Join Adric Fell, the halfling Bree Three-Hands, the dwarf Khal Khalundurrin, the tiefling Tisha Swornheart, and the elf Varis in a tale of high adventure and deep secrets. Collects all 16 issues of the Dungeons & Dragons series written by John Rogers with art by Andrea Di Vito.
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Originally published as DUNGEONS & DRAGONS issues #0–15.
Introduction

When IDW was nice enough to offer me one of the Dungeons & Dragons comics they were launching, while on the phone for the very first conversation I scribbled “working class heroes” on a pad. And so Fell’s Five was born…

“Working…”

I’m fascinated by systems. Your proto-Dungeons & Dragons group travels the world, kills monsters, and takes their stuff. I’m not the inventor of the term “murder hobos,” but it certainly seems appropriate. But what kind of world, exactly, requires traveling bands of skilled mercenaries? What kind of world has dungeon ruins reeking of magic and death scattered across the landscape like deadly reality-bending Easter eggs? And perhaps most importantly, what kind of towns spring up in between those cursed places? What’s the economy like? Even subsistence agriculture requires a thriving trade system (axe heads don’t grow on trees, kids), never mind the sprawling stone metropolises that support wizard towers and griffin stables.

Fell’s Five work for a living. They’re not speculative spelunkers in exotic ecosystems, slaughtering native life in order to collect the gold coins left behind by undigested magical bloodlines. No “thees” and “thous” for our group. No epic poetry tripping off the tongue. Our role-playing adventure parties, in the end, are run by everyday friends who sound just like we do. Why should our proxies in the fantasy world sound like weekend theater productions of Camelot?

“…Heroes.”

Anti-heroes are all the rage. But personally, I want my role-playing game to be where I can fulfill my fantasy, and let’s face it, in modern society, one of the most pervasive fantasies… is justice. Our world is unwieldy, a place where change comes slowly if at all. So why not let our fantasies be fantasies of sacrifice and kindness? Granted, Bree will slit your throat for a hot coffee and a cold coin—but she’s a necessary evil in an evil world, not the ringleader. Adric Fell and most of his friends are inherently decent folk. They’re not saints. But you’d be damn glad they lived on your block, in a pinch.

Once we established our world of working class heroes, the truly great insight IDW brought to the table was in pairing Andrea Di Vito with this approach to fantasy. Andrea’s got a classic look, a perfect complement to the meta-nature of the Fell’s Five books. Andrea’s clean art made me believe in Adric’s world. I believed they existed, they smelled earthy, their clothes were handmade. I believed, thanks to Andrea, in a real world that just happened to have magic in it. And he can land a joke, which is crucial. Dungeons & Dragons, after all, is an intensely social game. It’s used to tell a wide range of stories over a wide range of world-types, but if you play in a bunch of groups you find the one common denominator is laughter. D&D players love to have a good time. Andrea, IDW, and I really wanted the book to be like the fun adventures of characters that you’d like to game with every week. We’re a pulp book. Pick us up, enjoy the great fight art, laugh at the banter, and steal tons of ideas for your own campaign.

Or, hell, if you really like it, maybe you’ll try playing the game if you’re not already a player. That would be cool.

John Rogers
November, 2013
KRASH

This way! We can catch them if we--

Oh, here they are. Great.
IN THE BLESSED NAME OF MORADIN, YIELD!

KHAL, DON'T DO NOT START BLOODY SINGING!

YAAAAAAY!

BREE!

KRAAACCH!

BREEE THREE-HANDS, WHERE ARE--

YOU?

—YOU?

SHCHUNK

HEY, BOSS!

NICE OF YOU TO JOIN US.

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

RUN, AGAIN, NOW.
“Below,” we've been going down for two hours. Who builds these dungeon mazes, anyway?

This isn't all of them.

Rear guard, rest of the bandits already went below.

Bree, stop looting the filthy murder dogs!

In a world with dragons, underground corridors big enough for a man, but no bigger...

It just be common sense.

They got nothin' on 'em, anyway!

Reward'll make up for it.

Last caravan these bastards hit, they got the Duke's family jewelry. Find those; it means hot baths and cold beer for a year!

—Trappity-Trap!

Six hundred years old, sharp as the day she was made. Fine dwarven craftsmanship right there.

Your people are artisans of death, Khal.

Bree, locked door ahead.
Runes, they say—

"Behold the fields of despair beneath the sunless skies."

What's it mean?

Means we're here.

The Underdark.

... How did you beat us down here, Varis?

We elves walk ancient paths.

"Shortcut. Just say "shortcut."

I would never offend you that way.
I have found the bandit clan's trail...

...but there is a complication.

Yes, the trader pays well for your pretty skull...

Hirhn-hirhn-hirhn.

These guys don't have the jewels! They're just slavers.

Let's go.

You know we have to—

Sigh! I know.

Not! Our! Problem!
BY MORADIN'S COMMAND—

—HAVE SOME OF THIS!

TWO SECONDS, FOLKS, WE'LL HAVE YOU OUT OF HERE.

OKAY, MAYBE FIVE SECONDS.

THANKS FOR RUINING MY PLAN.

YOUR "PLAN"? LADY—

DAMN. WE GET OUT OF THIS, YOU WANT A JOB?