

Dungeons & Dragons

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Dungeons & Dragons

by [spacedogfromspace](#)

Summary

Data discovers an old game called Dungeons & Dragons and decides to take his friends on a fantasy adventure. But then Q comes along and everyone suddenly finds themselves in the game itself.

Notes

Trektober Day 2

Prompt: "Monsters & Magic"

Usually after alpha shift, the senior staff of the *Enterprise* would gather for a friendly game of poker. However, this evening was going to be different. The game had changed.

Data had discovered an old Earth game and was instantly infatuated with it. And as Data was wont to do, he wanted nothing more than to share this new joy with his friends.

So Data, Geordi, Deanna, Beverly, Will, and Worf sat tightly around a table in Data's quarters, papers and pencils, gridded maps, and tiny figurines spread out before them.

"I do not understand the goal of this game," Worf said. "How do you win at Dungeons and Dragons?"

Geordi, who had read the Player's Handbook cover to cover in preparation for the game, said, "You don't really 'win' at Dungeons and Dragons. It's a collaborative effort. We all work together to achieve a goal."

"So we win by not all dying," Will observed.

"Essentially, yes," Data said as he set up his DM screen. "There are multiple outcomes to each encounter, some of which negatively effect your progression through the story. But the only real 'losing' condition is total party death."

Data finished his setup and looked around. "Has everyone come with characters prepared as I requested?"

When everyone nodded, Data suggested they all introduce their characters.

"I'm Gedon Ironbark, human blacksmith turned artificer," Geordi started.

Deanna went next. "My name is Elara Winterfell. A distinguished elven druid."

"My character is a gnome cleric named Rose," Beverly shrugged apologetically. "I thought I might be the only one to remember that we need a healer in the party."

"Stronk Steeljaw," Will proclaimed. "Half-orc fighter, at your service!"

Everyone turned to Worf, whose mouth formed a thin line.

"I am... Worf," he said, finally. "Barbarian."

"What is your species?" Data asked.

"Klingon."

"I mean your character's species."

"Klingon."

"Worf, there aren't Klingons in Dungeons and Dragons," Will said.

Worf squinted. "But there are humans in Dungeons and Dragons," he argued.

Data raised a pointed finger. "As Dungeon Master, I propose we add Klingons to our game, as it is rather unfair that they are excluded."

"The Dungeon Master has spoken!" Will announced, punctuated by thumping a fist on the table.

With housekeeping out of the way, Data introduced them to the adventure he had planned. It was a simple oneshot, perfect for beginner players. The princess had been kidnapped and locked in a tower, guarded by a ferocious dragon, and it was their job to rescue her and return her to her people.

"So... where is the tower?" Deanna asked.

Data tilted his head to the side. "Are you asking this in character?"

"Oh," Deanna said. She straightened her posture and tried again. "Please, dear barkeep, tell us where we might find this tower," she said in her most elegant elven voice.

Data answered in the gruff voice of the barkeep. "Of course, my lady. First you must travel North through the woods. Then, you will have to traverse the Simmering Swamp. After that, you must cross the Lake of Madness—the tower is on an island at its centre. But be warned—it is guarded by a most fearsome dragon!"

Taking note of their directions, they decided to set off immediately, heading out of the little village and into the woods.

"You walk along the forest path," Data narrated. "When suddenly—"

He was cut off by a loud pop that startled everyone in the room. They were shocked to see someone standing in the middle of their table.

"What's this?" Gaspd the dramatic voice of Q. "A random encounter!" He snapped his fingers, and everyone's vision went white.

When their vision cleared, Geordi, Worf, Will, Deanna, and Beverly were standing in a dimly lit forest. They looked around at their surroundings before looking at each other, confused.

Deanna looked at Beverly. At first, she thought Beverly was kneeling, but on closer inspection... "Beverly! You're...!" She was at a loss for words.

"Short," Will answered for her.

Indeed, Beverly stood at only three feet tall. She crossed her arms and glared up at them. "Well, I'm not the only one who's changed. Look at Deanna's ears!"

Deanna reached up to her ears and found that they were much larger than usual, and pointed. "We've become our characters!" She exclaimed as she understood. Everyone looked down at themselves, then at each other.

Beverly, of course, was significantly shorter, and was wearing monkish robes. Deanna had the long pointed ears of an elf, wore an elegant green dress, and carried a knobbed wooden staff. Will had a scar over one eye and had an under bite, lower incisors poking up through closed lips. He wore a comically large sword across his back. Geordi wore a black cloak and had a tool belt full of fantastical weapons around his waist. And Worf was Worf, still in his Starfleet uniform.

"Q," Will snarled, appearing intimidating with his orcish teeth.

Another pop. "You called?" Said the all powerful and all annoying being from... somewhere.

The group looked around, trying to locate Q.

Q whistled. "Up here!"

They all looked up in unison, and saw Q lounging in the branches of a tree, out of their reach.

"What do you want, Q?" Will demanded.

"Oh? I don't want anything," Q said, mock innocently. "I just thought I'd... enhance your little game a bit."

"Well we don't want it enhanced!" Will said. "Put us back! And where's Data?"

Q rolled his eyes. "Oh, you humans— and Klingon," he nodded to Worf "—are so *boring*. How about this— if you finish your little story and save the princess, I'll take you back to your ship. As for your dear android— you'll find him soon enough." Before Will could shout at him more, he vanished in a flash of light.

"Well," Deanna said, clutching her staff in both hands. "I guess we have no choice."

There was another flash of light, and this time a stack of paper appeared on a tree stump. Geordi walked over to it.

"There's a note," he said, reading the sticky on the top of the pile. "You might need these," he read. He flipped through the pile. "It's our character sheets," he said, and passed them out.

"Do we remember the directions Data gave us?" Will asked.

Beverly spoke up. "We have to go through the woods, then the Simmering Forest, then the Lake of Madness."

"Well, I guess we better get going through the woods, then," Geordi said. He pointed down the path. "I see smoke coming from over there, so that ought to be the village. So we're heading in this direction," he said, pointing the opposite way.

As they began to walk down the path, Worf muttered, "I knew we should have just played poker..."

Will had taken point. They had only walked for a couple of minutes before he stopped and put out a hand to motion everyone else to a halt.

"What is it, Will?" Deanna asked, peering out from around him.

"I thought I heard something," Will said.

They were all silent for a moment, listening for whatever it was he might have heard. Just when they thought it might have been nothing, they heard it. Low growls and rustling in the bushes.

"We're under attack!" Worf announced, and fumbled for a phaser that wasn't there. His face turned ashy as five wolves burst out of the woods, surrounding them. None of them had phasers. And none of the wolves had wolf heads, either. Instead, they had snarling Data heads that growled and barked at them.

"Attack!" Will shouted, pulling the giant sword off his back and brandishing it like he had trained with it for years. Everyone followed suit, brandishing whatever weapons they had. Geordi pulled a hand crossbow off his belt. Deanna brandished her staff. Worf and Beverly didn't seem to have any kind of weapons.

Will raised his sword and met the first wolf's attack, while Geordi dodged around a tree, frantically loading his crossbow. Deanna panicked and bonked her wolf on its Data-head with her staff.

Beverly consulted her character sheet quickly, before wincing. "Please let this work!" She shouted as she pointed a forceful finger at the wolf that was racing towards her. An icy spray flew from her finger, engulfing the wolf in a snowy mist. When it subsided, what was left was what appeared to be an ice sculpture of a wolf. With Data's head, of course.

Will had cut his own wolf's Data-head off, killing it, or disabling it, or whatever. He turned to help Geordi with his wolf.

Worf's wolf leapt at him, knocking him to the ground, and they wrestled, the wolf's Data-head biting Worf's arm and drawing blood. Worf howled with rage, and tore the Data-head off the wolf, then got back to his feet, in time to see Deanna struggling with her wolf, which she was trying to fight off with her staff— nothing more than a glorified stick. He raced to her aid, grabbing the wolf around the middle before it could bite her. He hoisted the wolf high over his head, and threw it as hard as he could into the bushes.

The wolf got back up and turned towards the group, snarling, but saw that all its fellow wolves were dead, and turned to run with its tail between its legs.

"Yeah, you'd better run!" Will shouted after it.

"What *were* those?" Beverly asked, staring at the wolf ice sculpture, studying its Data head.

"I guess this is what Q meant when he said we'd find Data," Will said.

"Why is Data the wolves?" Deanna asked.

"Not just the wolves," Geordi said. He was examining a tree, peeling back some bark. On the inside were circuits and blinking lights, looking very similar to Data's positronic network. "Data is... everything."

Worf puffed up in anger. "The next time I see Q I'm going to—"

"Going to what?"

They all looked up and saw Q standing on a tree branch above them. He clapped slowly. "Well done dealing with the wolves. Now if you'll continue on, you have a princess to save." He vanished again.

Worf growled at the space where Q occupied until just a second ago.

Will sighed and replaced his sword on his back. "Well, let's go, then."

"Just wait, Worf's been hurt," Beverly said, seeing the bite wound on Worf's arm.

"It's just a flesh wound," Worf argued, not wanting to be fussed over.

But Beverly placed a hand on his arm, and magic flowed from her into Worf, and Worf's skin knit itself back together again. "There," Beverly said. "All better."

They followed the path until they reached the edge of the forest, which turned into the Simmering Swamp. They quickly discovered that the name of the swamp was so because it was boiling, and it would take careful navigation to get through it without scalding oneself.

"I guess we just... guess?" Will said, taking a hesitant step forward.

"Wait!" Deanna said, not looking up from the character sheet she was studying. "I have an idea." She raised her staff and waved it. "I cast... Find the Path!"

A magical mist swirled from her staff, then darted forward along the ground through the swamp, twisting and turning. What was left was smokey guide-line through the swamp.

"Great thinking, Deanna," Will said.

One by one, they traversed the swamp, following their guide carefully. They passed steaming geysers, gnarled dead trees, and frogs and lizards with Data-heads. They made it out of the swamp without a single injury. But now, they had arrived at the Lake of Madness.

They couldn't see the island in the middle of the lake. In fact, they couldn't see very far at all, due to the sea of fog that covered the lake's surface.

"Anyone have the spell 'create boat?'" Will asked, looking around at the group.

Everyone looked at their character sheets.

"Actually," Geordi said slowly. "I kind of do."

With a creative use of the spell Fabricate, Geordi created a small rowboat that would fit all of them. They got in and pushed off, letting Worf and Will row the boat.

"I wonder why it's called the Lake of Madness," Beverly mused as the shore vanished into the fog behind them.

"I don't know," Deanna said. "But things will get difficult if all six of us go mad."

Worf, who had been busy rowing, looked up. "Six?" He asked. "There's only five—" He stopped, squinting around.

Only a moment ago he had been sure there were only five of them. But now there were six. Him, Will, Deanna, Geordi, Beverly, and Data. "One of us is not real."

"What are you talking about, Worf?" Will asked.

"When we got on the boat there were only five of us," he said. "But now there are six. We picked up a passenger in the Lake of Madness."

Everyone looked around at each other with unease.

"But which of us is the imposter?" Data asked.

Nobody knew the answer to that.

"It could be any one of us," Geordi said. "I can't remember which one of us didn't get on the boat. I remember all of us being together this whole time, even though I know there should only be five."

"The lake is messing with our memories," Beverly said. "Deanna, you should be able to tell who isn't real. An illusion wouldn't have emotions!"

"You're right," Deanna said. She closed her eyes and focused, then frowned. "I think the illusion might be more advanced than that. I can sense all of you except Data."

"So Data's the imposter?" Will asked.

Deanna shook her head. "Data's an android. I can never sense him."

Data looked around at all of them. "Actually, I think it's quite obvious," he said. "Just look at us. All of us are wearing costumes except for one. One of us clearly doesn't belong in this world."

Everyone looked at Worf.

Worf gritted his teeth. "I am *not* the imposter!" He argued. "I remember fighting the wolves and going through the swamp!"

"I think even the illusion thinks it's one of us, Worf," Deanna said sadly. "I think you might just not be aware that you aren't real."

"I *am* real!"

Geordi and Will had made eye contact and nodded to each other during this discussion, and it was at this point that they both lunged at Worf, taking him by surprise and knocking him off the boat.

Worf flailed at the surface of the water, sputtering, and everyone on the boat turned to Data as he began to laugh.

His laugh became more and more maniacal, and his jaw unhinged, opening his mouth a full one hundred and eighty degrees. His arms started

to lengthen and bend in odd ways. A storm was suddenly upon them, throwing the boat back and forth on the waves, thunder roaring in their ears and lightning striking nearby.

Beverly stood, balancing precariously on the rocky boat, and pointed at the eldritch Data. "Thunderwave!" She shouted, and a thunderous shock wave erupted from the space in front of her, slamming into not-Data, and knocking him over the side of the boat. He disappeared beneath the waves, which calmed instantly, and the storm stopped. The fog lifted, revealing the island and its tower.

Will and Geordi helped the sputtering Worf back onto the boat.

"Sorry, Worf," Geordi said, rubbing the back of his neck in embarrassment.

Worf glared at them.

"There's the tower!" Beverly shouted, pointing.

"Great," Will said. "Let's save the princess and go home."

They grounded the rowboat on the shore and hopped out, walking towards the tower.

"Hello! Princess!" Will called up to the single window at the top of the tower.

The princess emerged in the tower's window, wearing an eloquent red gown. But something wasn't quite right. This fairy tale princess was... bald?

"Captain Picard?" The whole group exclaimed in unison.

"Yes, yes, it's me, quit your gawking!" Picard shouted at them from above. "Q kidnapped me and put me here—"

"We know! He kidnapped us too!" Beverly shouted. "We're here to rescue you!"

"There's a dragon!" Picard warned them. "The dragon is—"

"Yeah, the dragon is Data, we know," Geordi said.

"No!" Picard shouted. "The dragon is—"

There was a frightful roar, and the sound of flapping wings. The dragon flew over them, casting them in shadow. It landed on top of the tower, faced them, and roared.

"Spot!" Everyone exclaimed.

Indeed, it was Data's beloved cat, Spot, albeit with wings and the size of a whale. Spot hissed down at them.

Geordi's shoulders slumped and he turned to the group. "What do we do? We can't fight Data's cat!"

"It's not real, Geordi, it's just one of Q's tricks," Will said, gripping his sword.

"I know," Geordi said, looking up at Spot with hands on his hips. "It just feels wrong."

"Maybe it won't come to that," Deanna said.

Everyone looked at her.

"What is your plan?" Worf asked.

Deanna walked forward, away from the group and looked up at the kitty-turned-dragon. "Spot!" She called in a high pitched voice, getting the large feline's attention. "Pspspspspsp!"

At the sound, Spot stopped hissing and leapt down from the tower. His landing before Deanna caused the Earth to shake, and everyone lost their balance and tumbled to the ground.

Spot loomed over Deanna's prone body.

"Deanna!" Will shouted, too far away to do anything.

Spot brought his giant face down, and Deanna closed her eyes tight against her impending death.

But she opened them again when she felt soft fur brushing her face. Spot, as large as he was, was nuzzling her with his cheeks and purring.

"Good kitty, Spot," she laughed, burying her hands in the orange fur and giving him scratches.

Geordi cast Feather Fall on Captain Picard, allowing him to float majestically and safely to the ground, dress billowing around him. His face was almost as red as his dress.

"Q!" He shouted angrily, trying to summon his nemesis. But Q didn't appear.

"I think there is one thing left for us to do," Deanna said, and climbed onto Spot's back. Everyone followed suit, and when they were all seated, Spot took off, flying into the air, and steering off into the sunset.

Then, in a flash, they were all back in Data's quarters. Everyone was their usual height, with their usual ears and facial features, and wearing their usual uniforms.

"This was not exactly what I had in mind when I proposed that we play Dungeons and Dragons," Data said from his spot behind the DM screen.

Everyone turned to him.

"Where were you during all of that, Data?" Deanna asked.

Data tilted his head to the side. "I was... everywhere. And everything."

"Well, that was an experience I'd rather not repeat," Captain Picard said, turning to leave. "Thank you all for rescuing me, I certainly needed it."

Will grinned. "Anytime, Princess— I mean, Captain."

Everyone laughed as Picard ignored him and strode out of the room.

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