party campaign? Our  
efficiency consultants encountered  
that band of drunk girls from  
Marketing?

CILLIAN

I had to work that weekend.

TYGAR

Huh?

PLONK

Orcs.

CILLIAN

Had to throw fireballs at them all  
Saturday night... from the  
ramparts of the Castle Achenthorn.

PLONK

Ugh!

Gringur shakes his head.

GRINGUR

No cross-ventilation there.

TYGAR

(to CILLIAN)

What do you \*do\* for a living,  
anyway?

CILLIAN

It's complicated.

(shrugs)

It usually involves fire.

TYGAR

Shouldn't I \*know\* what you do for  
a living?

CILLIAN

You never asked about that, either.

PLONK  
I didn't know, either.

CILLIAN  
Really?

TYGAR  
Look... all I'm saying is, we've  
all played this together for  
months now --

GRINGUR  
Not me.

TYGAR  
Yes --

GRINGUR  
I just started tonight.

TYGAR  
Okay, except for Gring, none of us  
really know each other.

CILLIAN  
That's not entirely true.

GRINGUR  
Yeah, you've told us about your  
induction ceremony at least three  
times tonight.

CILLIAN  
Look: so what if it's not a big  
bonding experience?

TYGAR  
But what's the point of it?

PLONK  
It's fun?

TYGAR  
It's just... y'know what? I'm too  
old for this.

GRINGUR  
What?

CILLIAN  
Tygar, I'm older than you.

GRINGUR  
Yeah, but you're not Mister  
"Archer of the King's Guard" who  
thinks he's too cool for gaming  
now!

TYGAR  
Gringur, stay out of it, I --

CILLIAN  
No, your little brother has a  
point.

TYGAR  
What?

Plonk hits the table with his fist.

This gets everyone's attention.

Plonk stands up.

PLONK  
Look. I go to work every day, and  
every day, I cast the same damn  
spells to keep the slaving  
hordes of the undead bound to  
their graves in the Unholy Crypts  
of Karthal. And all I want, at  
the end of the week, is just to  
sit with my friends and pretend,  
for a little while, that I am a  
god... of bulk shipping-container  
sales.

A dramatic pause as everyone takes this in. Cillian  
looks ashamed. Tygar looks pensive.

PLONK  
Is that so much to ask?

Another pause.

PLONK  
You can do what you want.  
(He sits.)  
I'm staying here.

Tygar rolls his eyes.

GRINGUR  
C'mon, Ty.

TYGAR  
Okay. We'll engage the Xerox hand  
to hand.

Another die roll.

CILLIAN  
Um... well-done. You've killed  
the Xerox.

TYGAR  
That was easy.

Cillian smiles enigmatically.

FADE THE LIGHTS DOWN over the following lines.

PLONK  
Uh-oh.

GRINGUR  
Why is he smiling like that?

TYGAR  
We're in some kind of trouble.

GRINGUR  
What's down that hallway?

PLONK  
We'll go north.