



Terror Island

Terror Island (The Comic) (The Book)

*Wyatt S Carpenter's
2023 unofficial
compilation*



0-index 1-title page 2-foreword.md 3-buzzsaw_review.pdf about cast contact dramatis etc fanart faq guide 000-index
001 002 003 004 005 006 007 008 009 010 011 012 013 014 015 016 017 018 019 020 021 022 023 024 025 026 027
028 029 030 031 032 033 034 035 036 037 038 039 040 041 042 043 044 045 046 047 048 049 050 051 052 053 054
055 056 057 058 059 060 061 062 063 064 065 066 067 068 069 070 071 072 073 074 075 076 077 078 079 080 081
082 083 084 085 086 087 088 089 090 091 092 093 094 095 096 097 098 099 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108
109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135
136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162
163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189
190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216
217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243
244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270
271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297
298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324
325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351
352 end Z-cover back

Terror Island

"some photos of chess pieces don't want to buy groceries?"

About

Cast

Main

Forum

Search

&c.

Foreword by the compiler (Wyatt S Carpenter)

Hello and welcome to *Terror Island*, the comic from <http://www.terrorisland.net> by Ben Heaton and Lewis Powell; the book. I guess that technically makes this a graphic novel.

I made this book version of *Terror Island* for my own personal use and enjoyment. I didn't want any money or to have to get in contact with the original authors. However, this does mean that the book is not as good as it could be. Specifically, the images are small, and therefore don't look as good as they could (Ben's annotation on Strip #317 implies there are higher-quality photos hoarded, and possibly higher-quality entire strips?). Also, I didn't try very hard on making every aspect of the book look good — actually, I did try pretty hard, but then I got tired.

Another interesting aspect of this book is that I've included all of the about pages, etc, as front matter. This includes a page called "strips/index.html", which is apparently a table of contents of the comic (and continues the joke of the comic being logically necessary, as it is formatted as though it is the table of contents of a work of mathematical proofs). However, it seems like the authors forgot about this page eventually, so it only goes until strip 30.

If this is your first time reading *Terror Island*, I softly recommend skipping the notes the first time. While the notes are great, you'll be able to speed through the comic breezily the first time, and on subsequent reads you can enjoy the notes as well. This is not an imperative suggestion; if you feel like reading the notes, go ahead. (As a side note, I'm fairly certain that Ben's Notes on Strip 1, which is written as though it's retrospective, was actually written concurrently with the production of the strip, as a joke. The notes were added, as best I can tell, the day the strips went up, and not retroactively.)

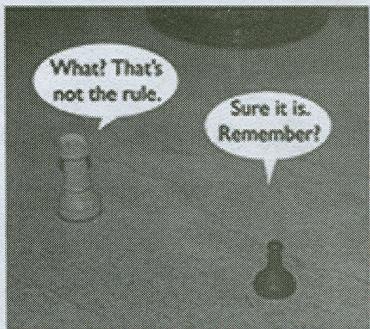
The code, and other things, to make this book can be found at <https://github.com/wyattscarpenter/terrorisland>.

The concept of calling this "Terror Island (The Comic) (The Book)" is metrically derived from *Twitter: The Comic (The Book)*, the book collection of the comic *Twitter: The Comic*, which is adaptations of great tweets into comic strips. However, unlike the *Twitter: The Comic*, the "The Comic" in "Terror Isand (The Comic)" is not a mark of adaptation but a disambiguator, merely there to distinguish it from all the other things out there titled "Terror Island". For example, if this were, say, a comics adaption of the film *Terror Island* (1920), I would call it "Terror Island: The Comic". And then, in both cases, the "(The Book)" is in parens because that step isn't really an adaptation so much as it is just an alternative presentation in which to enjoy the exact same content. This isn't really germane to anything, because this foreword is about *Terror Island* and not about *Twitter: The Comic*, but I want to mention that the song for the commercial for *Twitter: The Comic (The Book)* is very good. Since the commercial is titled "Twitter The Comic (The Book) – The Trailer", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IktnlZmK6zU>, the song is called "Twitter The Comic (The Book) – The Trailer (The Song)" in my personal musical collection. I'm not sure if the song has an official name. Presumably, if it does, I've rediried exactly the same name indeperently, compelled by pure reason.

This edition contains the "title text" of each strip, which would normally appear on hover on the website, as italic text underneath the comic.

I've also enabled the calibre option to "smarten punctuation", especially noticeable in the quotes, which are now curly instead of straight.

If you've modified this edition somehow, you can include a description of how below this line.



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Terror Island - Web Comic

As the newspapers continue to provide bland and consistently boring comics I look to the web for salvation. *Terror Island*, created by Lewis Powell and Ben Heaton, is an original, clever, and refreshing little treat that supplies a great comic fix three times a week.

In this photo-based web comic, roommates Stephen and Sid, played by a rook and Professor Plum from Clue respectively, are in an ongoing struggle to persuade the other to go shopping. Don't be fooled by the simple premise though, the writers often invent very drawn out and intricate plotlines that usually elicit a combination of laughter and confusion. The beauty of this comic comes from the cleverly juxtaposed, surreal personalities of the *Terror Island* characters. The game pieces are intelligent and perhaps even educated, but at the same time utterly unable to resolve their grocery problem. Other challenges

they struggle with include everything from spelling bees to demonic possession.

Another great part to the *Terror Island* experience is the ongoing commentary from its two creators. With each strip both writers write their thoughts and feelings that range from philosophical ponderings, factoids about the strip, links to other web comics, or even computer drawings of a merdog (like a mermaid) named Scruffy McBubbles (see strip #12).

The fact that the characters are just game pieces is enough to make you chuckle once you realize how involved in their lives you've become. Unfortunately to be fully involved and get all the jokes one must go back and start with the very first strip, of which there are currently 125. Once up to date though, *Terror Island* is sure to make you bypass the newspaper and go straight to the internet for all your comic needs.

-Daniel Barker

buzzsawhaircut.
blogspot.com

For more scintillating tidbits, including reviews of the latest by Ted Leo, Modest Mouse, Andrew Bird as well an interview with The Essex Green. Also, there will be lots of cool pop culture facts and an exciting concert announcement that, if you've got this far, you'll surely enjoy.

About *Terror Island*

Terror Island is a web-based photocomic by Ben Heaton and Lewis Powell. It's named after the philosophic concept of an island which is distinct from all objects, including itself. *Terror Island* is updated thrice weekly; Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

This website was composed using nano, vim, and a limited understanding of html. The images themselves were captured with a Nikon D50 digital SLR camera and adjusted using Adobe Photoshop. The font used in the comic is [Gill Sans](#).

For information about the cast of *Terror Island*, see the [Cast page](#).

If you would like information about the characters in the strip, feel free to view the [Dramatis Personae](#).

Do you have other questions? Check out [the FAQ](#).

About the Authors



Ben Heaton is photographer and co-writer for *Terror Island*. He currently resides in Palo Alto, CA and recently graduated from the University of Rochester with a B.S. in Mathematics.

Lewis Powell is co-writer of *Terror Island* and webmaster of [terrorisland.net](#). Lewis graduated from the University of Rochester with a B.A. in Philosophy, and is currently living in Los Angeles, CA pursuing a Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Southern California.

Contact Us!

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This page covers the cast of *Terror Island*. For information about the characters in the strip, see our [Dramatis Personae](#).



Sid: The role of Sid is played by Professor Plum, from Clue. Plum is a brilliant but absent-minded professor, and was a close friend of the late Reginald Boddy.



Stephen: The role of Stephen is played by White King's Rook, from Chess. Rook has been a stalwart defender of the White King for many years, frequently castling to protect him in battle. He is noted for his mobility.

Liln: The role of Liln is played by Red Foam Piece, from *SnaFooz*. She fits in with the other five red pieces to form a cube.



York Funhaven: The role of York is played by Thimble, from Monopoly. His interests include sewing and real estate.

Jame: The role of Jame is played by Blue Wink, from Tiddlywinks. He is worth three tiddlies in the pot, and one if left unsquopped on the mat.

Aorist: The role of Aorist is played by Large Green Pyramid, from Icehouse. He can be used for a variety of games, including IceTowers, Zendo, and Martian Chess.



First Folio: The role of First Folio is played by Green Cranium Piece. A native of Planet Cranium, she passes through various party games in an attempt to reach Cranium Central.



Omicron: The role of Omicron is played by

Ray the cat. He is 12 years old, and resides in Palo Alto.



Contact Us!

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Terror Island's *Dramatis Personae*

This page covers the characters of *Terror Island*. For information about the cast who portray them, see our [Cast page](#).



Sid: Sid Byrahk is a freelance author living in Geography City, CA. He and his roommate Stephen are currently running low on groceries, but neither wishes to go shopping.



Stephen: Sid's roommate, Stephen Greeter, is a vexillographer. He too is disinclined to end the grocery shortage by shopping. Stephen was recently elected Czar of Geography City.

Liln: Liln Bemular is a close friend of Sid and Stephen's. She is a professional jeweler and is dating Jame Palrose. Sid and Stephen frequently attempt to get Liln to assist with their various schemes, and she is generally reluctant to.



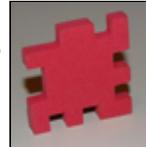
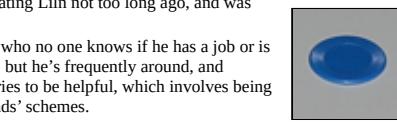
York Funhaven: York Funhaven works at a gaming store. He was originally Sid's friend, but has bonded with the group as a whole. York fancies himself something of a group leader, but the rest of the group hasn't really noticed that, and so has not responded to his power play.

Jame: Jame Palrose is a restaurateur. He is decidedly the least "zany" of the bunch, and has only recently met any of them. He began dating Liln not too long ago, and was introduced by her to Sid, Stephen, &c.

Aorist: Aorist is that guy who no one knows if he has a job or is independently wealthy or what, but he's frequently around, and pleasant enough. Aorist often tries to be helpful, which involves being complicit in various of his friends' schemes.

First Folio: First Folio was so-named because of her parents' love of Shakespeare. First Folio went to college with York at Center of the Earth University (Moon Campus). She keeps kosher and has been known to use some powers of divination.

Omicron: Omicron is Sid's pet cat. He used to be Sid and Stephen's, but Stephen lost his half in a bet about formica.



Links

[Oh No Robot](#): Search and Transcription

[RSS:Pect](#): RSS feed

[Livejournal RSS feed](#): Damned if we know what this RSS stuff is, but all the cool kids have it. (thanks to [Angyl](#))

[Factitious.net](#): Ben's Web site

[Lewis Powell dot com](#): Lewis's Web site

[Factitious' LiveJournal](#): Ben's Livejournal

[Maximum Verbosity](#): Lewis's Livejournal

[TimeFan](#): Ben's Time Discussion Site

[OnlineComics.net](#): A directory of online comics

 [Photo Web Comics TopSites](#)

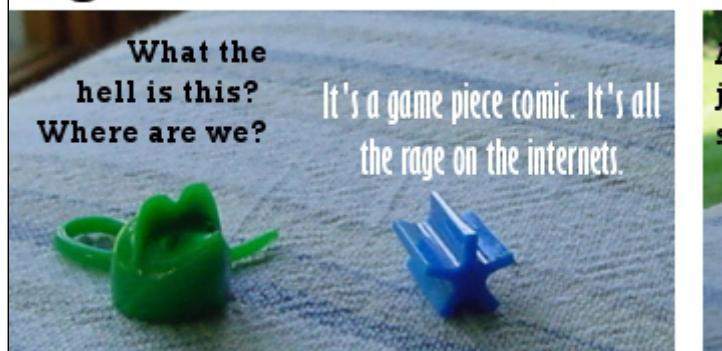
The Archipelago of Comics we like:

This list is very incomplete.

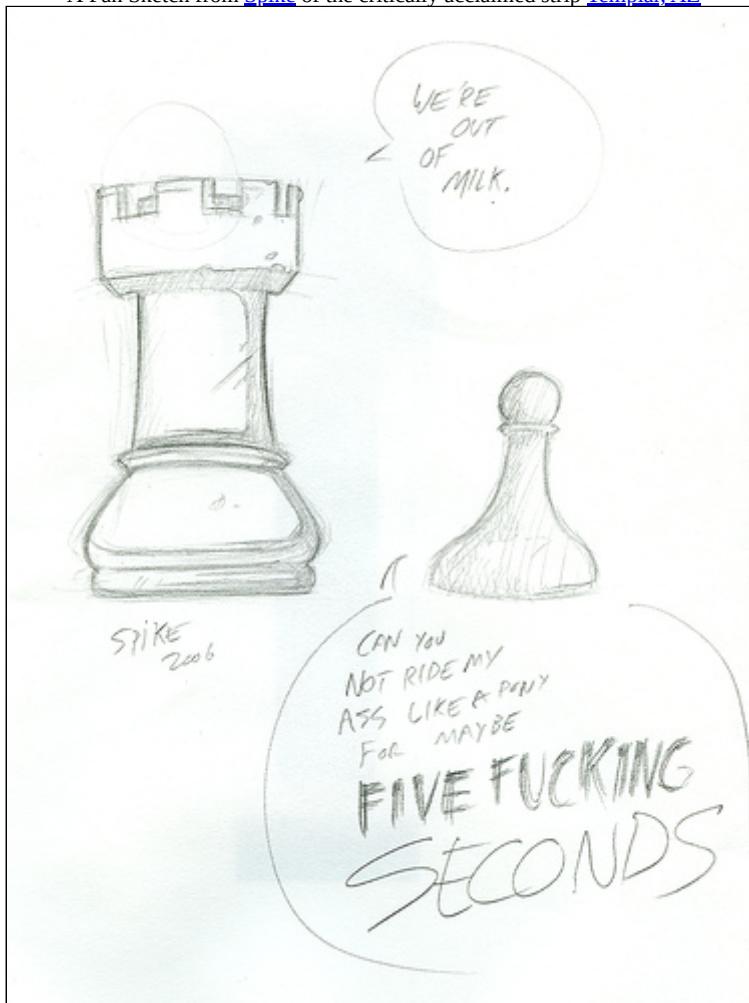
- [Killer Robots from Space](#)
- [Starslip Crisis](#)
- [Dinosaur Comics](#)
- [Achewood](#)
- [Irregular Webcomic](#)
- *and many more...*

An Homage Strip from [David!! Lu](#)
Click the image below to see the entire strip.

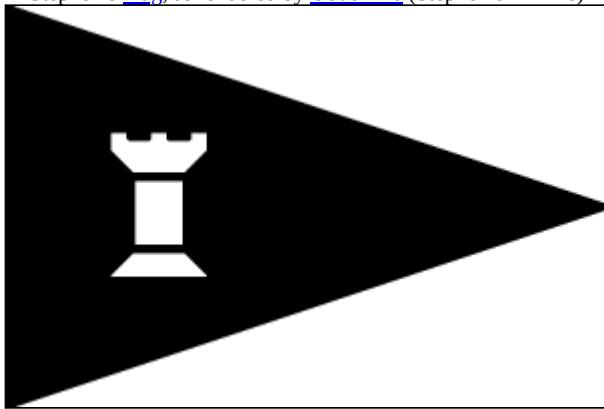
Right Out of Edmund Wells



A Fan Sketch from [Spike](#) of the critically acclaimed strip [Templar, AZ](#)



Stephen's [Flag](#), as rendered by [Obdormio](#) (Stephonian Prime)



Why don't you look like your avatars, [Gibbs and Lockley](#)?
Actually, we do look like them, they just don't look like us.

Why a photocomic?
Ben has a camera, and we like the way photographs look.

Why gamepieces?
Gamepieces tend to be abstract and iconic. Also, they are often colorful.

What's the deal with Sid and Stephen?
They need groceries, but neither of them wants to be the one to get the groceries.

Why don't Sid and Stephen resolve their grocery dispute by taking turns? Whoever didn't go shopping last should buy the groceries this time.

That would work, except that although Sid and Stephen have both bought groceries before, neither of them was the last to do it! You see, on the first day of June, Sid bought groceries. Then on the next half-day in June, Stephen bought groceries, on the next quarter-day in June, Sid bought groceries again, and so on. During June 2nd, each of them made an infinite number of shopping trips. Then on June 3rd, they realized that this left them in a tricky situation. Since there was no last one (for any given instance of buying groceries, there exists another one that took place later), the turn-taking strategy fails here.

OK, so why don't they go grocery shopping together?
Because that would mean they both lose.

I heard Scott Kurtz was down on your comic, or something, what was the deal with that?
At the 2006 San Diego Comic-Con, we approached Scott Kurtz, who was kind enough to look at some sample strips of ours, and give us feedback. He had some substantive criticisms of our strip, which is described [in this forum post](#). We did and do appreciate Kurtz's input, and it was very nice of him to take the time to give us detailed feedback during the convention.

How do you go about making the strip?
[This page](#) contains a detailed guide to our process, broken down step-by-step.

I like the idea of a photocomic about inanimate objects, but could they be a bit more humanoid?
Try [Depth of Field](#), [Alien Loves Predator](#), or [Leisuretown](#).

Wait, not that humanoid. How about one with Lego figures?
You want [Irregular Webcomic](#) or [Legostar Galactica](#).

OK, now what if I want a photocomic about actual humans?
We recommend [Reprographics](#) or [Michael's Exciting Life](#).

While we're at it, are there any other photocomics you'd like to recommend?
Yes. [Fluff in Brooklyn](#), [Tiny Ghosts](#), and [A Softer World](#).

What if there's a photocomic I like that you haven't mentioned?
Email us and let us know!

Here's our process, carefully presented in such a way that "Art" is divided into three of the five steps:

Step 1: Writing

We start by working out the basic premise and then writing a loose script over AIM. Storyline ideas are worked out months in advance, but without very many details. We bounce ideas off one another until we get something we can agree will work, then try to fit it into four panels. The punchline usually comes last, and often changes during the later steps.

Step 2: Staging

Next, I take the characters the strip needs, as well as whatever props we're using, and set them up on a nearby surface. This can be as simple as "Sid and Stephen standing next to each other on a table" or as complex as Jame's restaurant, where I had tables to arrange, a hat to make, lights to position, &c. Even that wasn't all that intensive, though, since I don't spend anywhere near as much time on this step as a professional-type photographer probably would.

Step 3: Photographing

This is the simplest step. I take a few pictures (generally 10 per panel), moving the pieces in between as required by the plot. I try to keep in mind where the speech bubbles will end up being, so that the composition doesn't get too messed up, but as you may have noticed, I don't focus on this too much. The dialogue tends to change from the initial script anyway.

Step 4: Photoshop

Once I've chosen the pictures that I'll use for the strip, I open them in Photoshop, add text and speech bubbles, scale them down, crop as needed, and put them on a template consisting of a white background with the URL and copyright. Most of the time during this step is spent tweaking the dialogue to be more ellipse-shaped.

Step 5: Webmastering

Once I have the completed file, I send it to Lewis. He lets me know if he sees any problems with it, and then I fix them. We think up several ideas for title text, pick the objectively best one, and then write our comments. Finally, Lewis goes through some process that puts the strip on the website. I'm not sure how that's set up.

Theorems 1-5: Groundwork

1. [Produce Paucity Postulate](#)
2. [Shopping-Shirking Supposition](#)
3. [Preposterous Plot Principle](#)
4. [Absurd Association Axiom](#)
5. [Constant Citation Corollary](#)

Theorems 6-10: Early significant results

6. [York's existence proposition](#)
7. [York's uniqueness proposition](#)
8. [Jame's uniqueness proposition*](#)
9. [Aorist's existence proposition](#)
10. [Aorist's uniqueness proposition](#)

*Jame's uniqueness implies his existence.

Theorems 11-15: Apartment Disguise Scheme

11. [Paperback premise \(If \$\sim P\$, then R\)](#)
12. [Apartment Disguise Hypothesis \(If P, Q\)](#)
13. [Scheme Effect Denial \(\$\sim Q\$ \)](#)
14. [Negation of Scheme \(So, \$\sim P\$ \)](#)
15. [Proof of Photosynthesis \(So, R\)](#)

Theorems 16-20: Assorted Results

16. [Omicron Introduction](#)
17. [Occupations and Wagers](#)
18. [Sid's Baking Soda Theorem](#)
19. [Mythical Misinformation Theorem](#)
20. [Aorist's Announcement](#)

Theorems 21-30: Spellmaster York's Results

21. [Cross-Scheme Interference](#)
22. [Redirection of Absurdity](#)
23. [Restaurants and their themes](#)
24. [Bee: Liln goes first](#)
25. [Bee: Sid's Bingo](#)
26. [Bee: York is stern but fair](#)
27. [Bee: Uncooperative Answers to legitimate questions](#)
28. [Bee: Liln can't lose](#)
29. [Bee: Stephen's battle with ambiguity](#)
30. [Bee: Victory, Grapes, and Fiction](#)



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pay no attention to the bowl of fresh fruit behind them

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

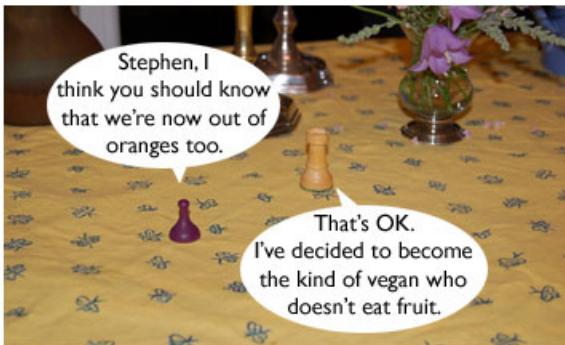
This was the first Terror Island strip we made. It's hard to believe we've come so far since then, isn't it? The area Sid and Stephen are standing on in most of the strip is a kitchen counter, but I used a card table for the panel three flashback.

Lewis's Notes

I think this work speaks for itself.

However, I will note that I added "RSS:Pect" and "Oh No Robot" features for all you crazy kids out there. I also avoided the "border" attribute of images, because apparently it doesn't exist, and I wanted the site to validate.

Because I care.



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we're the type of vegans who make comics

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I was going to write out an actual grocery list on that tiny piece of paper, but my handwriting doesn't really look like Stephen's. So I just drew some squiggly lines.

Lewis's Notes

No animals were harmed in the making of this strip. Unless Ben or I ate while we were making it. And, then the animals weren't harmed in the making of the strip so much as before the making of the strip.



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Sid's plan is not a statement about American consumerism

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

none

Lewis's Notes

I think I'm most happy in this strip with how convoluted of a plan we were able to generate and dismiss in four panels. With any luck, the convolution will increase exponentially over time.



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this comic foreshadows comedic legal highjinks if and only if we later write strips with comedic legal highjinks

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

For this strip, I used a more traditional grid layout than I usually go with. That and the repetition of views are meant to give the conversation between Sid and Liln a feeling of endless recurrence.

Lewis's Notes

I'd like to prepare any readers of the comic for the fact that Liln might be about as close to "voice of reason" as you're going to get. And since she recommends petty larceny as a problem solving technique, that should give you some sense of what 'reasonable' amounts to in a world created by Ben and myself.

Unrelatedly, I am trying to get people to use a nickname for me, so, if you could start referring to me and introducing me as "LP" that'd be pretty cool.



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Sid rules at Apples to Apples, Stephen is more of a Sudoku guy

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

In the background of panel 3, you can see Apples to Apples, a chessboard, and a photomosaic puzzle. Those are items I happened to have around the house, and that happened to be on the bench that I wanted to use for these pictures.

Lewis's Notes

I'd like to make it clear that one could not choose either of the following: (1) Captain America's shield or (2) a protein allergy. The former is a possession, not a power, and the latter is a weakness, not a power.

One could however, choose either of the following: (a) the ability to summon Captain America's shield instantaneously, whenever desired, or (b) the ability to acquire and lose allergies at will.



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The Rock-Paper-Scissors expansion won an Origins award.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

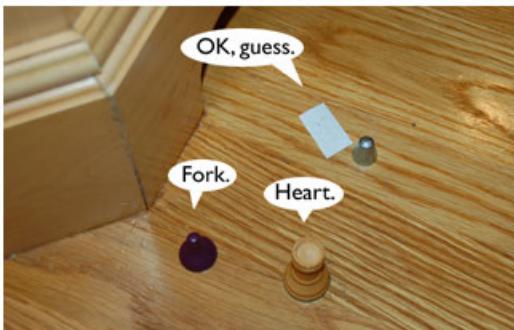
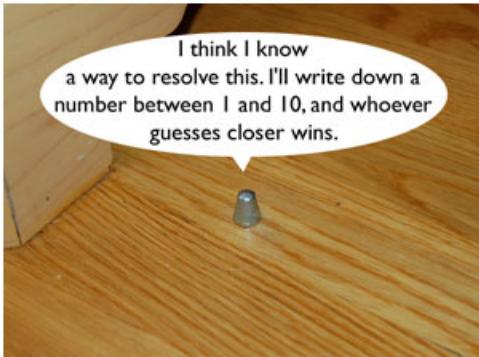
Ben's Notes

Panel 4 is the smallest Terror Island panel so far. It may look very similar to panel 2, but in fact I used different photographs for each of them. I don't like reusing images.

Lewis's Notes

Ben usually comments on the photos or the panel composition, and I usually comment on the content of the strip, a trend that will continue today. I will give you some background. Sid and Stephen play by the traditional basic set rules for Rock-Paper-Scissors. These rules are as follows: (a) Players smack a closed fist into an open palm three times, followed by a fourth time throwing either rock, paper or scissors. (b) as players are performing the aforementioned gestures, they say "rock, paper, scissors, shoot", punctuating each word with the gestures. (c) rock breaks scissors, scissors cut paper, paper covers rock. As you can see, the rules do not address a tie scenario.

Also, the cast page currently features a sneak peak at an upcoming character or two, so you should [check it \[the cast page\] out.](#)



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the weird thing is, they're all actually quite good at math.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I'm not really happy with the way the piece of paper turned out in panel 4. It originally looked darker and slightly blueish, so I adjusted it in Photoshop. Usually I prefer to leave things as close as possible to the way they actually looked in real life.

Lewis's Notes

Firstly, you'll note I changed it back to "Lewis" from "LP". That's because who was I really kidding? No one. That's who. I am teflon when it comes to nicknames.

Ben asks disapproving questions when I talk too much about things that aren't the strip in these notes, so, I guess I'll answer some likely questions about today's strip.

You may be wondering, "hey, what if York wasn't a jerk, and put down a number, like 6, or even 3?" That is fairly straightforward. Fork is closer to even numbers, Heart is closer to odd numbers.

But, who wins given what York actually wrote? Sadly, no one. Heart and Fork, are, in fact, equidistant from blue. And now you know.



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Fun Fact: Jame and Liln met at a grocery store.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If I had kids, I'd want to give them names that require explanations like Jame's. Fortunately, I don't have kids.

Lewis's Notes

Ben and I decided to invent a new genre (the gamepiece photocomic), because that way, in addition to being genre pioneers and thus, important innovators, it allows us to be the sole members of a particular comparison class, which makes it easier to truthfully say things like "Terror Island is the best gamepiece photocomic there is."

Also, neither Ben nor I can draw, and so it made sense to create the comic in a way where it would look good. (I can compliment the way it looks, because Ben does the photography not me, so that sort of comment is kind instead of vain).



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Aorist's heart isn't really in the whole pirate slang thing, but at least he's trying.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This is the first comic with a sound effect, and the second comic with a character speaking from off-panel. I'm hoping the high number of nonstandard speech bubbles won't make this too confusing.

Lewis's Notes

With the exception of Omicron, we have now introduced the main [cast](#). I hope that at this point, you are starting to get some sense of who these characters are. Especially Sid and Stephen. Ideally, our fan base will split off into two factions, the Siddites and the Stephonians; based on who they identify strongly with and/or want to see victorious in the current grocery struggle.

I would also like to say "Happy Birthday Ben", as it is his Birthday.



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grapes truly would be a treasure for these two

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

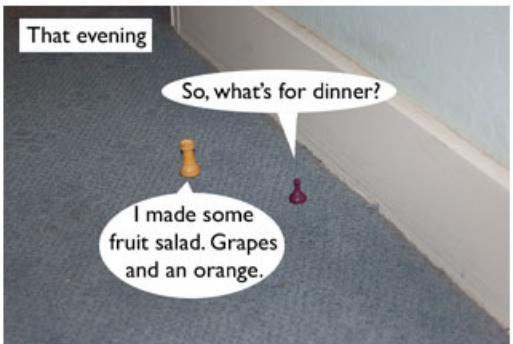
Aorist represents the sort of person who will go along with wacky schemes, but insists on adding his own pointless twist on things. Sid just wanted him to give a grocery list to Stephen, but Aorist decided to complicate matters by dressing up like a pirate as well. I've known enough people like that to consider it a stock character type.

Lewis's Notes

I asked Ben what I should write about today, and he suggested "showering" and then "the distinction between maps and lists". We're going to talk about the latter, because I don't have much to say about showering.

On second thought, I'm going to talk about our [forums](#), because they are fun and useful. Ben is a time enthusiast, which I don't really understand, but it motivated him to register the domain "timefan.com" and put up forums there. For time related discussion. We decided they could double as the terror island forums, so that's where our forums are. We have a mnemonic device, though, to make it easier to remember where the forums are. "Terror Island: May Each Fan Aid Napoleon." So, remember that to figure out where the forums are. Or click the button up top.

As per my suggestion of fan-factions, one of our fans, Obdormio, declared himself to be a Stephonian, a bold act which was rewarded with the title of "Stephonian Prime". And that, my friends, is the sort of zany fun that can happen on the forums. It's also a good place to ask me and Ben about the strip, or post recipes you like.



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some time, ask us about the gravity's rainbow joke this strip almost had as a punchline

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The “fruit salad” Stephen made actually consists of [this](#) and [this](#). Don’t click on those links if you’d rather work it out for yourself. They contain spoilers.

Originally, there was going to be a bit where Sid was eating a book, and said that it was too chewy. Then Stephen would tell him not to judge it by the cover.

Lewis's Notes

Today I bring you fan-news and a crazy Ben anecdote.

First, we’ve been [adoringly ripped off](#). If you are curious about the punchline of that fan strip, I direct you to [an explanation](#). And, yes, if you check those credits, they make it clear that I was director and Ben was *merely codirector*.

And now the anecdote. One time (October 7, 2004), Ben had introduced me to wikipedia. And I had never come across the word “neologism”, which gets used a lot on wikipedia when people want to delete articles. So I send Ben an IM (he lived on the same floor as me at college, but in a different suite).

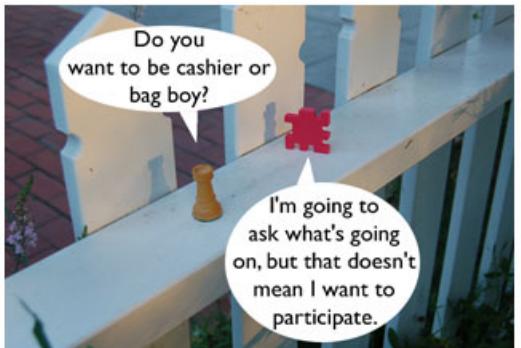
(18:56:11)ultralewis:what is neologism?

(18:56:19)factition:Neologism?

(18:56:28)factition:Lewis, that's a word you just made up.

Then he runs to my room, to see my reaction and make sure I got the joke. At which point I say, “Ben, how long have you been waiting to use that one?” To which he replied “two years”.

And I believe him.



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Some fake grocery stores don't allow women to be bag boys, but Stephen isn't sexist.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This is the first appearance of Gil Sans Italic! I'm not completely happy with it, but it works well enough.

Also noteworthy: this strip continues the Terror Island tradition of strips with Liln being set outside. That white fence they're on is, in reality, a white fence outside my house.

Lewis's Notes

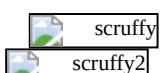
I got bored this weekend, and made up faction tags for all the different factions. You can read about what is going on with these [in this forum post](#). Here they are:



siddite-1
lilnarus-1
yorkster-1
omicron-1



stephonian-1
jamist-1
aristocrat-1



I also drew two shots of a merdog, who is tentatively named Scruffy McBubbles. This is entirely unrelated to Terror Island. But I think he's cute.



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If only Liln had been willing to help

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This was a fairly elaborate setup, compared to previous strips. In addition to the sign and the fake groceries, I had to set up some lights above the set in order to get the lighting right. I think this way, it comes across looking like an apartment that was inexpertly made to look like a grocery store.

Lewis's Notes

Time for more tales of BEN. This story, I think, shows part of what makes ben so awesome and yet also more than a little frightening.

So, I suggest a primitive version of the plan in the above comic to Ben while we are brainstorming plots, and he immediately replies:

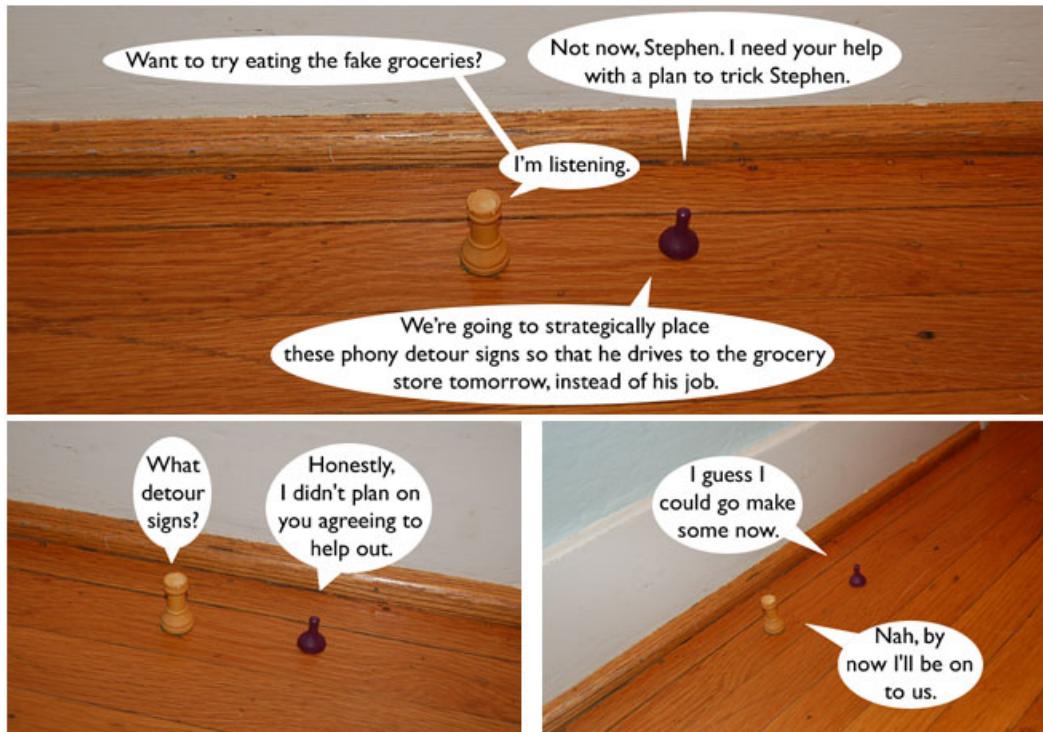
8:49:28 PM factition: I have access to some small fake plastic groceries.

I like to think he is a powerful psychic who uses his powers only to anticipate my ideas for plotlines for the comic, and purchase tiny groceries accordingly.

Now for the part where I talk about things only sort of related to the comic. There is, or rather, was this awesome band, "Splashdown". They stopped being a band and decided to let people put their music on the internet for sharing. You should all download "[Blueshift](#)" and enjoy listening to a very good band. I owe my awareness of this band to [my good friend Dennis](#). The whole album is good, but I particularly recommend [Waterbead](#) and [Procreation Chick](#). Strictly speaking, that wasn't even a little bit related to the comic, but I think we can all be ok with that.

One last note: I found out that my friends who I never talk to because I'm generally a horrible person when it comes to keeping in touch with people who are far away from where I am read and enjoy the comic. So these comments are dedicated to Elliott and Jenny. I'd dedicate today's strip, but then I'd have to talk to Ben about it, and he doesn't know them. Also then I'll have to let him dedicate a strip to someone sometime, and it will be, like, a 16th century Italian mathematician or something.

Ben wanted me to make "16th century Italian mathematician" [this link](#). Needless to say, I didn't.



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it's just as well they didn't eat the groceries, there was no fake milk for the fake cornflakes.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

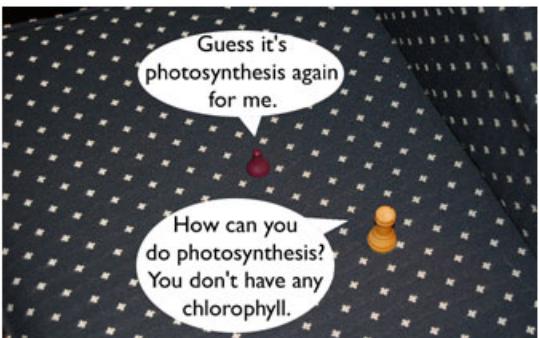
Ben's Notes

Look, this strip has three panels! That was unexpected, wasn't it? And on Monday, who knows, maybe there will be five panels. From here on out, there are no rules.

Lewis's Notes

While Ben is busy showing he's not slave to the four panel format, I am going to humbly supplicate you, our readers, for a favor. I've decided that *Terror Island* requires, well, more exposure. And one sure way to get exposure is Internet drama. That being said, if you have a web comic, or know someone who does, and want to stage an entertaining internet fight with us, we are open to the idea. Just so long as it has a decent chance of getting noticed by [Websmark](#) or [Comixpedia](#) or what have you.

Also, it would be optimal if you or your friend wanted to be the 'bad guy' in the fight. Ben and I want to maintain our reputations as the nice guys of gamepiece photocomics.



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Sid doesn't have any of the other photosynthetic pigments, either

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Before we settled on the version of this strip that you see above, we went through a number of possibilities based on plant-themed puns. It turns out Lewis hates puns, but I figure you should see them anyway.

Rejected replies for Sid:

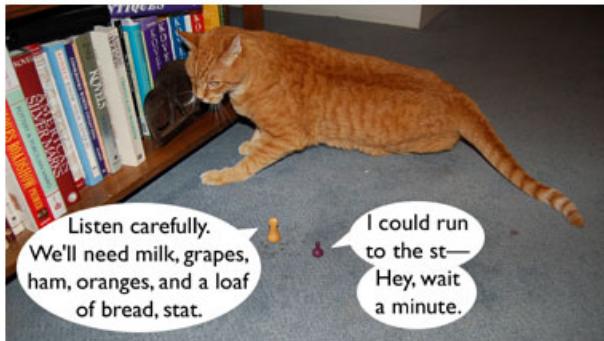
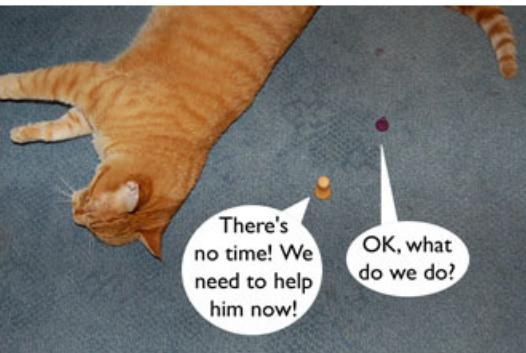
- If I told you, I'd have to "leave."
- The knowledge is well "rooted."
- I don't want you having any "dirt" on me.
- You could say I'm a late "bloomer."
- There's nothing secret about it, it's just a "garden"-variety trick.
- I've "branched" out since then.
- Your "bark" is worse than your bite.
- To the victor goes the "soil."
- The bigger they are, the harder they "fall."
- It isn't easy being "green."
- I'm just "skeletonizing" around.

Lewis's Notes

I wouldn't say I hate puns. I'd say I am judicious in their application.

In other news, Ben and I are going to go to San Diego for Comic-Con this week, which is exciting because I think I went to one in Chicago when I was eleven, but that's all I remember. I know it was a comic convention, I don't really know which one.

Also, I added a few comics to the [list of comics](#) Ben and I like. The list is still vastly incomplete, because he and I like a lot of comics, but it has a couple more items on it now.



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It's OK kids, there is no Kitty Heaven.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

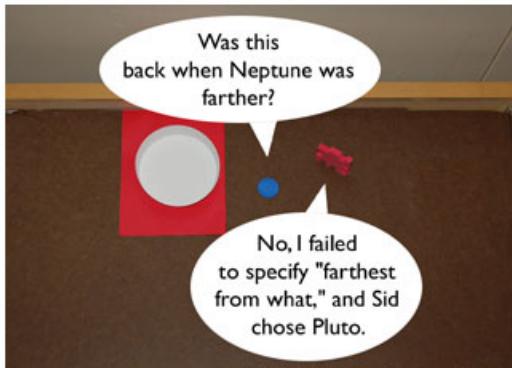
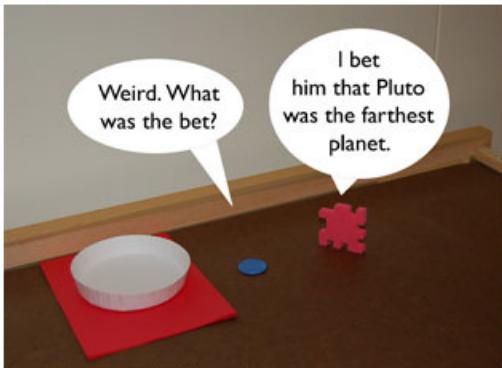
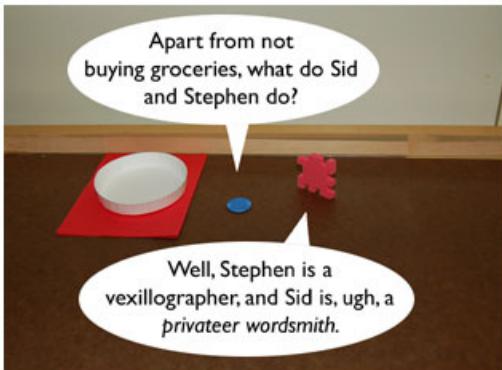
I'd like to thank my cat Ray for playing the role of Omicron in this strip. We decided to call his character Omicron because the idea of a strip about a cat named Ray who lives in Palo Alto is already [taken](#).

Lewis's Notes

We moved, but in a way where spatial metaphors break down, since you all found us in the same place.

Put more coherently; we acquired the domain, terrorisland.net, which currently works alongside waxintellectual.com. We may eventually break up that dual functionality, but for now, they both work. This was done partially at the behest of people who mentioned that our domain and comic title should relate. (*Tell that to [Daily Dinosaur Comics](#) or [Order of the Stick](#), I say*)

Today, Ben and I are en route to San Diego for Comic-Con, which is exciting and fun. If you see us there, we will likely try and trick you into promoting our comic. This constitutes fair warning under the Stockholm guidelines.



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you don't want to know why they were betting on this.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

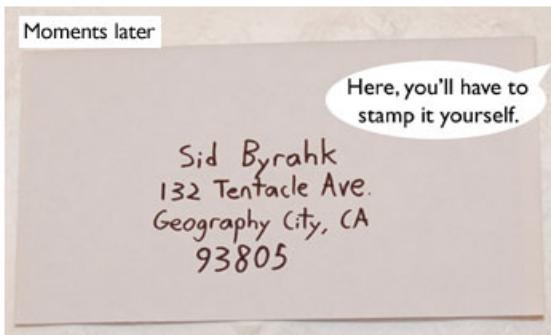
Sid could also have said that there are planets in other solar systems that are farther away. Or he could have pointed out that [Pluto](#) isn't really a planet (if you want to dispute this, [our forum](#) would be a good place). But he didn't do either of those, because he's shockingly ignorant of astronomy.

[Comic-Con](#) is going very well. We have received some very good critiques. For instance, the roomier speech bubbles (and partial departure from grocery theme) in today's strip are based on advice from Bill Barnes, of [Unshelved](#). [Lewis's Notes](#)

First off, this strip was literally produced **from Comic-Con**, which should impress you all. Not that we do all our strips as the clock chimes midnight. We actually have a number of future strips already made, but Ben brought his camera, and all the characters (except Omicron), so it seemed foolish not to make one while here. Also, for those of you with a high rating on your curiosometers, Comic-Con is pretty awesome. You should all be here. I acquired, among other things, both [Starslip Crisis](#) books, and I met a number of people who, until recently, were mysterious internet beings. However, I will have to wait until after the Con is over to give a full report, with scans of sketches, my impressions, and the like.

Secondly, I felt it important to clear up the terms of the bet which were not mentioned in the strip. Had Liln won, Sid would have had to refer to his occupation as "The Stumbling Scribe: The superhero whose power is mediocre writing" but only when talking to potential employers.

To pre-empt potential confusion, I should also note that, at least among our cast, it is common practice that when something is left unspecified (e.g. the location of comparison), whoever calls it first, may specify.



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Astute readers may note that the envelope was not technically self-addressed.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Comic-Con just ended last night, and now I'm heading off to Michigan for a couple weeks. My Internet access will be sporadic there, but I should be able to get content to Lewis in such a way that our update schedule will be unaffected.

Lewis's Notes

Since we had a couple strips done before Comic-Con, we are living in the world of cramped speech bubbles again, but only briefly.

If you are coming here from the Fleen link, there will hopefully be something on that front later today, technology willing. Certainly it will happen early this week. If you aren't coming from the Fleen link, feel free to ignore that.

I'm also going to briefly plug another site of mine here, which potentially no one but me will be interested in. I had been reading webcomics blogs and found myself filled with a desire to post long comments. Rather than be all talky on someone else's webspace, I decided that I would just [set up a blog](#) on my webspace, so that later, when I want to see the things I wrote, they're all in one place. For instance, instead of posting about Comic-Con here, I'm going to post thoughts and stuff on that site. I will say this though, Comic-Con was a lot of fun, and I hope I'm able to go again next year.

In strip news, Ben and I plotted out Terror Island for a good month of strips on the drive back from San Diego, and we have a couple of plotlines that we know are coming after that. Which was a lot of fun to plan out, and will hopefully help keep this fun for us, rather than stressful or what have you.



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Sid's job would have been easier if Stephen trusted Wikipedia.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

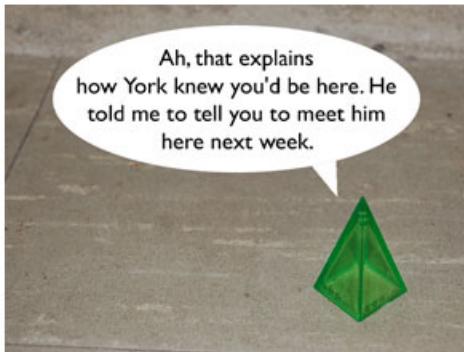
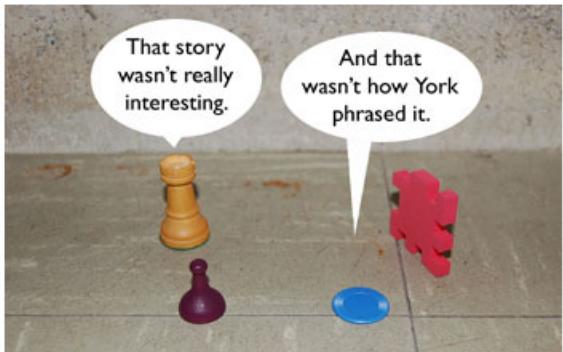
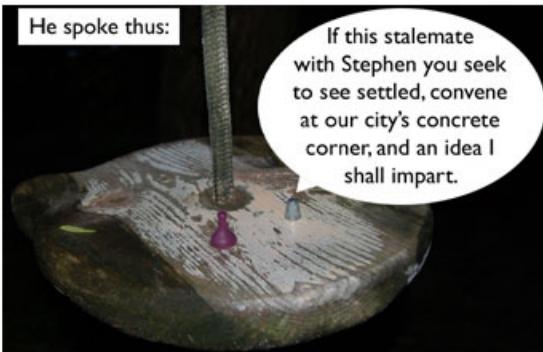
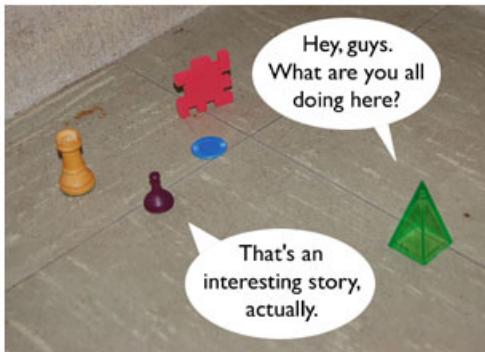
Fun Fact: The shadows moved almost an inch between panels 3 and 4, this was done so that the careful reader would note the passage of time as Liln considered Sid's plan.

Lewis's Notes

Fleeners: Getting access to a scanner is less easy than I anticipated, but check back Friday, when I will definitely have an update on that front. It may be done before then, but I don't want to give a false promise.

Secondly, Ben and I invented an awesome game at Comic-Con. They were handing out Galaxy Press promotional decks; playing cards with summaries of L. Ron Hubbard stories on them. Ben and I invented "Hubbardopoly" in which you split up the deck between you and another player, and proceed to draw cards (as in the game war). You then read the plot summaries, and whichever player drew the more ridiculous plot, wins the trick. The player to collect the most tricks wins. Those cards gave us at least an hour of entertainment that way. Sadly, most of the stories they described were not yet published, and so Ben and I could not get the book about the guy who acquires an island in the pacific only to discover it is haunted by a shark god.

Also a comic-con update: [R. Stevens](#) said that he liked our comic, and [Scott Kurtz](#) kind of implied that he didn't so much like our comic, by making a face and shaking his head when R. Stevens said he liked it. This was during the webcomics 102 panel, so, there were lots of witnesses. Sadly, no one said the name of our comic, or the URL, so we didn't even really get any press (bad or good) from being discussed at the panel.



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Jame and Stephen are quite correct in panel 3

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This continues the theme of writing flashbacks in a kind of stilted alliterative style. Not only do Lewis and I both think this is a funny idea, but it got a good reaction from fans the first time we used it in a strip ([Terror Island #1](#)). We may use this device in the future at some point, but not for at least another month or two.

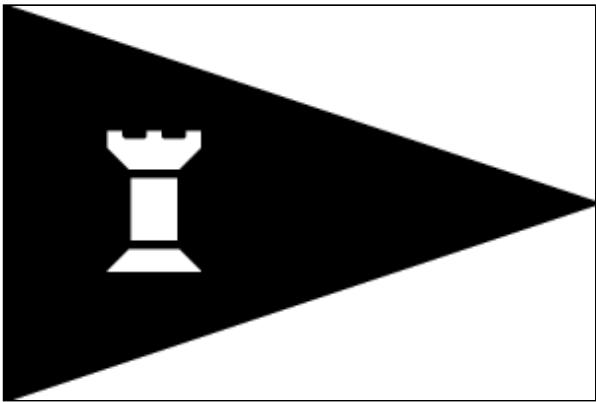
Lewis's Notes

Ben and I are making the comic from even more long distance than usual today. He is in Michigan, I am in Los Angeles. We're like the odd couple, but with location instead of neatness.

You who are the ones referred here from Fleen: [Check back later today, and I will have an update for you.](#) Progress is being made, it will be up when it is up.

Norwegians: You guys rule. You're like 9% of our traffic, and we don't even have any Norway specific references. So, Go Norway. If Sid and Stephen ever take a trip to some other country, you can bet we'll pander to your demographic.

In particular, I'd like to say that one fan of ours, [Obdormio](#), rules, because he was so excited that Stephen was a vexillographer, that he made a flag. That's awesome. Here's the flag:



Which reminds me: [Fan art section!](#)

And lastly, since a number of people asked me about the Kurtz/Stevens comment yesterday, I will explain that further [at the webcomic blog I do](#).



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Never lie to your friend when it might get in the way of a third friend's scheme.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I like chicken,
I like liver,
Meow Mix, Meow Mix,
Please deliver

Ben didn't give me notes for today's strip, so this was my best guess as to what he would have wanted to say — Lewis

Lewis's Notes

I think this strip represents something of a turning point, but instead of talking about that, I am going to share with you all one of my favorite jokes:

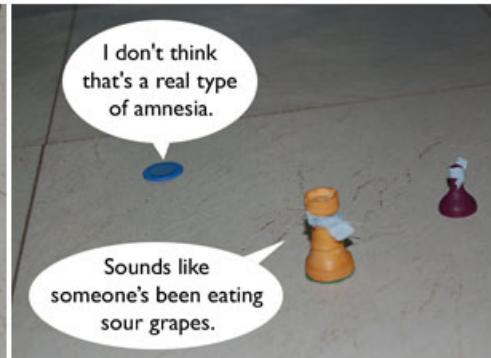
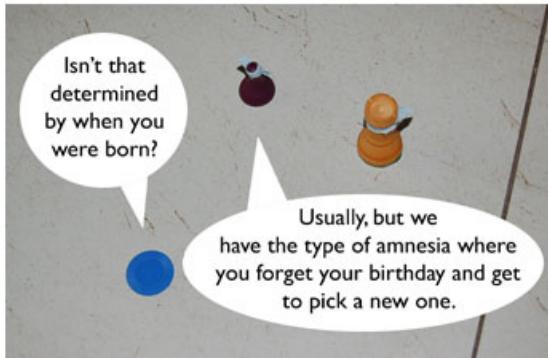
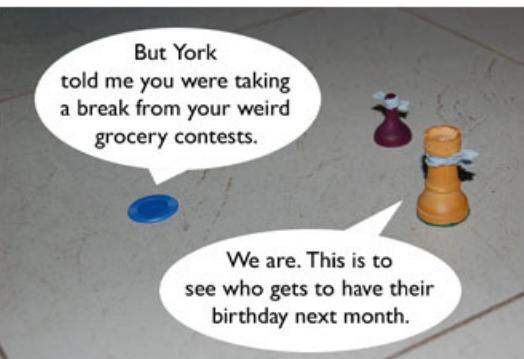
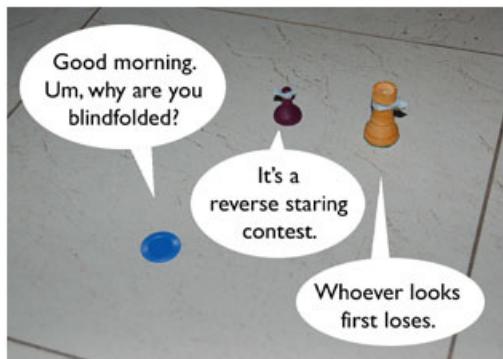
Q: What do you get if you cross the Atlantic with the Titanic?

A: About halfway.

I will say one thing about this strip. If you were to describe some of what goes on in *Terror Island* to someone, they could come away with the opinion that Sid and Stephen are tricksy by nature, and basically just like to scheme. I think this strip reveals that we are not dealing with two people who just like to trick each other. For Sid and Stephen, this dispute really is about the groceries.

By the way, if you have feedback on the strip for us [tell us in the forums](#). Seriously, even if you think our comic is bad, and that our sense of humor is awful.

And if you like our sense of humor, you should check out [Killer Robots from Space](#), which I think is funnier than me and Ben. Well, definitely funnier than me, and probably funnier than Ben. At any rate, its good, so go read it.



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Admit it, this is what you'd do if you got to have amnesia.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The original idea here was that Sid and Stephen would have birthdays that occurred outside time, but Lewis thought that was "too weird." I may write some *Terror Island* fanfic exploring their atemporal origins later.

Oh, and the blindfold idea came from the fact that in Nethack, blindfolding yourself is often useful. I've been playing a lot of Nethack lately.

Lewis's Notes

I guess I will do a little bit of "what's our process" exposition. A *Terror Island* strip begins usually as a half baked idea of mine or Ben's. We'll take [strip 11](#) as an example.

That strip began with my saying to Ben, "we should also have one where one guy puts a bunch of books in the fridge, and claims he went shopping, and its the other guys turn." Ben replied, "And then the other guy eats one to make a point." (This was back in early June, before the strips had even started being put up and made, so that's why we're saying "one guy" instead of "Sid" or "Stephen"). Then I proposed the punchline, "Pride and Prejudice is delicious. Please just go buy some grapes.

A day later (June 9th), we were discussing what book would be funniest to eat, and considered:

- Pride and Prejudice
- Paradise Lost
- Don Quixote
- Gravity's Rainbow
- And many more...

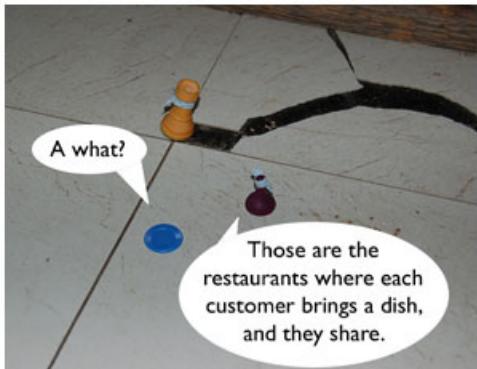
One joke we didn't get to use, but I liked was the idea that they ate "Characters in Conflict" a book of short stories exemplifying the four main narrative structures, "Man vs. Dairy", "Man vs. Meat", "Man vs. Fruit" and "Man vs. Grain" (that is a real book, but a fake description of it).

So, we decided on Gravity's rainbow, and worked out a rough draft script. Then we both think about the script, and come back with suggestions. Ways to punch it up. Sometimes my scripts that I send to Ben instead of dialogue in panel four say, "Insert Punchline". And often, they have way too much dialogue.

The script for eleven went through several revisions, Ben was pushing for a “judge a book by its cover” joke, and I (odd though it may be) was kind of pulling for a pun like, “Needs a Pynchon of salt”

We weren't quite satisfied with either joke, so we started thinking of other famous books and authors, and we noticed that some fairly popular books have food names in the titles. It was at that point that the script you see fell most of the way into place. Then we modified it based on space constraints, and Ben did some voodoo magic or whatever, and then, I posted the comic on the site.

So I hope that's an interesting bit of anecdote for you, and lets you see that Ben and I have to sacrifice some gags we both like because they aren't quite right for the strip. Most of them don't have much reuse value, as they are too close to gags we actually go with. This is lucky for me because it gives me something to put in the comments.



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Sid is blindfolded, so he didn't hear Stephen fall down.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I've been unsuccessfully trying to convince people to start up a potluck restaurant with me for over a year now, so it was high time I transferred that urge into fiction instead. Potluck restaurants wouldn't have the high expenses of most restaurants, but the tradeoff is that they wouldn't be able to meet basic health standards, without some pretty thorough screening of the food people bring in.

Lewis's Notes

I'd like to thank one Garrison LeMasters who submitted the following transcription for [strip #2](#):

Terror Island %u2014 Strip #2

Little Dusky Mauve Pawn: Stephen, I think... (trails off)

Dark Ivory Rook (aka Castle): That's OK. (indistinct) ...eat fruit.

[[This continues for some time, and then:]]

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[[Except that the c should be in a circle, not between two parentheses, but I'm just trying to get the flavor of the whole experience across to you, not actually encode the experience itself. That would require a serifed font, and this is a sans. Mores the pity.]]

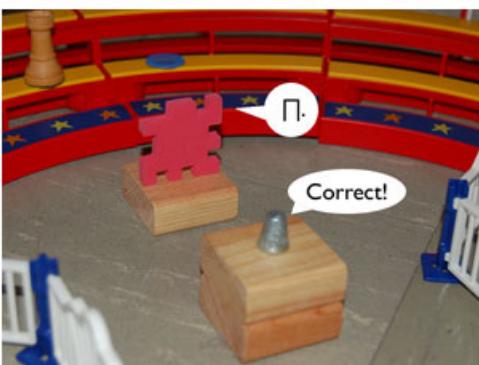
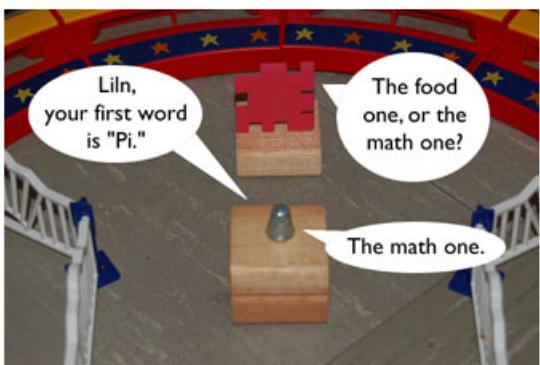
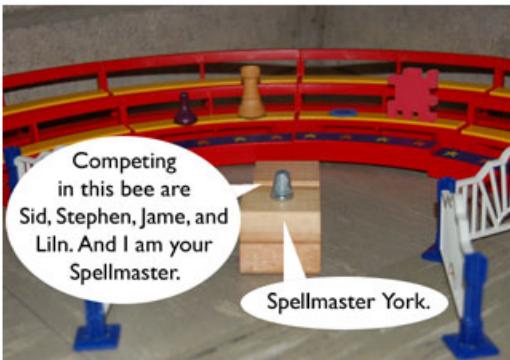
<<Wacky clown horn>>

Ben and I were, shall we say, *quite* tempted to leave that up, but, sadly, things like that would destroy the utility of our [search tool](#).

I should note that I have no solid evidence that it was in fact Garrison LeMasters, except that was the name and e-mail address provided. So, no offense meant to the real Garrison if that was a false name.

This is also a not-too-subtle attempt to remind people that they too can contribute transcriptions (as some already have) to our [Oh No Robot](#) archives.

Lastly, a note of comic recommendation. While I don't think they would even notice the possible referrals from here, given their quite large readership, for the benefit of you, our readers, I would like to say that [Unshelved](#) is one of the most consistently comedically on target comics I read. Some comics are kind of hit-and-miss, but Unshelved is just repeatedly and regularly funny. And I'm not a librarian or anything, so don't worry that working in a library is required for getting it, it's funny for everyone, librarian or otherwise.



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Liln knows not to commit a rookie mistake like using lowercase pi.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The set design here is based on what I imagine spelling bees are like in Geography City. That's why there's no audience apart from the contestants. York probably didn't even send out a press release.

Lewis's Notes

First and foremost: the San Diego Comic-Con [ham scans](#) are up. Infinite thanks to Kris Straub of [Starslip Crisis](#) for his assistance and bandwidth. And also to all the artists who participated.

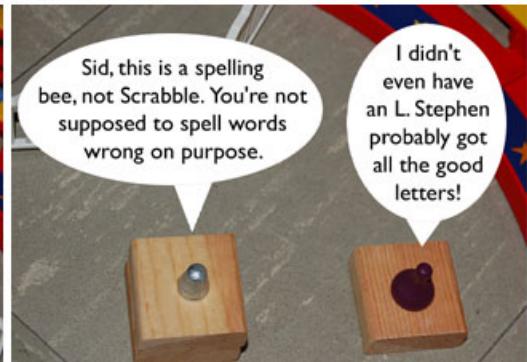
Welcome to anyone who has been linked here via Starslip or Fleen, or anywhere else for that matter. If you want to sample our wares, I recommend [starting here](#). *Terror Island* is a gamepiece photocomic, telling the story of two roommates trying to decide whose turn it is to go get the groceries, while their friends variously help or hinder their grocery shopping related schemes.

I am very very excited about this spelling bee storyline we just started, as well as the storylines coming up after it. Then again, I'm pretty excited about everything having to do with *Terror Island*, so, that's not really news.

[White Town's 'Your Woman'](#) is exceptionally good, and a while after it came out, I completely forgot about it. I rediscovered it from my friend Dennis's music collection, and then again when the video was linked from some forums I hang out on. So I figured I'd share it with you all.

Also, you should all ask Ben about the book I got him for his birthday. It's about fonts and morality.

(note: His birthday was a while ago, and I got him the book right before Comic-Con, but I wanted people to know that they make books about font morality)



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Had Sid's play gone unchallenged, he would have earned 13 points.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

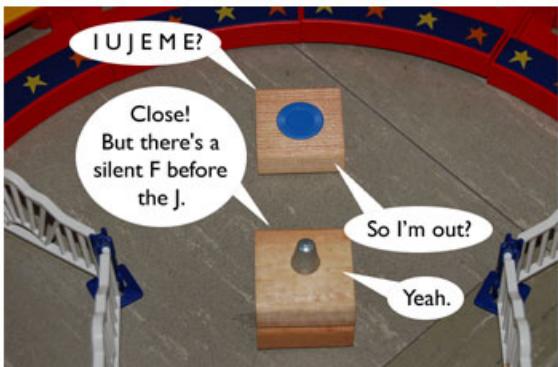
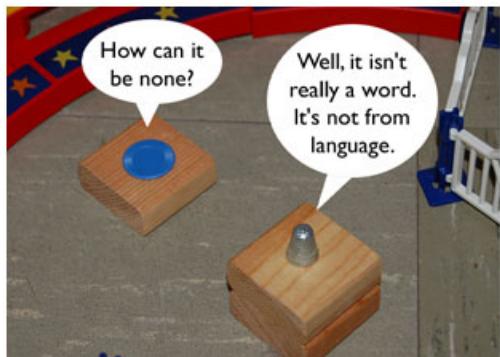
I just ascended in Nethack as a Healer, and managed to tame two of the Riders. If you want more information [ask me about it](#) sometime.

Oh, and this strip has Scrabble in it, which is good.

Lewis's Notes

Astute readers will note that neither Sid nor Stephen are blindfolded, strongly implying that their contest has ended. Awesome readers will speculate in [the forums](#) on who won and when they will be having their birthdays.

On a more serious note, I'd like to encourage any of our readers who don't frequent the forums to consider contributing to [this thread](#), which is specifically for telling us how you found out about *Terror Island*. To give us an idea of where our readers are coming from.



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Had Jame requested the definition, he would have been told that Iufjeme would mean, were it a real word, having a silent F before a J

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Today is my last day in Empire, Michigan. I'll be back home this evening, and intend to spend several days catching up on webcomics stuff.

It's been great vacationing up here. Swimming in Lake Michigan, watching fireworks, seeing Hot Tuna at the [Dunegrass Festival](#) — this would be the perfect place for next year's TerrorIslandCon.

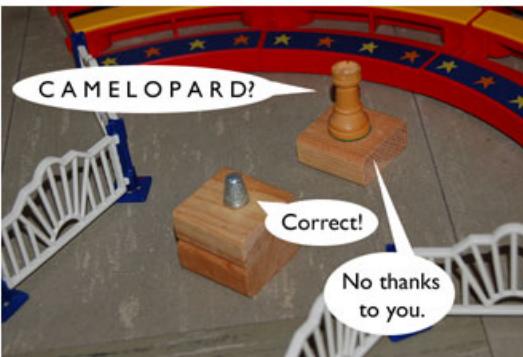
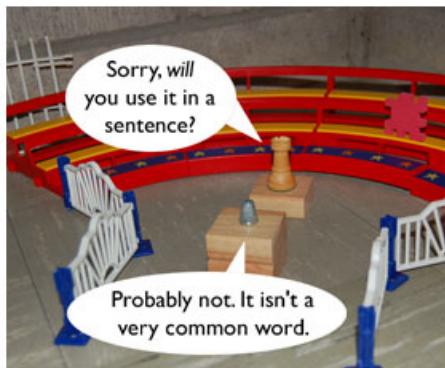
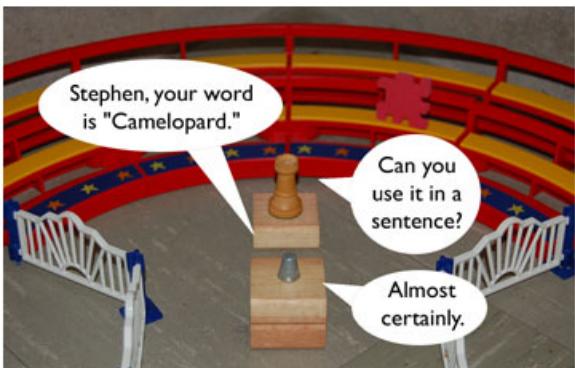
Lewis's Notes

What Ben doesn't know is that I have veto power over the name of our convention, and it damn sure isn't going to be TerrorIslandCon.

Are you smart and articulate? Do you want a venue for voicing your thoughts about webcomics? You should think about [trying out for the team](#). When I write I am fairly wordy, but I don't have the frequency to provide regular enough content for a blog.

We will not be [rocket pirates](#), but that's ok. Ben and I have been talking about starting our own webcomics collective, though primarily we'd be talking about a "collective" in the sense of interlinkage, shared forums, and a sense of companionship. I like the idea, and am all for it, except Ben and I can't be a collective of our one comic. I mean we could, but that's kind of lame. Basically, we want internet friends, and we want to come up with a cool name for our internet friendship. If you are interested, [let us know](#).

OH. I almost forgot. I added a little something for you guys: [Piperka](#) Bookmarking. Here's how it works. You go register an account at Piperka, and you can tell it all the webcomics you read, and it keeps track of their updates, so you can just check it to see if the sites you read updated, rather than loading thirty comics over and over. It also keeps track of where you are in the archives, so, say you are starting to read [Melonpool](#), like me. You past the page of the last comic you read from there into a box on your piperka updates page, and it will bookmark the next page in the archives for you. Stellar, I know. Here's what I did. On every page of our archives is a button that says "bookmark". You click that, and it will automatically tell piperka that's where you are. Not that impressive with our 26 strip archives, but later, when we have robust archives, this will be a nice thing I did for you guys.



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These days, calling giraffes camelopards isn't politically correct.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

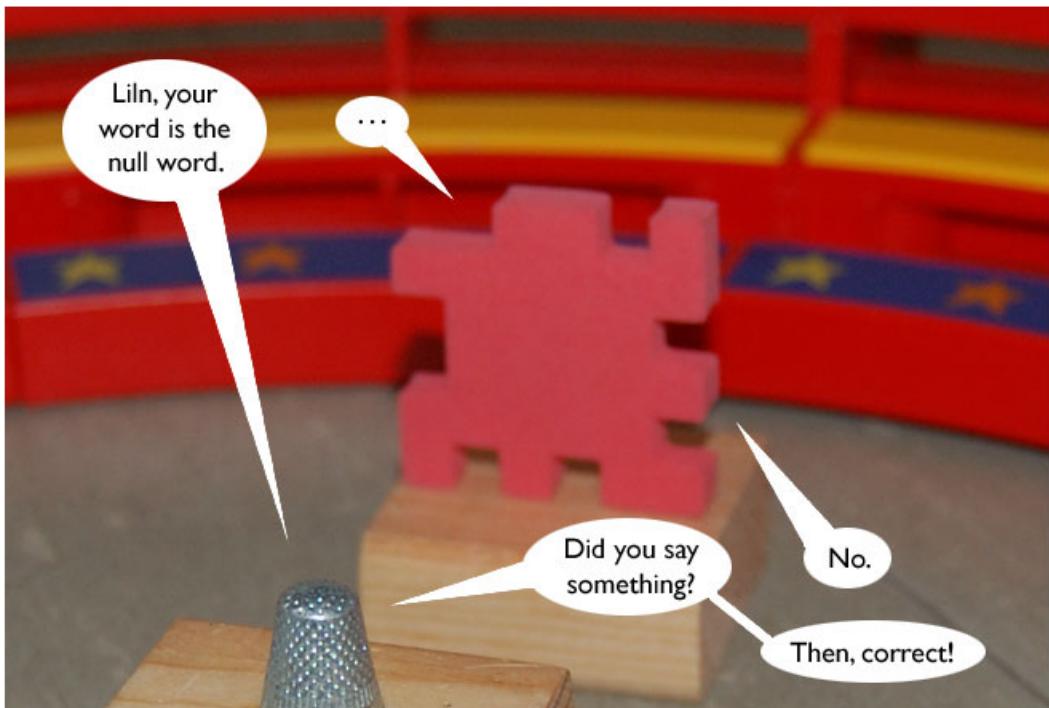
I was planning for my comments to just be a list of all the monsters I killed in my most recent NetHack ascension, but that would be over 300 lines long, and most of those lines would be boring.

Regarding today's strip: York's answers in the first two panels sure are unhelpful, aren't they? I used to do things like that a lot when people asked me questions. I've been cutting down on that a bit, but I still do it more than so-called "helpful" people.

Lewis's Notes

Ben and I named our planned future comics collective: "Complex Derivative Comics". We have yet to work out any other details. Except that he and I will satisfy the [Cauchy-Riemann equations!](#) (*By the way, that's Ben's joke, I don't actually know what I just said.*)

Also, I want to bring your respective attentions to another photocomic, [Perpetually Pondering version 1.5 alpha](#), by Grant Farmer. He said his goal was to become more popular than us, which (a) wouldn't be all that hard, and (b) makes us mortal enemies. So, be sure to check it out.



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Liln is quoting Chrono, from Chrono Trigger.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

See, the null word is the word containing no letters. It's kind of analogous to [the null set](#) or [the null sentence](#).

Well, I think it's funny.

Lewis's Notes

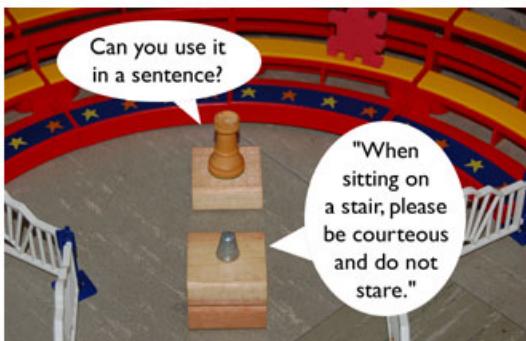
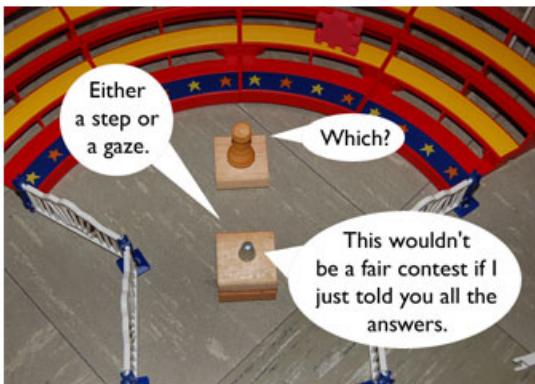
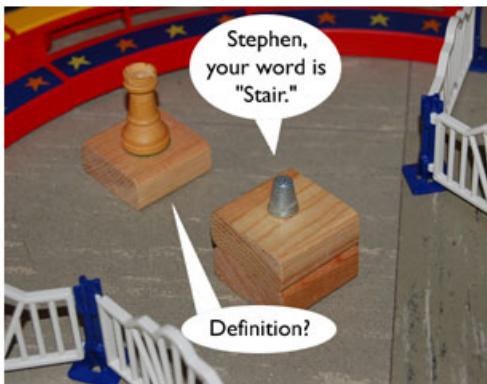
So, I put one of our comics up on "[Webcomic Battle](#)" for humor battle purposes. I choose strip #1, because it was the first. We won our first battle, 126 to 36, but a new battle just started.

Here's a neat button you can click to see how it's doing.



[See How We Did at Webcomic Battle!](#)

Also, I need to make a correction. Yesterday I linked to Grant Farmer's webcomic and mistakenly called it "Perpetually Pondering version 1.5 alpha". That was an error. The name is actually "Constant Cogitations, web release edition". I apologize.



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York thought up clever example sentences for all the words in the bee, but only got to use this one.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

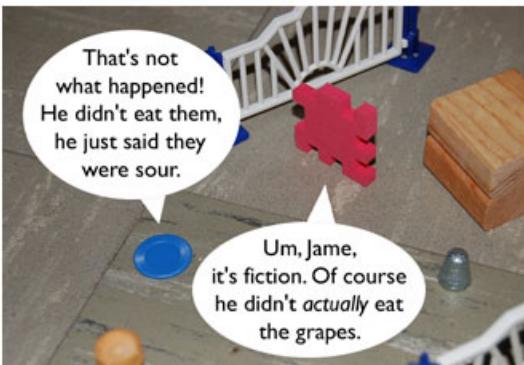
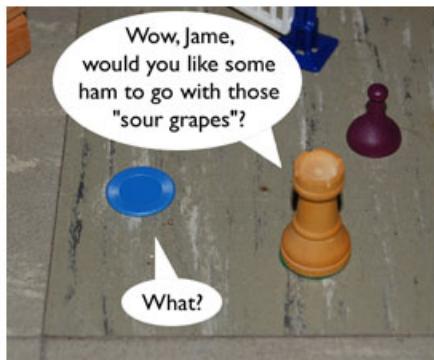
The original example sentence for panel 3 was something like "His stair worried me." I'm pretty glad that we fixed that. Other than that, not much to say here. Oh, important note: these spelling bee strips are still all using photographs I took while in Michigan. So if I had decided yesterday that Stephen should be wearing a funny hat while spelling "stare," I would be out of luck. I'm living on the edge.

Lewis's Notes

Strip #1 is doing well in the [webcomic battle](#) (three straight wins), and we got mentioned on [Webcomicker](#). Not a bad couple of days for the comic (side note: Gil called us "The photocomic that's not a photocomic", which Ben and I like so much that it's our new tagline).

Also, if you've been paying attention to who's in and who's out, you'll note that everyone has been eliminated but Liln. What awaits in the aftermath of the spelling bee?

You'll have to check back Monday to see.



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Jame's sour, all right — sour like a fox!

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

My fans often ask me what the hardest part of making a webcomic like Terror Island is. I would say it isn't any one thing — it's not the photography, or the writing, or even the panel layout. No, the hard part is synthesizing all these to form a unified whole. That's why working with Lewis is so helpful to my process. I'm able to take the raw material of his ideas and shape it to fit my underlying vision for the Terror Island world and all its wacky characters.

I hope that answers your question, and thanks for writing in. It's always good to hear from fans like you.

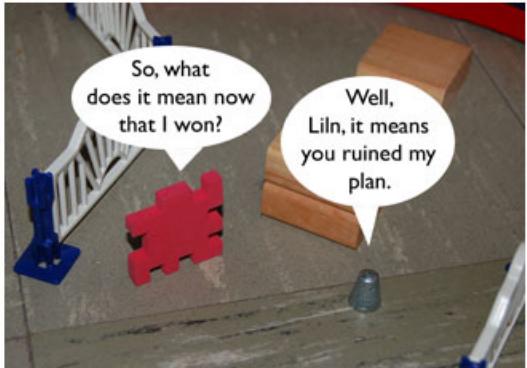
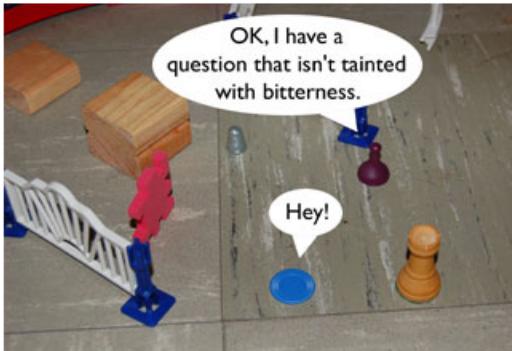
Lewis's Notes

Ben's comments may be somewhat misleading, insofar as they could be taken to imply that he has been asked that question often, or, say, at all.

Sometimes, though, people don't ask us enough questions, and that's when it is time for us to make some up.

We're still going strong at [Webcomic Battle](#), Sunday we unseated the thirty-something day champion strip, and so that was exciting.

Ben has a [convincing argument](#) that Pluto isn't a planet, by the way. Or rather, that "planet" shouldn't encompass Pluto. It totally convinced me, so check that out.



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Secretly, Sid's question does bear the taint.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Steve Baphogon of Uranium City wrote in, asking how Lewis and I managed to come up with such great names for our characters. Well, Steve, there are two main points involved here.

The first is that in general, I thought of the first names, and Lewis thought of the last names. However, there are exceptions to this. For example, I think Lewis named Sid and Stephen, though Sid's last name (Byrakh) was my idea.

The second issue is more subtle. In webcomics, it isn't enough to just think of a name for a character. You also have to make sure that the readers learn the names. One tried and true method of achieving this is to put their names in the dialogue as much as possible. For example, York's last line in today's strip emphasizes that the person to whom he is speaking is named Liln. Similarly, panel three reinforces the dichotomous roles of Sid and Stephen.

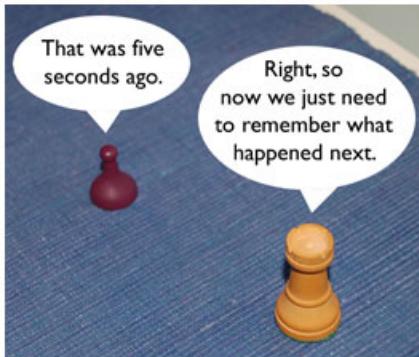
The most important thing to remember is that the name should fit the character, not vice versa as in real life. Good luck in your webcomics, Steve!

Lewis's Notes

First things first, I want to talk about our [cast page](#). It is not, at present, useful for someone who wants to know about the plot of our comic. It is, in fact, a listing of who/what portrays each of the characters. This is useful if you want to know what game the Jame piece is from (tiddlywinks) or whether the piece that portrays Stephen is a Sorry piece (no).

As a consequence of that, Ben and I agreed we should have a [Dramatis Personae](#) for the strip. So, now there is something useful for people wanting to find out more about who the characters are, as opposed to who they are played by.

We are still going strong in [Webcomic Battle](#), entering our tenth day. There are actually two of our strips up today ([#1](#) & [#15](#)), because I assumed we would lose to [that Waldo comic](#) and submitted a second strip. We didn't lose, and so they are both in competition today.



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Everyone knows the past was slightly darker than the present.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Good news for people who care about planets: the IAU officially declared that there are only eight planets in the Solar System: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune.

Some of you may feel that this invalidates [strip #17](#). I don't think it does, and that brings me to an important point about webcomics. One that is brought up in a large percentage of the fan mail I get for this comic.

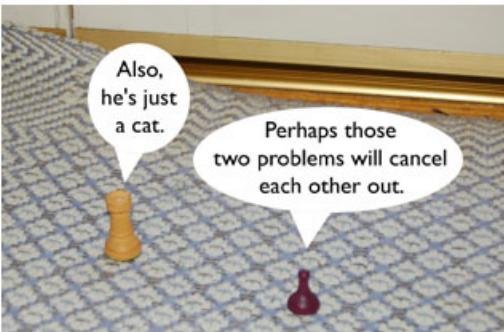
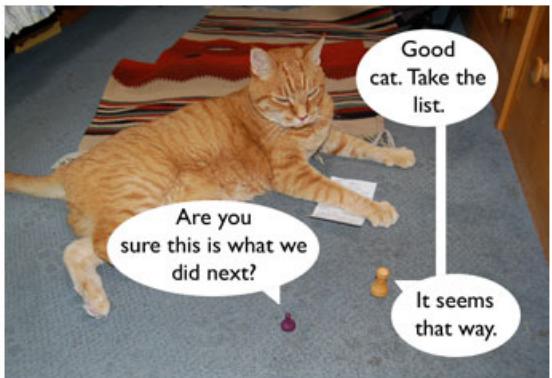
You see, for a humor-based comic such as *Terror Island*, the joke is the most important aspect of the strip. It's possible, often even necessary, to abandon all scientific accuracy for the sake of a slightly improved punchline. In our next strip, perhaps Stephen will be a dracula, or Sid's skin will change color for no reason. Does that sound crazy to you? Perhaps so. But if it allows us to make even one pun about blood, or about "feeling blue," then it's worth it. In fact, I would say it's the point of this journey we're on. Won't you join us on that journey?

Lewis's Notes

Ben tries to confuse/appease nitpickers by saying that we abandon scientific accuracy. I however, take pride in ensuring the accuracy of what transpires in *Terror Island*. So, I painstakingly ensured that there was no potential problem with a Pluto/planet joke (science-wise) before we made it.

I know what you're thinking. "But Lewis, how can you claim you take such care to avoid errors? Your webcomic takes place hundreds of years in the past, long before the discovery of Pluto, doesn't it?" And the answer is, "No, why the hell would you think that?"

Also, those things Ben said might happen won't be happening. (1) Draculas don't exist in the TI-verse outside of fictional stories within the TI-verse, and (2) everyone in the strip is both literally and figuratively color blind, and so, neither racism nor skin-tone based puns exist in the continuity.



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Sid means he should shop in the cause of justice, not that justice is something he should buy.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

You can't see it in the strip, but that piece of paper has many types of food written on it. They include: bacon, flour, baking soda, grape leaves, yogurt, trout, bagels, watermelon, pomegranate juice, caraway glaze, milk, grapes, ham, bananas, cheese, turkey, tortellini, oranges (non-clockwork), other cheese, lettuce, root beer, rice, olive oil, soup, potato chips, paprika, bread, and ketchup.

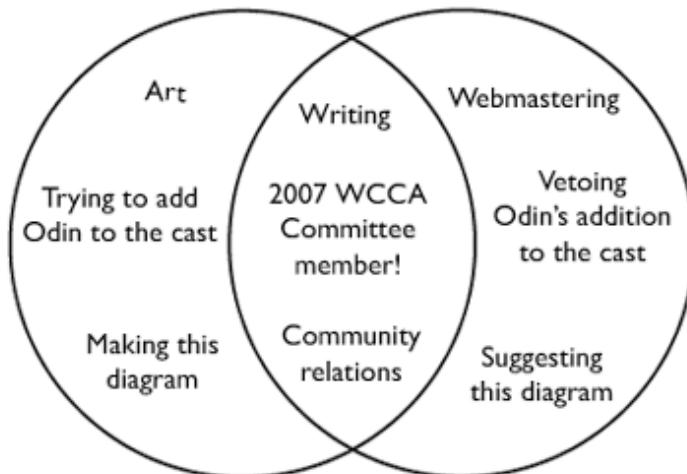
Lewis's Notes

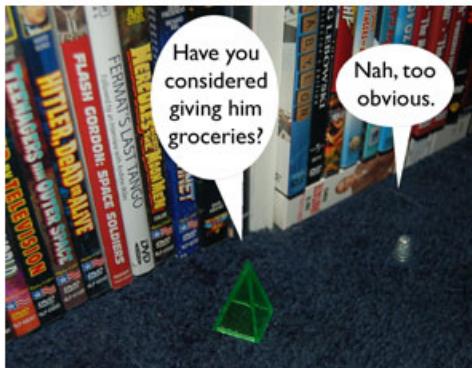
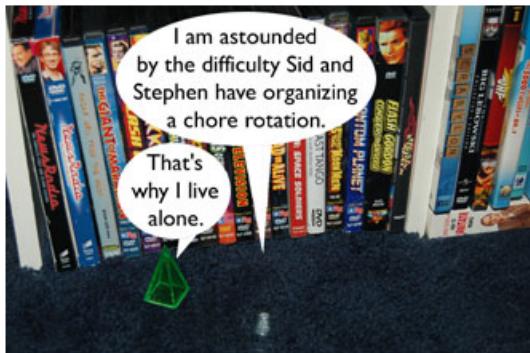
Sometimes people (actual people, not fictional ones like Ben talks about in his notes), ask us who does what on the comic. So, I came up with an idea which Ben executed, namely the creation of a diagram of our responsibilities.

Here it is:

Ben Heaton

Lewis Powell





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What do you get the man who has everything but groceries?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Some of my favorite movies are represented in today's strip. That video store is completely skewed towards my tastes, and yet, if I went there, I would find nothing I wanted to rent, because I already own all their movies.

Lewis's Notes

I love Bosco, it's rich and chocolatey.

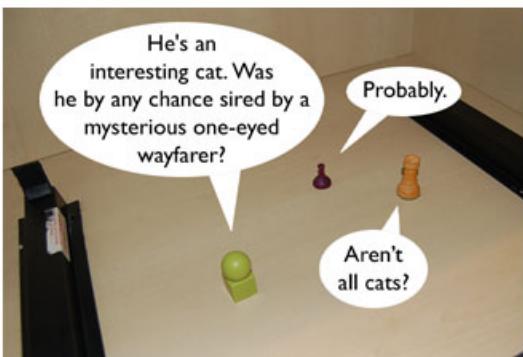
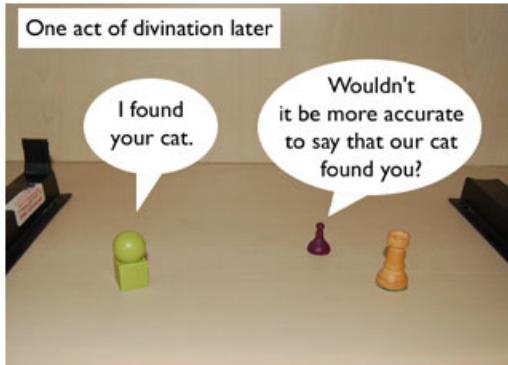
Chocolate-flavored Bosco is mighty good for me.

Mama puts it in my milk for extra energy.

Bosco gives me iron and sunshine Vitamin D.

Oh, I love Bosco, that's the drink for me.

Ben got to do my notes today because I was busy writing a paper for school. — Lewis



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Omicron had many adventures between strip 33 and strip 35, and maybe one day we will learn of them.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Ronald Algebra wrote in asking why it is that most webcomics have their archives in sequential order. That's a good question, and the answer is closer than you may think.

As the well-educated reader will already be aware, Scott McCloud famously defined comics as "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence." Given that the medium is already sequence-based, it's no surprise that the most popular archive structure is one that reflects this. You could think of the archives of a webcomic as being a sequence of sequences. It's almost as if they form a second-level comic, with webpages as the panels. At least, that's what we were going for when we designed the Terror Island site navigation system. Thanks for writing in!

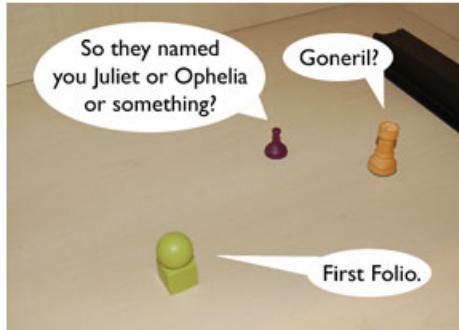
Lewis's Notes

Many of you are probably wondering who this helpful and inquisitive new character is. Right now, all you get to know is that the game piece is from Cranium. Rest assured, though, more information will be forthcoming.

My birthday is next Friday. I mention this as a service to you, my readers, who are probably wondering how you can give me a birthday gift. Well, friends, the answer is simple. Nothing says "happy birthday" like word of mouth advertising for this webcomic. That can be your way of saying, "Hey Lewis, this dusty rock we call home completed another orbit with you alive, have some extra traffic for your site."

Increased [forum](#) activity is another potential gift. Since those things have a combined cost of "free", consider giving both this holiday season.

Note: Ben pointed out that my birthday isn't "really" a holiday. To that I say: It sounds like somebody has a diet rich in "[sour grapes](#)."



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Sid only knows the names of two Shakespeare characters, but that's still one more than Stephen.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

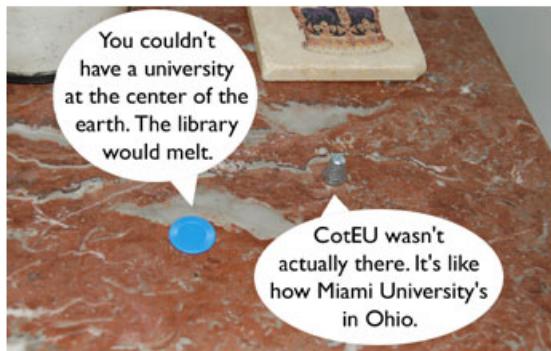
Ben's Notes

Happy Labor Day, TI fans!

Lewis's Notes

I'm taking over Ben's webcomic advice column today, as a Labor Day surprise. Today, we answer a question sent in from Simon Masonicconspiracy. He asks, "Where do you get your ideas?"

That's a good question. Most people search their hearts and minds for inspiration. Ben and I, on the other hand, being the abstract purists that we are, have decided to deduce our comic from first principles. The entirety of *Terror Island*, its cast, and the plotlines, has been determined on the basis of logical neccessity. I cannot recommend this approach to you, however, as that would produce the same comic Ben and I are already making.



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York isn't talking about an actual boat. It's just pretend.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

CotEU has pretty good classes, but there's no atmosphere.
Get it?

Anyway, watch for the 24-page miniseries about York's backstory, coming in March 2007. It's going to be entirely from the point of view of Jim, who's the — well, I'd better not get into that right now. Let's just say there will be plenty of surprises, and maybe even a few familiar faces. So to speak.

Lewis's Notes

First, you can thank me that the punning was confined to Ben's comments.

Second, some of you might be curious about how things might have been with the comic. I'll give you a glimpse into one way the strip might have differed*:

9:13:58 PM factition: I have an idea.

9:14:09 PM factition: What if it takes place amid soup cans?

9:14:33 PM ultralewis: why?

9:14:40 PM factition: Why not?

9:14:45 PM ultralewis: ok

9:17:36 PM factition: Oh, wait.

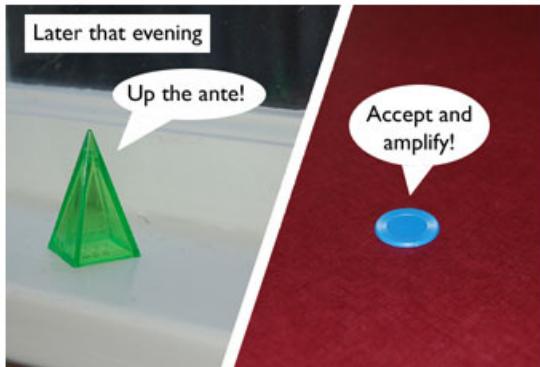
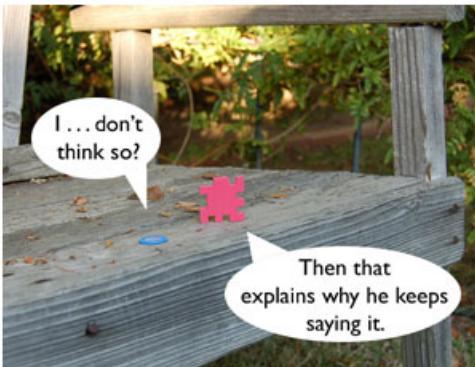
9:17:46 PM factition: Are we trying to avoid pictures of humans in the comic?

9:18:19 PM ultralewis: umm, we don't want a picture of a human, not sure about pictures of depictions of humans

9:18:39 PM factition: Wolfgang Puck soup cans have a large human face on them.

9:18:51 PM factition: I think I'll just use a non-soup setting.

*Actually, the comic couldn't have been this way, because a logically necessary comic leaves no room for merely possible features. Proving this is left as an exercise to the reader.



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If people didn't own phones, this sort of awkwardness could be avoided.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This is the first five-panel strip, so it makes up for strip #14. We're now back on an average of exactly four panels per comic (PPC).

Anyway, if you enjoy comics with the word “ante” and other poker terminology, why not check out [+EV](#)? It’s written by Bobby Crosby, the guy from Pupkin!

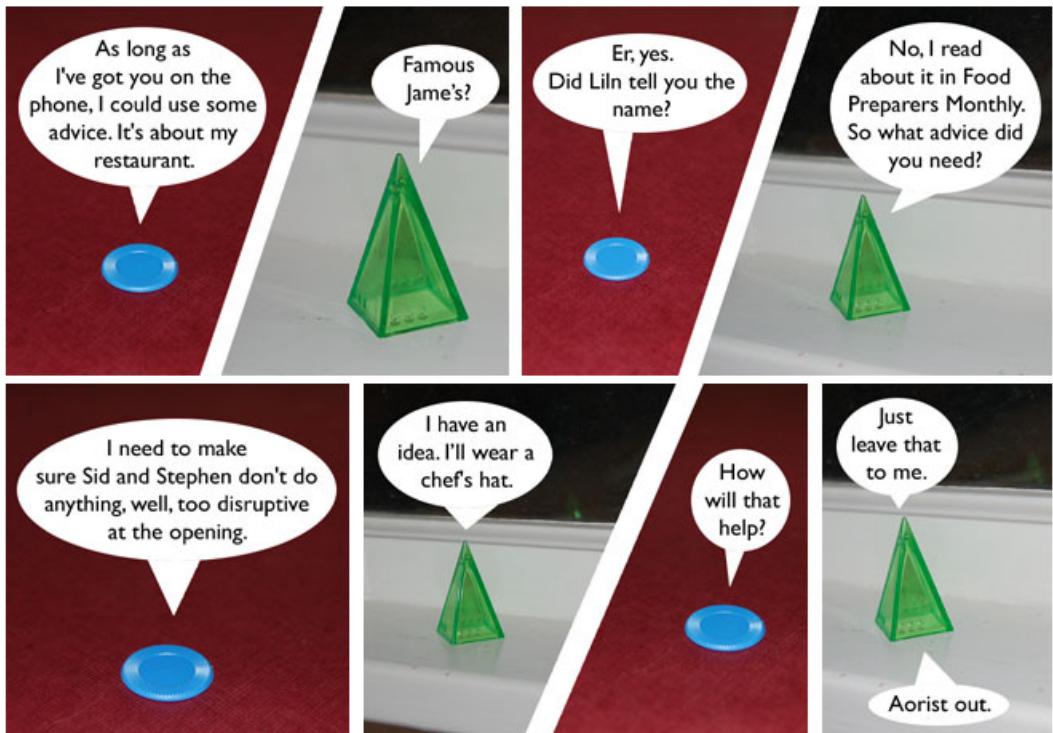
Lewis's Notes

First, my birthday wish is for our comic to get critical acclaim, or at the least, some critical attention. Know what I'm saying? Hint: this means you Mr. Eric Von Websnark, *if that's your real name!*

Secondly, I want to make sure you all know my favorite Aristotle quote ever:

“*Evil belongs to the class of the unlimited, as the Pythagoreans conjectured, and good to that of the limited.*”

Stay tuned for my next webcomic project: “*Aristotle and the Lords of Philosophy versus the Infinite Evil*”



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At least all the panels are quadrilaterals.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Industry-specific publications are always funny. Not really funny in a punchline sense, necessarily, but still funny.

[Floor Covering Weekly](#) is one of my favorites. Did you know that they interviewed the Coen Brothers for it once, because the plot of The Big Lebowski is motivated by a carpet? If you don't believe me, check the DVD extras. They mention it there.

Speaking of floor coverings, to get the effect of the red surface Jame is standing on, I used a Scrabble box. (The nice version distributed by Selchow & Righter in the seventies.)

Lewis's Notes

If Jame were wackier, we would have had more fun naming his restaurant. Here are some names we considered: (1) Peanut Butter and Jame's, (2) The Jameteria, (3) "Planet Pizarro", (4) Jame Difference, (5) The International House of Jamecakes, and (6) The Cuisinarium.



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Stephen looks like Bizarro Stephen because of the power of suggestion.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Lewis and I are both big fans of DC's Bizarro World comics. It's a whacky backwards place where "Dog Bites Man" is more newsworthy than "Man Bites Dog," parents punish their kids for getting good grades, the world government headquarters is in the **Upright** Tower of Pisa, and women give engagement rings to men! Also, when you say the drinks are "on the house" in a Bizarro bar, you then fly up and literally pour the drinks on the house. That's the opposite of Earth, where "on the house" is a figure of speech.

Lewis's Notes

My favorite Bizarro moments are as follows.

Moment the first: In the opening of one Bizarro comic, they were doing the usual "things are so backwards/opposite on Bizarro world" schtick, and one of their examples was that people put bombs in birthday cakes there. I was talking with Ben and we concurred that, in fact, that is the opposite of what we here on Earth do; namely, not put bombs inside cakes.

Moment the second: Immediately before DC had their massive continuity reboot with the Crisis on Infinite Earths, Alan Moore gave us one of the greatest Superman comics of all time, "Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow?"

This is your spoiler warning, by the way.

Bizarro goes crazy, in a way that dwarfs his normal amount of crazy. Superman is called in because Bizarro is tearing up the town. Superman confronts him and asks why he is rampaging. Bizarro explains, "*Ha! That easy! It am part of genius Bizarro self-improvement plan!*"

"See, Me suddenly realize that me am not perfect imperfect duplicate! Maybe me not trying hard enough. Example: When your planet Krypton blow up by accident, you am coming to Earth as baby..." "...So me decide to blow up whole Bizarro world on purpose and come to Earth as adult!"

Bizarro then takes out some blue kryptonite, which is the kind that kills Bizarros, and says, "See...you am alive, Superman...And if me am perfect imperfect duplicate, then me have to be...h-have to be..."

"Uh...everything, him go d-dark..." "Hello, Superman. Hello."

Find and read that comic. It is **superb**.



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Aorist normally doesn't announce his attacks.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

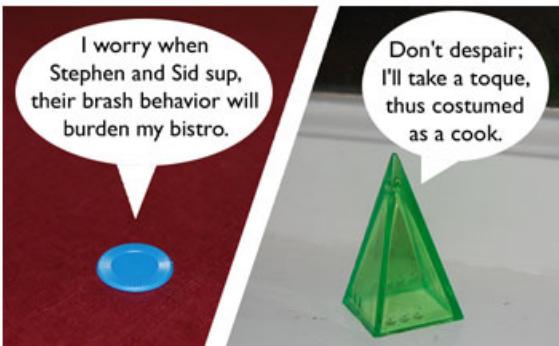
I'm pretty sure Lewis is going to explain the Spanish part, so I won't. Instead, I'll point out that the reason Bizarro Aorist is blue is that the Bizarro version of green kryptonite is blue kryptonite. The radiation from blue kryptonite passes right through lead, but is blocked by imperfect duplicates of lead.

The physics of Bizarro objects is pretty fascinating.

Lewis's Notes

Ben and I were talking about how we should have gone after a niche market. Like how there are comics for [video game fans](#), and comics for [library fans](#), and also one for people who like [online poker comics made by the guy who did Pupkin](#). Hell, there are even comics for [people who like their jokes awkwardly overexplained](#). The trouble is, our comic is sort of niche already. Just not a niche that you can put into words easily. Maybe I'll have Ben make up a term.

Note: Ben says our niche is "people who used to play board games and kind of want to see the pieces doing things completely unrelated to those games."



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Homework: Between now and Wednesday, imagine what Terror Island opening credits would look like

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Do any of the photographs in today's flashback sequence look familiar to you? Believe it or not, they're actually all authentic copies of the artwork we used back when the original events were taking place. If you go through the archives, you can verify this for yourself.

Even though I didn't have to take any new photos, this strip was somewhat difficult to make, just because of the flashback writing style. I suppose that's the price we pay for not sticking to linear time in telling the story.

Lewis's Notes

I've been watching a lot of *Lost*, and, as with many ongoing-story type tv shows, they remind you at the outset of an episode some relevant plot points. Ben and I decided that we should do a *Terror Island*-esque take on "Previously", making use of our quirky style of flashback-ing. That way, instead of this being completely boring recycling of material, it is an inventive recap which should bring new readers up to speed, and give old readers a chuckle. Also, it should give you all some insight into precisely what the next story arc is going to be.

By the way, for minimizing your frustration while watching *Lost*, I recommend doing it over a weekend where you can watch all of seasons one and two in three days. It makes the constant cliffhangers way less annoying.



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Sid should have consulted the translation guide, aka menu.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This set was fun to prepare. There's a lot more going on in it than you can see in today's strip, but don't worry, you'll find out more about Famous Jame's before we're done.

The lighting here uses the same clip-on lights from strip #13, but arranged differently. I should probably get around to acquiring a good lighting setup for general use, so that I won't have to rely on the flash as much as I have in the past.

Lewis's Notes

The unit on Aristotle in the class I TA has ended, so people in my life will probably notice a sharp dropoff in the frequency with which I discuss Aristotle.

Unless, perhaps, they are distracted by how much I now talk about Hume.

As for the comic, it seems like Ben and I deduced this plotline a really long time ago. I guess it was one of our earlier proofs.

That reminds me, if you want to use technical terminology, each strip of the comic is a theorem. The writing process is called "proving". So instead of saying "Ben and Lewis knew what they were doing when they wrote strip 25" you could say, "Lewis and Ben made no errors when they proved Theorem 25." This is the sort of thing you could say at cocktail parties to sound smart and/or awesome.

By the way, I chose 25 at random. In case that worries you, I should clarify that while the strip itself is logically necessary, these notes are definitely contingent. As a result, you get a nice mixture of the necessary with the merely contingent, without diluting the comic itself. I write my comments by channeling a spirit (luckily, it is my own spirit). I think Ben uses haruspicy for his. You'd have to ask.



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Every good restaurant has a waiter who makes life more interesting by citing fictional laws.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Here are the things I like about the way this strip turned out:

- The em-dashes in panel 1 both fell at the ends of lines, which looks kind of interesting.
- I managed to arrange Jame's line in panel 3 into a fairly good ellipse, which is tricky for seven-deck speech bubbles.
- The first two panels each hide one of the food items, and the last two panels display them fully.

There's probably also some plot advancement or character development in there. I didn't really check. Some day we'll eliminate those factors, and the comic will just be about arranging words into ellipses.

Lewis's Notes

Some of you might wonder what aspects of the script Ben brings to the comic, and what aspects I bring to it. You can extrapolate from the following.

If Ben wrote the comic alone, it would be about medieval mathematicians, and disputes they had. If I wrote the comic alone, it would be the story of Metal Hands McGee, a super hero who wears metal gauntlets that produces the sound effect "Catamo". *Terror Island* is the result of mixing those two comic visions.



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Aorist gave Famous Jame's his highest possible rating: three out of four enchiladas.

[Notes, Thoughts, &c.](#)

Ben's Notes

Now that the “Jame’s restaurant” storyline is over, here’s a special look at the studio where I shot these strips. Note the tripod, the clip-on lights, and the odd rocks on the bookshelf. Click on the image for a larger version.



[a picture of something](#)

Lewis's Notes

I am not certain I am 100% pleased with the way this strip turned out, but I can’t quite put my finger on what it is that is leaving me unsatisfied. I suppose that its possible my sense of humor isn’t perfectly in tune with logical necessity.

We’re adding an FAQ, as soon as some questions get asked frequently.

[Please contribute.](#)

Fun fact: my building’s hot water is on the fritz today. I have decided to start liking cold showers as a result. This plan is not easy to implement.



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Sid was intending to hypnotize the sky gods (thus giving him reign over the kingdom of the skies). So much for that plan.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This strip has more references than we usually include, so here are some quick panel-by-panel annotations.

Panel 1: The hypno-kit was last mentioned in [strip #18](#).

Panel 2: This panel speaks for itself, I think.

Panel 3: In NetHack, the “apply” command (default keystroke: a) is used for credit cards and unicorn horns, among other things.

Panel 4: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pascal%27s_Wager

Lewis's Notes

Ben is into molly-coddling, it would appear. I figure you guys can fend for yourselves with respect to the references, but he decided you needed help.

This theorem initially gave us some difficulty to derive, largely because we were going about it the wrong way. See, we had the dialogue initially laid out in a way that made some of the lines very difficult to script so that they would express what needed to be expressed and be sensible things for the respective characters to be saying. It was very satisfying to realize that it wasn't because what we thought to be a theorem was false, but instead because we were assuming the wrong premises. Once we fixed the dialogue (who was establishing what and in what order that was being done) the strip fell into place with the sort of naturalness that reminds us we are merely discovering these plots, not creating them.



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York learned this sales technique on the moon.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

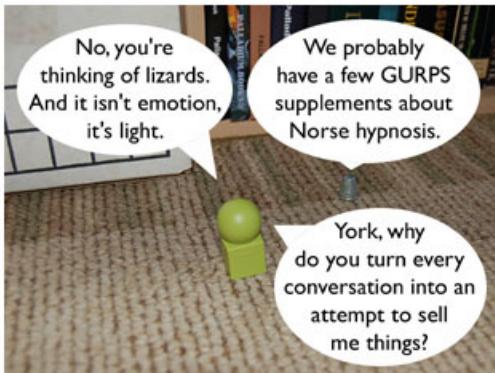
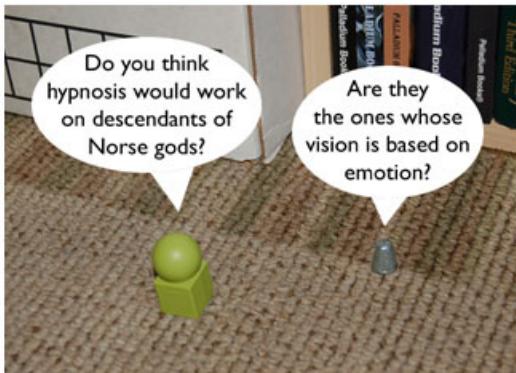
Ben's Notes

This update is coming to you from D.C., where I am. Also, I am entering these comments on the website, because Lewis is experiencing technical difficulties. So these comments are from an unusual source in two ways.

Anyway, speaking of board games, I played some earlier today, with Claire and friends. (*Ticket to Ride*; *Hey, That's My Fish*; and *Blokus*.) The books in panel four are Claire's, but she doesn't actually keep them together like that. She does not yet know that I rearranged her carefully color-coordinated books for the sake of a comic she doesn't read. Seriously, she organizes her books by color.

Lewis's Notes

Last night, I arrived home to discover that my internet connection was down. The wonders of technology allowed me to upload the strip and update the website from *my cell phone*. That is not a pleasant way to do the update, so midway through I deputized Ben as assistant webmaster, and had him finish.



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As a sales associate, York's extension is a mapping from customer utterances to sales-oriented segues.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Basically, this year's Yom Kippur installment of Terror Island is an opportunity to poke a little light-hearted fun at GURPS. Did you know that the popular mad-science webcomic "[Casey and Andy](#)" has its own [GURPS sourcebook](#)?

Lewis's Notes

I agree!



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This prophecy is both self-fulfilling and self-improving.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

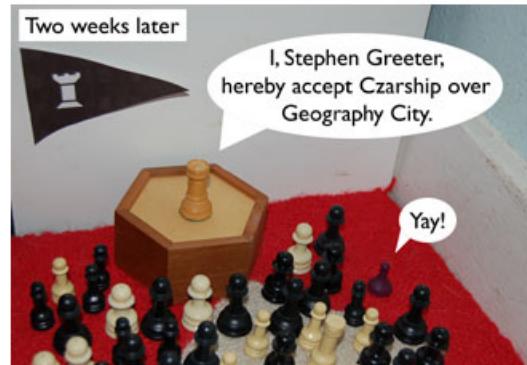
These pictures were taken in Texas, at the house of some of my wacky relatives.

The reason this front door doesn't look like the door in [strip #9](#) is that Sid and Stephen live in an apartment with multiple front doors. This is pretty much standard in Geography City. (It was revealed that they live in Geography City in [strip #18](#). Try to keep up.)

Lewis's Notes

Ben has been an amazing deputy over the last couple updates, as my Internet connection is still out. In fact, astute readers may have noticed that he wrote my comments on Monday.

I should add a note to what Ben said today. Some of you may be wrongly assuming that an apartment has to be pretty fancy to have multiple front doors. And thus, you might be assuming that Geography City is some sort of richy rich town for rich people. This is not true. It turns out that there is not, in the TI-verse, any correlation between number of front doors and wealth. So, for instance, York's apartment could have a greater number of front doors than Sid and Stephen's, without York being worth more than them, morally or fiscally.



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Boy is Liln's face red now.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This is our 50th strip, so I celebrated by using a somewhat unusual speech bubble layout in panel 2.

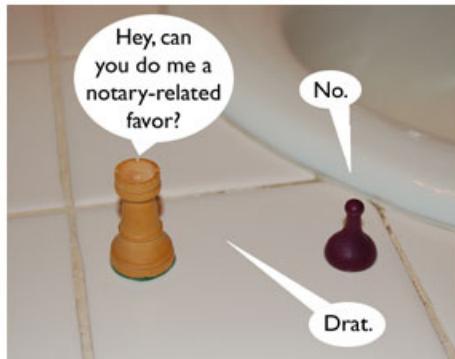
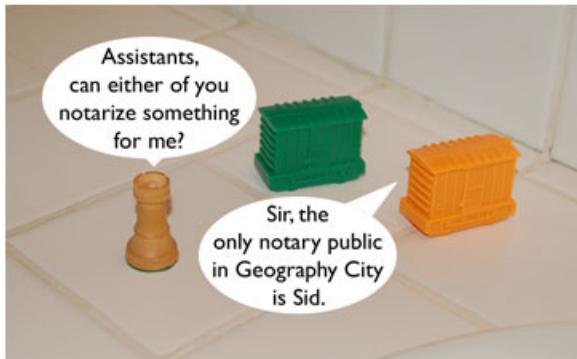
Oh, see the flag in panel 4? The one that looks cool even though I didn't tape it to the wall perfectly? It was designed for us by [Obdormio](#), on hearing that Stephen is a [vexillographer](#). We'd been waiting for the right moment to work it into the strip.

Lewis's Notes

We thought of this storyline in June, but you can't just derive things in any old order. You need to build off of your earlier proofs. This is what we call model-theoretic continuity, or logical canon. Between then and now, it had the status of postulate. Ben and I don't publicize our postulates, largely because we like to maintain a reputation of infallibility. Also, if we were pythagoreans or numerologists, we would be very excited that we could prove this as our fiftieth theorem.

One of my undergraduate professors told a joke about a blind guy and a swan my sophomore year at the University of Rochester. The joke made no sense at the time, because I didn't realize it connected up to something from the reading, and didn't really understand that thing anyways, so even if I had made the connection, I still wouldn't have gotten the joke. Then, like last year, I was at a philosophy graduate student get together thing, and someone was talking about this thing called the Molyneux problem. All of a sudden, the joke from three years prior made sense, which is one of the best humor-related experiences of my life. I wish more jokes were so complicated that I only got them on a three year delay after learning about a philosophical debate from the 18th century.

Here's the joke, but you don't get the explanation: A blind man walks into a bar, and there is a swan on the table. He listens to the swan, feels the swan's feathers, and smells it. "A ha" he announced. "Now I know what whiteness is."



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Stephen's assistants are named Gibbs and Lockley. He calls them by the name Assistants out of kindness.

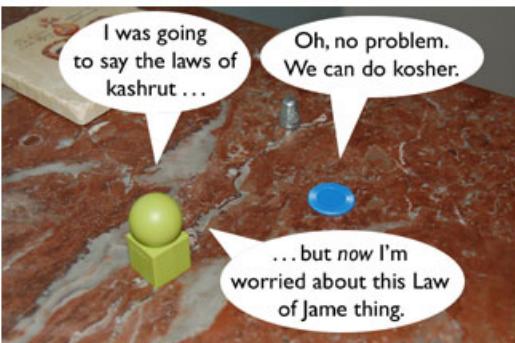
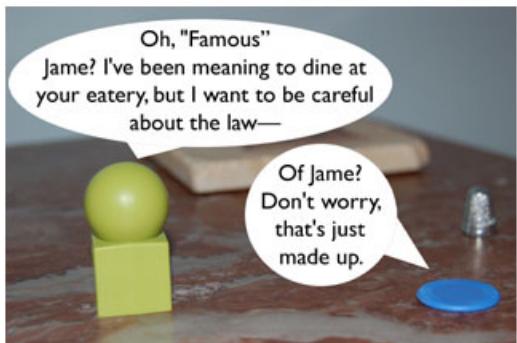
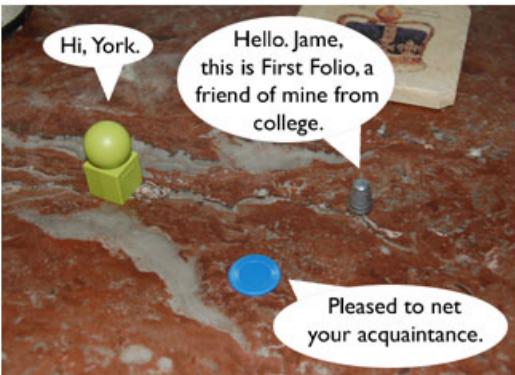
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If Sid and Stephen's bathroom looks familiar to you, it's probably because this set was also used for the memorable ["Zeke's lab" sequence](#) in [FOMS](#), my first photocomic. Or it might look familiar because you've actually been in my bathroom in real life. That category's probably larger.

Lewis's Notes

All of you should read Gottlob Frege's writings. Most of you probably won't care about them, but that is more of a defect in you than in the writings.



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Nobody has ever seen the mayor, but he's rumored to be a metal golem with a laser attack.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

One idea I had for this strip was for First Folio to be vegan, instead of kosher. Except it would be NetHack-style veganism. As a NetHack vegan, you're allowed to slay lichen and eat their corpses, for example. But if you polymorph into a mind flayer or master mind flayer, you can't use the brain-eating attack against monsters with brains.

To learn more about the differences between NetHack veganism and regular veganism, why not read this [NetHack conduct spoiler](#)?

Lewis's Notes

It is almost never the case that someone asks me my opinion on the various types of canon and fanon that can exist. However, that's what I was thinking about today, so it is the subject of my comments.

What we want to generate is an ordering of strength for claims about what is true in a fiction, relative to the source of that claim. For instance, obviously, those claims which are either explicitly made by a reliable narrator in the narrative, or describe events which explicitly took place in the narrative, will be stronger than all other claims. We'll call that Strong-Canon.

I will now mention some alternate sources, and attempt to rank them, intuitively. Authorial comments will either be retcons, which I will set aside, or permissible elaborations/clarifications. The elaborations/clarifications will be what I'll call "Defeasible Strong-Canon" which means that it is treated as Strong-Canon, but can be overridden by actual Strong-Canon. Rather than having contradictory truths, the Strong-Canon would simply take precedence. Claims which are fair inferences on the basis of Strong-Canon (including claims like, "So-and-so wasn't lying when they said X", or "Sherlock Holmes wore undergarments", based on the assumption that most men of his stature in that day wore undergarments) fall under "Defeasible Weak-Canon". Note that it is still canonical, but it is a weaker canon because it is overridden by an authorial comment to the effect that such and such a character was lying.

All fanon, obviously, falls below this level, and I will save discussion of fanon proper for another time. What I will note is that Ben and I have carved out a neat niche that I consider "Wildcard Canon", which we store, largely, in the title text. Wildcard Canon comes from the authors, which is why it is canon, but, on authorial whim, it could in fact, be weakened or strengthened arbitrarily.

All this, then, was really to remind you to always read the title text, but also to alert you that often, it is not to be taken too seriously.



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Czar Stephen is a model of justice and efficiency.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

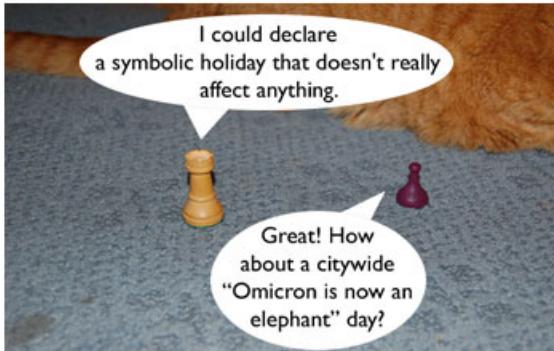
Robert Asprin had a bit in one of his Myth books where two people argued over ownership of a cat. The king thought he had an opportunity to act wise, so he did the “Let it be cut in half” thing. The people went along with this, and happily left to cut up the cat. Irritability did [a slightly different take on this](#). Oddly, it also involved a cat. I guess that’s one of the standard objects for this. Brecht and Solomon both went with the child thing instead, though.

I like happy endings, so both of the petitioners get a lawnmower. Hooray for Czar rule!

Lewis's Notes

This strip came together pretty nicely. I like when Ben and I come up with a general idea (in this case Stephen holding court) and an idea for the main gag (some play on that infanticide theory of justice from the Old Testament) which lead us to a rough script, which we then chisel away at until discovering the correct form.

That was metaphorical chiseling, by the way. Sculpture, being the most empirical of art forms, is far too contingent for our tastes.



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If Liln were there, Stephen would add that the present company is excepted, when talking about the naysayers.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

While I was taking pictures for this strip, I also took some pictures of Ray (the cat who plays Omicron) drinking from his sink. Cats look really odd when they're drinking, so I figured TI fans might be interested. Doesn't lapping it up seem like an inefficient way to get at the water?



A cat drinking water

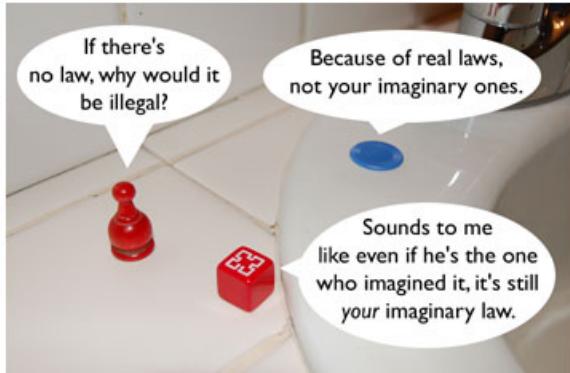
Ray's kind of weird about water in general. He likes to sit on the side of the bathtub while people are showering, for example. And after the shower's over, he will go into the bathtub itself.

So, that's my cat story for today. Over to you, Lewis.

Lewis's Notes

I read a bunch of [Alien Loves Predator](#) this weekend. It's a good comic, which I hereby recommend to you.

I am trying to figure out a good costume for Halloween, because Halloween is more fun when one is becostumed. Specifically, I would like a costume that is easy to put together, relatively cheap, and involves obscure philosophy references. Ideas (for me or generally) can be posted on [the forum](#).



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Believe it or not, the ruling in panel one cleared Sid of the charge of grocery shopping.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

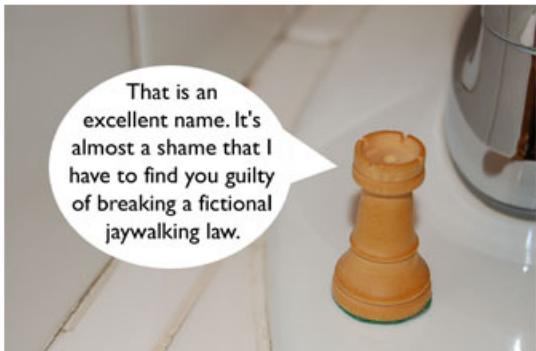
Today is Angyl Bender's birthday, so we made a strip answering her question of "What if Sid or Stephen were to order some Chinese food or something?" I'm not actually sure if Angyl asked that question, but I think someone did, at some point. Human identities are pretty much interchangeable anyway.

This strip is also notable for being the first use of the Pictionary cube character. Those of you reading backwards through the archives years after I wrote this will be chuckling to yourselves as to the significance of this character, who, to those of us reading this at more or less the time I'm posting it, is completely new.

Lewis's Notes

One time, for like a month or so (maybe more), I went around telling people that Ben had an imaginary girlfriend from Canada, and when Ben insisted that he didn't, I pointed out that I was in fact imagining that a Canadian girl was dating Ben. So, sometimes, when we're deriving a theorem for *Terror Island*, the gags in the theorem spookily correspond to actual events in the real world. The degree spooky of the correspondence (the coefficient of ectoplasm, if you will), seems to increase during October. This is evidence that October's role as "spookiest month" may be less contingent than you thought.

By the way, if you have access to Facebook, you should [join the Terror Island Fan Club](#).



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Everybody wins!

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This strip reminds me of the time in college when Lewis lost his shoes, and I tricked him into thinking I had hidden them. It worked out well, because I found them before he did, and then moved them somewhere else.

I hope all of our readers have their shoes with them, and that each day in our all-too-brief lives will shine ever brighter for having felt thus.

Lewis's Notes

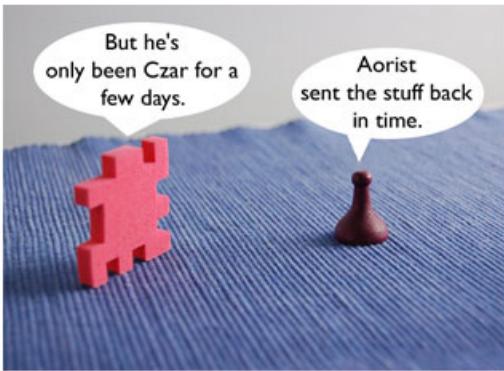
If I had unlimited money and I had to spend it decadently, instead of helping people with it, I think one thing I would do is buy brand new socks every day. None of those falling apart socks.

Also, I'd totally hire a personal assistant to keep track of things for me, remind me of stuff I meant to do, etc.

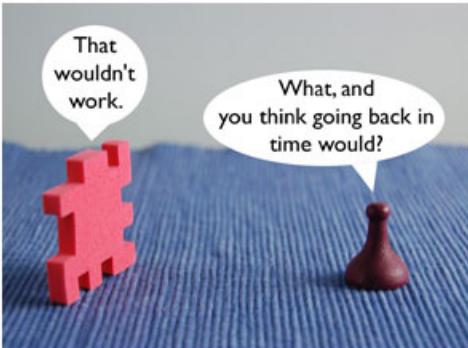
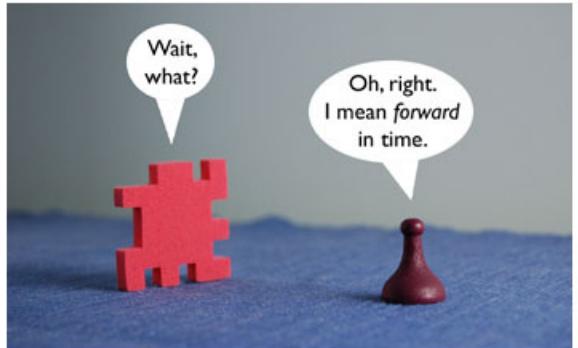
This is more fun than thinking about having magic powers, because it is very slightly more likely that I have the means to buy new socks every day than that I can actually perform magic.



Now that Stephen's the Czar, people have been sending tributes. Some of them are edible or near-edible.



Aorist sent the stuff back in time.



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Aorist uses time capsules as time machines.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Notice anything different about today's strip? That's right, the lighting! I got a [Lowel EGO](#) after seeing them recommended on the [Depth of Field](#) forums, and it's turning out to be a lot of fun to play around with. Expect to see much less use of the flash from now on.

Lewis's Notes

We put up an [FAQ](#).

Instead of comments today, we bring you desktop backgrounds.

°[800x600](#)

°[1024x768](#)

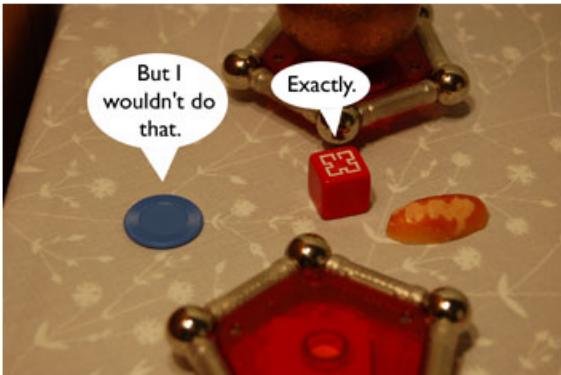
°[1280x960](#)

°[1600x1200](#)

°[1280x854](#)

°[1280x854 \(alt\)](#)

Ben actually made these, but it was at my urging, so that's why they are in my comments. Your comments about them are welcome, so feel free to share what you think. We're new to this, so if we've left out important sizes or what have you, [let us know](#).



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Gone are the days of Jame standing on copper balls on his own.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

You may remember the customers in panel 4 from [strip #53](#). It's nice to see that the one whose lawnmower was stolen apparently doesn't hold a grudge. I hope the thief guy doesn't end up stealing his food.

Lewis's Notes

First things first. We have [an FAQ](#). If you have questions not answered there, [feel free to ask us](#).

Secondly, Gunpowder Jackson has heart. That is undeniable. Also, it's provable in our system, as evidenced by this theorem (#58).

You may be wondering some things, like "Why does Jame have a giant copper ball in his restaurant?" and "Did he really let someone stand on a ball which was on a table, balancing bread on his head during business hours?" The answers to those questions are "I wouldn't say that he let him" and "in case it comes in handy" (anti-respectively).

If the waiter had been around (the waiter being the character portrayed by the old-school red wooden parcheesi token, for those of you who can identify game pieces but not follow the occupations of characters in the strip), I think he would have decided that Gunpowder's salary was likely to be money well spent.



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Ravens can also be made into soup.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Boo!

Did I scare you? Of course not. It isn't Halloween yet. But next week, we'll be starting an all-new Halloween-themed plotline that could last for one to three strips, depending on how long we want to stretch it out. Are you prepared for our spooky plans? Again, of course not. Terror Island Halloween 2006 is going to be the scariest Terror Island Halloween ever this year!

Lewis's Notes

I was thinking about applying for a fellowship, but apparently the person who introduced the fellowship left a clause in her will that no benefit from the fellowship go to persons who or insitutions which support, advocate, or uphold the principles of Communism. As a result, candidates to the fellowship can be required to submit an affadavit, affirmed before a Notary Public, confirming that they do not support, advocate or uphold the principles or doctrines of Communism. And while I'm not myself a total Pinko, I'm not entirely certain I'm comfortable swearing before a Notary about my political/philosophical beliefs in order to get a fellowship.

The title text today was Ben's idea, but I thought it was super-good. It gives us yet another answer to my favorite riddle. The best "real" answer to the riddle is "Because Poe wrote on both." The best answer in accordance with the dictates of Lewis Carrol's Nonsense is "Because there is a 'B' in both."

The riddle, by the way, is "How is a raven like a writing desk?"



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Act well your part; there the honor lies.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

We recently joined [Photo Web Comics](#), a ranking site. I usually don't get too interested in webcomic lists, but this way of restricting it actually produces a pretty cool feel. You might want to go there and try out a few other photocomics, just for fun. And if want to vote for us, you can do so by clicking on the image below.



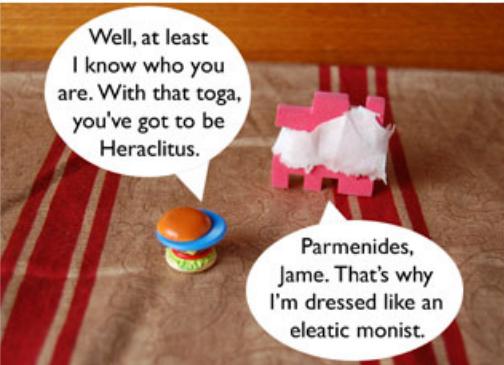
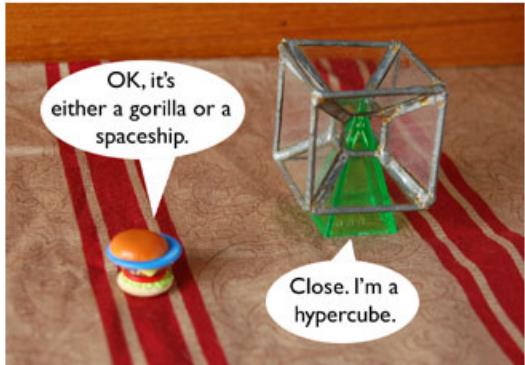
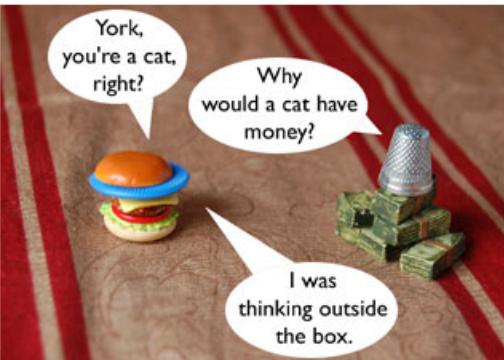
[Photo Web Comics TopSites](#)

Lewis's Notes

I think that for Halloween I will dress up as a philosophical zombie. This is an awesome costume because the only requirement is that I am functionally identical with a regular person. So, I get to wear normal clothes and act normally. The only difference is that I have no conscious experience of what I am doing.

If I was going to go all out, I would dress up as [David Hume](#), because then I'd get to wear me a turban *and* be a famous philosopher.

Also, thanks to Lauren of [Depth of Field](#) for linking to us.



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Jame suffers from the unfortunate condition of costume blindness.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I know you're probably excited about all the spooky costumes in today's strip, but we've got one more Halloween surprise for you. This year, we decided to take part in [Fright Night](#), which is sort of a secret Santa type thing, but for webcomics, and on Halloween. And not gift-related.

[Here's](#) our spooky remix of [Fragile Gravity](#), and [here's](#) their spooky remix of Terror Island.

I'm very pleased with how Fright Night turned out. Lewis did all the work for our end, and we got a cool reinterpretation from another webcomician. And we both ended up with a zombie theme! That probably means something.

Lewis's Notes

First off, let me explain some pre-Socratic philosophy at you, in case panel four was confusing. Heraclitus and Parmenides were both philosophers from before Socrates. Heraclitus belongs to a group I call "The Captain Planet Cosmologists." A cosmology is a theory about what the universe is fundamentally made of. So, this is a mildly amusing joke, if you are familiar with Captain Planet. Heraclitus thought everything was made of fire. This other guy Thales thought everything was made of water, and there was one for air and one for earth. I don't know if there was one for "heart" per se, but we can worry about that later. Parmenides was above all that jazz (sort of). Parmenides thought that change was impossible (I think because there can't be void). If change is impossible, than all perceived change is illusory. The view that there is only one eternal unchanging thing is called "Eleatic Monism", I think, largely, because Parmenides was from Elea.

If you found the punchline unsatisfying today, I highly recommend the title text, which I think is a bit punchier, but not really conducive to being presented as dialogue, and maybe too silly for canon.

As a special super bonus treat, I am going to share with you guys an idea I had then Ben did not go for. It went (roughly) like this:

Lewis: Ben, what do you think of the phrase "Trick or Treaty?"

Ben: I don't like it.

Lewis: I was thinking someone could say it to Stephen, and Stephen would reply, "Well, I guess I don't like tricks." And then, the other person could say, "Perfect, then as Czar you agree to commit the resources of Geography City to protect Target City whenever it is attacked."

Ben: [silence]

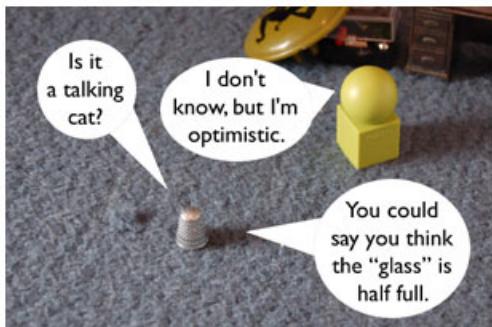
Lewis: Then Stephen could reply, “Darnit, I’ve been tricked!”

Ben: *[more silence]*

Lewis: And then the other person could reply, “It was the inclusive ‘or’.”

Ben didn’t warm to the idea, and so you get it as a bonus in my commentary. I think Ben was worried that we’d be violating that rule of fiction writing put forward by George Washington, “Don’t create entangling alliances with cities outside the scope of the lives of your main characters, unless you really want intermunicipal politics to be the dominant theme for at least one major story arc.”

That Washington sure knew how to “spin a yarn.”



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Get it?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

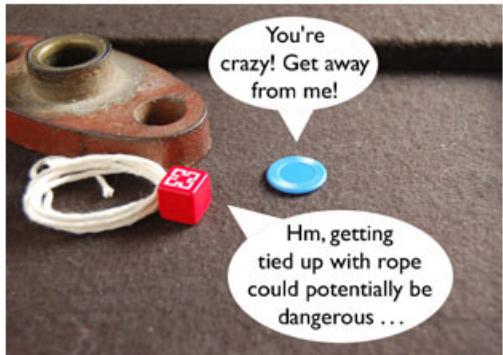
Ben's Notes

Did you see our guest strip at Reprographics yesterday? If not, or if you did but it wasn't very memorable for you, [go check it out!](#) Sid and Stephen are kind of in it, but it probably isn't canonical.

Lewis's Notes

I think we're reaching the point where some critics should acclaim Terror Island, because that way I can refer to it as a "critically acclaimed photo-comic."

Are you a critic? Feel free to give us some acclaim. I can help you with the draft copy if you'd like. My prose style has been described as "passable."



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Gunpowder sure is in a bind.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Gunpowder was going to tie up Jame, but since that would be a stunt (and Gunpowder is Jame's stunt double), he tied himself up instead! Wacky, huh?

Panel four took a little while to set up, because it turns out I'm not very good at tying cubes to things. But on the other hand, tying yourself up is hard, so it's reasonable that Gunpowder's attempts would look something like that.

Lewis's Notes

I was glad to work a [Guy Fawkes Night](#) reference into the strip. Stay tuned after these comments for a traditional Guy Fawkes Night poem. And by "stay tuned after" I mean that you should keep scrolling down.

An interesting thing happened, while scripting this strip. Originally, we were thinking that Jame would get tied up, but that wouldn't jive well with the upcoming strips. Lucky for us, when we discovered the theorem's true form, we realized that Gunpowder didn't tie up Jame, he tied himself up. And as usual, something that looked worrisome at first wound up working out just fine.

That's why I always try and remember that when logical necessity gives you lemons, its fairly likely that at some point in the future you will be able to prove lemonade.

And now, a poem:

*Remember remember the 5th of November,
The Gunpowder, Treason and Plot,
I know of no reason why the gunpowder treason
should ever be forgot.*

*Guy Fawkes, Guy Fawkes, 'twas his intent
to blow up the King and the Parliament.
Three score barrels of powder below,
Poor old England to overthrow:
By God's providence he was catch'd
With a dark lantern and burning match.*

[Anti-Catholic portion of poem redacted]



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What disingenuous game is this?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This is strip number 64, which is exciting, because it's a power of 2. We haven't had one of those since [strip #32](#), and I forgot to mention it in my comments then. I also forgot to mention it for [strip #1](#), even though 1 is the most important of all the powers of 2.

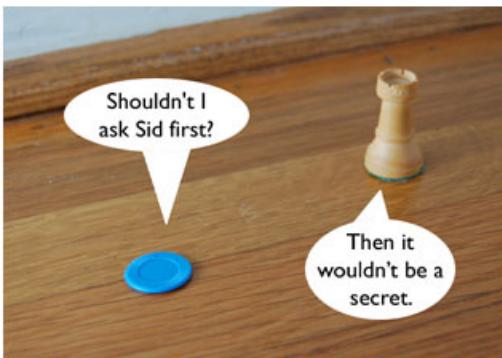
Check back in about five months for strip #128!

Lewis's Notes

If you would like to blow your mind, you should learn about [Cantor's Diagonalization argument](#). It is how Cantor showed that there are more real numbers than rational numbers, despite both sets being infinite in size.

With respect to the comic, I'll just say that exciting things are afoot, and I am eagerly anticipating the next set of strips.

General note for people: you probably don't read enough. Remember to read. I suggest David Hume and/or Aristotle.



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Stephen knows never to go into the secret room.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

People often ask me how I get the props that end up in the comic. To demonstrate that it's easier than you might think, I took the pictures for this strip using nothing but common household items. You too can create "Sid's secret room" in the comfort of your own home, using nothing but an eye-themed novelty clock, a miniature Turkish-English dictionary, a wax [small stellated dodecahedron](#), and whatever else was in panel four. I forget the details.

Next week, I'll explain how to make your own "Stephen's secret room."

Lewis's Notes

This one time*, David Hume said, "*Whatever has the air of a paradox, and is contrary to the first and most unprejudic'd notions of mankind, is often greedily embrac'd by philosophers, as shewing the superiority of their science, which cou'd discover opinions so remote from vulgar conception. On the other hand, anything propos'd to us, which causes surprize and admiration, gives such a satisfaction to the mind, that it indulges itself in those agreeable emotions, and will never be perswaded that its pleasure is entirely without foundation. From these dispositions in philosophers and their disciples arises that mutual complaisance betwixt them; while the former furnish such plenty of strange and unaccountable opinions, and the latter so readily believe them. Of this mutual complaisance I cannot give a more evident instance than in the doctrine of infinite divisibility, with the examination of which I shall begin this subject of the ideas of space and time.*"

That may be the best introductory paragraph ever written. And its not even the introduction to *The Treatise* itself, its the introduction to the first section of the second part of the first book of *The Treatise*.

*1739 AD



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Possession (like by a demon) is nine tenths of the law

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I've been waiting for a chance to use a fisheye lens for several months. Back in July, we decided that it should be used to represent the effect of a demon speaking, but there haven't been any demons in the strip until now. I hope you agree that it was worth the wait.

Lewis's Notes

Some awesome guy named Cal did a bunch of transcriptions. I wonder if it's the Cal I know. At any rate, thanks, Cal.

I'm going to take over Ben's webcomic advice/question column. Today's question comes from George Washington Carver Jones, who asks, "How do you tell the difference between all your characters?"

Well George, we don't. If there has been any consistency in naming, &c. so far it has been merely accidental. Thanks for writing in.



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When opportunity knocks, ignore the demon problem.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I had some computer problems that delayed production of this strip. Fortunately, I was able to use another computer, but that was a significantly slower process. I'm not really happy with how the strip turned out, so it's possible that we'll replace it with an improved version tomorrow.

Lewis's Notes

Because of Ben's delays, this strip didn't get posted until after I went to sleep. In fact, I'm asleep now, and Ben is typing these comments in an attempt to pretend to be me. Do not let yourself be taken in by his impersonation.



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Sid has a good nose for riddles.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

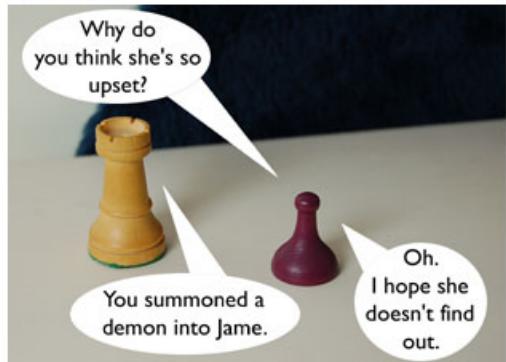
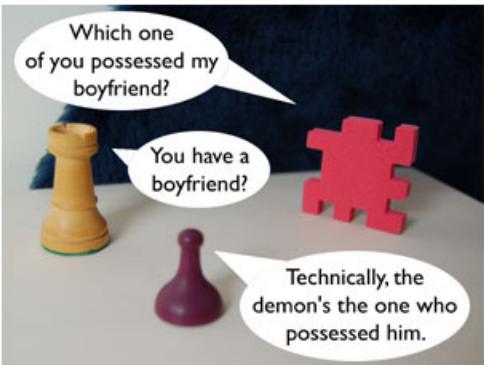
Ben's Notes

It's a good thing Stephen wasn't the one facing the demon-riddle. As you probably remember from [strip #19](#), Stephen hates riddles, and would have been unwilling to rise up to the challenge.

See, we're watching out for continuity issues.

Lewis's Notes

I'm tired, so Ben is writing my comments again. He didn't want you to know that, but since he's accurately writing what he thinks I would have written, I'm able to reveal it against his will.



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Wait, seriously, Liln has a boyfriend?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If you like comics about the heads of former presidents and other historical figures, you should read [Thinkin' Lincoln](#). If you don't like the sound of that description, [this strip with Emperor Norton](#) may change your mind. Also of note: Lincoln's [pet cat](#), [Theodore Mewsevelt](#).

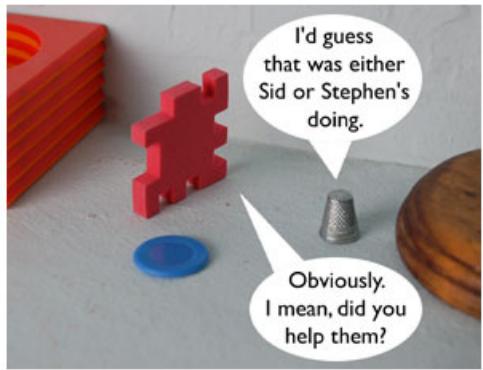
Lewis's Notes

It is time for more of that webcomic advice column you love so much— Oh, I guess I should name it. It will be called, “Letters for Lewis.” So, here’s today’s question, which comes from a Ben Heaton, of Palo Alto, Ca. Ben asks, “Isn’t it great collaborating with someone like Ben Heaton?”

Well, Ben, I’m glad you asked that. First off, let me say that collaboration is an excellent general strategy. It’s a lot more fun to bounce ideas off of Ben, and have Ben bounce ideas off of me than if I try and just think stuff up alone.

But, there is the worry that too many cooks, or should I say, “too many Bens” spoil the comic. I mean broth. Whatever. The point is, sometimes, it is important to put one’s foot down and say, “Ben, I’m not kidding. ‘Trick or Treat’ was a way better idea than you gave it credit for.”

In all seriousness, though, not only would I not be doing a comic if not for Ben telling me that he and I were going to make a comic, but the comic I wouldn’t be doing is hundreds of times worse than this one.



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The moral is to never lend books to friends.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I would explain what “Türkçe konuşamıyorum” means, but then people would accuse me of mollycoddling the readers. Instead, I'll just point out that I advised you [over a week ago](#) to have a Turkish-English dictionary handy. Did you follow my advice?

Lewis's Notes

Ben is taking the reigns of the comic for a few days, as I will be out of town with the possibility of no computer access. So we worked out the scripts a little ahead of time. However, we are not working out the title text ahead of time, so the title text for today and Friday will be surprises for me when I get to see them. Now I will know what our fans experience when they begin to hover the mouse over the strip.

Anticipation.



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When it comes to demonic wards, there's only one choice.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

We didn't update on Thanksgiving, so I'm going to wish you all a happy Thanksgiving today instead. Happy Thanksgiving!

This year, I'm thankful for humans. Without them, most of the things I own wouldn't exist, and I would have significantly fewer friends. It's easy to take humans for granted, but our lives would definitely be less interesting without them. Thanks, humans!

Lewis's Notes

Greetings, people of the future. I write this letter to you from what will now be three days in the past. Please give my regards to the Lewis of your era, as time travel will have been hard on him.



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So, is the acorn statue edible or not?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

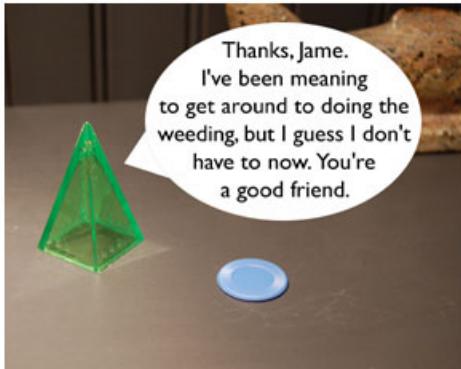
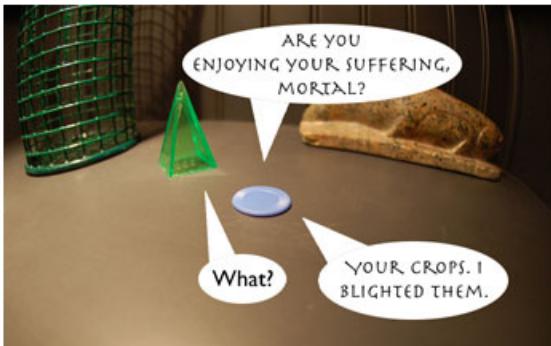
Ben's Notes

If they had taken Jame's offer, he probably would have made sure that the rest of their lives wasn't a very long time. This is just speculation, though. Maybe they would have gone on to live long, happy lives. I don't know.

The brighter lighting in the first panel is meant to indicate the idyllic state of not having a demon present. I hope that was clear enough. If it was, don't read this paragraph.

Lewis's Notes

What to say about The Wright Brothers. I mean, hooray for the pioneers of aviation and all that, but at the same time, if there had been no Wright Brothers, there would be no stupid layovers in airports, and you could recline your seat whenever you want, and use your tray table *all the time*. Insofar as air travel makes seeing my entire family a possibility, I suppose the frustration is balanced. So, Wright Bros., you get off this time, but you had better be careful, because you might not be so lucky next time.



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Remember, kids, you always reap what you sow.

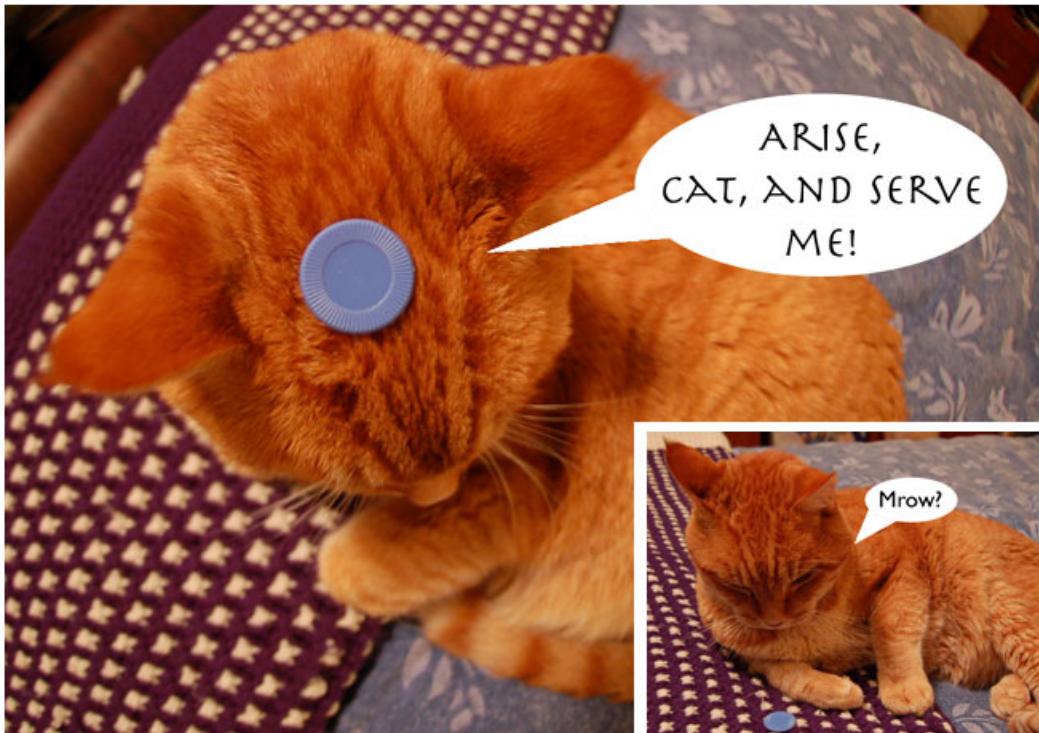
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Superosity's been around for nearly eight years, and it just now got around to the plot point it's named after. Check out Boardy's line in the first panel of [yesterday's strip](#). I have a feeling this storyline will involve some major changes. If you're not already reading Superosity, this is probably a good time to start.

Lewis's Notes

I think this demon is particularly well suited to possessing Jame. Which is to say, I think there is a nice symmetry between Jame's inability to completely fit in with Liln's friends, and this demon's inability to demonize effectively. You sort of imagine that if he explained what happened in this strip to his demon friends, they would say something like "Sounds like you've got a case of *idle hands*." Or, "Have you tried looking harder for work?" and then the demon would have to say, "what? I don't get it." and the other demons would say, "You know, work to put those *idle hands* to."



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The name of the Demon is Demon-Jame, but that's just a coincidence.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I had more trouble than usual getting Omicron to pose for this strip. Cats have many advantages for photocomic-making, but willingness to follow instructions isn't one of them.

Lewis's Notes

If anyone knows why we got a number of hits originating at games.slashdot.org, please let me know. I am curious.



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Will our heroes escape the force cage of Demon-Jame? Tune in the day after tomorrow, and maybe find out!

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

When we were planning this strip out, I suggested changing First Folio's line in panel 2 to "It must be some kind of alloy!" That way, it would be a reference to the movie version of Isaac Asimov's short story "Nightfall." The 1988 movie that Asimov hated, not the other one.

Behind the scenes trivia: when I was writing the previous paragraph, I had to look up whether the movie was based on the short story rather than the novel-length version of the short story. I couldn't tell based on content, because none of the possible source material had people using psychic powers to burn snakes, which is most of what I remember from the movie.

Lewis's Notes

Most people don't appreciate the importance of reviewing things in the "Too much X, not enough Y" style of review. For instance, I TA a class called "Mind and Self" and the professor mentioned that after submitting his initial syllabus the first time he taught it, he was told by the administration that it was "too much mind, not enough self."

And when I saw "The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe", my first response was "Too much witch, not enough lion, sufficient wardrobe."

This has no relation to our comic, which, by all reports, is "not enough terror, not enough island," but I thought I would share it with you all anyway.



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Famous Jame's Famous Monkey-Imps do not come with plates or utensils.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

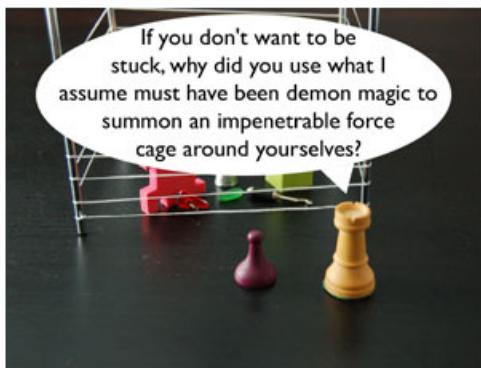
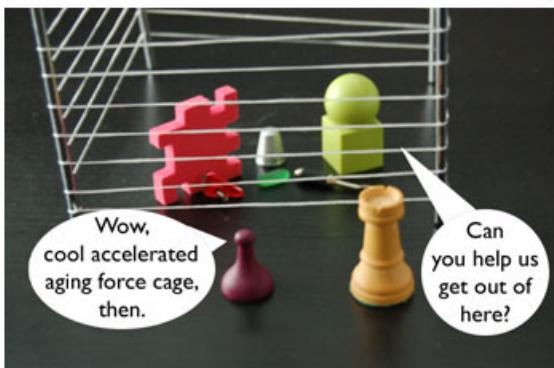
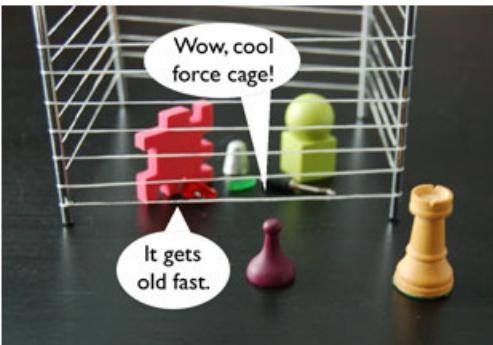
Ben's Notes

Switching back and forth between Gill Sans and Herculanum is starting to get annoying. I'm glad we're not one of those comics with a different font for each character.

Lewis's Notes

I've been thinking that I really like the effect of the demon's speech looking different. I am going to talk to Ben about setting it up so that each character has his or her own unique font.

Unrelatedly, what is this [growing phenomenon of "Internet"](#)? (hat tip to [Ryan North](#))



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Seriously, that's a bad way of pursuing your goals.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

There's a lot of overlap between Terror Island fans and chess fans, so you might be interested in Chessudoku, which is basically Sudoku with added constraints based on chess.

It was invented by Matthew Skala, the guy who makes the webcomic [Bonobo Conspiracy](#). He wrote [a book of Chessudoku puzzles](#), which you can get in printed form or as a PDF. If you kind of like the idea of Sudoku, but find it a bit uninteresting in practice, you'll probably enjoy these chess variants.

He gets bonus points for using amazons (fairy chess pieces that can move like queens or knights) in some of the problem types.

Lewis's Notes

I have been spending time writing papers. That takes up a lot of my time. Today I used some "Lewis" time to play Guitar Hero, which a friend lent me. Turns out it is a remarkably awesome game. I realize this is very old news, but it is new to me.

More of you should participate in [the forums](#). They are a good place to hang out, share recipes, and have a good time. I assume that if you are a regular reader of *Terror Island*, you like having a good time.



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Four out of five dentists agree that toothpaste isn't groceries.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

[One of our fans](#) sent me an Instant Message today, complaining that recent strips are boring, and that *Terror Island* "has lost the wit and charm it once had." We haven't done anything to address these concerns. And we never will.

Lewis's Notes

I was particularly happy with the line "toothpaste isn't groceries" because of the non-agreement in number ("toothpaste" is singular, "groceries" is plural). I don't know why this made me happy with the line, but it seems to be the thing that tickled my fancy.

I am still not happy with our current level of critical acclaim. See, since the strip's humor isn't really accessible to the masses, or even sometimes to Ben and myself, we have basically two remaining avenues to pursue: (a) being the favorite of the intelligentsia in the webcomics community, or (b) being a cult phenomenon. I guess I'd be ok with (b), but, really, that's more like kids in the future unearth the strip and get a 'retro' kick out of pretending they like it. I'd much prefer (a), first off, because it involves actual people sincerely saying nice things about the comic now, rather than hypothetical robot space kids ironically saying them in the future.

Right now our acclaim consists in being able to quote [R Stevens](#) as saying the comic is "pretty good," from the San Diego Comic-Con last year, an IOU for a review from the [Webcomicker](#), and that's about it. So, if you are a webcomic reviewer, or would like to be one, why not get started with our strip? Another potential story: Why are both creators of *Terror Island*, a relatively new webcomic, on the [WCCA](#) planning committee? (Note: hard hitting reporters, this is a chance for your big break)

Last note: *Guitar Hero* got inside my head. To the point where I realize I am subconsciously doing the strumbar and frets for "Crossroads" or "Infected" while walking through a grocery store. And when I close my eyes, I can see the colored discs and trails of "Take it Off" flying at me. Plus I catch myself singing the guitar part to "Cochise" every so often. So, you know, be warned about the addictive tendencies of guitar heroism.



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His grocery is losing money because of Internet.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

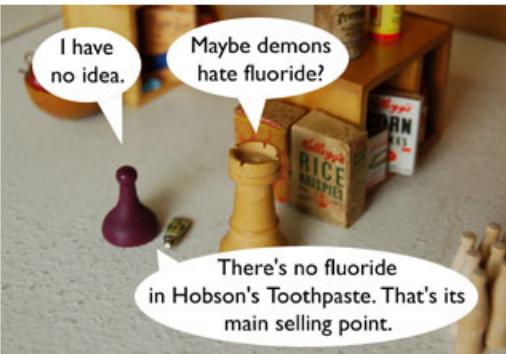
Ben's Notes

I came up with the idea of a supervillain called "The Green Grocer" back in June, while we were working on [strip #8](#). Now that I look back over my records, that was on the same day that we decided on the Czar plotline. We also scripted part of [strip #32](#) that day. And, I suggested a joke about Mark Twain that didn't turn out to be funny! OK, that last one isn't very good. But still, several significant future plot points were decided back then, over a pretty short period of time. It was a productive day by my standards.

Lewis's Notes

Ben's days count as productive when three decisions get made in one or more conversations.

Wow, I was trying to think of more to say, and I almost nodded off while formulating a sentence. I guess that means I am tired.



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Competitive grocery Lent is always intense.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

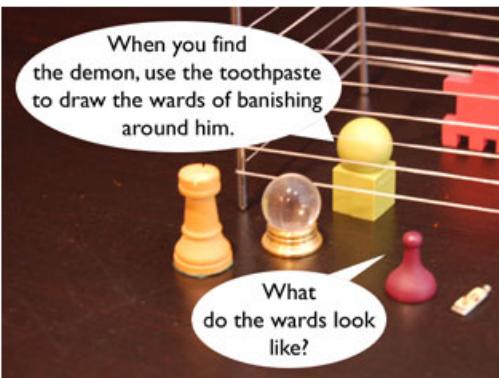
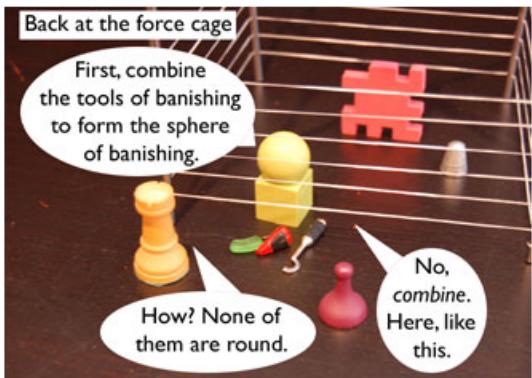
Ben's Notes

With this strip, I was going for more of a continuous set than usual. My initial impulse was to make the checkout aisle and the shelves of food as two separate locations, and just cut from one to the other. But this way makes it feel more like a real place, and also took up a bit less space in my basement.

Terror Island Riddle: Sid received 31 cents in change. So how much does that mean the toothpaste cost? Believe it or not, it's possible to figure this out, but you may need to look through the archives a bit.

Lewis's Notes

I'm trying to get some new slang started. Whenever you think something is bad, you should call it "widdershins." As in, "Having to shave every day is totally widdershins." Widdershins currently means counterclockwise, but seriously, it needs a much more useful meaning, I think.



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York just bet Liln three hundred demon dollars that Sid and Stephen botch the banishing, and somehow make it so the demon takes over, and institutes his own currency.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

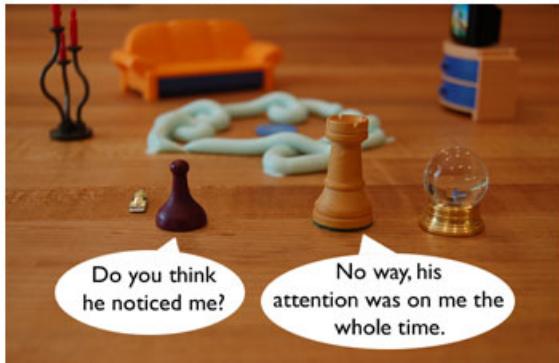
Ben's Notes

The Terror Island Riddle from the previous strip has been solved! In case you don't remember, the riddle was to figure out how much Hobson's Toothpaste costs. ManCat was the first one with the correct answer: "Legal Defense minus 31 cents." As he realized, [strip #4](#) clearly established the amount Sid paid for the toothpaste.

I'd like to thank everyone else who posted, wrote in, or otherwise participated in the riddle challenge, but there are no such people. Maybe there'll be more of a turnout for the second riddle challenge, which will be posted in the next week or so. Until then, have fun — and happy riddling!

Lewis's Notes

I will have double funny comments next time. Right now I am trying to finish my last bit of work for the semester. Then I get to start on the work I have to do over winter break. It's ok though, I love philosophy, so I am not complaining.



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That tube held a surprising amount of toothpaste.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

It's times like this that I'm glad to be making a photocomic. If this were a drawn comic, it wouldn't give me an excuse to play with toothpaste. Unless the comic were drawn with toothpaste, I suppose.

Oh, almost forgot. We're participating in some sort of "[webcomic battle](#)" site. You can click on the button below to see what's going on with that.



[See How We Did at Webcomic Battle!](#)

Lewis's Notes

I promised double funny comments today. I found out, though, that Internet has outlawed double funny comments because that's the sort of thing the man does. In protest, I won't even be writing single funny comments today.



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Yes, he should.

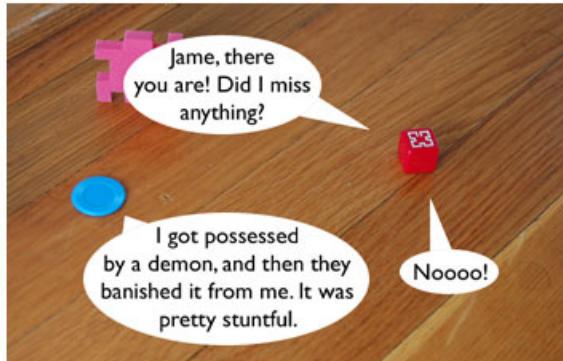
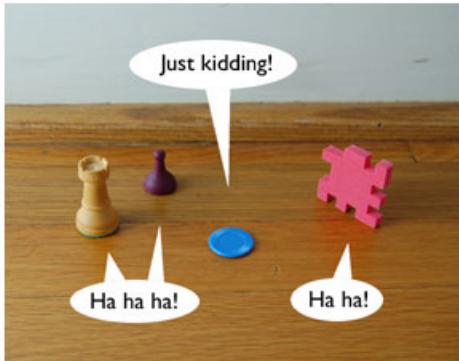
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Season's Greetings, Terror Island readers! This time of year is one filled with adventure. I'll be spending the holidays here in Palo Alto, and Lewis is flying off to New Hampshire to visit his kids or something.

Lewis's Notes

Actually, it's Chicago, parents and friends.



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The force cage disintegrated when the demon was banished. Duh.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

An alert reader pointed out to me that to her, the lines of toothpaste in strips #82 and #83 looked larger than the opening at the end of the tube of toothpaste. She further expressed confusion as to how this could be.

As with many other brands of toothpaste, Hobson's Toothpaste tubes are designed with a special chamber before the nozzle, to compress the toothpaste so that it will flare outward as it leaves the tube. I had thought this was conveyed adequately in the strip, but apparently it was easy to miss.

Lewis's Notes

In the Christmas Sprit (or, belated Chanukah spirit, if you will), I would like to send out some thanks and whatnot.

Thanks to [Adam Greengard](#), [Miles Grover](#), [Amanda Wood](#), [Gil Palleon](#), [Ryan North](#), and [Randall Munroe](#), for either themselves linking to the comic, or hosting forums where the comic was linked.

Also thanks to Ben for kickin' it real (aka: updating the webpage) when I was hip deep in end of the semester work.

Finally, thanks to the geniuses who made Guitar Hero II, that game is totally awesome.

Post-finally, I totally forgot about [Obdormio](#), [Chris Yates](#) and [Lauren Tozer-Kilts](#).



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Like most notaries, Sid doesn't know the difference between a stunt double and a manservant.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

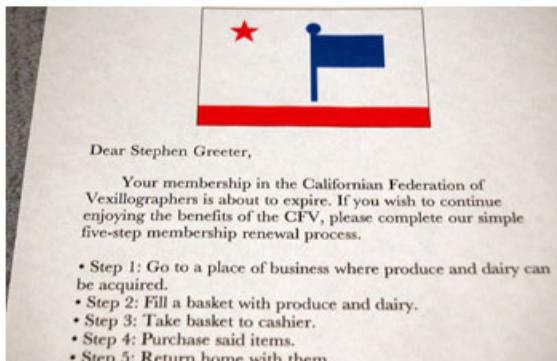
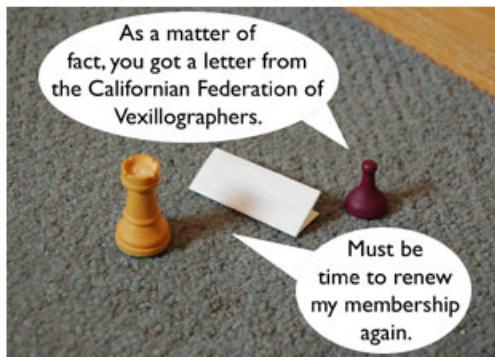
Ben's Notes

I received a letter from loyal reader Leo Backgammon, who writes: "I design toothpaste tubes for a living, and Ben's comments on [strip #84](#) make no sense. It's almost as though he has no idea how toothpaste works, and was just rambling in order to fill space."

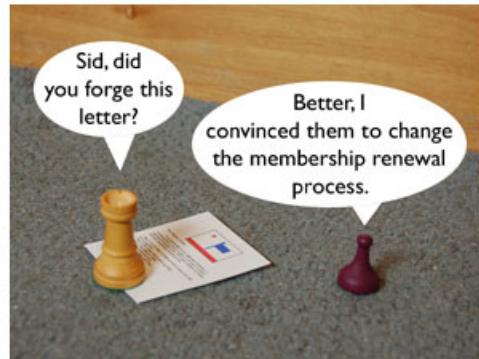
Thank you for writing in, Leo. The ease of communicating with fans is one of the things I like most about webcomics. However, regarding the points you raised in your fan letter, I disagree completely.

Lewis's Notes

Our normal update schedule does not work as well when Ben and I are two hours apart. We got this one done, but I was already supposed to be asleep by the time we finished. Basically, my comments would be some clever jokes and then instruction for you to vote for us in the [webcomic battle](#).



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The flag in the CFV flag represents flags.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

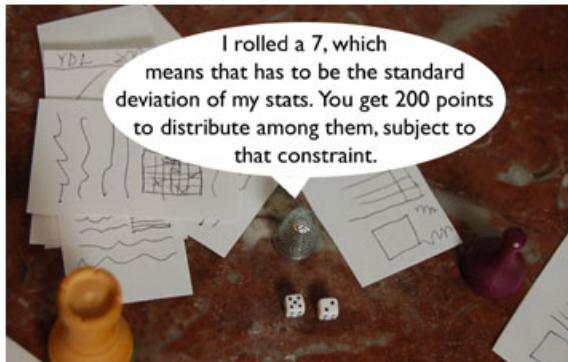
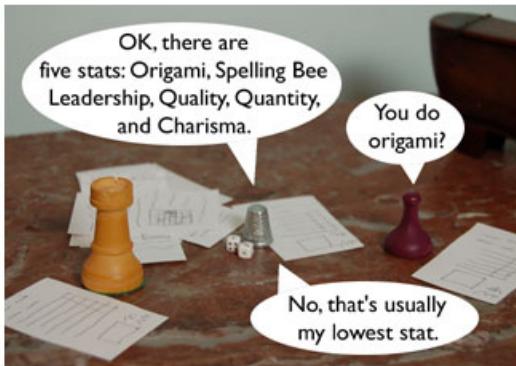
Today is December 29th, and you know what that means. That's right, it's been 200 days since we started Terror Island!

If days were years, this would be the Terror Island Bicentennial. But since days aren't years, the actual bicentennial celebration is going to have to wait until 2206. I'm looking forward to it.

Lewis's Notes

Ben and I decided that after wrapping up the demon plotline that it was time to get back to basics.

I decided that all-you-can-eat-make-your-own stir fry is excellent, and Guitar Hero II is an addiction. Also, Wii is the most brilliantly designed game system ever, based on playing like, a half hour of Wii tennis. And that's just some random game that came with the system (I don't have a Wii, but my friend Elliott does, and he was gracious enough to let me get my ass kicked at Wii tennis).



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York has higher quality than quantity.

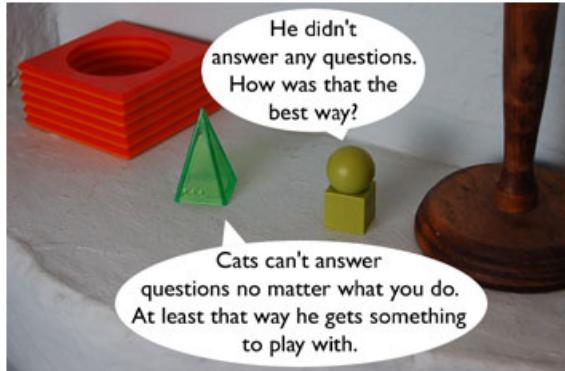
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

[Happy Tenth Anniversary of 1997!](#)

Lewis's Notes

Terror Island fans, I hope you all had an awesome New Years. Join us in 2007, when we radically alter the basic premise of the comic to "Terror Island 2: Space Terror Island (from hell)" starring Terror Island as a heroic semiotician willing to fight the rising tide of, umm, anti-semiotics.



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First Folio has a terrible memory for which species lack the power of speech.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

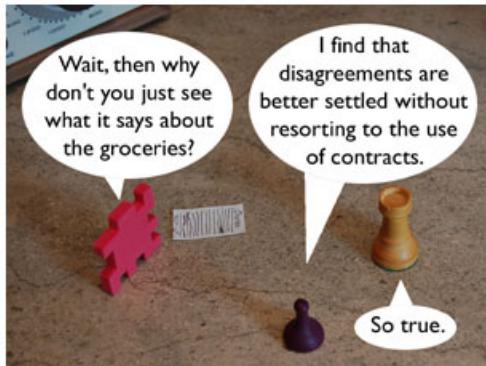
Ben's Notes

Some of you may be excited to know that [Pponderings Us](#) has returned from its hiatus. I used to be pretty active on their forum, and I'm looking forward to seeing where the strip goes next.

Lewis's Notes

Today I return to Los Angeles.

I wrote this thing, about what makes things funny. Its not very funny itself, but I found the topic very interesting, and so I thought I'd [share it with you all](#).



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Legitimizing is a form of change, so strictly speaking, Liln is wrong.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This is the same counter where I shot [strip #1](#). It's hard to believe we've come so far since then, isn't it?

Lewis's Notes

"Splash Mountain is a turbulent flume adventure with high speeds, heights, and sudden drops and stops." Guess where I went today.



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Will the as-yet-unnamed waiter save Gunpowder? Will Jame sit this adventure out? And will Sid and Stephen ever purchase groceries? Tune in Wednesday for the exciting continuation of this exciting Jame-venture

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

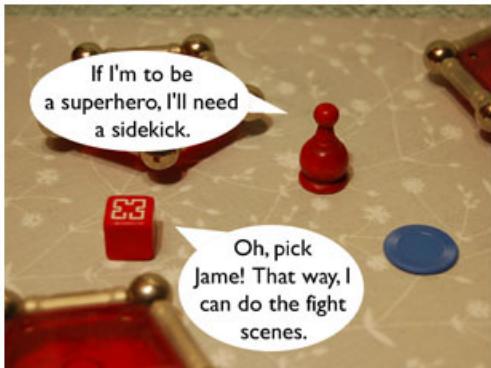
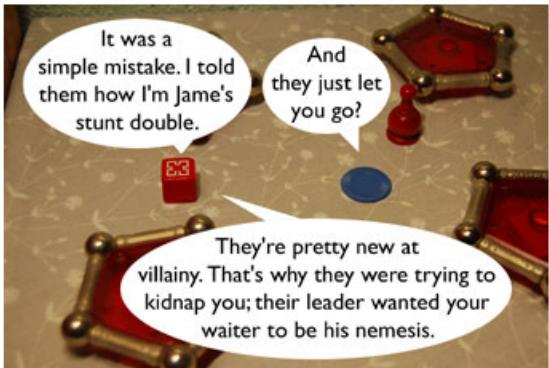
So, I noticed that [xkcd](#) is under a Creative Commons license. [Attribution-NonCommercial 2.5](#), specifically. That allows for redistribution and derivative works, provided it isn't done for money, or without crediting him.

Lewis and I don't currently have any plans to use a Creative Commons license for *Terror Island*, but I've been wondering which one would be the best choice. Attribution-NonCommercial is good, but I could imagine going for one of the ShareAlike ones. Maybe even dropping the NonCommercial too.

I'd like to see some complicated what-if scenarios about consequences of various licenses, since that's the easiest way for me to think about such things. [Here](#)'s a forum thread for discussing this topic, if you're so inclined.

Lewis's Notes

Everyone should go see Pan's Labyrinth, unless they are allergic to good movies. Also, if someone you know reviews webcomics, make sure to casually mention *Terror Island* as often as possible until we get the critical acclaim we so richly desire.



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Waiterman can't pick Gunpowder to be his sidekick, since Gunpowder doesn't have a stunt double.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I went to the [Cartoon Art Museum](#) today, because they have a great exhibit on cartoons that have been rejected by the New Yorker. I'm hoping to learn how we can get Terror Island to that point.

Lewis's Notes

I remembered today how awesome Aristotle is. Not that I ever really forgot.

Note: That's actually my boilerplate text for comments, I didn't have anything in particular to add today.



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Probably too stupid.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Some of our readers may take issue with the portrayal of Socrates as a villain. That's all well and good, but I put it to you, dear reader: is it not the case that Socrates was villainous in nature?

Reader: Surely he was, Ben.

And would you agree that one who is villainous is, by definition, a villain?

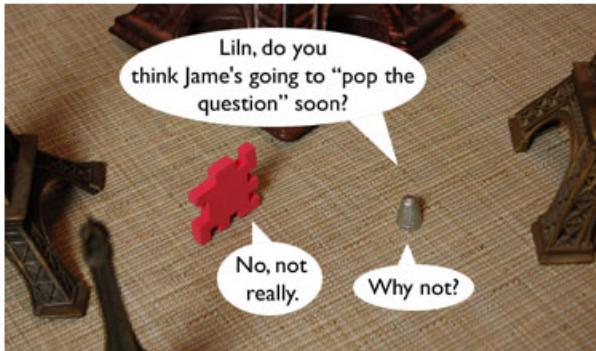
Reader: To doubt that would be madness.

Then does it not follow that Socrates was in fact a villain?

Reader: Now I see clearly; you have pointed out the error of my ways.

Lewis's Notes

I was as surprised as anyone that it is logically necessary that Socrates is the paradigm case of a villain. That's the beauty of doing a discovered comic. You learn a lot of things that you might have thought were empirical in the process of making it.



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They aren't in France. Geography City has its own Eiffel Tower(s).

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

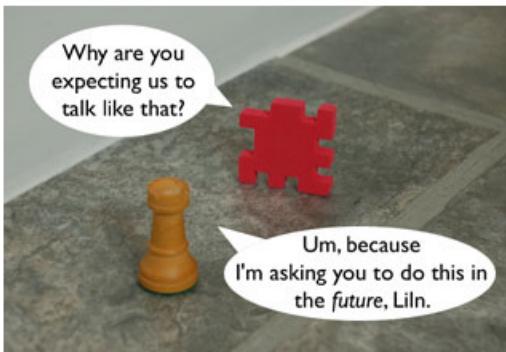
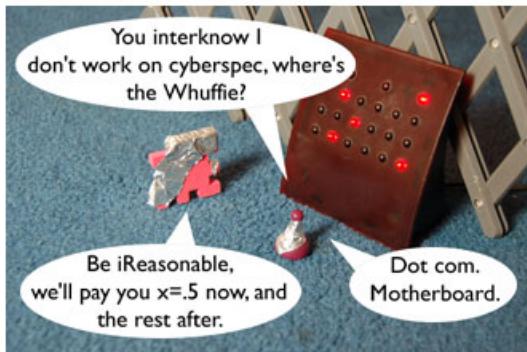
We first thought of this strip idea during Comic-Con 2006. It was the reason that we put "professional jeweler" in Liln's description on the [dramatis personae page](#).

Also, this strip is dedicated to Eric and Wednesday Websnark, who [recently got engaged](#). May their lives be free of evil demons.

Lewis's Notes

Lewis's comments are the X such that the degree funny of Lewis's Comments equals six times the degree funny of Ben's comments.

Solve for X.



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Terror Island uses a tensed logic.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

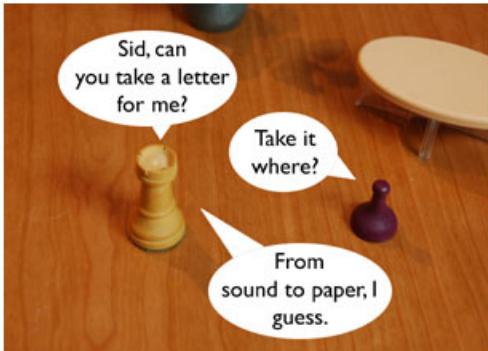
Ben's Notes

So, now you know how Terror Island dialogue shifts for the past and the future. (Except in the case of demons and other supernatural creatures, who are immune to this.) We'll get into more complicated aspects eventually, but the current understanding of time should get you through most situations.

Lewis's Notes

Writing dialogue that uses fictitious future slang is pretty fun. Coincidentally, I am taking a class on philosophy of time, which started with some readings on tense logic. This means we talk about things like the costs of endorsing a sempiternal ontology versus rejecting the implication that if it will be the case that there is someone who cures cancer, then there is someone (now) who will in the future cure cancer" (the consequent seems to suggest that whoever cures cancer is around now, the antecedent doesn't seem to require it).

"Sempiternal" is a good word because 'semp-' is a prefix meaning "always" and "eternal" means "enduring forever." "Sempiternal" is the word to use when you want to make sure there is absolutely no confusion about how long something is going to endure forever for.



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Stephen is illiterate.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If anyone reading this lives near Palo Alto and is missing some fingers on his right hand, [email me](#). This is not a joke.

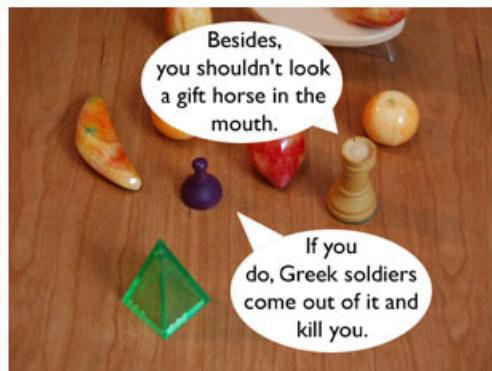
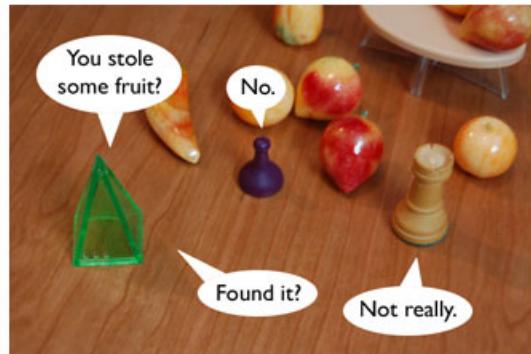
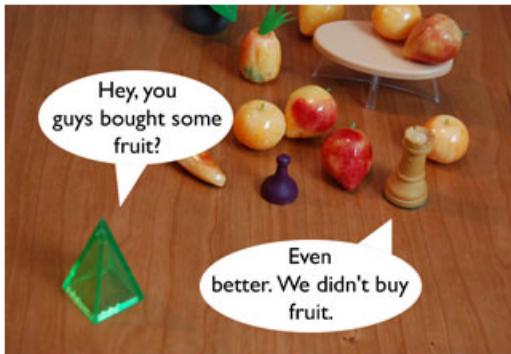
Lewis's Notes

Hey, we got [reviewed](#)!

Next Tuesday, I am going to see Emily Haines in concert. She is the lead singer of Metric, and recently released a solo album. Also, she is pretty awesome.

That reminds me, hey, Ben, we should get that comic done early, so that my concertgoing won't cause problems.

You guys should watch [this video of hers](#).



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Hence the saying, carpe equus

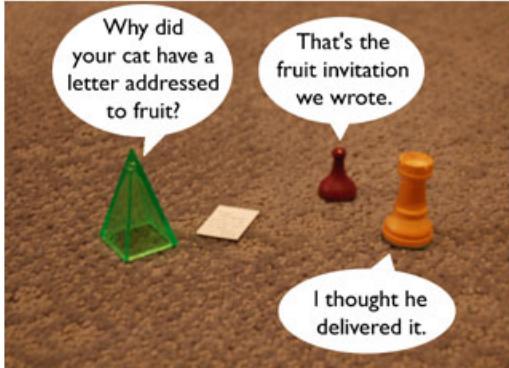
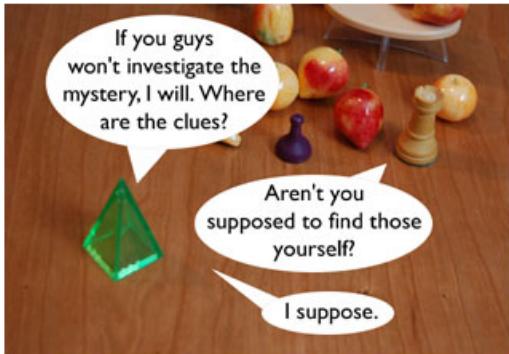
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I've never actually received a gift horse, but according to my research, today's strip is an accurate depiction.

Lewis's Notes

Children of Men and Pan's Labyrinth are good movies I saw recently. Since I just got back from Children of Men, I am too tired to write witty comments. Just assume I made a clever joke that you enjoyed, or perhaps a wry observation.



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Omicron's Bed != mailbox

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I heard that Cory Doctorow is having [a book signing](#) in San Francisco a couple weeks from now. Any fans from around there want to show up with me and hijack the event into being TerIslaCon 1? Doctorow's [a known Terror Island fan](#) himself, so he probably won't mind.

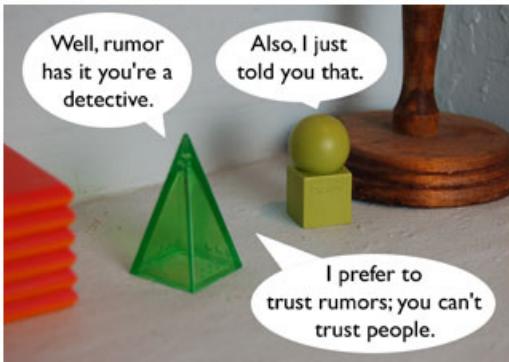
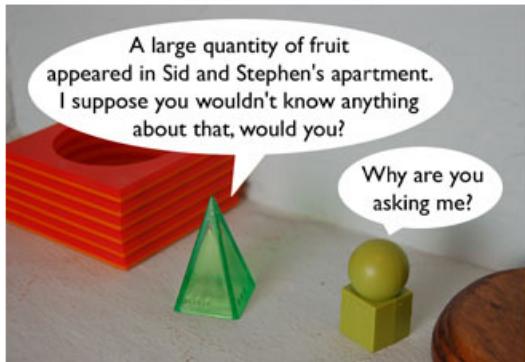
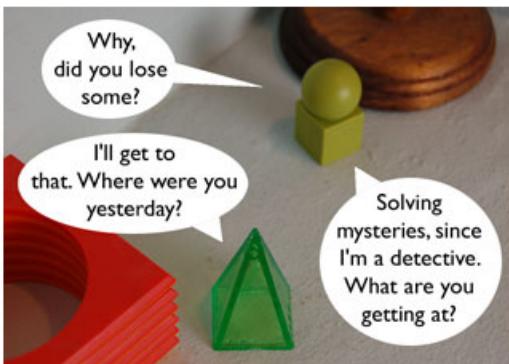
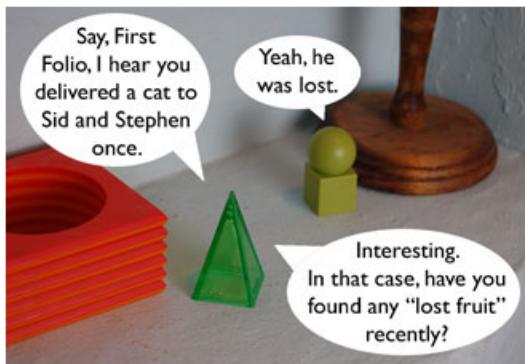
Lewis's Notes

ring ring

Hello?

Hi, yeah, it's Lewis, I am conveying my comments telephonically.

How lackluster.



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You're like a child who walks in in the middle of the movie.

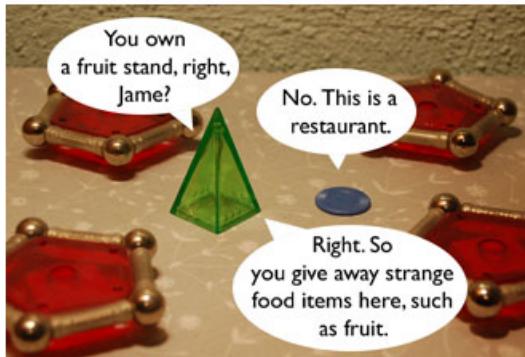
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Lewis, the title text should be "You're like a child who wanders into the middle of a movie." I looked it up using the IMDb.

Lewis's Notes

My comments today are solely to link you to [Porcupine Racetrack](#), the best sketch ever in the history of sketch comedy.



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Polite requests to be left alone are excellent alibis

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

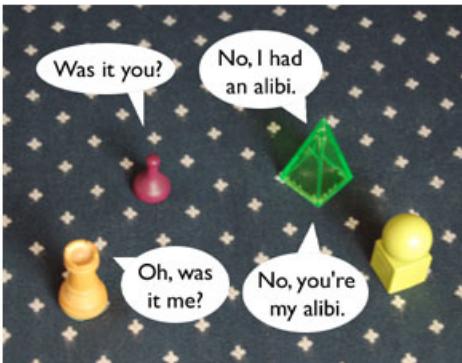
Ben's Notes

Readers! Aorist needs your help to solve this mystery! Go to [this forum thread](#) to tell us who you think brought Sid and Stephen the mystery fruit. Or if you don't want to bother with making a forum account, email us your guess.

Guesses submitted via email will be incorrect.

Lewis's Notes

Personally, my money is on Gibbs and/or Lockley.



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Did you spot all the clues?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

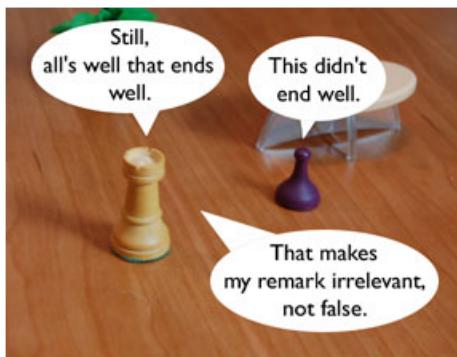
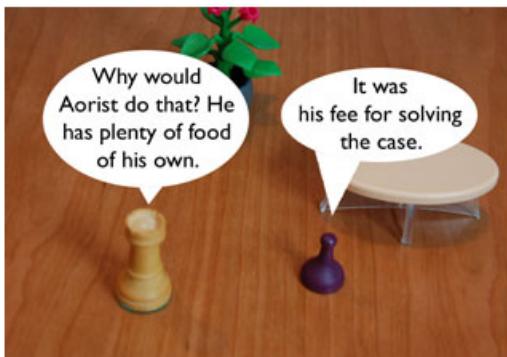
Ben's Notes

We had a lot of entrants in the 100th Strip Mystery Contest, but none of them figured out that Bartleby was the one who brought the fruit. Clancy had the closest guess: "a character we haven't even met yet." Congratulations, Clancy! I'll give you your prize next time I'm in Rochester, NY, which is the location indicated on your forum profile.

Lewis's Notes

100. Wow. Part of me didn't think we could sustain the strip this long. I mean, when you are brainstorming and your strip's premise is that people don't want to buy groceries, you imagine that you would pretty quickly run out of ways for them to fail to purchase groceries. But we have kept it up, no groceries seem to have been purchased, at least, not by our protagonists, and the strip is coming along quite well.

And remember, [always watch YouTube clips that I link you at.](#)



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Union detectives take their fee in the form of tall tales.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If you read a lot of webcomics, you may have noticed that some of them have been announcing the fact that they've been nominated for the [Webcartoonists' Choice Awards](#). We didn't get nominated for those. At all. But we *did* get recognition from the [Factitious Webcomic Awards!](#) *Terror Island* won both **Best Gamepiece Photocomic** and **Best Use of Live Cats**. I can assure you that I'm just as honored as you are impressed.

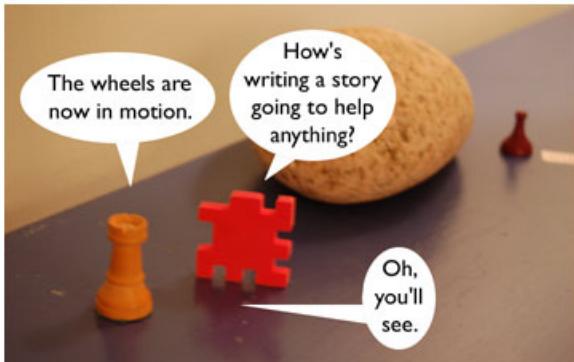
What's more, the FWAs are awarded monthly, so we have a good chance of winning again in a few weeks. Now that's efficient!

Lewis's Notes

I was thinking how awesome cartoons used to be, and how much I missed out on some really good ones. Like, the one where the main character was a superhero musician who fought against an evil rock group.* Truly outrageous. Anyways, I am also slightly saddened that I missed out on the new Ninja Turtles tv show, because according to [the plot synopsis off of wikipedia](#), it is the greatest story ever told.**

*I am just guessing that this show is awesome based solely on the premise. I haven't actually seen it.

**The greatest story about turtles with ninja training, at least.



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Sid knows that tortoises are boring.

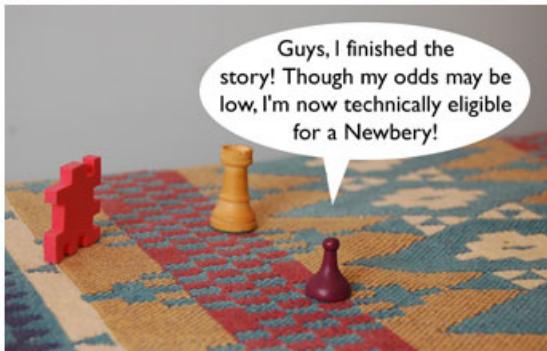
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Fans of [FOMS](#), my old photocomic, may both recognize the rock in today's strip as the brick elemental from [the fire station storyline](#). This isn't really a crossover, though. In the context of *Terror Island*, it's just a rock, not a character.

Lewis's Notes

The fingers on my left hand have increased dexterity as the result of playing Guitar Hero 2. It would be nice if, for every skill or ability I wanted to develop, there was the appropriate 'hero' game to structure my training in the form of short enjoyable tasks with scored feedback and adjustable difficulty levels. Seriously, I would totally get, "Drawing Hero," "Getting/Keeping Your Apartment Organized Hero," and "Social Interaction Hero."



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Vain glory is to Sid as hubris is to every Greek hero ever

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The Newbery Medal is an award that the ALA gives to authors of American children's books. It's a pretty good award, even though they've never given it to [Daniel Pinkwater](#), the best author of children's books. Maybe they don't realize that he's American.

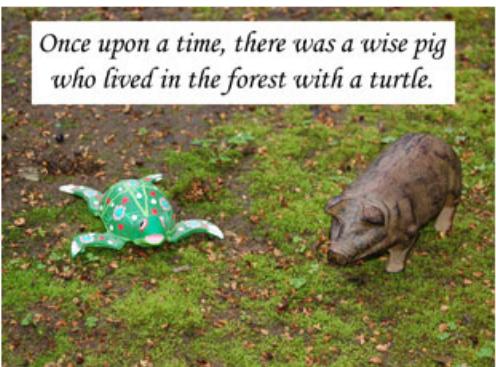
Fun Fact: If Sid's story wins a Newbery, it will be the first time the committee has given the award to a made-up work mentioned in a webcomic.

Lewis's Notes

Really, the Newbery should be eternally given to "The Monster at the End of this Book," which is universally recognized as the best children's book ever created. Second place is a tie between all the good Dr. Seuss books and "A Lion for Lewis" which was an awesome book about a kid who had siblings that did not want to play with him. When they did let him play, they would be the prince and princess and Lewis had to be the servant or whatever. So Lewis, our protagonist, leaves their silly game and looks around the attic, where he finds a lion costume. He then scares his siblings with the lion costume, and they learn a valuable lesson (about fear, I guess), and let him play for real, and not have to be the servant.

I know that sometimes I make stuff up for my comments, but that was really a book I had when I was little. You know what? Nostalgia for childhood is awesome. I'm starting [a forum thread for the discussion of children's books](#). Go forth and nostalgize.

Once upon a time, there was a wise pig who lived in the forest with a turtle.

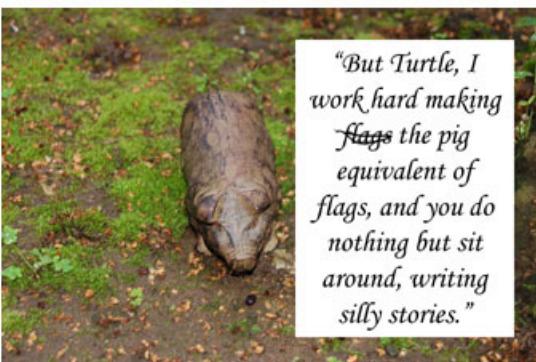


One day, the pig said, "You know, friend Turtle, we are out of acorns."



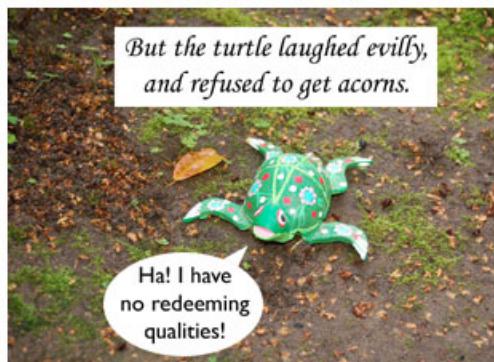
"Ha, you spoke first of the acorn shortage, now you must gather more," said the turtle.

"But Turtle, I work hard making flags the pig equivalent of flags, and you do nothing but sit around, writing silly stories."



But the turtle laughed evilly, and refused to get acorns.

Ha! I have no redeeming qualities!



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I guess the turtle's kind of a jerk

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

It was nice getting to work with a different scale for this strip. The pig and turtle are closer to the size of the rocks from FOMS than they are to gamepieces. I think of this size as "small" and the usual Terror Island scale as "tiny." This may not be quite how those terms are used by others, but it means that I can say, for instance, "I need to get some tiny chairs" and know exactly what I mean.

When we planned out this strip, I was actually thinking about using tiny objects for the characters, but at the last minute, I decided that I liked the way this pig looked better. Maybe the tiny pig and turtle will end up being used for something else.

By the way, my term for Omicron's scale is "normal-sized."

Lewis's Notes

This is the fairy tale Stephen commissioned, in case you are very confused.

*The king of the forest
told the evil turtle
to gather the acorns.*



*But the turtle refused,
and even tried to trick
the good noble pig
into going to get them.*



Then the turtle and everything he loved died.



*And the moral of
the story is that Sid should
buy the groceries.*

*Don't
you mean the
turtle?*

*No, the turtle was supposed
to get acorns. Didn't you pay attention
to what you were writing?*

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Nobody listens to the king of the forest

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The props in panel 2 may be familiar to some readers.

Lewis's Notes

I love stories with a happy ending, don't you?



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If only Stephen had mastered the ancient art of literary criticism

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

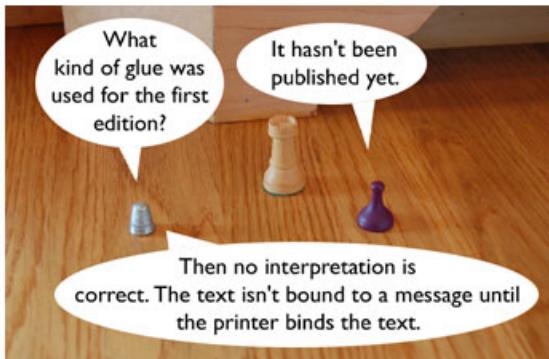
In college, I wrote a mildly controversial satire piece for the school paper, and ended up receiving a few emails objecting to it. The problem: many of the criticisms I got were along the lines of “You’re no Swift.” Of course I’m not. So what? Sure, he was good, but he isn’t the standard all satires have to be judged by. Namechecking “A Modest Proposal” whenever satire comes up is a cliche. Don’t do it.

Some of the other reactions I got involved death threats, though. That was honestly more pleasant.

Lewis's Notes

When people ask Ben and I what the point is of our comic, I think strips like this one are excellent evidence that we are fundamentally concerned with developing a better understanding of the relationship between artist, artwork, and audience. For instance, you might think we are just writing off some of these debates about textual interpretation as silly, but really, Ben and I are holding these views up to the harsh light of inquiry, so we can tell if they are suitable bases for groundwork in a theory of aesthetic normativity.

Stay tuned next week for when we examine the philosophy of friendship.



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York cross-minored in Literary Criticism and Bookbinding at CotEU

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Some webcartoonists probably would have handled the fourth panel above by simply drawing the “Stephen should buy groceries” flag. But here at Terror Island, we care about art more than they do. That’s why we don’t stop at designing how a flag should look. I then take the design, print it out in the form of a physical object, and then make a photographic record of that object. That’s because photocomics are about being real. We’re not going to try to pass off fake images on you. Every panel is an actual scene from physical reality, which is one of my top ten favorite realities.

Lewis's Notes

I try not to pry into the personal lives of our characters, so I don’t know what happens off-panel in these storylines, but based on my knowledge of Sid and Stephen, I assume that Sid and Stephen will recognize that the flag and the book cancel each other out, returning us to the stalemate scenario. I am less confident about this next part, but I am pretty sure that it is not exactly a stalemate, since making this flag for Sid likely ate away at a piece of Stephen’s soul, both the part of him that cares about not getting groceries and the part that cares about not making really bad flags. Sid on the other hand wrote a pretty neat story that he does not consider to undermine his professional credibility.

I think about the grocery competition in terms of tennis scores, so to summarize, the strip generally takes place with a score of **deuce**, and it was, very briefly, **advantage Stephen**, but Sid has better net game than we all expected, garnering a swift two point swing, leaving us with a current score of **slight advantage Sid**.

If you’re thinking “there’s no such score as ‘slight advantage’ in tennis,” I remind you that no one elected you king of tennis, so maybe keep those thoughts to yourself.



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They were originally going to give it $5i+2$ stars, but that would be too complex.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Getting the pieces in panel four to look transparent was kind of fun. Maybe we'll do a storyline later on where all the characters become transparent because of an alien disease or something.

Lewis's Notes

I suggested the following alternative title text: "They were originally going to give it $\pi+2e$ stars, but that would have been irrational, even for them." Note that I came up with a pun of my own volition.



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Waiterman should know that there's no such thing as g-g-g-ghosts.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I hope you like the way the imaginary characters look. Their transparency means that each panel needs to use two pictures, which is twice as many as usual.

Lewis's Notes

Bonus Alternate Title Text: "These aren't imaginary people, it's just old man Witherspoon from the abandoned amusement park."



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Waiterman fell for the old fiat money trick

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

A restaurant called “Eat at Joe’s” next to another restaurant called “Joe’s” was one of our earliest ideas for Terror Island. I’ve tried to get it in the strip a few times before, but it didn’t really fit right until now, when we had the idea of making it more imaginary.

Lewis's Notes

Economists might disagree with the final panel assessment, but it turns out that economists are actually less credible than imaginary characters in a work of fiction.



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Focus groups are normally a bit larger than this.

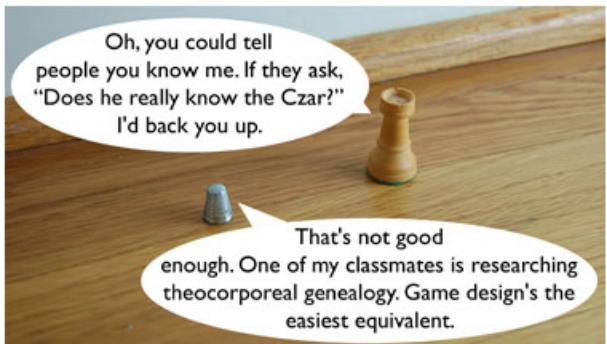
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I may have mentioned it here before, but Ray (the actor who portrays Omicron) actually does regularly drink from that sink. It's as good a water bowl as anything, I suppose.

Lewis's Notes

Sometimes I learn things when making Terror Island. Today I learned that Mousetrap was actually based directly on the drawings of Rube Goldberg. Crazy.



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Stephen is implying that 'York's Daily Life' was not successful.

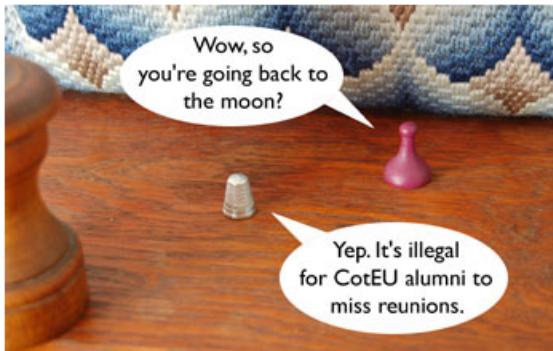
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

You forgot about [Center of the Earth University](#), didn't you? Or "[York's Daily Life](#)"? Or Stephen being the [Czar](#)? Wow, this strip didn't seem so continuity-heavy to me when we were writing it. I'm not even going to bother explaining the rest of it now.

Lewis's Notes

I heard that people who link to Terror Island from their website or blog are favored by the gods. It might not be true, but why risk it?



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Do you know where your favorite pylon is?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I played *Odin's Ravens* today. It's a fun board game, set up to encourage the sort of fast-paced planning and trickery you'd expect from Hugin and Munin, but my first thought when the box was opened was "Kind of neat pieces. Too bad they're too representational for Terror Island."

Lewis's Notes

This strip is dedicated to all the fans who said, "Why aren't there more nonsensical grocery schemes in *Terror Island*?"



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Sid and Stephen have been following York around for like a whole day asking to come with

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If you have friends who are astronomers, you should try calling them astrologers sometime. It provides hours of fun, probably.

Lewis's Notes

It took me a while to come up with the word "terrestrians" because I just kept thinking of words that already existed or sounded too much like, "terrorists." Also, I hope you are all excited at the prospect of a solo moon adventure for York, I know I would be.

Also, to add on to Ben's suggestion, when they get angry with you for calling them astrologers, make sure to remind them that haruspicy is a better form of divination anyway. That will double the fun.



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How will Waiterman get out of this one?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Do any Terror Island fans live in Washington, D.C.? I'm going to be there this weekend, so this could be a good chance for you to buy autographs from me in person.

Lewis's Notes

I saw an excellent collection of plays last Monday night. It was called [Bedtime Stories](#). I found out about it because my friend Kate was performing in it, but coincidentally, so was the Internet's own [Dave Kellett](#), husband of Gloria Calderon Kellett, the author of the plays. If you are in the LA area, I definitely recommend checking it out.



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York didn't notice that the suitcases were so heavy, because he's on the moon.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

You're probably disappointed that no stars are visible in those moon shots. It's because stars are actually pretty faint, even from the moon, so they don't show up without a long exposure time. When I went to the moon for these pictures, I used a fairly short exposure, to better capture the images of the characters, so the stars didn't come out.

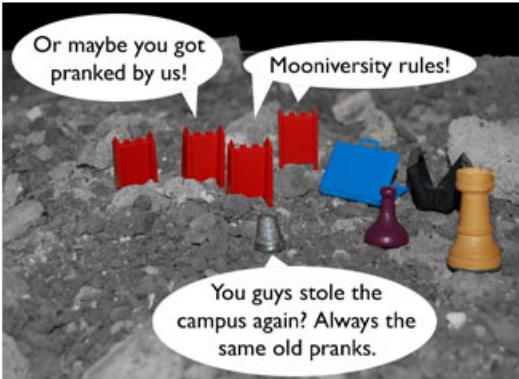
To learn more about taking pictures of stars on the moon, see [this article](#).

Lewis's Notes

Silly Ben, stars can't fit on the moon.

A lot of people ask me, "Lewis, how can I help *Terror Island*?" The answer is simple. Tell everyone you know about it, constantly. Open it up in their web browser and insist that they read some. I didn't want to tell people this, but if we don't get our numbers up soon, we're going to have to switch formats, and become a dramatic fantasy comic, only the dialogue will all be written in Fake Esperanto.

Just remember the three easy steps TELL SHOW INSIST: 1) TELL everyone you know about it. 2) SHOW them the site. 3) INSIST they keep reading.



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Mooniversity State's mascot is a moon rock, because Mooniversity kids are jerks.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

In regards to strip #116, a fan by the name of frost_maze asks, "Wouldn't the suitcases have burst open as soon as York landed on the moon? After all, the suitcases have air inside and the pressure would make it open."

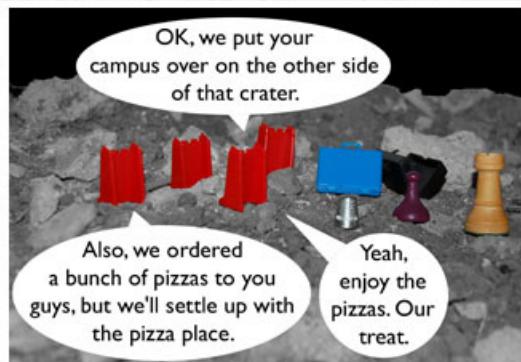
That's a good question. The answer is that in order to stow away, Sid and Stephen had to remove the contents of the suitcases so they could fit inside. So although they had pressurized air when York packed them, this was no longer the case upon moon arrival.

Lewis's Notes

Spring Break! WOOOOOO!

So far, my spring break has consisted in catching up on sleep. Soon it will involve writing some papers as well. Believe it or not, this is actually a super appealing way to spend spring break.

For realxies.



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To answer the question from panel 3: yes, that is a good prank.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Comments are for lesser beings.

I wrote Ben's comments today. - Lewis

Lewis's Notes

I have a new comic which I will be doing in addition to *Terror Island*. It is called [*Mere Happenings in the history of my body*](#). It is a journal comic. You should check it out.





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Being shot from a cannon is actually a pretty standard punishment under Moon law.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I actually took the pictures for the last three panels of today's strip on Earth, at the university closest to my house. I'm willing to go to some effort for photocomics (I went [on location to Japan for FOMS](#) once, for example), but building a full university on the moon, even a gamepiece-sized one, just wouldn't be cost-effective. I hope you understand.

Lewis's Notes

I am beta testing some [archives](#). I'll add the navigation button to the page template when I get the archives up to date.

As much as I wish I'd gone to Center of the Earth University, I think I am proud to be a terrestrial. We don't do as much cannon-oriented punishment, and we aren't required by law to attend reunions.

On the other hand, CotEU students get to major in things that Ben and I make up because they sound cool, so, there are some trade-offs involved.



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York isn't wearing his nametag because he thinks he's too cool for that

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

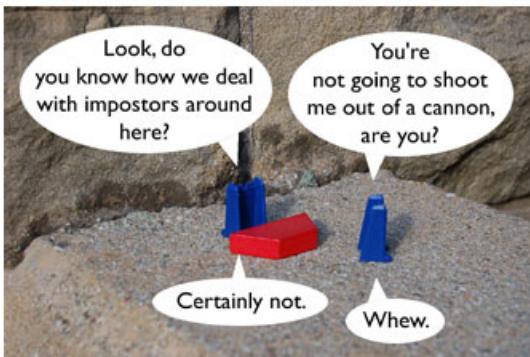
Ben's Notes

This is our 120th strip! That's five factorial, which is why I'm using exclamation points in these comments! There will be more such exclamation points when we make it to 720 strips!

Lewis's Notes

The character of Ned Q. Sorcerer is based on my current roommate.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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The moon is a harsh catapult

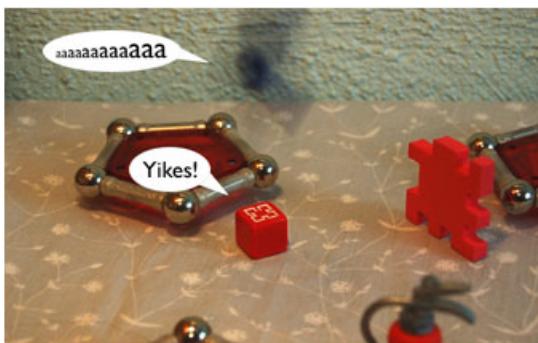
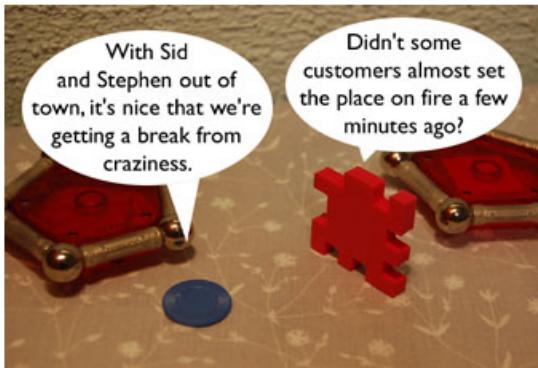
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I'm not really sure if a catapult counts as an upgrade from a cannon. But then, I didn't get in to any moon colleges, so I probably don't know what I'm talking about.

Lewis's Notes

Some people have been asking whether every policy of moon-based colleges involves cannons and the like. Well, Center of the Earth University policy was written by a group of people who considered the essence of education to be moving rapidly through the air, as a projectile. These are not retributivist flingings, nor even used as deterrent; they are meant to be rehabilitative learning experiences.



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The fire didn't speak English, so they had to use a Japanese fire extinguisher

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Getting a picture of Ned falling was harder than I'd thought. There were a couple shots that did a better job of showing the falling action, except that in them, I missed and hit Liln or a table instead.

Lewis's Notes

This update was late, for which I apologize, but we are going to blame the Teapot Dome scandal, rather than Internet, because Internet gets upset when you blame it for your problems, and the Teapot Dome scandal is just happy to be getting discussed.



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Actually, Geography City counts as the Czar's fiefdom

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Admit it, if you overheard someone talking about catapults, you'd assume he was a superhero.

Lewis's Notes

I can sympathize with the henchmen, because if something exciting and work related came up on my day off, I too would be proactive about it, despite not being obligated to deal with it.



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2d6 is actually a pretty limited way to select emotions.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

It's too bad that the text on their name tags isn't very easy to read. That is realistic, though.

Lewis's Notes

I found out today that I can't pronounce the German names "Julia" or "Johannes" correctly, because of the vowels. I think I was happier when I mistakenly thought I could pronounce them correctly, but it is probably better that now I will not go around pronouncing them wrong and planting subtle seeds of resentment for me in the minds of so-named individuals.



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Despite the D.D.S., Ned isn't actually a dentist either

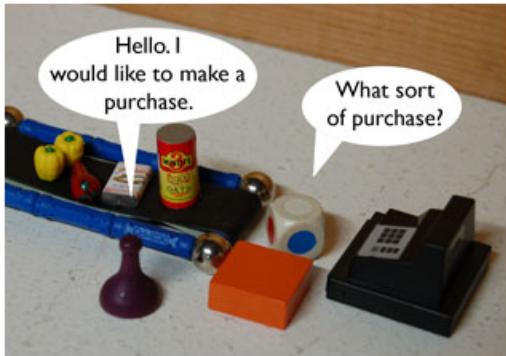
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

We've seen the sphere of banishing in action [before](#). Though it isn't really in action now. Stephen doesn't know any magic.

Lewis's Notes

There is an alchemy joke that should be clear from this strip. Its proof is left as an exercise to the reader.



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This is basically the opposite of canon.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

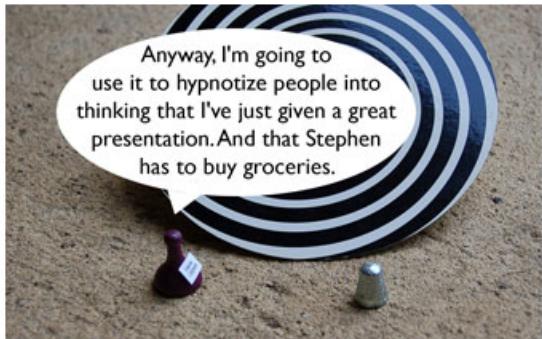
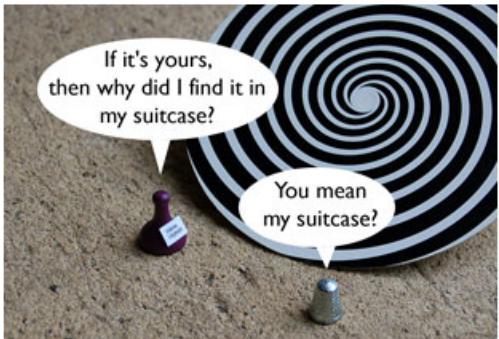
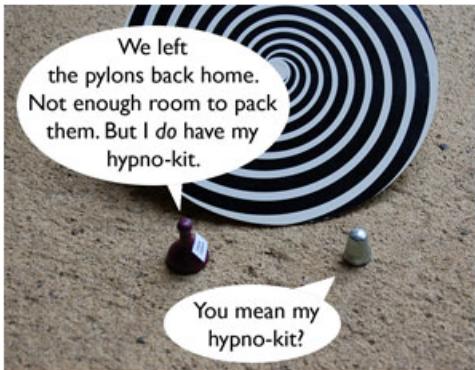
Hm. I wonder where we can possibly go from here.

Lewis's Notes

I wish I knew what game that die portraying the store clerk is from. Games where the instructions read, "Roll the die and move the corresponding color of spaces" get many points in my book.

How many?

Purple, that's how many.



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The hypno-kit looks too large to pack, but that's an optical illusion

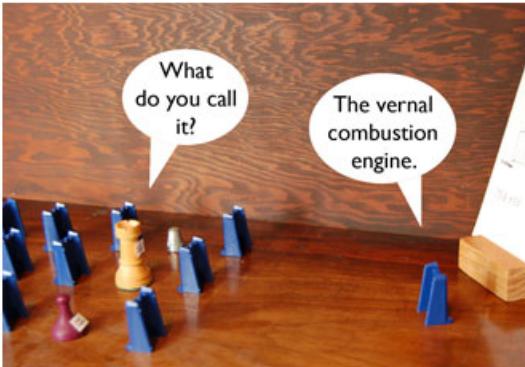
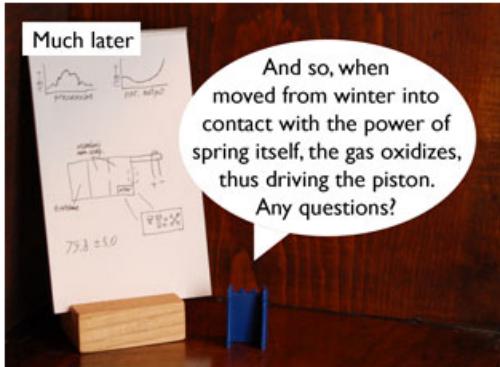
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Man, the hypno-kit hasn't been in the strip for a while. (Last appearance: [strip #47](#)) I had to look through the archives to make sure "hypno-kit" was supposed to have a hyphen.

Lewis's Notes

I am in San Francisco right now, probably for some sort of philosophy thing. Yay philosophy!
I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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The charts in panel 3 contain hidden clues

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

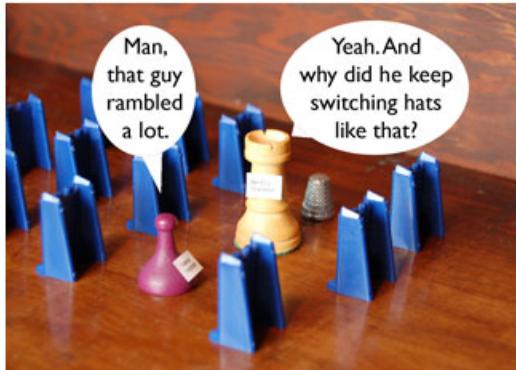
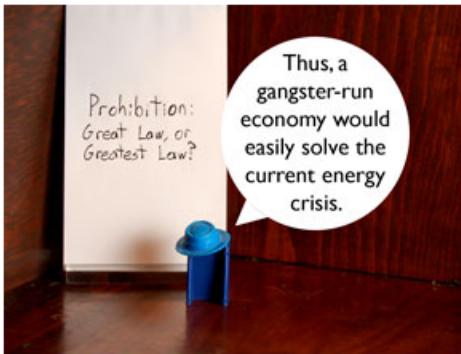
Ben's Notes

Hey, this strip number's another power of 2! I don't remember seeing one of those since at least 50 strips ago.

Lewis's Notes

The vernal combustion engine was one of the first ideas I came up with for *Terror Island*. We've been sitting on that one for close to a year now, just waiting for the right moment to strike. I mean, spring.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Sadly, preventing Ragnarok is impossible

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

You know, I really like the idea of failed mutinies. I can't think of a single successful mutiny in a work of fiction that I liked.

Lewis's Notes

Sometimes when I go grocery shopping, I think, "I don't need a cart" But the weird thing is, I only have the normal number of arms (2), so I have no idea why I think I can do that. Last time, I dropped a bottle of shampoo, and had to put all the things I was buying down, reorganize them, and pick them up again, so I guess I learned my lesson the moderately easy way.



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Actually, his superpower is for everyone to know that he is a dentist.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

We felt the strip needed more super-powered excitement, and this was the most action-packed power we could think of.

Lewis's Notes

Unbeknownst to Ben and I, this comic is taking some steps away from "slice-of-life" as its genre and towards "action/superhero."

I have begun to hope that my life will take a similar turn, and I will gain super powers. I would also be pleased (though to a lesser extent) if my friends and associates began to develop super powers.

Also, we got reviewed. [Check it.](#)



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The Green Grocer can never pass up an opportunity to announce himself.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

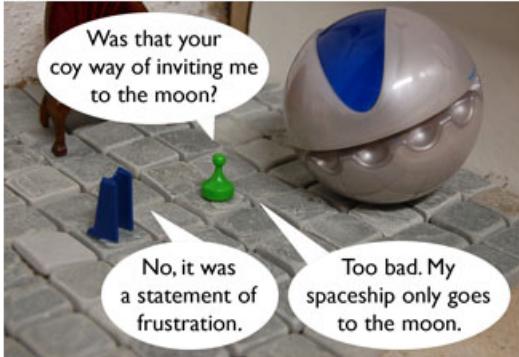
Ben's Notes

Fran Seabane writes in, asking, "Why doesn't your webcomic update every day? I want to see more than three strips a week!"

I'm glad to know you want more Terror Island, Fran! But the reason we only update on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays is that our traffic data shows that more people visit the site on those days. Admittedly, I may have the direction of causation backwards there, but there is definitely a causal link.

Lewis's Notes

You can tell that The Green Grocer is fairly brave, since he was willing to fight The Obvious Dentist even though The Obvious Dentist has the advantage of having actual super powers. I would suggest that the henchmen balance that out, but the odds are that they wouldn't participate in the fight, so much as give insightful analyses of the quips traded between the combatants.



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His phone also goes only to the moon.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This strip was inspired by the fact that my favorite type of fruit juice is guava juice. Orange juice is also good.

Lewis's Notes

This strip was not inspired by any juices whatsoever. But it was brought to you by the letter π and the number e .



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Spoiler: they marry Sid and Stephen in strip 450

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

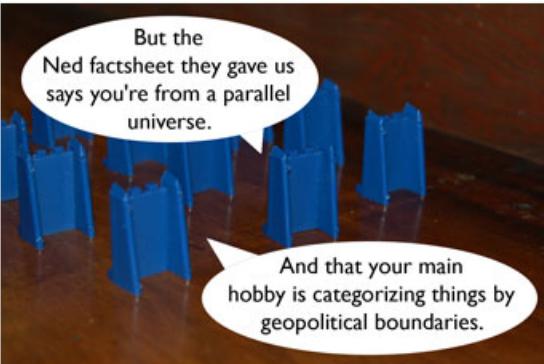
Ben's Notes

I just noticed that the name "Sidra" looks a lot like "Sethra." That isn't intentional, though. Lewis came up with her name, and I'm pretty sure he's never read any of the books in which Sethra Lavode appears.

Lewis's Notes

The world would be a better place if more philosophers spent time in their works discussing the secret powers of bread.

Yes, David Hume is that awesome, why do you ask?



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Stephen requested a factsheet, but was told that would be cheating

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Just got back from seeing Iggy Pop play in San Francisco. Putting some pictures of gamepieces online almost feels like a letdown after all that **rocking**.

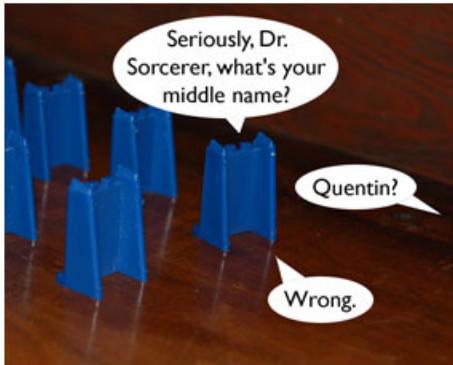
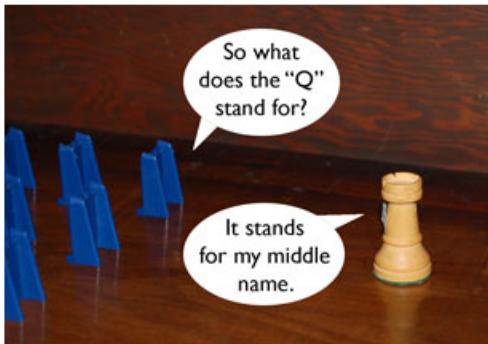
Almost.

Lewis's Notes

Sometimes I want to share jokes with all of you, but I worry that they won't translate well. For instance, a while ago, a number of us in the department were sitting around the philosophy grad student lounge, talking about a question in metaphysics, and a possible solution to it. There were some worries about how well the solution would work if you had certain other views, and one of my fellow grads said, "Yeah, but that's only a problem for David Lewis" to which another replied, "And Aristotle."

Of course, we all burst into laughter.

I would explain the joke, but (a) explaining jokes always makes them less funny, and this one wasn't actually that funny to begin with, and (b) I can't remember what problem we were talking about, or the proposed solution, or the worry, so if anyone can think of a philosophical problem, solution and worry about that solution which meet the condition "it is humorous that David Lewis and Aristotle would both have to deal with worry x if offering solution y to problem z", please let me know.



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This is probably a lot more interesting than if Ned were giving the presentation

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

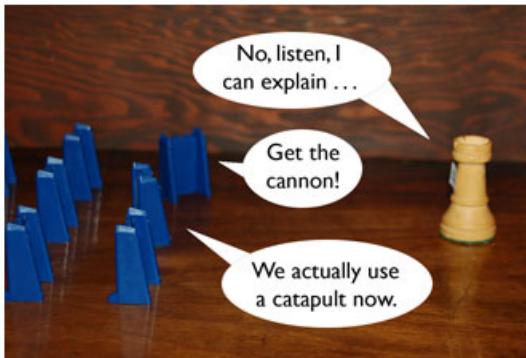
I went to APE this weekend, which was a lot of fun. Instead of writing a detailed con report, here's a list of names:

- [Daniel Merlin Goodbrey](#)
- [David Malki!](#)
- [Stephen Notley](#)
- [Adam Prosser](#)
- [Jason Shiga](#)
- [Chuck Whelon](#)
- [Chris Yates](#)

People like having their names listed, right?

Lewis's Notes

You guys owe me one, because Ben's idea for today's strip was, "What if Stephen just buys some groceries?" I obviously said no. He came back with, "What if Sid just buys some groceries?" I have to admit that I was tempted, but ultimately, I remembered that there are no grocery stores on the moon. Man, what a continuity nightmare that would have been.



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Don't you hate how the guys in front are always the only ones who speak up at lectures?

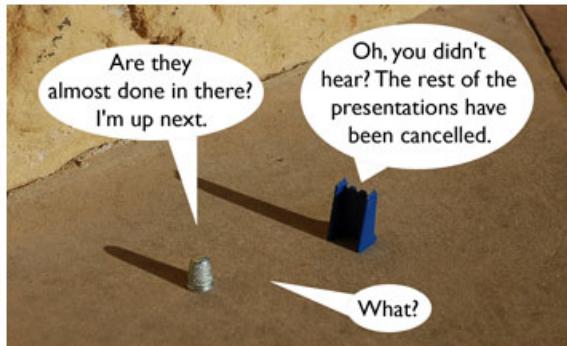
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Looks like Stephen's got himself into another fix here. Taking credit for bilocation's some nice fast thinking, but we'll just see how long that lasts him. That crowd's pretty unruly, and I've got a feeling the real Ned might have a few things to say himself.

Lewis's Notes

Some people think the real Ned Q. Sorcerer should be the one with the nametag. Some think it should be the one who is really Ned Q. Sorcerer. My position is that, obviously, the real Ned Q. Sorcerer is both of them. (not canon)



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The Green Grocer is now considering upgrading York from bait to lieutenant

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

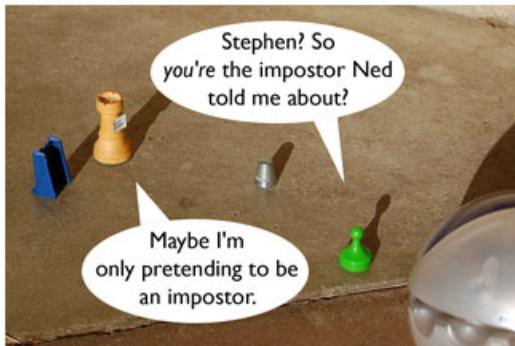
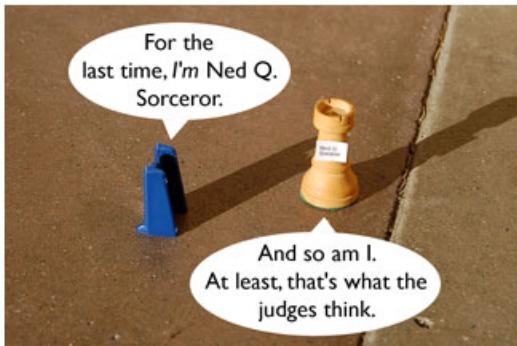
I like that the Green Grocer announces his name so often. Maybe if all the characters did that sort of thing, people would find it easier to remember who's who.

Lewis's Notes

Sometimes people ask me if philosophy of language has any practical applications. They are usually asking it rhetorically, or the way that similar to asking rhetorically, but more as an insult than as an actual rhetorical maneuver. I have an answer for them, though, whether they want it or not.

Let's say you're reading an article on Wikipedia, and for whatever reason, some stupid dispute about neutrality resulted in the article reading like this, "Some have claimed that 2 is the only even prime number, but this is not accepted by all mathematicians." Well, *pragmatics* is what philosophers of language and linguists call it when there is more to what you conveyed than the literal meaning of your words. And it provides a formal basis to explain why phrasing the claim that way, even if it is literally true, is highly misleading. For example, in this case, it is because making the weak statement that some people have claimed 2 to be the only even prime suggests that the stronger statement that 2 is the only even prime number isn't warranted. So the attempt to state things neutrally tends to indicate a pretty strong skepticism. While this isn't shocking, what is shocking is the awesomely systematic way in which these implications seem to get generated. So remember, if someone asks why philosophy of language is useful, the answer is that it gives us a way to explain why the articles on Wikipedia sound so silly all the time.

Bonus points to anyone who can successfully get Wikipedia to adopt language like this in the articles for primes and the number 2.



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This is why Stephen never became an event planner

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I probably spend more time tying gamepieces to things than almost anyone else. You'd think I'd be better at it than this.

Lewis's Notes

I am reading a book right now by a philosopher named Graham Priest. It is called *Toward Non-Being* and it is defending the claim that some things don't exist. Some people find that to be an obviously false thesis. Some people can't believe it is in doubt. What is important to note is that Priest is not saying that there are non-existent objects (that would be silly, he admits). He only wants to say that some objects don't exist.

Yeah, philosophy is pretty awesome, in case you were wondering.



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They don't hold up very well under interrogation

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

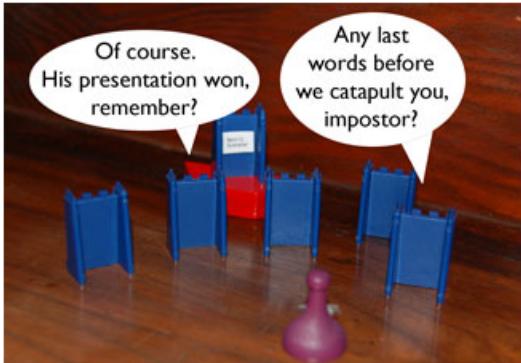
Ben's Notes

In case it isn't clear: the reason Ned has the nametag now is that he took it from Stephen when tying him up. This is also the reason that Stephen no longer has the nametag.

Lewis's Notes

After this [mistaken identity](#) storyline, Ben and I plan to do an [Accidental Marriage](#) and [Locked in a freezer](#). Man, I am so glad that every storyline there is has pretty much already been thought of and categorized on the internet.

Except [this story](#), which is brand new.



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Today, the real action's in the comments

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Good news! I wrote a theme song for *Terror Island* the other day. Like all great songs, it's to the tune of [the WKRP in Cincinnati opening theme](#).

Lyrics:

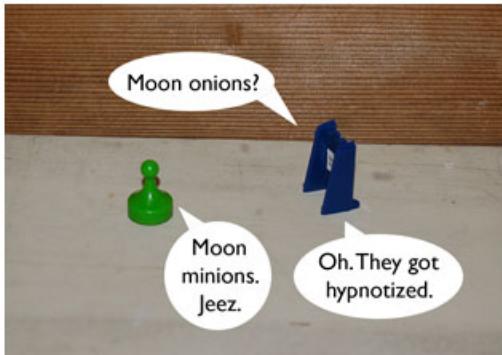
Baby, if you've ever wondered
Wondered whatever became of me
I'm living with a rook in Terror Island
Terror Island, Geography City
Got kind of stubborn about buying groceries
Pranks and schemes, never giving in
Maybe someday I'm just gonna starve and die
But maybe buying food would be a sin
I'm at Geography City in Terror Island

Lewis's Notes

I can one-up that:

Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale,
a tale of a fateful duel.
That started from a lack of grapes,
and one disputed rule.
The czar was a vexillographer,
His roommate, notary.
The only one to buy some food,
was their roommate Bartleby, their roommate Bartleby
Their scheming started getting old,
Lil's boyfriend was confused.
Until the bit with Demon Jame,
no one was amused, no one was amused.
The plot occurs in the land of this impossible terror isle,

with Funhaven, First Folio too,
the Jeweler Liln, and Aorist,
the Restaurateur,
the Waiter and the giant cat,
here in Terror Isle.



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Must not break fourth wall — oops

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

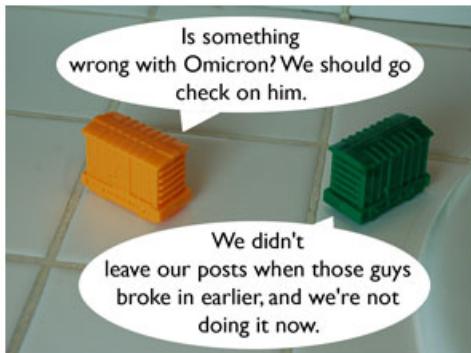
There are actually a couple side bits in this strip that have some importance for future plot, but since Lewis wrote pretty much the entire thing (based on my suggestion of "What if the Green Grocer goes and talks to Ned or something?"), I'm going to let him be the one to explain it.

Lewis's Notes

Here's my review of Spider-Man 3: It was an OK movie, but needed more Venom. They could have cut out the entire Sandman part and most of the Harry plotline, and just added way more scenes with Eddie Brock and the symbiote.

Also, they should have kept the origin story from the comics, and had Spider-Man get the symbiote from an alien costume vending machine.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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And from that day forward, Omicron's mew was known as the purr heard round the fiefdom

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Hey, it's [Gibbs and Lockley](#)! Remember them? I guess they live in Sid and Stephen's bathroom now. And they're bad at handling [break-ins](#).

To portray Omicron's cat food in this strip, I used actual cat food. Most food photographers will tell you that this is a bad idea, since it doesn't end up looking very realistic. But fortunately for me, I don't care about realism.

Lewis's Notes

While it is true that the yellow traincar is either Gibbs or Lockley, and true that the green traincar is either Gibbs or Lockley, and also true that between the two traincars, one is Gibbs and one is Lockley, it isn't determinate in the fiction which traincar is Gibbs and which is Lockley. A prize to anyone who can use this in deriving a contradiction for this perfectly logical webcomic.



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Sid is a jealous catowner

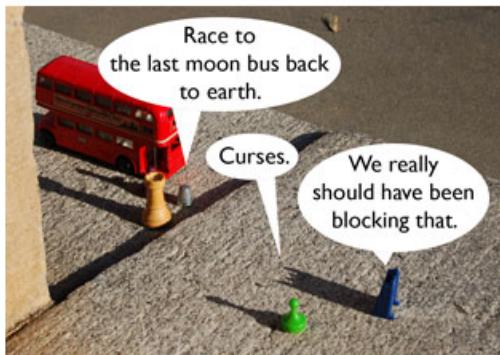
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

My regular camera is in for repairs at the moment, so this strip was made using a backup one. As you can see, it only takes extra-wide pictures, but we should be back to the normal shape by Monday.

Lewis's Notes

Actually, Ben's backup camera can take extra-tall pictures too. He just doesn't know how to rotate it properly.
I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Not all moon buses are double-decker, but they are all red

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

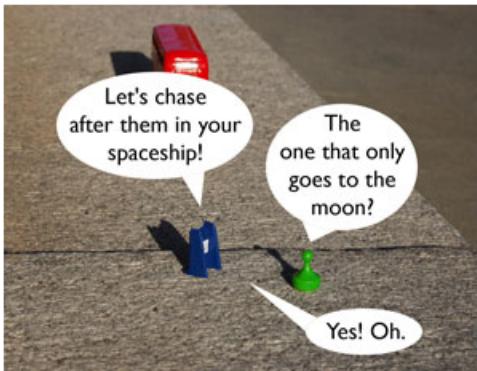
Ben's Notes

This makes 144 strips, or one gross. Now you can tell all your friends that Terror Island is gross, and then shout “Get it?” at them until they laugh. If they don’t, they’re not really your friends.

Lewis's Notes

Ben wrote my comments today.

No I didn't. -Ben



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After a brief period of missing them, Jame is already growing weary of Sid and Stephen's antics again.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Not many people know this, but I have secretly been using the constraint of never photographing the same gamepiece twice. This means that in order to complete today's strip alone, I needed four different copies of Clue. Even though you can't see Sid in the first panel, I had a piece offscreen representing Sid being on the bus. Since the bus windows aren't opaque, I counted bus shots as including Sid, even though, technically, the camera didn't capture him.

I wrote Ben's comments today. -Lewis

Lewis's Notes

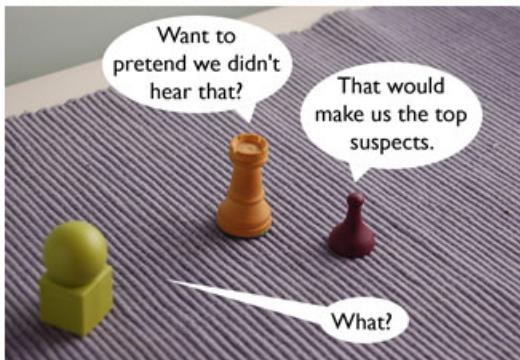
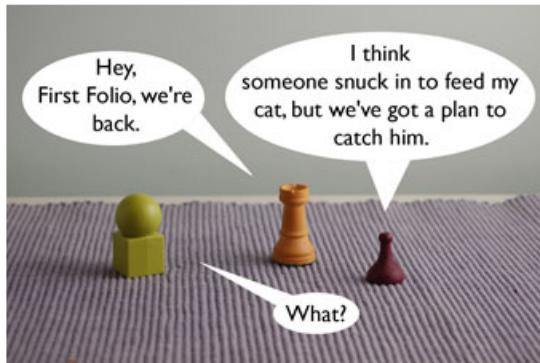
The most awesome occupation I ever said I wanted to be when I grew up was "Puppy Dog." This is awesome for three reasons:

First, puppy dogs are objectively awesome.

Second, *puppy dog* isn't a career, it is a type of animal, but I wasn't going to let that stop me.

Third, and most importantly, my goal, as a child, for when I grew up, was to be the canine equivalent of a child. So, my goal was to not so much grow up and get a job, as turn into a dog that was roughly the same age as me.

So much for childhood dreams.



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Stephen was really looking forward to the listening contest.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Finally, they're done with the nametags. I've had to keep those tiny bits of paper around and in good condition for about two months now. Sid's kept falling off whenever I took him over to the university for CotEU scenes.

Lewis's Notes

I was just thinking, it probably isn't true that everyone loves a slinky.
On the other hand, I really do believe that nobody doesn't like Sarah Lee.



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The unity don't really understand how schemes work.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

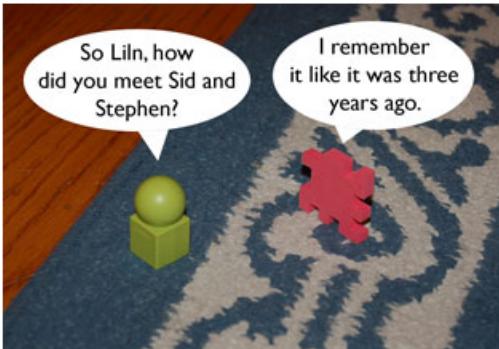
Ben's Notes

Here's something cool I found out about on Wikipedia. [Goodstein's theorem](#), which is that every Goodstein sequence converges to 0, has a pretty simple proof using infinite ordinals, but it can be shown to be unprovable within Peano arithmetic. It's a really natural-looking theorem as examples of undecidability go, and the proof using ordinals is easy to follow. The proof that it's unprovable in PA is trickier, unfortunately.

Lewis's Notes

If you link us from your comic or website, please let me know, so I can give you a shout out, or link back, or what have you. If you read us, and don't link to us from your comic or website, now would be a good time to consider changing that.

The unity sound a lot like Vicki from "Small Wonder" in my head, but I'm not sure if that's even remotely canonical, so don't start writing fanfic with that presupposition.



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The store isn't really called Just Jewelry. It only becomes alliterative during flashbacks.

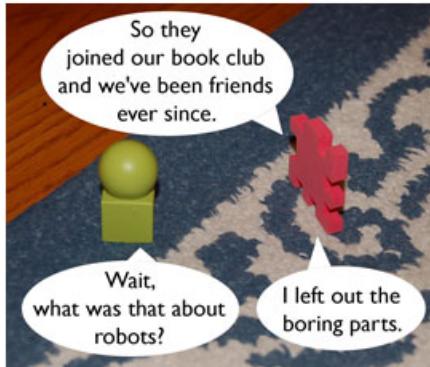
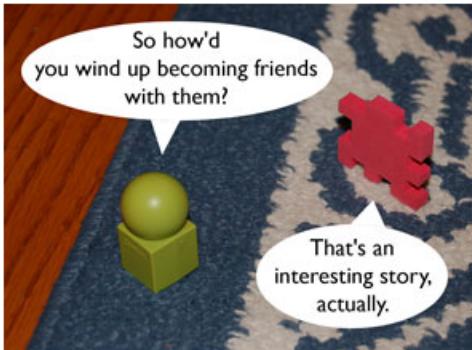
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This strip is dedicated to all the fans who've been bugging me to tell them about how Sid and Stephen used to be jewel thieves. And to everyone who was wondering when we'd get around to showing Liln's jewelry store in the strip.

Lewis's Notes

These comments are crafted with a riddle in mind. The first person to solve the riddle wins a prize. Can you solve it?



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You'll never guess what Sid and Stephen originally wanted the Jane Austen book for.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

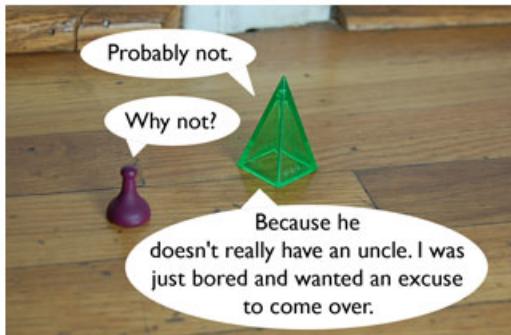
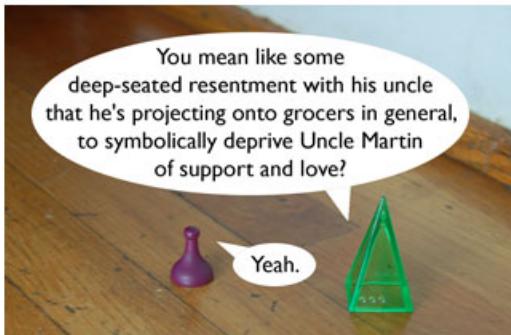
Ben's Notes

People in the past used too many words. I made panel 3 fairly wide, and the dialogue still barely fits in it. It's a good thing most of our strip takes place in the present.

Lewis's Notes

Watch this: Props to Mike Podgorski of [Green Circle](#), Maryanne Papke of [Tile](#), and Kier McFarlane of [Wiki's Lessons In Life](#), for being members of the elite community of people who link to Terror Island.

Also, some advice: If you don't play a musical instrument, take one up. They are way fun. I started playing the flute recently, so you should take up a different one. That way we can participate in some sort of distributed music production. Orchestra@home or something like that.



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Stephen does, however, have several crazy aunts

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

It seems [Tinyfolk's national tour](#) is taking him to California this week. I'm looking forward to seeing him play in San Francisco tomorrow, and recommend that those of you who live around there go check it out.

I found out about Tinyfolk a few years ago, when he wrote a song about me called "[An Ode to Ben Heaton](#)." I've still never met him in person, though. Perhaps that will change! Expect some sort of comments about this on Wednesday, unless I forget to go or something.

Lewis's Notes

Earlier today I drove past a car place called "JUST BRAKES and more." All day long I have been thinking about that place, and how absolutely awful of a name that is. Since I've been thinking about it all day though, maybe it is a cleverly horrid name, in that it certainly embedded itself in my mind pretty thoroughly.



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The normal attitude to have about parties is approval

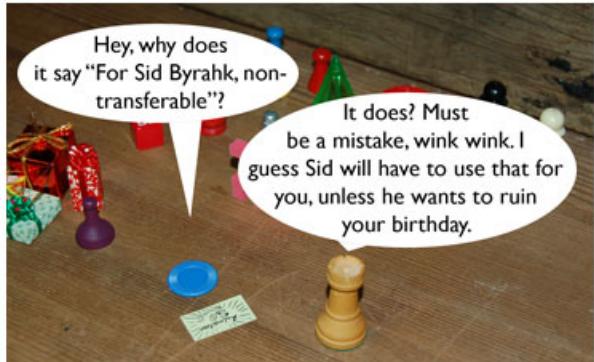
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

So, [Tinyfolk](#) turned out to be awesome. I picked up his latest owlbum, *Platapeasawallaland*, which I'd say is his best stuff yet. If you like ukuleles and songs about owls, you should either [buy it](#) (cost: five dollars) or borrow it from me (cost: however much it costs to walk/drive/fly from where you live to where I live, and possibly back). I think you can listen to parts of it for free online somewhere too.

Lewis's Notes

AT&T is to blame for these comments. They are taking a long time to get Internet back in my house, and I don't like typing long comments for Ben to post via my cell phone.



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Stephen has something in his eye. Something called scheming.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Today's xkcd is great. I used to love the *Powers of Ten* book when I was a kid.
I guess the film was neat too.

Lewis's Notes

Ten points to anyone other than Ben who can deduce the in-story date of Jame's birthday party.



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Jame isn't a player either, he's technically just a gamepiece

[Notes, Thoughts, &c.](#)

Ben's Notes

Seems like neither Sid nor Stephen did a very good job of picking out a gift for Jame. I wonder what's going to happen next.

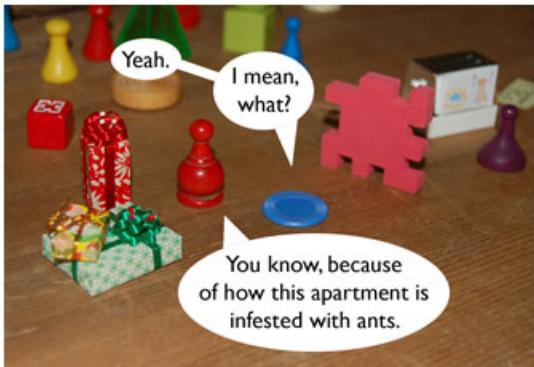
Hey, Lewis, did anybody solve that riddle from your comments [a couple days ago](#)? I haven't been trying to work it out, since I'm not eligible for the prize anyway.

Lewis's Notes

Ben, I don't know if anyone solved it, but no one has attempted to claim the 10 points.

So today, I will offer an easier challenge. Five points to anyone who explains the whereabouts of any absent cast member. Guesses should be made in [the forums](#).

Points will be awarded on a first-come first-serve basis, so get your guesses in early.



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The round orange dog is covered in ants.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I'm pretty sure this party takes place in an abandoned building hastily selected by Sid and Stephen. Stay tuned for an exciting revelation on Friday!

Lewis's Notes

Unless Ben disagrees, I am going to decree that the apartment in which the party is being held is Waiterman's apartment. What with him knowing about the ant infestation and all.



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Sid and Stephen are kind enough to let Jame keep their presents.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

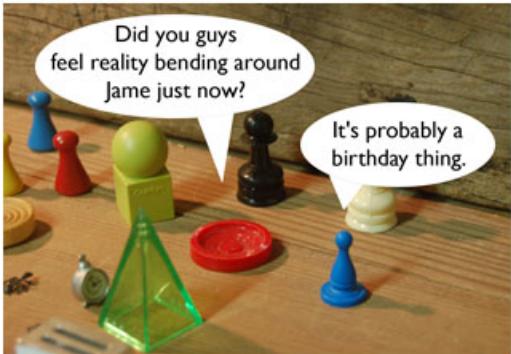
Ben's Notes

Happy birthday, Mike! I hope your birthday is full of surprises, as the [old saying](#) goes.

Lewis's Notes

I was going to talk about how much I like playing the flute (I just had my fourth lesson), but I can't say "a lot" all that many times without getting bored. Instead, I will introduce a new point challenge for the fans.

10 points to the person who suggests the best present Jame could have received, 5 points to any particularly ingenious runners up. Suggestions should include the name of the gift-giver(s), a description of the gift, and, if necessary, an explanation of the gift. The submissions need to be in before Monday's update.



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Sid is an expert on demons, not human emotions.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I know many of you have been hoping for the return of the demon for some time now. Well, I hope many of you have, anyway. Because he's back.

In case you don't remember the demon, I recommend refreshing your memory by reading through the archives a bit, starting with [strip #63](#). Or jump straight ahead to the demon's first appearance, in [strip #66](#). And then keep reading for about a couple dozen more strips. It took a while to resolve that storyline.

Lewis's Notes

This strip (or one of his choosing from the archives) is hereby dedicated to my brother Aaron, who is a truly awesome guy. Happy birthday, Aaron! I hope your birthday is full of surprises, as the [old saying](#) goes.

Also, the point awards for best gift suggestions have been announced in the forums.



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One character will die each year, unless my demands are met.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

We've been making *Terror Island* for a year now, and I think we've both learned a lot along the way. But this learning process never really ends. Over the years to come, *Terror Island* will continue to grow and evolve, as we further refine the art/craft of gamepiece photocomics.

One thing I learned only recently is that Icehouse pieces are really well-built. They can take more damage than you'd expect before breaking. I'm not sure how this knowledge will aid *Terror Island* in future strips, but it's handy to know anyway.

Lewis's Notes

To borrow the internet's favorite exclamatory interrogrative: WTF?

I had no idea this was coming. I have been caught totally off guard by this turn of events, and I don't know who to turn to or blame.

However, when I stop and think about it, it was foreshadowed pretty clearly in an earlier strip. 35 points to the first person to correctly identify the relevant foreshadowing. As always, guesses should be posted in the forums.



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The sixth stage of grief is nit-picking.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

A good mnemonic for [the five stages of grief](#) is “DABDA.”

Or “895962,” for those of you who don’t understand hexadecimal.

Lewis's Notes

I always forget that it is the 5 stages of grief and think that it is supposed to be the 8 stages. I think this is because I am confusing the 5 stages of grief with the 8 levels of [tedakah](#). In order to avoid this sort of confusion, we should just pick one number to use generally for anything like this. There should be 8 food groups, 8 stages of grief, 8 primary colors, etc. It would just make it easier to remember, I think.



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Terror Island writing tip: Specify that characters have names. This makes them more relatable.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

As you may recall, the Green Grocer runs a local grocery store. He only started doing the supervillainy thing when Sid and Stephen [suggested it to him](#). In hindsight, that wasn't a very good move on their part.

Lewis's Notes

I'm in Chicago or Toronto right now. Or some other city. I'm pretty sure it ends in the letter O. Probably not San Francisco, because Ben would have remembered that. Tokyo?

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Omicron is a sleepy kitty

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

It took Ray a little while to get into character for Omicron's role in this strip. At first, he kept staring alertly at the doorway, as though monitoring it for suspicious activity. That's the complete opposite of what the script required! Fortunately, he eventually pretended to be sleeping long enough for me to get some pictures.

Cats make good actors, but they require a bit more patience than gamepieces.

Lewis's Notes

Apparently it's part of *Terror Island* canon that the sound of a force cage appearing is "KA-ZAP!"

Also, that there's such a thing as a "force cage."

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Man, I'll bet this story of the Green Grocer's is going to be really good

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I guess Florian and Gavriel just wander into Sid and Stephen's house whenever they want. It's not like anyone's going to be able to stop them.

Oh, for those of you who want to "chat" with fellow *Terror Island* fans, we have an IRC "chatroom" now. Just point your IRC client at irc.freenode.net, and join #TerrorIsland. If you don't know how to use IRC, then ask a friend for advice or something. Friends love that.

Lewis's Notes

I got a phone call tonight from my friend Leland that went like this: "Hi Lewis. What is Buffy's last name?" "Summers." "And what high school did she go to?" "Sunnydale." "OK, thanks. Bye." I don't know why Leland needed those two facts, and while they aren't the most obscure bits of Buffy trivia, I am pretty proud of the fact that I am the person to call for Buffy trivia.

Unrelatedly, when I flew to Chicago, I accomplished something pretty interesting. I've been trying to read "Cryptonomicon" for about four years now. Several times, I read up to about page 70, got busy, and put the book down long enough that I would have to start over when I picked it back up. Well, this time I broke the page 70 barrier, and am actually now over halfway through the book (600 pages out of 1000). I suppose describing this as an interesting accomplishment may have been misleading, but what can you do?



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Tecnically, the Green Grocer spoke the truth.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

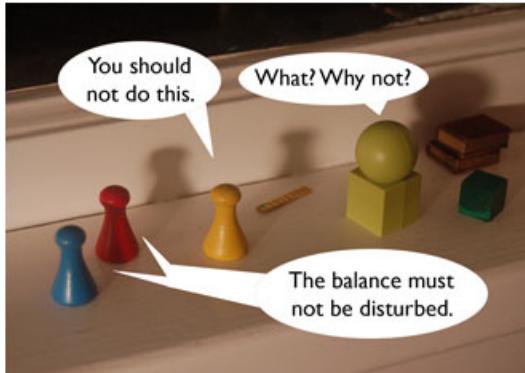
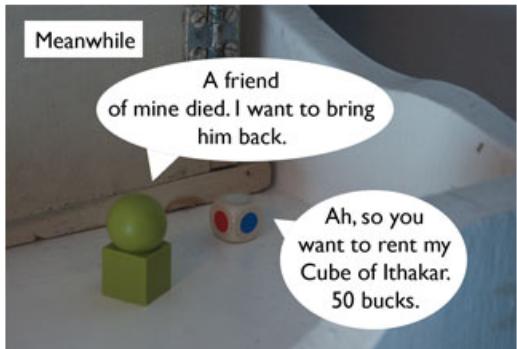
Ben's Notes

As I'm typing this, [Kingdom of Loathing](#) just came out with a major content update, NS13. I've been keeping from checking out the new quests until the strip's updated, but by the time you're reading this, I'll be deeply engrossed in it.

I guess a lot of *Terror Island* readers play KoL, so chances are you already knew about NS13 coming out today. It's still exciting.

Lewis's Notes

Some of my friends make music. You should give Dixie's band, [White, Wrench, Conservatory](#), a listen, and maybe also sample some of my friend [Kate's music](#).



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The magic cube black market is notoriously untrustworthy

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

When Aorist died, I was expecting dozens of people to ask why First Folio couldn't just resurrect him using a magic cube rented from [this guy](#). This strip was meant to put their speculation to rest once and for all.

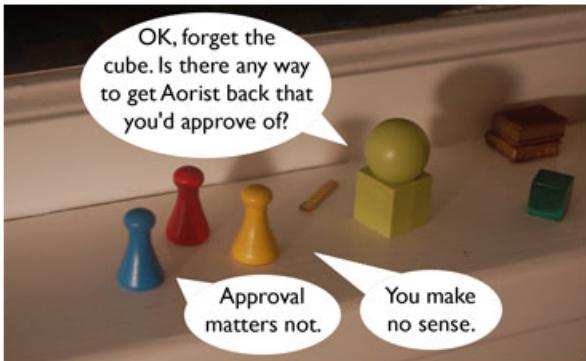
Anyway, it turns out nobody asked that question. But now you know the answer anyway!

Lewis's Notes

Having First Folio intend to resurrect Aorist in this strip was actually my idea, not Ben's. And it wasn't meant as some response to hypothetical reader questions.

Instead it was meant as simple wish-fulfillment on my part. The Cube of Ithakar is a "Mary Sue" character.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Sometimes balance means more and more killing.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

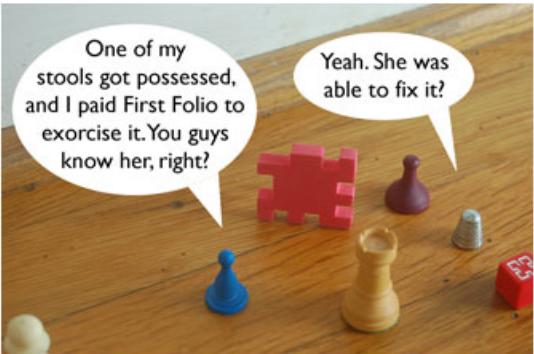
The unity's meant to be a funny character or group of characters, but it actually kind of creeps me out sometimes. Of all the gamepieces we use in the strip, it seems the most likely to come to life while I'm asleep.

I wonder if that would mean just three pieces coming to life, or if the sets of backups I have would also be animated. There could potentially be nine moving parts, all representing one character.

Lewis's Notes

Ben and I assumed that you can label any stance you want as "preserving the balance" as long as some sort of eerily knowledgeable character is the one making the proclamations, since you would need to specify what is being balanced against what before you could see if it is true or false.

Luckily, the Unity knows more about what needs balancing against what in the TIverse than Ben and I do, so we're just going to follow its lead.



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Notable demonic languages include Esperanto, Perl, and E-Prime.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Attentive readers may remember the stool from [strip #62](#). That was also the first appearance of First Folio's shield.

Lewis's Notes

A number of people have been asking me who I will be endorsing for the 2008 presidential election. Since I don't want to keep people in suspense, and I know what sort of impact my stance can have on the outcome of major elections, I figured that I should announce my support officially.

I hereby offer my endorsement of **Zombie F.D.R.** for President of the United States. For those of you who are curious about his platform, I will share it with you here.

1. The New Deal (again)
2. BRAINS!



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The Green Grocer is bad at reassuring people that he won't cause harm.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Those guys are finally splitting up? It's about time. Having to take pictures of nine pieces at once was starting to annoy me.

Now that I've said that, Friday's strip is probably going to end up using ten or more characters.

Lewis's Notes

People have been asking me why I don't support George Washington's Ghost for president. That's simple: ghosts are spooky.

Happy Fourth of July. Ben's birthday was yesterday, making him one day old, by my approximation.



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Interestingly, this means that First Folio successfully fulfilled her contract.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I know some people think Papyrus is overused, but it was clearly the font best suited to this. When a possessed (technically repossessed, I suppose) stool talks, it sounds exactly like that. And once you learn more about the history of this particular demon, it'll make even more sense than it does now.

Also, I used Papyrus last time this stool showed up in the strip, and we need to keep things consistent.

Lewis's Notes

Claim: "The Princess Bride" is the best romantic comedy ever made.

This is part of a new effort where I try and present you all with subjective claims that are nonetheless difficult to dispute.



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Don't worry, Omicron isn't a demon. He just likes their food.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

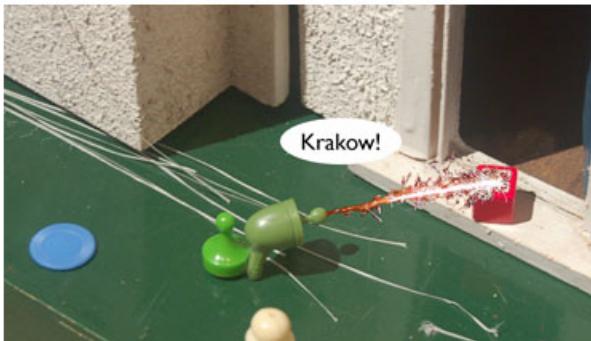
Ben's Notes

The events in panel 3 were Ray's idea. He's good at knocking over things that I'm pointing a camera at, which usually delays comic production. In this case, though, it turned out to be really helpful. Much better than our original idea for that panel, which was basically "Trap continues to sit there untriggered, so they give up on it."

I am not ashamed to admit that our plot ideas can be improved by the advice of a cat.

Lewis's Notes

I just watched Short Circuit again the other day, and realized that my memory of it is largely intermingled with my memory of Short Circuit 2. Also, the non-Steve Gutenberg good guy was the villain in the movie Hackers, which is weird. The oddest thing, though, is that originally, the screenplay was a dark thriller in which the sentient robot went on a killing spree, and it apparently morphed into a comedy over the course of several revisions.



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Too bad Gunpowder wasn't Aorist's stunt double

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

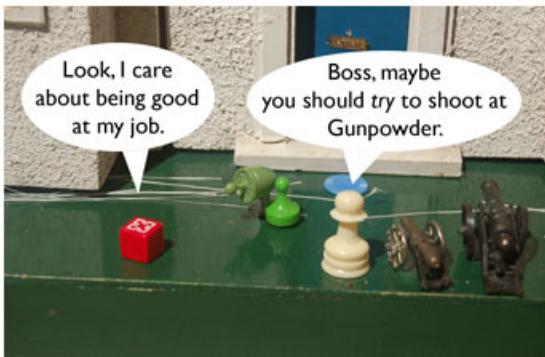
Ben's Notes

For the blast in panel 3, I used a picture I took of some fireworks a couple years ago. I have hundreds of fireworks pictures like that, so this ray gun might become a recurring prop.

The ray gun itself, as you can probably tell, is from an old Earthworm Jim action figure.

Lewis's Notes

For anyone who is curious, Gunpowder did not earn his M.D. at the CotEU medical school, because they don't have one. He also did not attend Mooniversity State. For those of you keeping track, that means there are at least three institutes of higher learning in the TIverse. Feel free to speculate on the nature of the third.



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Not even demon fighting is an excuse for slacking off on the job.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

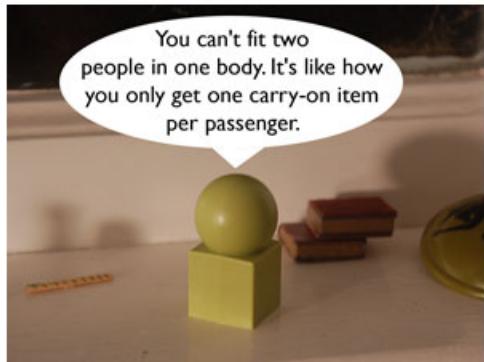
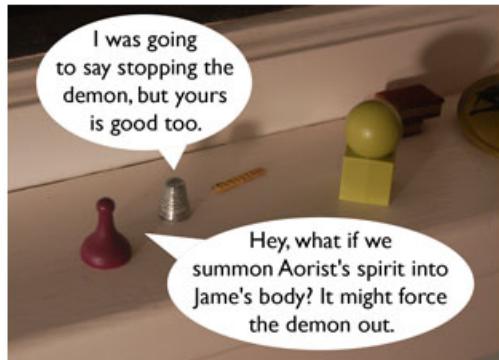
Ben's Notes

There's that firework gun again. I think it's using some crazy moon technology or something.

Lewis's Notes

Rule number one for effective demon fighting: Make sure your target does not have a stunt double.

Rule number two: Avoid hubris (cf. panel 2).



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The demon was hiding in Jame's overhead bin until the surprise party

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Lately I've been seeing a surprising number of books using unusual ligatures in the text on their back covers. It goes well beyond the standard f ones — I'm looking at a book right now which has ct, gi, ip, it, sp, and st ligatures just dropped in casually. I think I've seen this done on books from multiple publishers, too. Is there some recent fad for that sort of thing? I like ct and st ligatures, but the others look pretty distracting to me.

Lewis's Notes

I saw Transformers tonight. I think it was as bad as a movie could be without accidentally being bad enough to generate some ironic value. I have also decided that Roger Ebert's opinion is worthless because instead of saying that Transformers was one of the worst films ever, he said positive things about it. Now, I didn't go see it on his recommendation or anything, but anyone who came away from that movie with something other than disgust or revulsion has thereby lost all credibility on the quality of anything having to do with movies.



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While demonization by necromancers is rare, the demonization of necromancers by the liberal media is all too common.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If *Terror Island* were a NetHack patch, demonization would occur when you read a cursed scroll of zombie while confused. Also, the groceryless conduct (no buying food from stores, stealing it is allowed) would be tracked.

Lewis's Notes

If *Terror Island* were a hit television series, the attempt to demonize Aorist would occur in the final moments of a season finale, so that you would only see whether it was successful or not by tuning in again for the big budget season premiere. Also, we would totally have the episode where two characters who can't stand each other get handcuffed together and stuck in a meat freezer, as well as the one where a main character accidentally gets married owing to the obscure customs of a different culture.



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Furniture store owners hate being reminded that they always have one worthless item around.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

We may be getting a bit continuity-heavy here. New readers, take my word for it: the lines in panel one make sense. If you go to [the first strip](#) and read forward from there, you will eventually understand why they need to take some furniture.

Or you could go back to [a couple weeks ago](#). That might be easier.

Lewis's Notes

In learning to play the flute, I have found out that breathing is way more complicated than I realized. And for something that I've been doing pretty much non stop for almost 25 years, I still need a surprising amount of practice. If you think you may play a wind instrument at some point, I recommend you learn how to breathe now rather than waiting.



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What, you thought the stool was his true demonic form?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

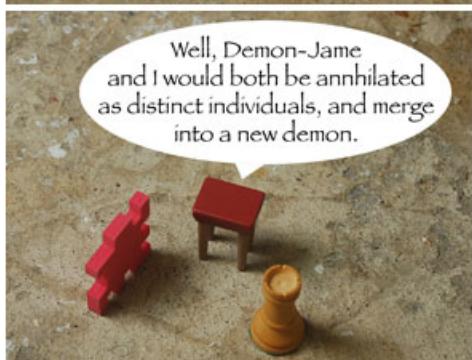
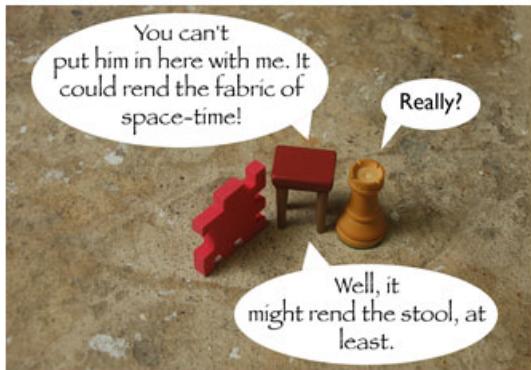
Demon etiquette is a complicated thing. And yes, there's a reason that this demon is named Buerzu. Not much of a reason, though.

Lewis's Notes

After careful consideration, my goal is to be somewhere near as cool as [this fellow here](#). I have a three step plan.

1. Learn to play flute
2. Learn to beatbox
3. Figure out how to do 1 and 2 at the same time

Wish me luck.



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The demon rights movement still has a ways to go.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

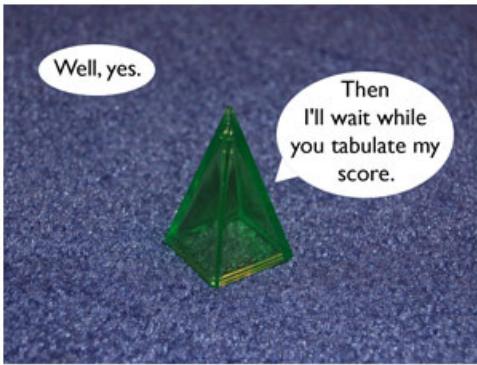
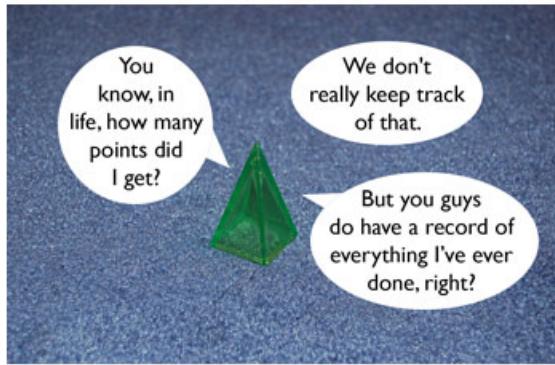
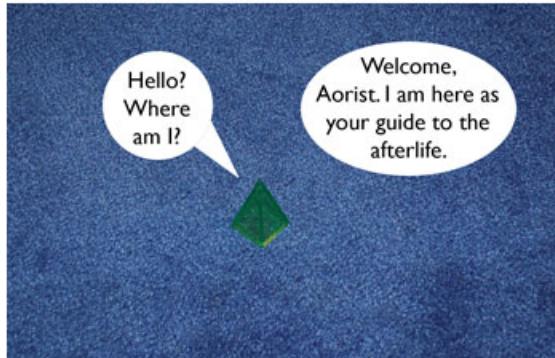
Ben's Notes

Comic-Con starts tomorrow! If you're there, feel free to come by and ask for a sketch. We don't technically have an official booth, but I'll be around the general webcomics area most of the time. Look for a long-haired guy in a T-shirt.

Lewis's Notes

By this time today, we'll be *en route* to San Diego, home of the San Diego Comic team, the San Diego Comic Conventioneers. They are my favorite team, and I have all of their rookie cards.

I hope they beat their rivals, the Otakon Otakanians (from Otako City, USA).



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If Aorist scores high enough, he may get to enter his initials.

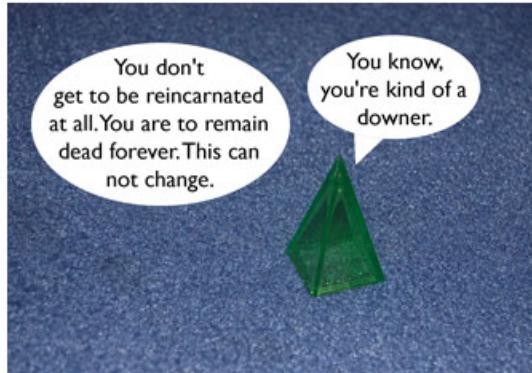
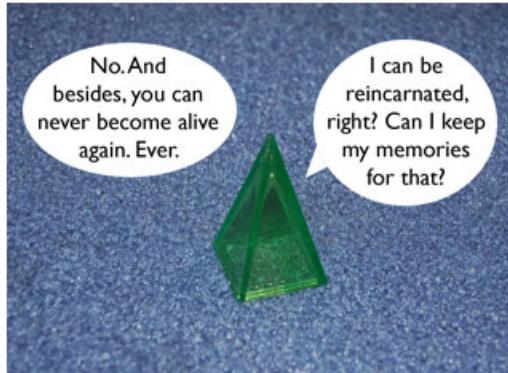
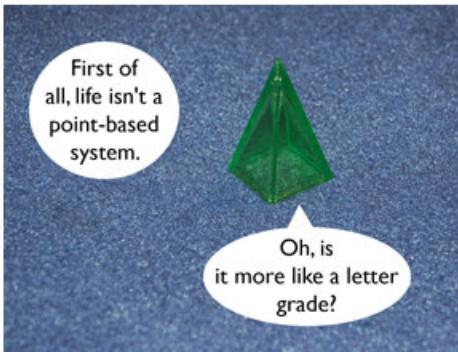
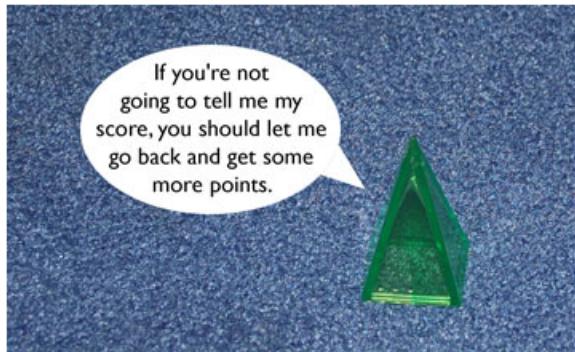
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

So, the Comic-Con is going well, but very few fans have come to us to ask for sketches. I think maybe they're having trouble recognizing us in the crowd. In case my description of myself last time was inadequate, here's some more information: I usually wear glasses, and my hair is brown.

Lewis's Notes

Today, Ben and I attempted to create a podcast. These comments would be in audio format, but Ben and I are terrifically bad at podcasting, and have decided to take our first attempt at it with us to our graves. Perhaps at some point in the future, we will have improved to the point where our podcast is not painful to experience. When that comes about, you can expect to get moderate enjoyment from listening to our lighthearted banter.



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For reals

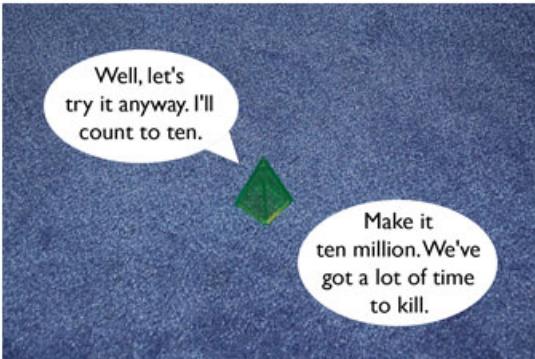
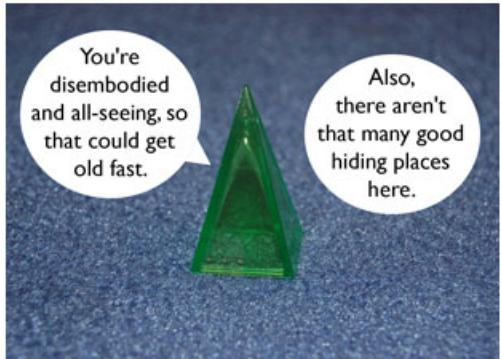
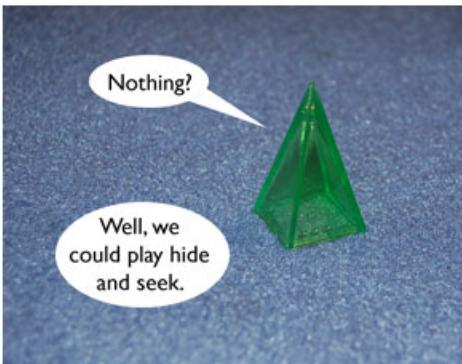
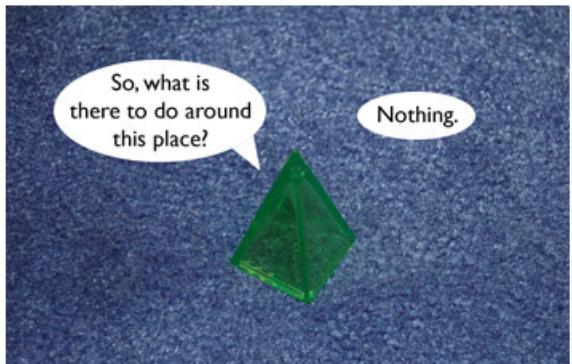
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This strip takes place in an area Lewis and I have been calling “the Blue.” I think it’s just one part of the afterlife, and other dead people are elsewhere, but to be honest, I’m not entirely sure how that stuff works.

Lewis's Notes

The time I usually take to come up with comments was monopolized by Guitar Hero 2 Encore: Rock the Eighties. Sorry.



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Aorist was a hide and seek champion before he died.

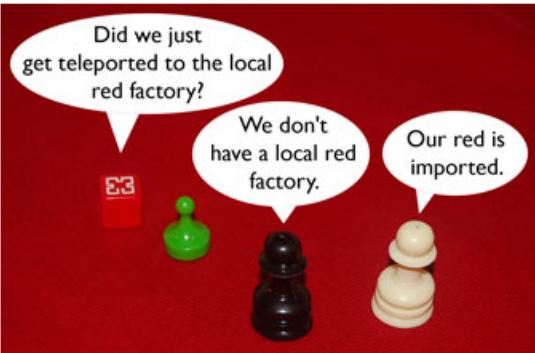
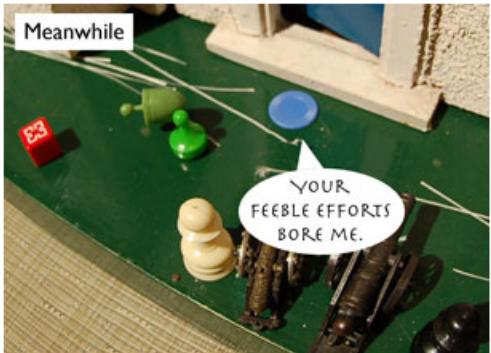
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Aorist's afterlife may not be very exciting for him, but at least he gets one.

Lewis's Notes

Many people may not know this, but Aorist is actually based on a person that Ben and I knew made up.



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You must be this possessed to ride.

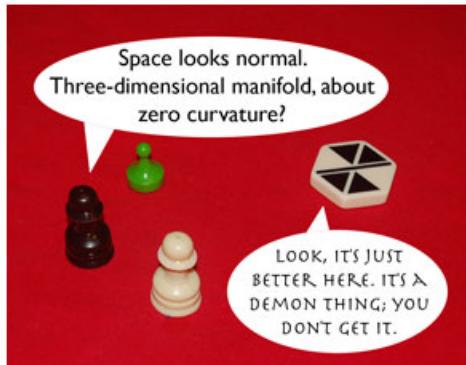
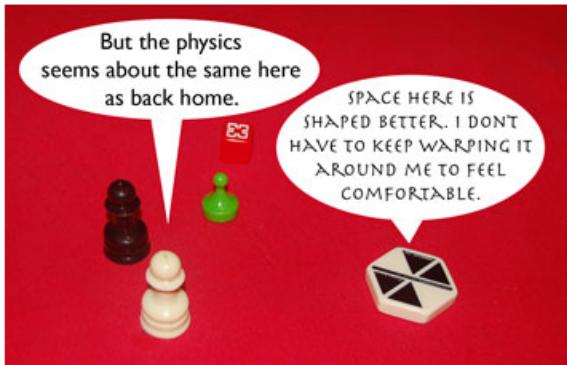
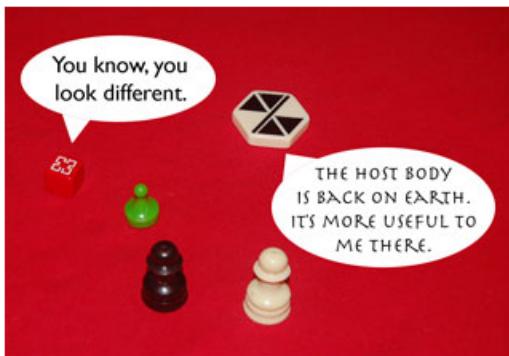
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The red landscape of Demonland in this strip was generously provided by Jon Bragg of Davis, CA. Thanks for reading, Jon, and for letting me take pictures of gamepieces on your sweater!

Lewis's Notes

I hope this answers everyone's questions about whether non-demons have alternate forms in Demonland. You know what else? [Everyone should read this awesome comic.](#)



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Demonland's space may not be shaped differently, but it is much more red.

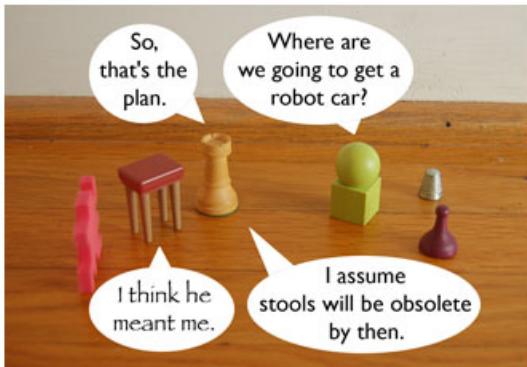
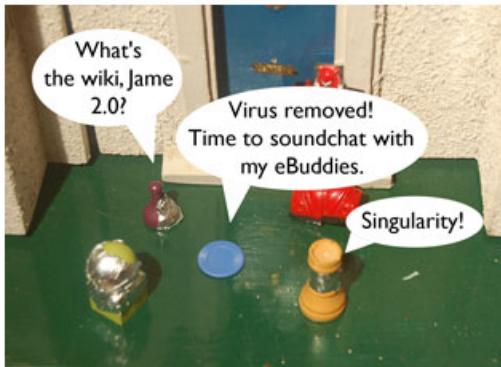
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

As we've seen before, not all demons on Earth warp space around themselves the way Demon-Jame does. The stool-demon, Buerzu, is mostly comfortable with earthly physics by now, and usually goes along with it to fit in. Demon-Jame is more like someone who visits a foreign country and refuses to learn any of their local customs.

Lewis's Notes

Can't talk. Finally got the new Harry Potter yesterday. Finishing it now.



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Freedom is the right of all sentient stools.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The future slang meaning of “wiki” comes from [Superosity](#).

Lewis's Notes

Luckily, when we get to the future, I'll have an easy time communicating, since all I will have to do is add some meaningless techie jargon to my ordinary speech.



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In panel 1, the stool tried to answer yes, but could not be heard over the reply of a certain egotistical demon named Buerzu.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Some of you may be wondering how the possessed stool moves around, given that stools are normally inanimate objects. In fact, it can't move on its own. The demon in it is effectively motionless, though capable of speech.

Some of you may next be wondering, "But how do the other characters move around? Aren't they also stools?" The answer is no. They are living beings just like you and me.

This may raise a third question: "How do you and I move around?" Since that isn't about Terror Island, I don't have to answer it.

Lewis's Notes

Does anyone besides me remember the toy "Wizzard" or "Whizzard" or something like that? It was shaped like a light bulb, and had bit at the bottom that could rotate, and you would get that bottom bit spinning real fast, and then you'd have a spinning top. If that sounds unexciting, or equally exciting as a regular spinning top, I have sorely misdescribed this toy.

Normally I would google for it, or check e-bay or whatever, and see if I'm making it up or if it really existed, but I couldn't come up with any comments today, so I figured, why not let the *Terror Island* be my google?

One last thing. My last sentence in the above paragraph reminded me of a ridiculous PSA campaign that was on TV when I was growing up. A dad was getting into the car with his kid, but they didn't have a child seat, and so they dad says, "That's OK, I'll be your safety belt." and clasps his fingers around the kid's waist like a seat belt. Obviously, the ad tells us that this is a bad plan, and that you should always buckle up. The point is, when I was growing up, I had no idea that some of the commercials and stuff like that were specific to different towns, and sometimes, when I am interacting with people, I forget that not everyone saw those growing up, and then wind up having people think that I am weird for randomly saying "I'll be your safety belt."

The most extreme example of this sort of thing is a ridiculous portion of a standardized test I took all through grade school. It was a memory test, I think, and it would give you some gibberish words, paired with real words. You got some time to study those (like 10 minutes or whatever), then you had to take a whole different test (like a math test) and then they asked you questions about the gibberish words. Every single time we took this test, the example sentence was the same. "A baloo is a bear." I took this test a number of times, and so that one is engrained pretty well in my head,

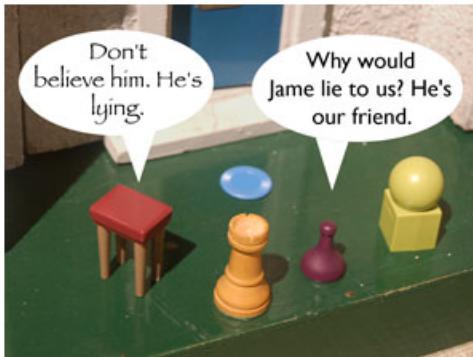
but, don't worry, it's not the only one I remember. Luckily, part of my brain is irrevocably dedicated to storing the following information:

1. A baloo is a bear
2. A tay is a hammer
3. A pillot is a shoe
4. A yonker is a young man
5. A lep is a ball
6. A flix is a comb
7. A korf is a tiger

These memory tests were used where I grew up, and a few other places (Indiana, for one), but they weren't really all that widespread. And it is just the weirdest thing to realize that I constantly interact with people who don't associate "korf" and "tiger."

Absolutely final note: according to the internet, there are two standard entries on the test I am missing. "To wuzzle means to mix" and "A zillation is an alarm clock." I don't remember either of those at all, but I do remember a wonderful tv program called "[The Wuzzles](#)" featuring a cast of animal hybrids, like a bumblebee lion and a kangaroo elephant, and a bunny-hippo.

And that, for those of you who are still reading, is a sampling of what it is like inside my head.



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Buerzu is a jerk for suggesting that their friend would lie.

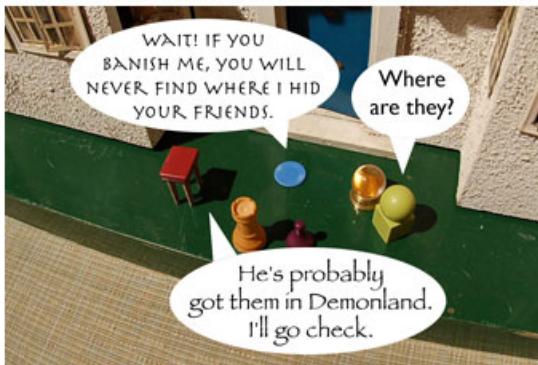
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If a fan were to buy [this lens](#) for me, I'd be able to put some superdemons in the comic. I think it's extremely expensive, so maybe several of you should team up for that.

Lewis's Notes

In mostly unrelated news, my new favorite computer game is [Hunt the Wumpus](#).
I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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It's a metaphorical goat, but wouldn't it be ZANY if it weren't?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

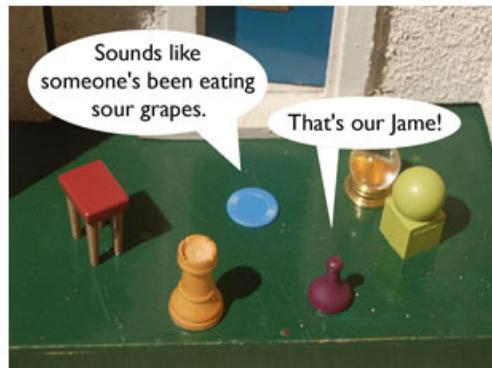
Last time, I joked a bit about a ridiculous way for you to spend money supporting a webcomic. In case you want a more practical way, why not go buy some stuff from Reprographics? I hear he could use that now.

In particular, I recommend the Baffler!. I've had good experiences with the traffic light one from this comic and the blue one in the middle of the bottom row in this comic.

Lewis's Notes

If I had a catch-phrase, I'm pretty sure it would be "Sounds like somebody's been eating sour grapes."

Actually, that's the catch-phrase I'd have if I wanted people to hit me, because saying that to someone who is already upset (which is when it would be most appropriate), is a good way to incite that person's rage.



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Merged demons' speech is annoying to read

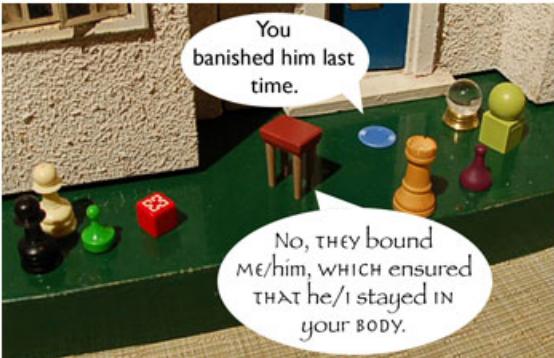
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Exciting news! [That "Thinkin' Lincoln" guy](#) just launched a new website, [The Best Dinosaur](#). I haven't fully processed it yet, but it appears to be both fun and educational.

Lewis's Notes

I rented the CGI ninja turtles movie. Didn't realize how all-star of a cast it was (Patrick Stewart and Sarah Michelle Gellar, for instance). It was good on the whole, but Raphael was too broody. Michaelangelo, however, was adequately party-duded, and Donatello was finally the correct amount nerdy (the correct amount being "very").



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Jame is mostly startled because they don't serve wine at his restaurant

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

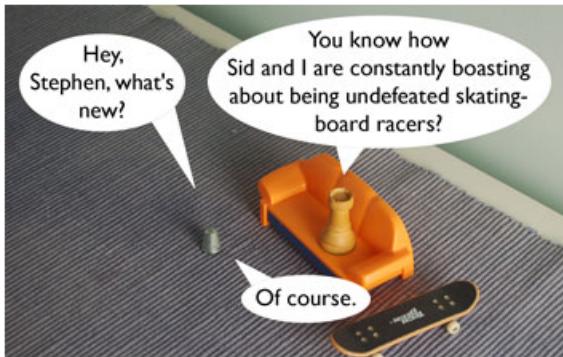
Ben's Notes

Well, that about wraps up this demon storyline. I know there are a few loose ends you'll be wondering about, but most of them are either things we're going to address later, or they're so far beneath our notice that we won't even listen to questions about them.

In either case, [the forum](#) is a good place to discuss that sort of thing. There's [a thread](#) there about how demons work, which so far has raised more questions than answers. (Current score: 1 question, 0 answers)

Lewis's Notes

This week, I guest blog at [Comix Talk](#). Now you have a new place to go to enjoy my prose stylings.



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Pareto optimality is a powerful thing

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Guys, David Malki ! of [Wondermark](#) made a [documentary about himself and Comic-Con](#) (to see which is better). Lewis and I are both in [it](#), but I'd probably be recommending viewing [it](#) even if we weren't. Check [it](#) out, and watch me *metaphorically deliver* a sucker punch with math.

Very, very metaphorically.

Lewis's Notes

No need to tell us that the term isn't "skating boards." Ben and I both know that the mode of transport in question is actually called a horseless scooter. Our deviation from that term is called 'artistic license,' which is like a driver's license, but for art. Ben failed his artistic road test several times before getting his license, but I managed to parallel park a tricksy metaphor on my first go.

Don't get caught authoring without an artistic license. You will be forced through a long and unpleasant proceeding defending yourself from the Department of Poetic Justice. The trick to defending yourself is to throw the book at them (specifically, Kant's 'Critique of Judgment').



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They tried firing him, but he took that as an indication of permanent employment.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I saw [Scott McCloud](#) give a talk at [the Cartoon Art Museum](#) today, as part of his [crazy fifty-state tour](#). Apparently he only has one state left to go — Nevada. I hope he manages it.

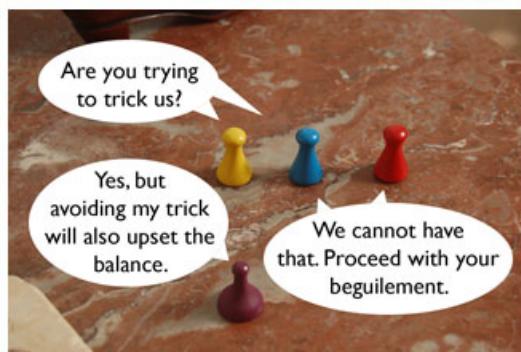
Also, today's comic sort of references strips #34 and #41, but since I'm not linking to them due to laziness, you'll have to figure out their URLs yourself.

Lewis's Notes

I'm not one to criticize Sid and Stephen's plans, but isn't the Bizarro version of someone is pretty much the worst possible choice to imitate them? It's like, with anyone else there is at least a chance they might do a good job, but with Bizarro whoever, you are guaranteed that they behave the exact opposite in every important respect.

PS: Apparently Ben is the person to go to for your Diatonic Accordion or Concertina repair information needs. Interestingly, Ben would have been the first person I asked if I needed that info before I saw that he had access to a video about it.

Since I'm not as lazy as Ben (at least not just now), check out these links: [#34](#), [#41](#)



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Sid doesn't actually read the paper.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Hey, if anyone who's reading this right now wants to talk about tiling the hyperbolic plane, come in [the Terror Island IRC channel](#). (#TerrorIsland on irc.freenode.net) We've been trying to work out a useful coordinate system, and could use some help.

Lewis's Notes

I wish I had Spider-Man's superpowers, except instead of having the relative strength and speed of a spider, I'd want the relative number of legs. (Eight.)

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Now they just need to find a way to exploit that weakness.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If you haven't been following [Wicked Powered](#), this is a good time to start. The main characters are reliving their past, so [the first strip repeated itself](#) a couple weeks ago. They're going through the early archives, reposting exact copies of the old comics, all for solid plot reasons.

Lewis's Notes

This strip reminds me of a philosophical paradox. We can ask what the most useful question/answer pair is. And, presumably, the answer to that question would be really useful to know. Perhaps, the most useful thing to know.

So then, that question and its answer would be the most useful question/answer pair. So the answer to that question would be that question and its answer.

This is not the cleanest paradox, as there are a number of different ways you might respond, and the set up is fairly confusing. Zeno's paradoxes and the Liar paradox are way nicer, but this one is still interesting.



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Whether or not the Unity is trying, we all hope Sid has learned his lesson.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I've been kind of hesitant to mention this here, since Lewis and I haven't yet worked out what it means in terms of *Terror Island*.

Ray passed away last week. He was 14, which is old for a cat, and I'd known this might be coming, since he was pretty sick lately. It still managed to feel sudden, though.

When I was really young, Ray used to sleep on the foot of my bed, attacking my feet if they moved too much. He mellowed out over the years, though. By the time I was back from college, he was pretty much never violent toward humans, provided you don't count trying to trip my dad down the stairs. (Fortunately, he didn't try very hard.)

He was the sort of cat who'd pretend to be lazy just to get attention. Left on his own, he'd jump up to the counter to [drink from the sink](#), but if anyone was around, he would stand below and stare at you pleadingly until you helped him up. He even did that for going up the stairs. He'd sit at the bottom until someone walked up, and then he'd follow alongside, as though he didn't want to travel without an escort.

He loved to be in the bathroom when people were showering. He'd wait on the rim between the two parts of the shower curtain, and as you were getting out, he'd jump down into the bathtub and lap up the water while it drained. Apparently it tasted better that way. Even at his sink, he liked it best when the faucet was running, and would often stick his head under it.

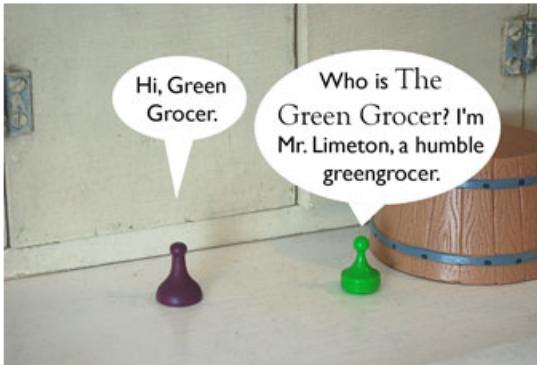
He had some territory disputes with our dog, Comet, who kept trying to get at his food. I remember walking in on them just a couple months ago, when Comet was stretching for his food bowl (which we'd tried to place out of her reach), and Ray was standing next to it, back arched, swatting his paw back and forth at her face to drive her away.

He was amazingly cooperative with his role as Omicron. After the first couple times I photographed him for it, he started to catch on to the process. Obviously he didn't have any understanding of the webcomic or plot, or even what my camera is, but he got that he'd receive attention if he sat around while I put gamepieces next to him. I could get him to look in a particular direction on cue, have him lie down in the spot where a scene needed to take place, sometimes even persuade him to do some varied facial expressions, which the strip is otherwise pretty short on. It definitely took more time than posing any of the other characters, but it was also much more fun, I think for both of us.

I realize this is a long and rambling cat post, but I really needed to get it out somewhere. Thanks for your patience.

Lewis's Notes

Stephen is going soft. I would have said any emblem with more detail than the Bangladeshi flag is "pushing it."



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Immediately after panel 2, both Sid and the Green Grocer began cackling evilly.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The Green Grocer is wise to protect his secret identity here, since for all he knew, Sid might have forgotten about [the time he announced it](#).

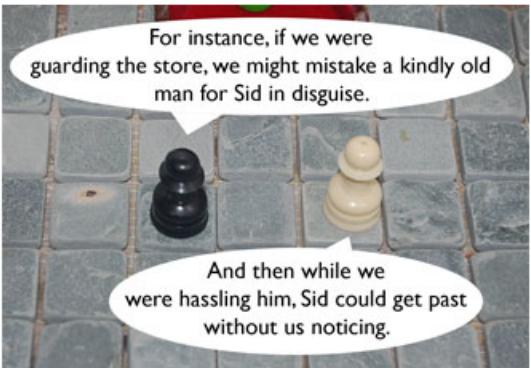
Since the last update, I've gotten some very nice supportive comments from readers, which have helped cheer me up. You guys are awesome. Thanks, and have a happy Labor Day.

Lewis's Notes

Do you know about Mangos? They are good. Unlike Kiwi fruit.

At one point during scripting, Stephen's line in panel 3 was just written as "[wacky guess]." While Ben was taking photos, I generated a large list of potential wacky guesses. Here is that list, so that you may ponder how else this strip might have gone.

- They discovered that P=NP?
- York decided to produce my 'Communopoly' game idea?
- You verified that we in fact have qualia?
- They decided to have two arbor days this year?
- Marmaduke sat on people furniture again?
- It turns out aerosol is good for the environment?
- I'm descended from Sherlock Holmes?
- We're switching to a laughter-based economy?
- My high school crush finally realized that she should have said yes when I asked her out?
- European restaurants started giving free refills on soda?
- They replaced sales tax with shoulder massage?



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And thus, the henchmen avoid having to guard the store.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

[Triangle and Robert](#) has been doing a major epic finale lately, which came to a end today. That strip's been a fairly big influence on me, and I've been impressed by the way it ended. There's a strong sense of balancing the needs of the narrative with those of the characters, and the result gave lots of resolution while providing new details to speculate over. (This is intentionally vague, since I don't want to spoil it for anyone.)

[The 31-page ending](#) is probably the best part of the strip, but I don't recommend reading it if you're unfamiliar with T&R, since it would be almost completely incomprehensible. Instead, start at [the very beginning](#) and take my word for it that it'll get good.

Lewis's Notes

Here's something cool: the people who make [Bitmap World](#) are putting together emoticon versions of characters from other webcomics, [including Terror Island](#). I, Lewis, order you to go check it out, and also read Bitmap World.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben

Terror Island Concept Art: Potential new character designs



Panther, the
Jungle Spirit



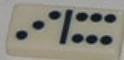
Zantrok,
half-demon
sorceror



Lord Terror,
King of
Terror Island



The Triad



Rnbrdu



Horace J.
Weatherby



"Lucky" Lydia



Ally Cs

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If you can figure out some way to count this as canon, go for it.

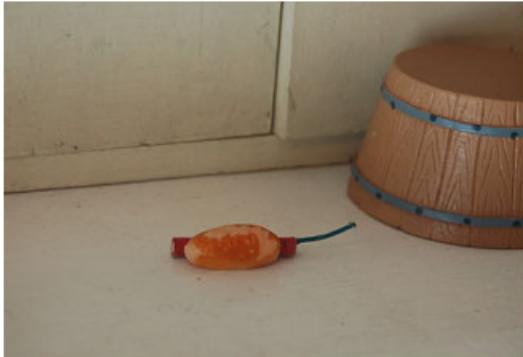
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Don't worry, we'll bring you the thrilling conclusion of the exciting Green Grocer whatever on Monday. I just didn't want to wait any longer on showing off these possible characters. Some of them might eventually appear in the strip again!

Lewis's Notes

Filler art is supposed to be a quick fix for lack of content, but I think Ben and I spent just as much time on this as on a regular strip (composing a detailed backstory and character sketch for each of these 8 potentials). You the fans can even decide which character you want to see in future strips. Feel free to vote in the forums.



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Seriously, who goes shopping and doesn't get bread?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

In all fairness, this scheme might actually work if Sid were interested in defying the ban placed on him. And if he didn't notice the dynamite in the bread. And if he were the sort of person who'd take bread lying on the ground in front of a grocery store.

Actually, if it were any kind of store other than a grocery store, that last one might fit.

Lewis's Notes

Ben's wrong. The scheme wouldn't work at all because Sid is on Atkins.



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Stephen defies the sun.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I've just started listening to [Webcomics Weekly](#), a podcast by [Brad Guigar](#), [Dave Kellett](#), [Scott Kurtz](#), and [Kris Straub](#) about making webcomics. If you make a webcomic, plan on starting one, or just like hearing informed people talk about them, you should listen to it.

Some of their tips aren't relevant to me because I don't draw, but most of the advice they have is applicable and interesting. Lots of tips on writing, composition, character names, and so on.

Lewis's Notes

I have two important things to share today. One is a list of underappreciated classic Disney movies that are totally awesome, compiled from memory. The other is a bit of advice.

The Great Mouse Detective, Robin Hood, The Jungle Book, The Sword in the Stone, The Black Cauldron, The Emperor's New Groove. Did I say "The Great Mouse Detective"? Oh, I did? Well it belongs on the list twice. Best Disney movie ever.

And now for the advice. Friends don't let friends read Rand. You find her self-interested ethical views appealing? Go to [the source](#). Reading Ayn Rand instead of Aristotle is like reading the noveliation of "Ghost Dad" instead of reading Hamlet.* I'm not an uninformed hater, by the way. I've read Atlas Shrugged, The Fountainhead, We the Living, Anthem, portions of the Romantic Manifesto, and I have even seen a production of "The Night of January 16th." But I promise you that it is bad to get your Aristotle diluted through a crazy-person's championing of robber-barony. That is all.

*See, because Hamlet's father communicates with him as a ghost, but other than that, there aren't a lot of important similarities, and Hamlet is obviously way better.



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Stephen doesn't remember the Green Grocer's name.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

You know, the Green Grocer, Sid, and Waiterman all have kind of similar shapes. Maybe we should have tried to bring in the Unity and the furniture salesman instead of Stephen. Then they'd all have that look going.

Lewis's Notes

I am trying out Yoga today. No Joke! My plan is to score twice as many points as any other rookies, and win the game of Yoga.



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Waiterman left to wait on tables.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

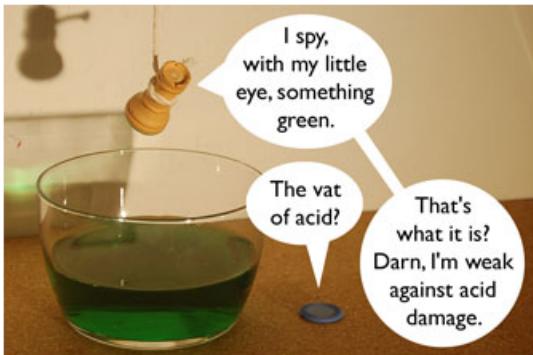
I guess Waiterman's one of those superheroes who doesn't mind tying his friends up in deathtraps.

Lewis's Notes

Ben doesn't really understand the nature of superheroism. You see, superheroism is to heroism as supervenience is to regular venience.

I don't remember what supervenience is (I think it's used in philosophy, possibly for the mind-body problem), so this account of superheroism will have to end there. Ask the real Lewis to explain it to you on Wednesday.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Stephen's main vulnerabilities are acid and bishops.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Happy Talk Like a Pirate Day!

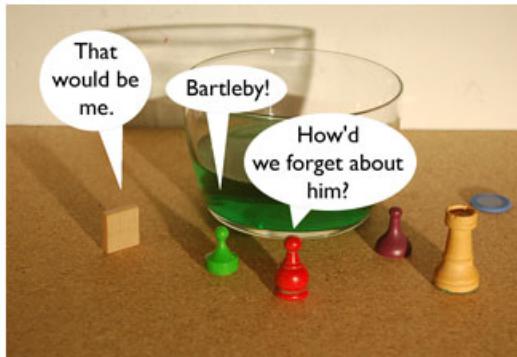
 No, he's not coming back as a zombie. This is strictly non-canonical.

Lewis's Notes

I started to write up some comments about supervenience, but it turns out that explaining that can be very boring, so I stopped. Instead, I will answer two questions that have been asked on the forums.

Q: Is that Jame? A: Yes, it is, but the lighting and props are creating the optical illusion known as "Jame Disguise" which makes Jame look slightly different than usual.

Q: Why would Jame be there? A: He is Waiterman's sidekick. Probably, also, he wants to make sure his friends don't die.



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Bartleby saves the day, as per usual

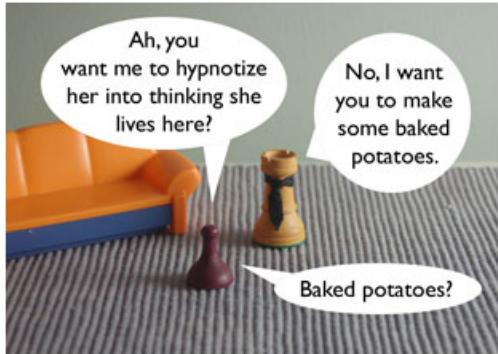
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Well, looks like *Terror Island* has made it to 200 strips. In celebration, we're bringing you a bit more of the fan-favorite character Bartleby, Sid and Stephen's other roommate who only exists once every 100 strips.

Lewis's Notes

Ben and I decided that we needed more strips and punchlines that only make sense to hardcore readers. Look forward to jokes so inaccessible even we, the authors, don't get them.



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Potato you later, Potatulator!

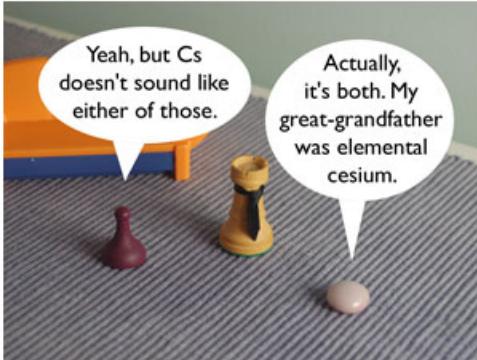
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This strip is based on the time Lewis and I were reporters for a college newspaper.

Lewis's Notes

This strip is based on the time Ben and I were feral for lack of baked potato.



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Elemental cesium is not the same as a cesium elemental

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

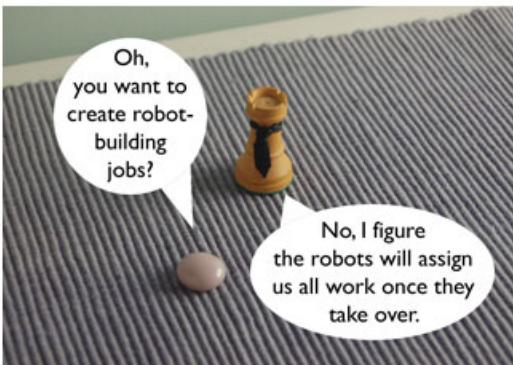
Ben's Notes

Atomic symbols count as general knowledge, right? We're trying to do "accessible humor" here.

Lewis's Notes

Last names are also often derived from place names, like Hamilton. York's last name, Funhaven, is an example of this.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Stephen has odd ideas about robotics.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I guess it's a good thing Czars in Geography City don't have much actual power.

Lewis's Notes

People have been asking what the deal is with the phrase "Pleased to net your acquaintance." The phrase has its origins one awesome day, when Ben and I were at UR, and Ben had a net for some reason. We were trying to come up with net related puns that one might use while casting the net over someone (for comedic effect), such as "Net to meet you" and the like.

Our often-grumpy friend Reid happened to be around, and I threw the net at him, saying, "Pleased to *net* your acquaintance." Reid was not amused by my clever wordplay, nor by the fact that he had had a net thrown at him. I think he also pointed out that I already knew him, and so the line was inappropriate. The moral of the story is that the phrase comes from one time that I threw a net at a friend. In the Terror Island universe, however, it is the standard greeting, and the word 'net' is used in the sense of 'acquire' or 'obtain.'



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Stephen solved the unemployment problem by firing people.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

It's Gibbs and Lockley again! They haven't been in the comic for a while, and now you know why: Stephen fired them.

See that ceremonial sword behind Stephen in the flashback? It's a kilt pin I wore at my friend Albert's wedding on Saturday. I had the honor of being one of his groomsmen, which meant traditional Scottish attire — pictures will be online eventually.

Lewis's Notes

Stephen assumes unemployment problems are a matter of the distribution of jobs among the employed, rather than an increase in the number of employed people. This puts him at both ends of the standard political continuum, and today's strip was supposed to serve as political commentary to that effect.



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The binary doesn't mean anything because Stephen doesn't know binary.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

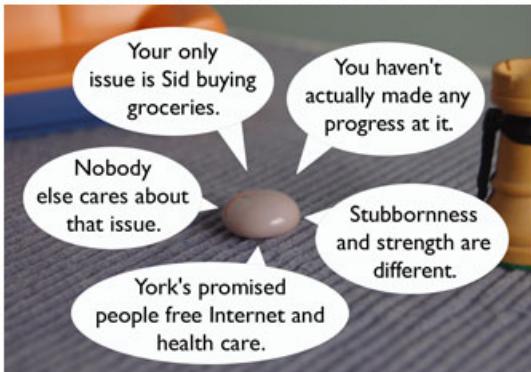
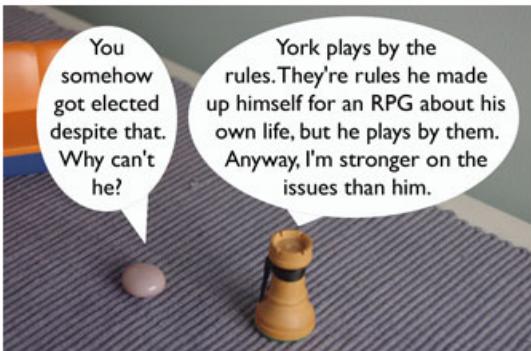
Ben's Notes

OK, so you can probably tell that I used an old Mecha King Ghidorah action figure for the Mecha-Mayor. But did you notice that:

- The holomatrix on the float is actually a Fluxx card?
- Stephen's podium for addressing the Mecha-Mayor is actually [a camera](#)?
- That cable on the right side of panel two is actually some random cable I had lying around?
- Panel one was actually photographed after panels two and three, despite taking place before them?

Lewis's Notes

I have spent a fair amount of time recently thinking about a philosophical thought experiment which I am calling "Aerobic Twin Earth." Saying any more about it would likely reveal that this is not the most exciting thing in the world, so I won't.



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Accepting maize from Native Americans does not count as grocery shopping.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

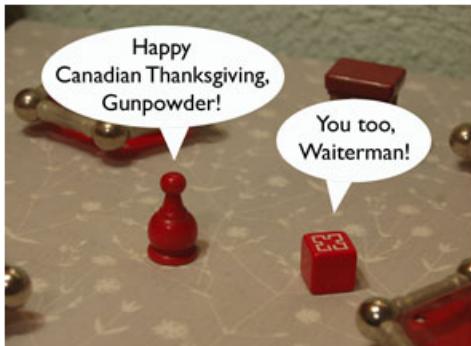
I think Ally is kind of stepping outside the bounds of normal interviewing practice here. That's because she's a loose cannon who plays by her own rules.

Watch for her upcoming spinoff: "Ally Cs: Maverick Reporter."

Lewis's Notes

Today's comic features a triple-callback. We reference both Stephen's election to Czarhood and York's RPG, but also, we make use of a device Ben and I are both fans of (though we try not to overuse it): the cloud of objections. Because sometimes, there is just so much wrong with a statement made by one of our characters, that we can't pick just one.

Bonus title text related anecdote: One time, when watching the movie "Dead Man" with some friends at the University of Rochester, I was reminded of the standard third-grade book-report line about Indians being a hard-working and industrious people who called corn "maize" (this is because "Dead Man" has Indians in it). I thought using the word "maize" in the same way Smurfs use the word "Smurf" was very funny, so I proceeded to use "Maize" with a different meaning in roughly every third sentence. At least one of my dormmates was not particularly pleased by this, but eventually found my childlike glee at using the term wrong humorous enough to overlook the lack of humor in the joke itself. The moral of the story is that I can get away with bad jokes as long as I myself am entertainingly amused by them.



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British Columbia once saved Jame's life.

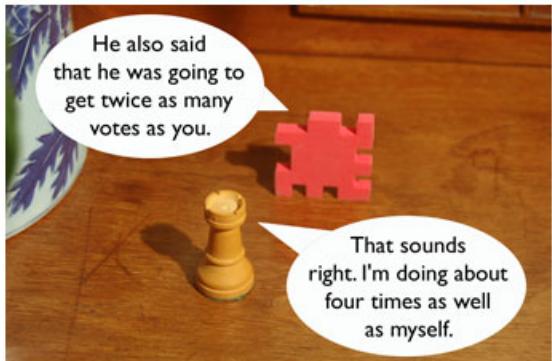
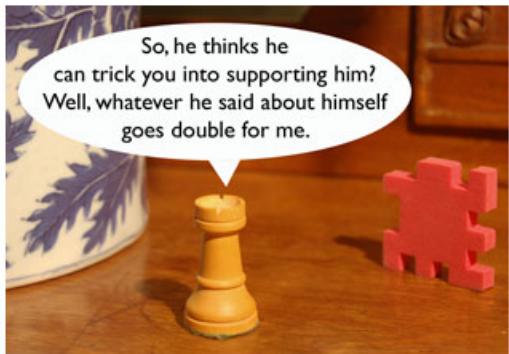
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This Canadian Thanksgiving, I'm thankful for Dave Foley, the talented actor-comedian from *Kids in the Hall* and *NewsRadio*. He was born in Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada.

Lewis's Notes

I guess this Canadian Thanksgiving, I am thankful for the band Metric, who I saw perform on Friday night, and who had a kickin' rad show. I think they are Canadian, but if not, I am still thankful.



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Stephen knows Liln is female, but he doesn't want to deviate from his usual campaigning script.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Ralph Nostradamus writes, "Are those really photographs in your comics? They look more like drawings to me. Childish drawings made with crayons."

Yes, Ralph, this is a photocomic. Photocomics have a long tradition, dating back to the early days of either comics or photography, whichever came first. Notable photocartoonists include such people as Lewis Powell and Ben Heaton. In conclusion, thanks for writing in.

Lewis's Notes

I would come up with clever comments today, but I was caught off guard by how engrossing "Heroes" is. Why didn't people tell me about it before? It is very very good.

PS: If you did tell me about it before, that doesn't count because you didn't tell me persuasively enough.



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It pays to be prepared (with vandalism)

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

[Today's Dudley's Dungeon](#) really amused me. Read it if you like NetHack, math, and jokes that take a while to get.

Lewis's Notes

Yes, NetHack is awesome. Did you know that there are woodchucks in NetHack, but they're never created by the normal monster generation process? To get them, you have to either polymorph other monsters, reverse genocide them, or use wishes. There are three ways you can get woodchucks from a wish: wish for a woodchuck figurine and apply it, wish for a woodchuck corpse and cast turn undead at it, or wish for a woodchuck statue and cast stone to flesh at it.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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This is why Jame and Liln prefer not to go on dates on days when the comic updates.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

[Today's Dr. McNinja](#) is good from a humor point of view, but it mainly reminds me of the year (2003, maybe?) that I went without saying the word "bagel" to fulfill a new year's resolution.

I really like that I can say it now. Bagel.

Lewis's Notes

Q: What is the best food ever created by human hand?

A: Veggie Samosa.



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Ally is not impressed by Stephen's idea of news

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I'm really enjoying the current set. It's one of the most elaborate ones I've made in some time. Quite a few of the elements in it come from [Daiso](#), a Japanese chain that recently opened a store in Mountain View. Good place to get cheap tiny objects.

Lewis's Notes

And for that matter

This cake is baked but I much preferred the batter
Perhaps in part because it had so much potential
To be delicious and still be influential

Sloan wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Bizarro Aorist have backyard in front of house!

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

And now, the Bizarro Aorist's backyard set will be dismantled, never to be seen again.

I feel like that famous sculptor who destroys all his works a week after making them. And also his works are all made of gamepieces and stuff he found in the basement. And he isn't even a little bit famous.

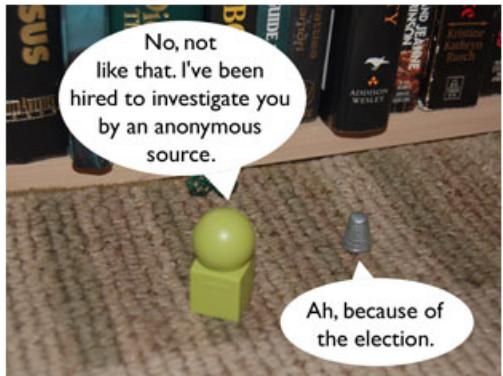
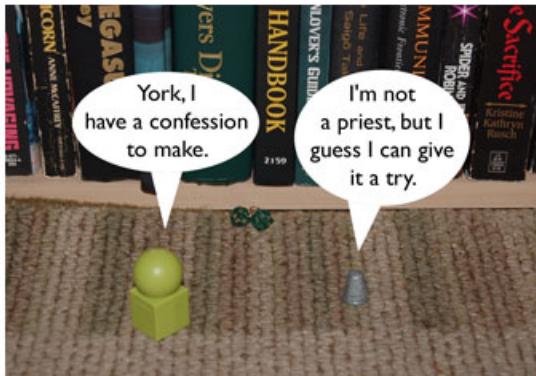
Lewis's Notes

One time, I went on a date, and the first thing my date said to me was, "If I stop breathing, I need you to stab me."

This was because she had a *severe* peanut allergy and didn't want to die on the date in the event that the restaurant was not 100% good at keeping peanuts out of her food.

Oh, and the thing I was supposed to stab her with was an epinephrine injection.

I wish more of my dates started off so enigmatically.



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Actually, York is a priest, but he has been keeping this secret under wraps for three centuries, and isn't about to blow his cover now.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

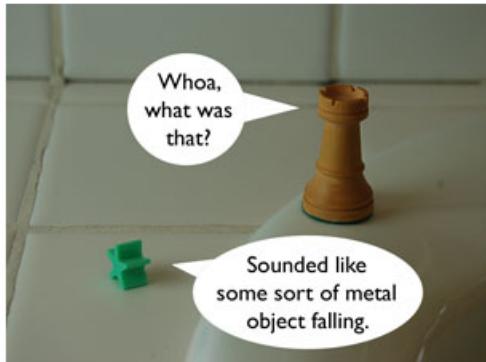
I'm in DC right now, as you can tell by the fact that York's gaming store is showing up in the strip. (I like to imagine that people watch the comic carefully to pick up on my movements in real life. Please indulge me in this notion.)

After I got here, I realized I'd forgotten to bring [my tiny novelty dice](#), but fortunately, Claire happened to have some of her own. D20s, even.

Lewis's Notes

The 'c' key on my keyboard is not working, and I am dealing with this by a combination of strategies: (1) See if I am able to reword what I want to type without the key that fails to work, and (2) copy and paste the letter 'c' from other text on the screen.

You had better believe I am getting this looked at in the very near future.



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Sid entered via the secret passage, which only counts as one square of movement.

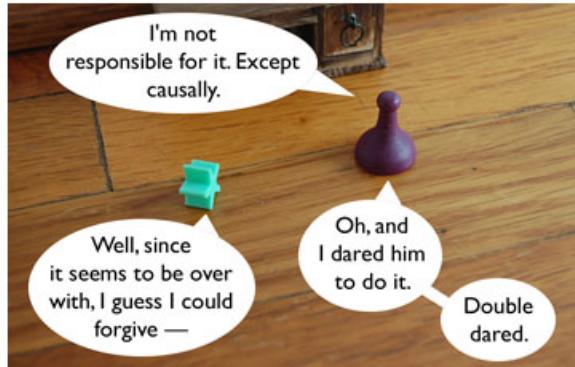
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I have the ending credits song from *Portal* stuck in my head, and I haven't even played the game myself, or seen the ending anywhere other than YouTube.

Lewis's Notes

Fun Terror Island fact #7 (collect them all): Lewis makes very fine distinctions regarding the notion of breaking the fourth wall, and considers it important that a strip like today's may come close to doing so, but does not technically present any structural damage to the fact/fiction barrier.



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Stephen thought about taking the physical challenge, but it would have been purchasing groceries.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Yay, it's another new character! We're going to keep this up until I run out of shelves to store them on. Or until nobody can keep track of who's in the strip anymore. Whichever comes last.

Lewis's Notes

If you ever want to read a good novel written in the second person, I recommend Italo Calvino's "If on a Winter's Night A Traveler."



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Sue wasn't actually arrested. She was summoned to answer a civil complaint.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Here's a slightly better view of the desk from the last strip. It's still covered up more than I would like.

Note to Lewis: we should do a storyline where everybody becomes permanently mute due to some sort of demon curse or something. Then I wouldn't have to put all those speech bubbles over everything.

Lewis's Notes

How many of you have wondered what it would sound like if Lewis played "Alouette" on the flute? The good news is, [now you can find out](#).

Also, I want to encourage fans with Facebook accounts to join [the Terror Island Facebook group](#).



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Pretty much everyone in Geography City is a notorious offender by Stephen's standards.

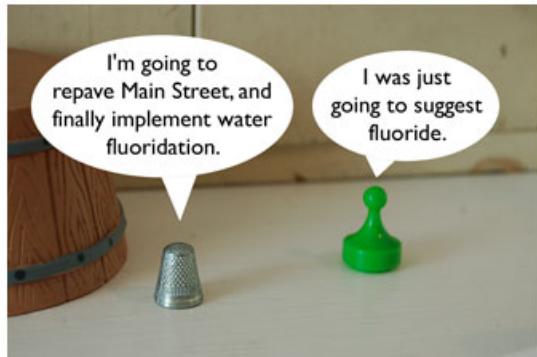
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Sue's last name is a reference to Max von Sydow, the actor who played Ming the Merciless in the Flash Gordon movie. The 1980 one, not the earlier serials.

Lewis's Notes

I wanted to do something in today's strip about Sue getting coupons redeemable for free malts but only if redeemed while on a date with Sid, but it didn't fit, and made no sense. So, even though "making no sense" isn't usually a good reason to cut an idea, we accepted it as one this time.



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The Green Grocer thinks tort reform has something to do with cake.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Here's a look into our actual comic-scripting process for this strip:

12:50:07 AM factition: What's the name of that song those Scandinavian guys played by wrecking a kitchen?

12:50:16 AM factition: The one about the total eclipse of the heart?

12:50:17 AM beatniklew: Total Eclipse of the Heart

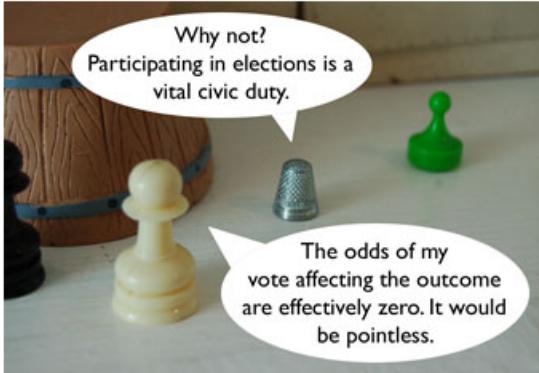
12:50:21 AM factition: Thanks.

12:50:25 AM beatniklew: i hate you

Lewis's Notes

Some days, you think you have run out of crazy Batman-related discoveries. Then you come across this:





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2 isn't prime over the Gaussian integers, due to voter apathy there.

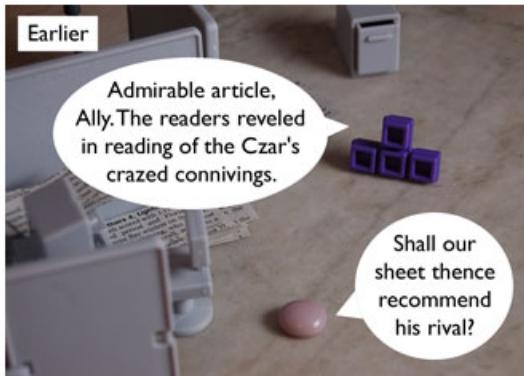
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If you've been taken in by Gavriel's argument that you shouldn't bother voting because one vote won't make a difference, here's something to consider: You can increase the power of your vote by encouraging other people to vote who wouldn't have otherwise. If you're part of a community of people who share some or all of your political beliefs, make sure they're registered to vote. The more active you are, the higher your vote multiplier becomes, and the better your chances of getting a high score.

Lewis's Notes

Fun fact: It was me, and not Ben, who suggested making a joke about the incoherence of voting for the primehood of numbers. From this, we can conclude that Ben, the so-called mathematician, does not believe that it would be foolish to hold elections for what properties are had by various numbers. Let's all join together and remind Ben that mathematics is not a democracy.



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However, they do give Pulitzers for puff pastries.

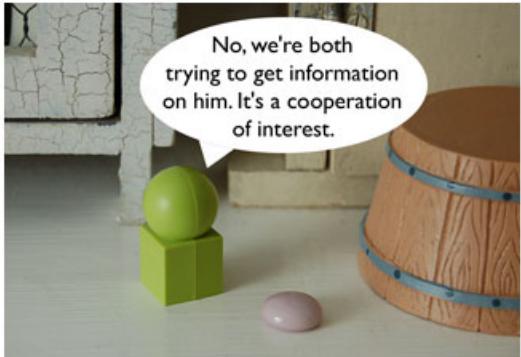
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Ally's boss is named Blorgomanxome Sudafed. Usually Lewis and I discuss ideas for character names with each other before deciding on them, but I couldn't resist this time. I'm sure he'll approve of Blorgomanxome Sudafed.

Lewis's Notes

We didn't originally plan it this way, but it looks like Ally's defining trait is being abysmally bad at investigative reporting. She's aces at interviews though.



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Spoiler warning: there's a secret fourth panel to this one.

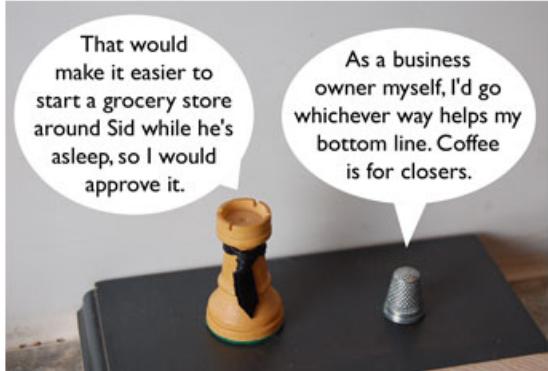
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I know a lot of our readers are fans of diacritical marks, but we're still not going to spell it "coöperation" in the strip. *Terror Island* does not pander.

Lewis's Notes

To save you the trouble of asking, I will answer some of your questions now. 1) Because the barrel is soundproof. 2) No, Ally and First Folio are not related, why do you ask? 3) "Walk Like an Egyptian" by the Bangles. 4) While he does have the power of flight, he only has the power to fly when he is not trying to fly, and so that is why you haven't seen him flying at all in the strip. 5) Manifest Destiny and the Frontier Hypothesis. I hope that helps.



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More like Yorkgarry, York Ross, amirite?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

You might think that Stephen's response to the question is odd, since people watching the debate won't know who Sid is. But in fact, he's fairly well known to Geography City residents who follow politics, due to being the impetus for most of Stephen's policy decisions as Czar. In particular, Ally's article about Stephen focused on the issue of his grocery obsession, highlighting Sid's role to the public.

Lewis's Notes

You know how if someone's an undercover cop, and you ask them if they're a cop, they have to say yes? There should be a movie about a policeman who's also a mime, but his mime act keeps getting ruined because of that.

[Scene: Police Mime is miming being trapped in a box. An appreciative crowd gathers, amazed at his skill.]
Random onlooker: Hey, are you a cop?
Police Mime: Yes, I am.

Crowd: Boo! You just talked! Boo!
I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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'Indentured servitude' isn't really an accurate description, but that's politics for you

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

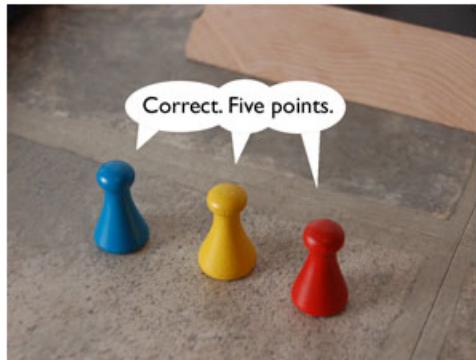
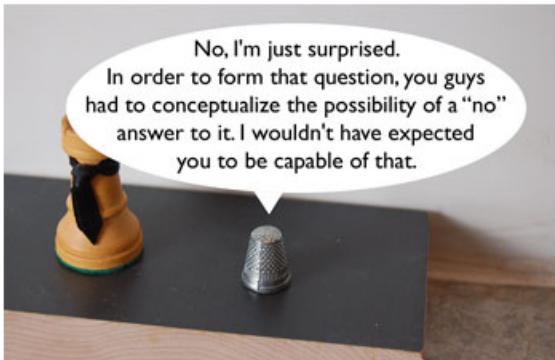
Ben's Notes

Remember [Ned Q. Sorcerer](#)? Also known as [the Obvious Dentist](#)? The [interdimensional supervillain](#) who bears a grudge against Stephen, Sid, and York after [they got him catapulted](#) out of [a Center of the Earth University reunion](#)? Who then [returned to the moon with the Green Grocer](#) and [seized control of the university](#), but he and his minions were [unable](#) to capture our heroes before they managed to [escape via moon bus](#)?

If you don't remember him, go read the moon storyline, starting [here](#). It has some of my favorite *Terror Island* strips, and quite a few surprising twists. You'll never guess what all happens in it.

Lewis's Notes

One advantage of studying philosophy is that you get to develop love-hate relationships with people who have been dead for hundreds of years. With David Hume, for instance, I alternate between being totally impressed by his genius, and basically swearing at him under my breath after each sentence I read. I am oddly defensive about Hume though. When people speak ill of his views, even when I agree that the view is bad, I am compelled to argue with them and support his position. I don't feel this way about the rationalists, interestingly enough, mostly just about the British empiricists.



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Good thing he didn't answer with wow

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I've been reading [Sonty Mick's webcomic review blog](#) lately, and it's pretty impressive. This guy doesn't pull punches — he's not afraid to tell it like it is, and target popular but overrated comics. For a start, check out his reviews of [XKCD](#), [Penny Arcade](#), and [Wonderella](#).

I'm officially declaring this to be the **Terror Island “Pick” of Webcomic Review Blogs**.

Lewis's Notes

I am too tired to be funny right now. I just finished a 14 hour day, and it was kind of a long 14 hours a that.



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If you think the Unity was going to disrupt the balance by awarding them different point values, you have another think coming.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The policeman joke here is from an old routine I read about in *Vaudeville: From the Honky-tonks to the Palace* by Joe Laurie Jr. Great book if you're interested in the history of vaudeville.

Lewis's Notes

Ben: I'm looking through an old vaudeville book for some jokes.

Ben: Mr. Cohen, what are you running for?

I'm trying to keep two fellows from fighting.

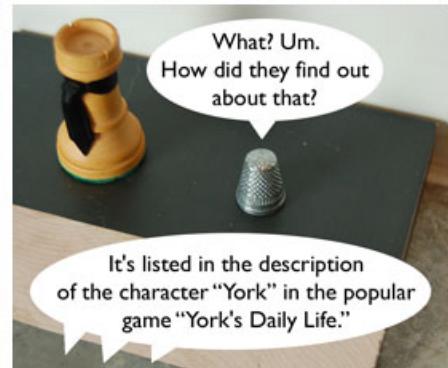
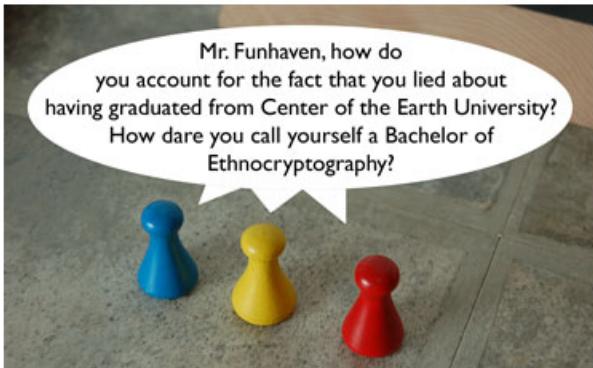
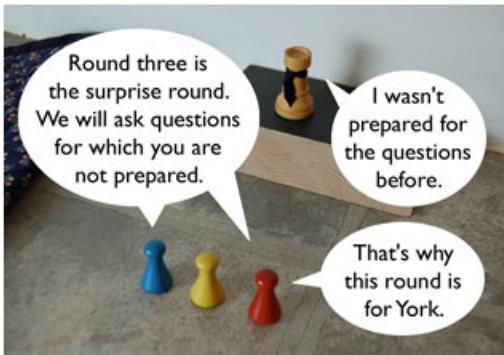
Who are the fellows?

An Irishman and me.

Lewis: find one that is less racist

Ben: I'll try.

Lewis: ps: that exchange is my comments for today, including this line.



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York's commitment to realism in gaming has come back to haunt him.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Ethnocryptography is the study of the social and cultural context around cryptography, often focusing on non-Western cryptography.

Lewis's Notes

Other majors we considered for York:

- Numismatics
- Windward Mathematics
- Aeronautical Anthropology
- Wind Engineering
- Theoretical Filmmaking
- Marine Astrology
- Morphology
- Socioharmonics

WITHIN A WORLD OF CHAOS



AN OCEAN OF HORROR REVEALS



AN ARCHIPELAGO OF PURE HORROR



AND ONE LANDMASS SO INCREDIBLY TERRIBLE AND FIENDISH IT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS...



TERROR ISLAND

I don't think he's ever coming back.



Sometimes it takes awhile to acquire groceries.

We must hold an election!



A land without civility is a land without elections.



But this is Terror Island!

Terror Elections then.



Oh, any minute now!

Here he comes!



OH CRAP IT IS INSTEAD A GIANT SEA MONSTER



Guys let's talk about annuities!

Imagine this all read by that movie trailer guy. Even the dialogue.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

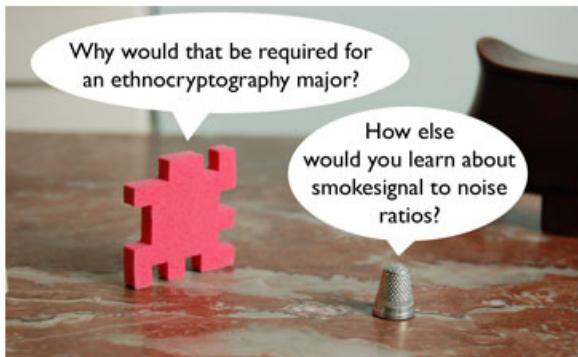
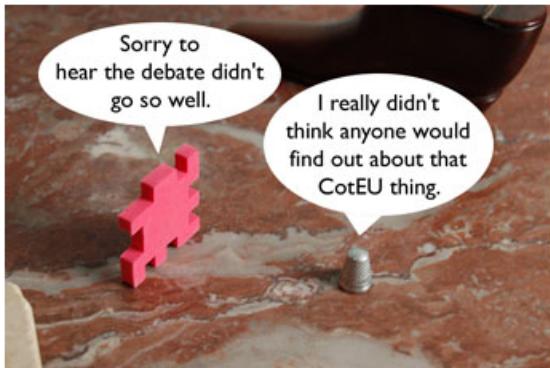
Ben's Notes

As you may have noticed, this strip is by Chris Yates, of [Reprographics](#) fame. Getting him to do a guest strip is really cool for me, since Reprographics has been kind of an inspiration for my own photocomicry. He did a great job nailing our tone with the Terror Elections bit, too.

Lewis's Notes

This strip is, in fact, the canonical explanation of why our comic is called “Terror Island.” You might think that’s the sort of thing we should have addressed on our own, but I find it’s more artistically authentic to allow guest cartoonists a chance at filling in such matters. It’s like how Plato didn’t write about the nature of morality, because he knew that Aristotle would do a better job at it later on.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. I bet you couldn't tell it wasn't really him, though. I mentioned Aristotle and everything. -Ben



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Since you can't make fires on the moon, the class was more about theory than practice.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I might as well mention it, since you'd probably hear about it eventually anyway. Sonty Mick [reviewed Terror Island](#), and he said some very cutting and spiteful things.

This came as a total shock, especially after I went out of my way [a few days ago](#) to say some kind words about him. Sonty Mick's really crossed a line here. I used to like his blog when he was tearing apart other webcomics, but it's completely different now that he's targeting us. How *dare* he do this to *Terror Island*?

Sonty Mick, I hope someday you'll go back to criticizing webcomics that actually deserve it. You used to be funny before you started being so unfair to me and people like me.

You are no longer the **Terror Island "Pick" of Webcomic Review Blogs**.

Lewis's Notes

I had hoped no one noticed we were a "King of the Hill" rip off. I guess we're going to work on taking Sonty's advice.



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Sometimes skating board contests don't have very exciting prizes.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This strip was inspired by our desire to mention skating boards in the comic again.

By the way, if you look closely at the other customers in the restaurant, you may notice some familiar faces.

Lewis's Notes

Actually, you won't notice any faces. *Terror Island* is a dystopian fantasy about what the world would be like if people didn't have faces, but still behaved as though they did.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Ruh-roh! How's Jame going to get out of this dog-gone cat-astrophe?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

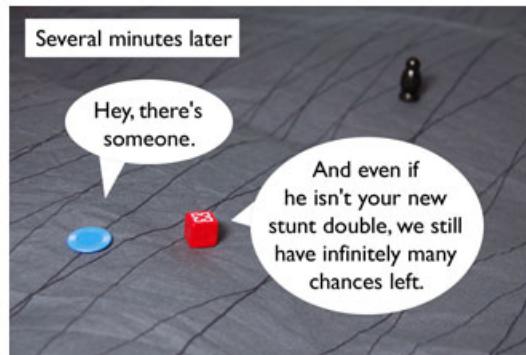
Ben's Notes

Remember, Gunpowder was only sentenced to be Jame's stunt double [for a limited time](#).

Wow, that strip's pretty hard to read, what with the white speech bubbles on a bright white background. I'd like to go back and redo some of those old ones, but that would involve a lot of work.

Lewis's Notes

True story: this strip inspired the famous author O. Henry to scribe "The Gift of the Magi," which makes it important in the realms of both literature and backwards causation.



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In real life, you'd probably use craigslist instead.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The spiral method actually works. I don't know why people always object when I suggest it to them.

Lewis's Notes

This strip is based on a real experience Ben and I had driving with our friend Reid. Reid was driving, and we were lost in downtown Rochester, looking for the bus station, I think. Reid, as it turns out, was not as enamored of the advice, "search outward from here in an expanding spiral" as Jame appears to be, despite the fact that the bus station would eventually have been found by that method.



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This is why there is never any parking available in Geography City.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This comic is a metaphor for how jungle spirits aren't very useful when you want a stunt double, even though you'd think they'd be great at it.

Lewis's Notes

Today's comic was almost a very intellectual high-brow joke about Upton Sinclair, but Ben nixed that idea because he wanted something more "slapstick."



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Geography City has very diverse terrain.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

It's been a while since we've had a five-panel strip. And I think this may be the first time we've had one with a different location in each panel.

Lewis's Notes

I honestly did not think about the fact that stunt double work would need to be unionized until Lord Terror mentioned it. The things you learn from the comics, eh?



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The trouble for Stephen is that nobody else heard about his free ice cream plan either.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Who do you think should win the Geography City Czar election? E-mail us with the name of your favorite candidate at czalection2007@geographycity.gov, and then watch as we pay no attention to your vote, because Geography City is a fictional place that you're not actually eligible to vote in.

Lewis's Notes

You guys may not know this, so I will let you in on a secret. I was the cutest 3-year-old-child in the history of mankind. Probably the cutest one there will ever be. Now I would prove this to you, if anyone were to tell me how to do a screencapture of a frame from a DVD played on a Macbook. Then I would be glad to show you guys how totally adorable I am. Uh, I mean how adorable I was (I was just watching some home movies that had been transferred to DVD, and so, felt the need to share this).

Oh, also, to answer a question about the strip, Stephen has five of the same tie. And by same tie, I mean numerically identical. While this would be problematic in first-order logic with identity, we like to think that the logic of Terror Island is a bit better than mere first-order logic.



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Stephen is gasping because he just realized his concession speech didn't plan for this contingency.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Gasp!
Lewis's Notes
Gasp!



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Blueteen does not plan on having any Deputy Czars. That's not how he rolls.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

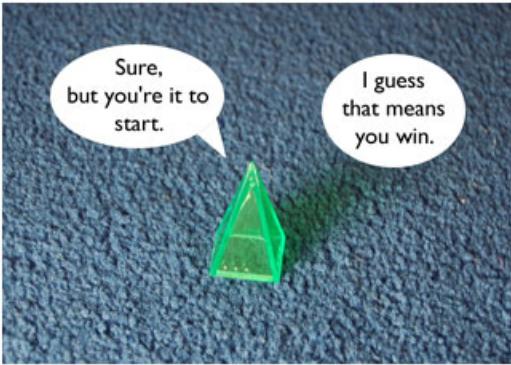
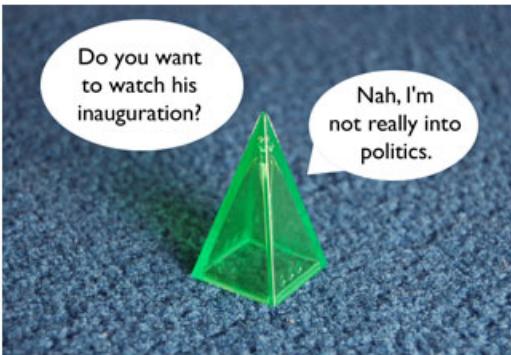
Ben's Notes

Aorist had a pet ghost! And that ghost is now the Czar! And his name is Blueteen!
Why is his name Blueteen, you ask? I'll let Lewis explain that one.

Lewis's Notes

The name of Aorist's former pet ghost is inspired by this photocomic, which we received from Mason in response to [Ben's attempt at making up an email address](#):





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Aorist is bored with hide and seek because he's too good at it.

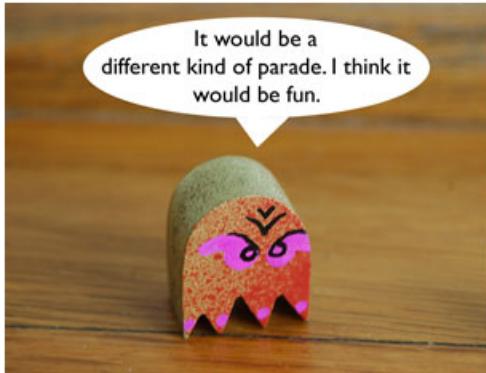
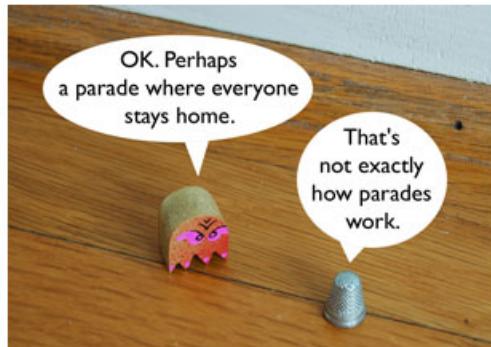
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If Terror Island used a different font instead of Gill Sans, what would you want it to be? Let us know on [the forum](#). I don't think there's a thread for it right now, so you'd have to start one.

Lewis's Notes

Did you know that our comic can compete with large airlines in terms of delivering service in the face of inclement weather? In fact, not only do we compete, we win, which is why I won't leave Rochester until Tuesday, after having today's flight cancelled. Terror Island updates in any weather (except maybe hot hail).



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It's nice of Blueteen to ask York for advice.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

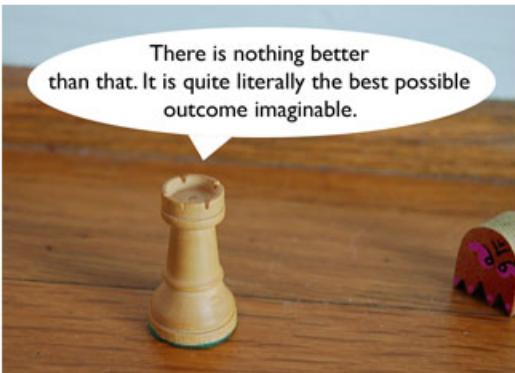
Ben's Notes

As I hope many of you have already realized, the part of Blueteen is played by a mini-ghost made by [Chris Yates](#). It's a fun item to photograph.

Lewis's Notes

Parades are a common Czar proposal in *Terror Island*, because if I were a Czar, I'd spend all my time organizing parades.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Blueteen is a wise and learned Czar.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Blueteen was introduced because we felt the cast needed a more helpful member.

Lewis's Notes

While I don't agree that every situation admits of improvement by the addition of a wheelbarrow, I will say that no matter how bad any particular situation is, it is definitely made worse by a headache. Situations that already have headaches in them are made worse by increasing the intensity of the heading, or adding a second type of headache to the mix.



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Jame will probably have to revise his employee discount policy, if he wants to stay in business.

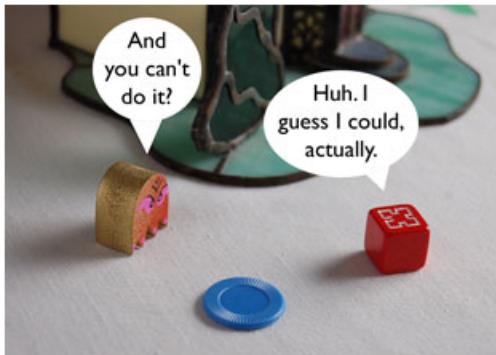
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

New webcomics site you might want to check out: [Family Webcomics](#), from the people who brought you [Bitmap World](#) (and [some neat Terror Island emoticons](#)). If you're looking for family-friendly webcomics, this should be a good place to do it.

Lewis's Notes

We haven't decided if Bluteen can teleport or if he is multilocated in various parts of the city. It is also possible he just travels very quickly. We have ruled out the possibility that he can holographically project an image of himself and then throw his voice to it. I suppose we might revisit that decision though, at a later time.



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Jame has low expectations for Czar leadership.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

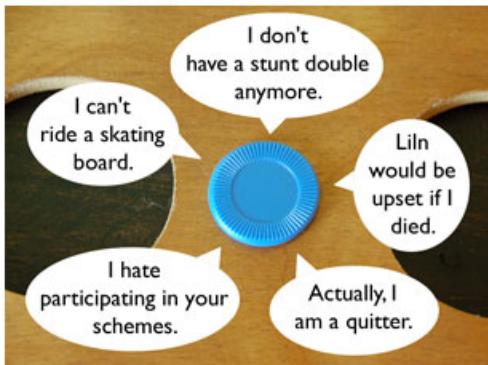
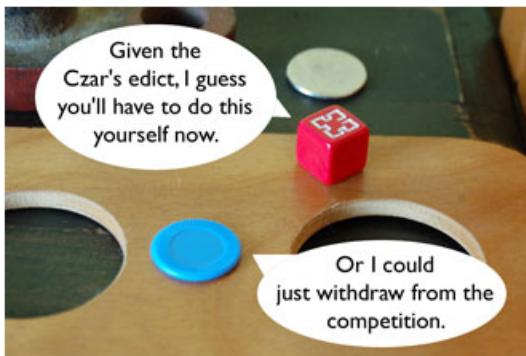
Ben's Notes

Blueteen might be my new favorite character. I know, he's no Aorist, but he's still fun to write.

Lewis's Notes

Happy Kwanzaa!

I wrote Lewis's comments today. He celebrates Kwanzaa, right? -Ben



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Is Jame afraid of skating boards?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Hey, I just came across an autobiographical webcomic written by a guy I went to high school with. It's called [Tip Me Over, Pour Me Out](#). Worth checking out even if you didn't go to high school with him.

Lewis's Notes

I know its only been one day since he's been in the strip, but I miss Blueteen already. Let's all take a moment to reflect on the wisdom of Blueteen's leadership. And the fact that people keep ghosts as pets in the TIverse.



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Do not email the creators of this strip to complain about the poker advice. It is better than you realize.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This is our last comic for 2007. I think it's worth taking a moment to reflect on how *Terror Island* has changed over the course of this year.

In 2007:

- Gibbs and Lockley got fired
- Sid wrote a childrens' book
- Jame and Liln went to Bizarro Aorist's backyard on a date
- Sid entered Jame in a skating board contest
- The Green Grocer started treating Waiterman like a superhero
- Aorist was killed
- Canadian Thanksgiving
- Sid, Stephen, and York went to the moon
- We started using tensed logic to indicate hypothetical futures, not just flashbacks
- Gunpowder stopped being Jame's stunt double
- The actor who played Omicron passed away
- Jame's surprise birthday party
- Stephen was up for re-election as Czar, and lost to Blueteen
- Sue narrowly avoided being sentenced to community service
- Bartleby appeared twice

Not necessarily in that order, though. Read through from [the beginning of 2007](#) if you want to review which events took place before which other ones.

Lewis's Notes

Speaking of webcomics that mention poker, why not go read [+EV](#)? It's a webcomic about poker.
I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Couches want to be free.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Fun fact: while trying to get pictures of Jame skateboarding down the ramp, I almost lost the piece that plays him. On one of the takes, it missed the bowl I'd set at the bottom and went into a crack between two boards. Fortunately, it didn't go in very deep, so I got it out with some tweezers.

If that had failed, I would have had to get out another blue tiddlywink. I have a lot of backups for Jame, but have never yet needed to use any of them. Now that he doesn't have a stunt double, the understudies may be more likely to see eventual use.

Lewis's Notes

Welcome to 2008. I hope we get some leap seconds this year. It's been a while.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Are they just leaving that couch out in the rain?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The reason the ground looks different from last strip is that it rained today. That's one of the hazards we risk when the comic's set outside.

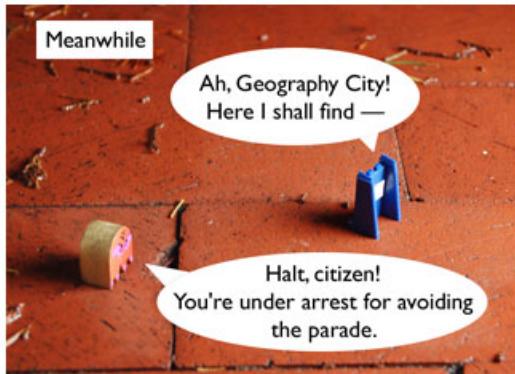
One problem I ran into while photographing it was that wet surfaces reflect light differently from dry ones, so the lighting setup I was using was producing too much glare on the ground. Moving the light to different angles didn't help much, and I started thinking that it would be great if I had some thin cloth I could drape over it, to diffuse it a bit. But the strip was already taking longer than expected, and I didn't want to head all the way back inside to pull out more equipment. Then I realized that the solution was right in front of me — or rather, right on me.

The point is, I'm willing to sit around shirtless in the rain at night if that's what it takes to provide you, the reader, with the comic you're used to.

Lewis's Notes

I never have to take my shirt off in the rain, because I'm a *writer*. I think I'm so great.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Technically, the parade is at everyone's home, not just Ned's.

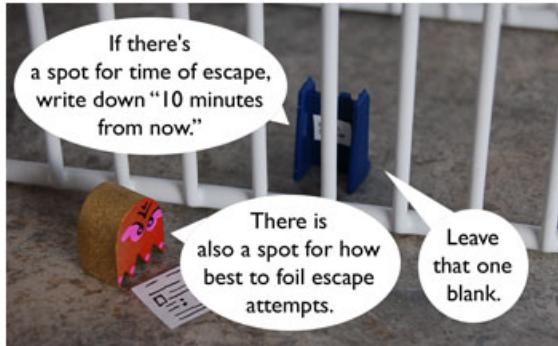
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Even from within jail, Ned Q. Sorceror demonstrates his uncanny abilities.

Lewis's Notes

I want everyone to notice that Blueteen's seemingly crazy plan resulted in the incarceration of a known supervillain. So rest assured, there is either a method to his madness, or he got randomly lucky this one time.



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What kind of jerk asks a guy with a name tag what his name is?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

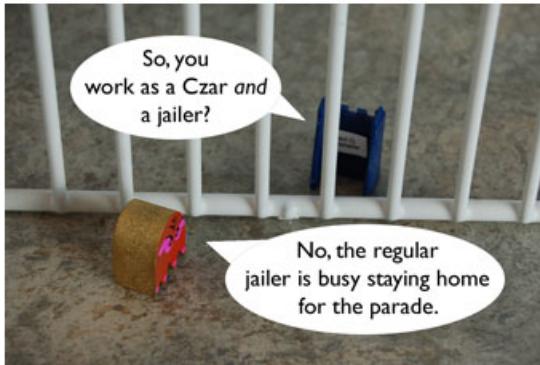
Look, a piece of paper with tiny lines on it! That takes me back. In the early days of *Terror Island*, we used to have a new random paper prop every week or so. I still have all of them.

Lewis's Notes

I am a great discoverer, like Ferdinand Magellan or, umm, that guy who made dynamite out of bread mold.* I, my good friends, discovered tea. Maybe I'm more like Columbus discovering the New World, since I am far from the first person to discover tea. However, recently, I adopted a rule to drink only water. That was good until drinking only water got very boring. I decided that tea was about the closest to water a beverage can get, and also I'd been hearing good things about it. So, I started drinking tea. Some teas are quite delicious. I am still exploring the various types of tea, but red teas and mint teas have been pretty good so far.

In conclusion, if they give out awards in the field of discovery, I think I deserve one of them, since tea is, I think we can all agree, a worthwhile thing to discover.

*I am fully aware that Nobel invented dynamite, and that the bread mold thing was penicillin. This was just some of my patented humor stylings.



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This honestly did not occur to Blueteen before.

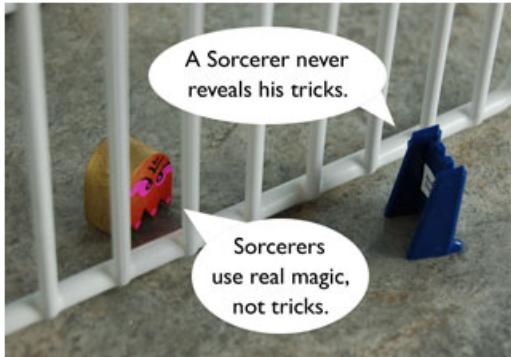
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This is going to be the best parade ever.

Lewis's Notes

Either Blueteen doesn't have absolute power, or Lord Acton was wrong when he said that absolute power corrupts absolutely. How many leaders would, when confronted with their own failures to observe the law of the land, voluntarily incarcerate themselves? Only one. And that is why I am declaring my support for ~~President~~ Pharaoh of the United States of America in 2008.



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Actually, they have given his family an awesome name.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

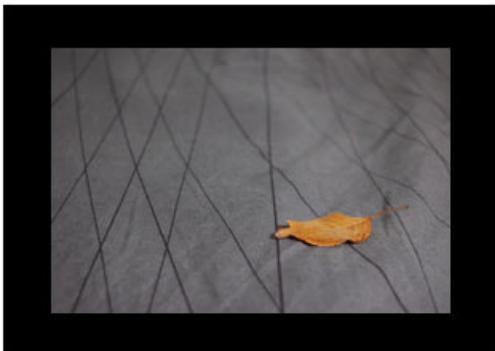
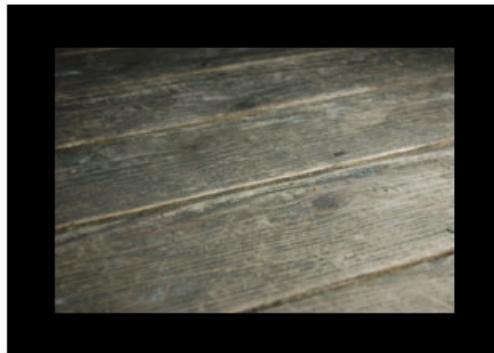
Ben's Notes

Ned's a tricky one, it seems.

Lewis's Notes

I have been six or seven places recently that were playing music from my high school days. This has reminded me of the completely objective fact that music from when I was in high school is the best music ever. I only feel bad for all the suckers who passed on before the mid-nineties, and missed out on the best music that has ever been or shall ever be.

If they are lucky, they are up in heaven listening to a kick-ass mix tape as we speak.



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Who, indeed?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

It was tricky to come up with a way of denoting that the first three panels are photographs, since the panels in *Terror Island* are always photographs already. Using Polaroid-type borders around them would have been good, except that the aspect ratio is off, and it might blend into the white background of the strip.

Lewis's Notes

Just so everyone knows, in about two years, the strip is going to be Gunpowder waking up and realizing that it was all a dream. Or was it? Then we'll pull back the shot and reveal that Stephen is actually watching the whole thing on a television inside a snow-globe. And then, just when you thought the twists couldn't get any twistier, we'll reveal that Sid and Stephen are actually the same person, and that they have been dead all along. Since people sometimes complain that twists like this seem unplanned and forced, I wanted to make sure everyone knew that this has been in the works since day one. Or, well, whatever day today is. The point is, you can enjoy the whole remainder of the series knowing that it is all the televised entertainment of the fever-dreams of a ghost with multiple personality disorders.

Also, for anyone doing literary analysis of the strip, it is about man's inhumanity to man. But it isn't saying anything interesting about it. It isn't even making the worthwhile observation that man is, sometimes, inhumane to man. If anything the strip is conveying the claim that Man is inhumane to man if and only if man is inhumane to man. While not as interesting as the observation or comment on actual inhumanity, it has the advantage of being tautologous, and therefore indisputable



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The round orange dog will dock Sid some points.

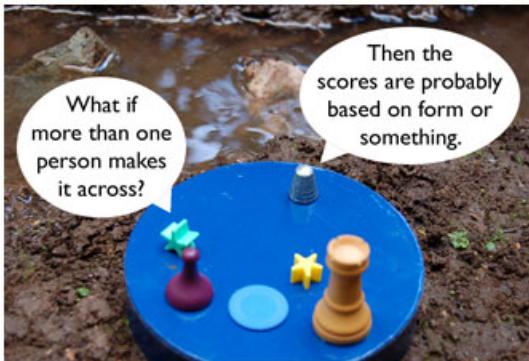
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Lewis wanted Stephen's line in panel 4 to be "[That's the answer! Jungle Patrol!](#)," but I changed it at the last minute.

Lewis's Notes

I shouldn't be surprised that Ben has a miniature razor scooter, but I've decided to be anyway. EGAD!



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Ironically, Skaterboon River is more dangerous.

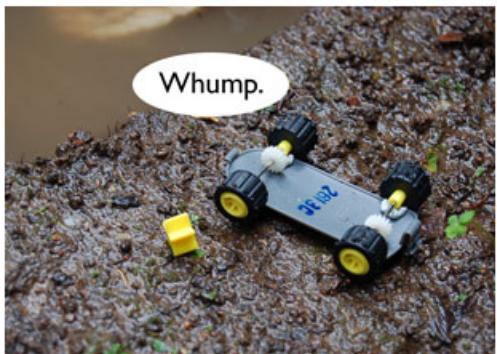
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This isn't the first time I've had to play in the mud for a webcomic.

Lewis's Notes

This isn't the first time I haven't had to play in the mud for a webcomic.



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*More like one lord *not* leaping, am I right?*

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

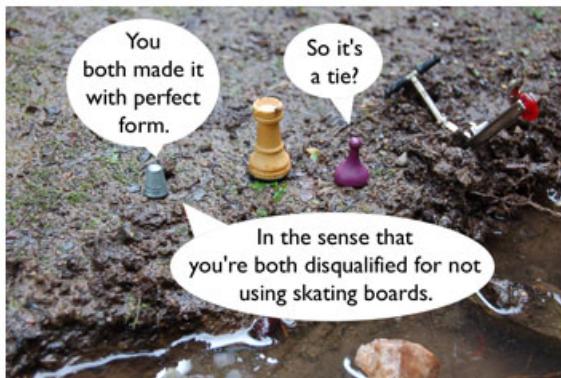
Ben's Notes

I made Lord Terror's skating board out of the part of a remote control that you remove to get at the batteries.

Lewis's Notes

I think you should bear in mind that although Lord Terror may not know how to ride a skating board, he does know how to lie to people. And in the end, isn't that the real power?

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Perfect form includes falling off your scooter when you land, apparently

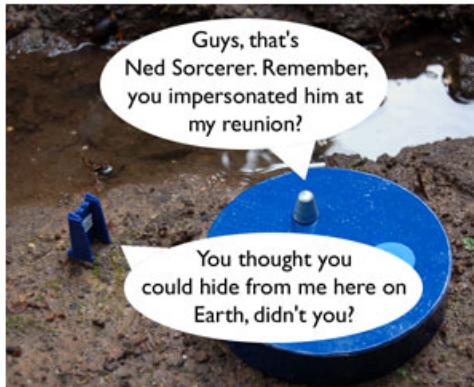
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Aw. I was really hoping Sid and Stephen would win this thing.

Lewis's Notes

I'm joining the [Jungle Patrol](#).



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A New Challenger Approaches!

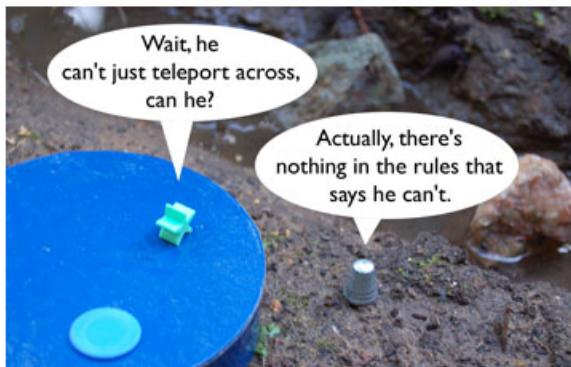
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Man, whose idea was it to put two of our bluest characters on a blue background?
Mine? Oh,

Lewis's Notes

I like the idea that one's super power can be to imbue other people with a particular piece of knowledge which they can't quite recall learning, and thus, are constantly trying to place into some sort of context.



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And now the secret of Ned's prison escape has been revealed!

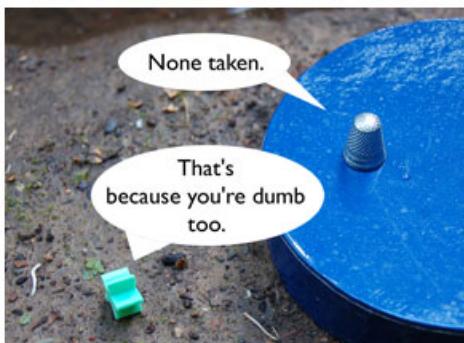
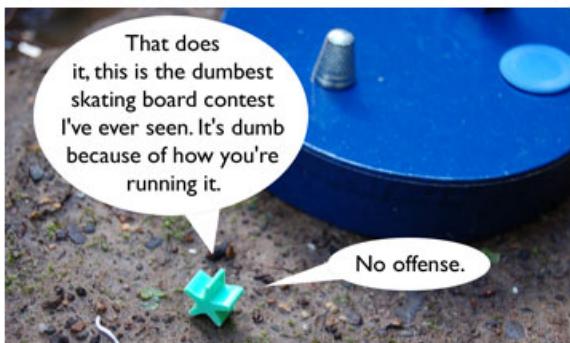
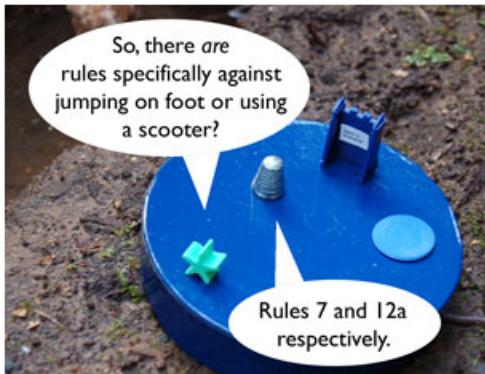
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Hey, this strip number's another power of 2! I don't remember seeing one of those since at least a hundred strips ago.

Lewis's Notes

Don't be fooled by Ned's pithy observation. The fact that there will occasionally be loopholes in one's regulations which permit this sort of unforeseen outcome isn't a good reason to forbid everything which is not expressly permitted. I mean, a better solution is just to change the rules so that in the future, any spatially discontinuous paths are disallowed.



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You know, Sue kind of has a point here.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Sue doesn't seem to like the skating board contest for some reason.

Lewis's Notes

Just to make it clear to everyone exactly what is up with the rules, rule 7 reads "If the entrant jumps the river on foot, he or she will be disqualified for not using a skating board" and rule 12a reads "if the entrant jumps the river on a scooter, he or she will be disqualified for not using a skating board." 12b-q rule out various other vehicles one might attempt to jump the river on. Since there is no rule saying "If the entrant teleports across the river, the entrant will be disqualified for not using a skating board" Ned cannot be disqualified for failure to use a skating board.



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Ned thinks terrestrians are hampered by their planet's high gravity.

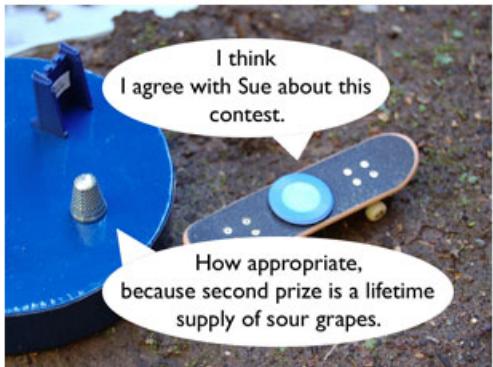
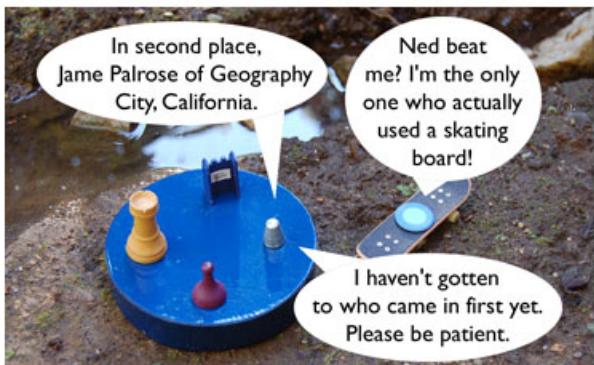
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The pictures of Jame's jump took a lot of tries. Most of the shots either didn't show Jame at all, or showed my hand tossing him across. Fortunately, simply increasing the number of pictures I take per session can make up for a lot.

Lewis's Notes

Ned's teleportation got me thinking about miracles, like cursing fig trees and finding money inside of fish. A more famous miracle I was thinking about was one that involved turning water into wine. I am trying to determine whether or not that qualifies as alchemy.



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Ned is from the Dentist Dimension.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

A lot of the fan feedback we've been getting or imagining recently has expressed outrage at Ned not being disqualified. If we reacted more to fan feedback, we probably would have changed the plot to have him not be declared the winner, but I guess that's not how this works.

Should I even be calling it "fan feedback"? I'm not sure if that sounds vaguely patronizing or not.

Lewis's Notes

Guys, my favorite historical figure is [Azariah Boody](#).

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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York was really hoping to get three finalists when he commissioned the podium.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

What the hey is a moonitaur, anyway?

Lewis's Notes

My friend Kate makes music. Here is an adorable music video featuring an adorable deer, for a song of hers.



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Surprisingly, their old best friend was none other than Furniture Store Guy.

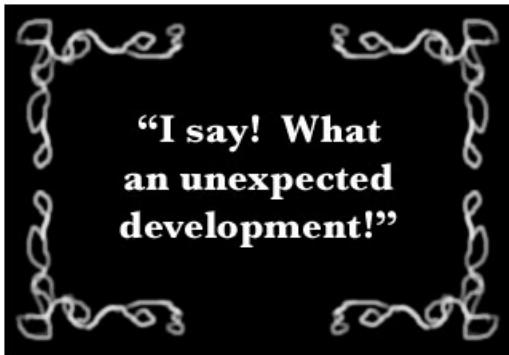
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Be thankful the next twenty strips aren't just more shots of Ned giving a speech. You might think you'd want to hear it, but that guy gets old fast.

Lewis's Notes

Whatever Ben said goes double for me.



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Let's see the so-called talking webcomics top this one

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

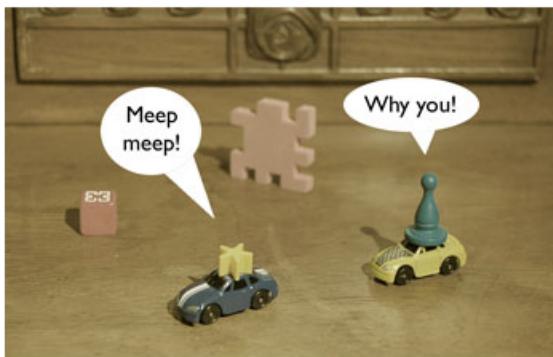
Ben's Notes

The panels in this strip are all the same size, because it's more authentic that way.

Lewis's Notes

Presented above for your amusement and edification is our latest comical foray: "Furniture Store Guy Takes Out the Trash."

Brought to you in glorious fumettiscope technology, transmitted over the aether straight from our photo-chambers to you. Fumettiscopes: the patent-pending solution to all your cares, sure to make those boys at the ice-cream parlor jump for joy!



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With apologies to Paul Julian

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

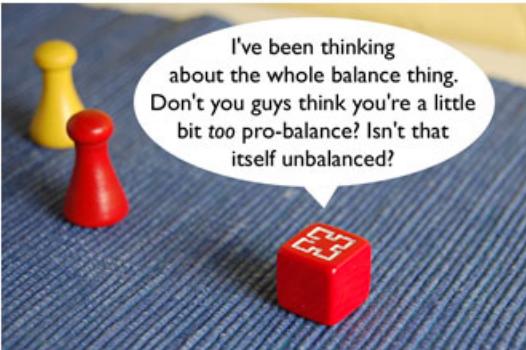
Ben's Notes

Target City is a pretty nice place.

Lewis's Notes

I teach a logic class as part of my being a philosophy graduate student. One of the lessons I try to teach the students is that learning logic is, in part, about knowing how to defeat the robots when they eventually rise up against us. If you think I am kidding, you can check with any of the students in my class, and they will verify this for you.

Actually, on second thought, it would be better if you didn't harass my students. Just take my word for it.



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Alternate ending: the Unity's heads explode after panel 2

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I've started reading [Chaos Pet](#), a stick-figure webcomic with some philosophy humor. It has strips about my two favorite philosophical concepts to annoy Lewis with: [philosophical zombies](#) and [dialetheism](#).

Dialetheism is the idea that contradictions are sometimes true, and that this isn't as much of a problem as those stuffy classical logicians think. You might be thinking that's crazy, and it is. But also, it's not.

Lewis's Notes

Most people forget that they should be trialetheists. Allowing some statements to have three truth values, that is, for there to be statements that are true, false and delicious all at the same time.



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Gunpowder knows that a story loses precisely half of its aesthetic value when abridged.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

[Go look at this.](#) I just found out about this so-called “sho” today. It’s a Greek letter (sort of), but it looks almost exactly like a thorn. Seriously, what the hey?

Lewis's Notes

Someone asked me about why I would endorse trialetheism rather than quadriletheism. I explained to them, as I now explain to all of you, that it would be patently absurd for a single statement to be true, false, delicious, and unappetizing at the same time. So, clearly, we must limit ourselves to at most three of the four at once.



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Garbage trucks used to be very dangerous.

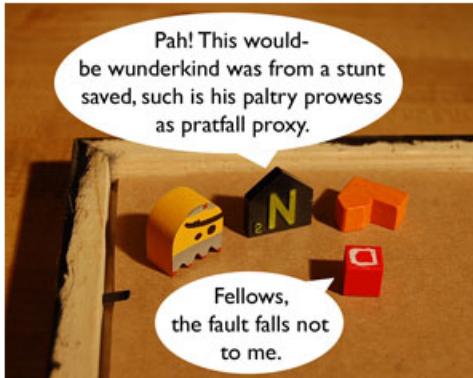
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I hope you like hearing about Gunpowder's past, because now that I have a separate piece to represent him as a child, his backstory is going to be figuring in the comic a lot more.

Lewis's Notes

It's funny, stunned silence sounded exactly the same in the past. Who'd have thunk it?



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The stunt doubles' names are Grover, Nop Nopper, and The Amazing Ficus.

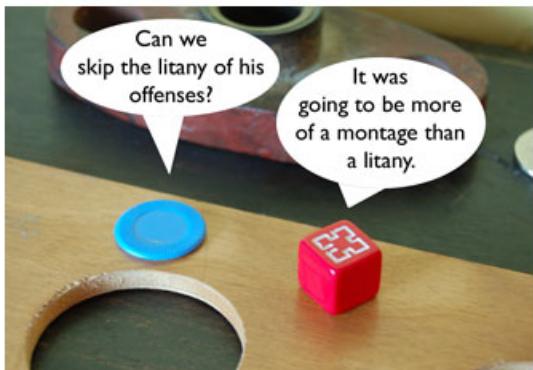
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Wow, stunt doubles used to be mean. I'm glad they're not like that these days.

Lewis's Notes

Sometimes I regret the decision to do all of the flashbacks in past-speak, because it makes it harder to script the flashbacks. Other times though, it winds up being a fun adventure where Ben and I have to find alliterative synonyms for present-day smack talk. That's when it is fun.



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Jame has lost interest in the art of the montage.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Anyone know what Terror Island's [6DoXKCD score](#) is? I'm too lazy to calculate this on my own.
My guess is that it's five.

Lewis's Notes

=COMMENT BEGIN=

My comments are: These are my comments for today.

=END COMMENT BEGIN=

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Jame doesn't need to eat the whole egg to know he's too busy for it right now.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

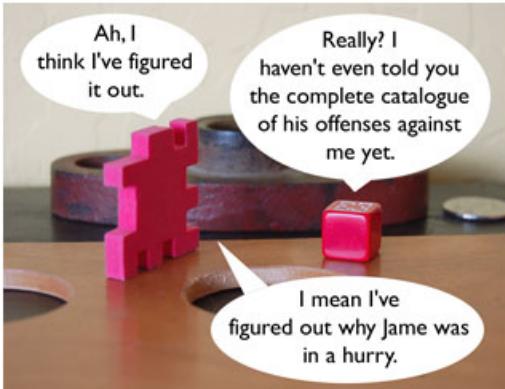
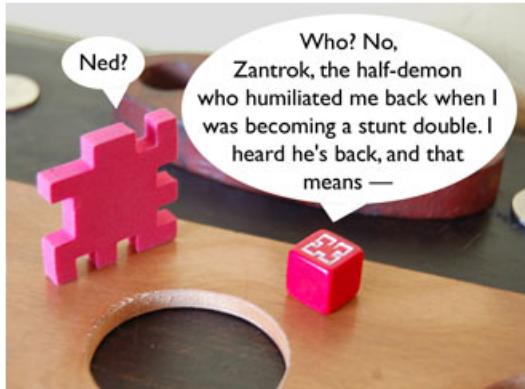
Ben's Notes

As you know, the phrase “the seven seas” doesn’t refer to a particular fixed set of seas in real life. It’s more of a figurative term for seas and oceans in general.

But that’s in real life! In the setting of *Terror Island*, “the seven seas” is understood to always mean the Adriatic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the Sargasso Sea, Lake Michigan, the North Sea, the Bering Sea, and Mare Frigoris.

Lewis's Notes

I never pass up an opportunity to have an old person refer to a year in the early 1900’s as “aught X”. Never.



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Gunpowder is a bore.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

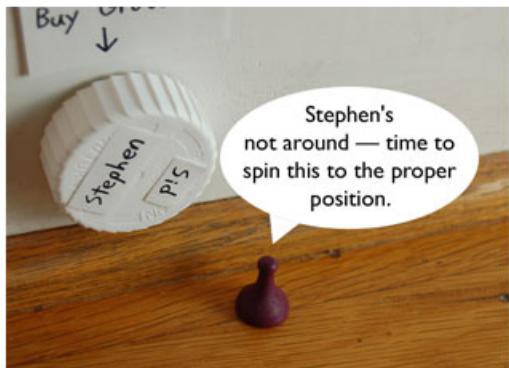
Ben's Notes

Today's [Ronald O'keeffe and the Ricotta Cove Irregulars](#) has a good cameo from a *Terror Island* character. Go check it out.

One of the things I like about *Ronald O'keeffe and the Ricotta Cove Irregulars* is that they've been doing set construction the right way from the start. The strips pretty much all take place in a single restaurant, with a consistent, well-organized setup to it. That sort of passive sense of place is something our comic doesn't manage all that often. (I'm not really sure where today's strip takes place, for example.)

Lewis's Notes

I have been watching *Smallville* on DVD, and, as of the end of Season 2, I am pretty sure it is a bizarre adaptation of some sort of Antichrist story. Oddly enough, Superman is the Antichrist in the story, not Lex Luthor.



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More wheels, more problems.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I made the chore wheels out of lids from vitamin bottles.

Lewis's Notes

Hahaha, Sid and Stephen still haven't bought groceries! Boy howdy!

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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This is actually the new Grocercmobile. The first one got old and furry.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

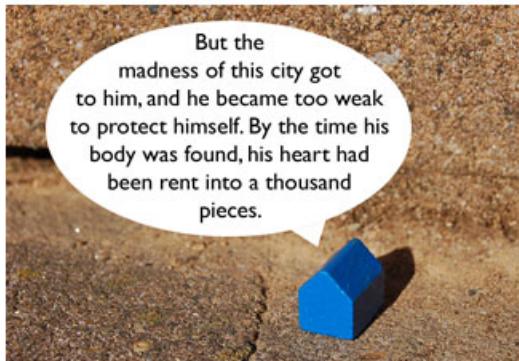
I am in Washington D.C. Look at me. I am soooooo cool.

I wrote Ben's comments today. -Lewis

Lewis's Notes

You all owe me big time, as Ben wanted to include a very lame lobster-related pun, and I was the last line of defense against such an assault.

I edited Lewis's comments today. -Erica



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Helping Gunpowder is safer than anything else he might do today.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

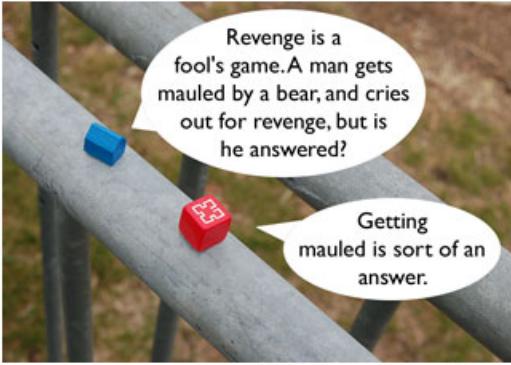
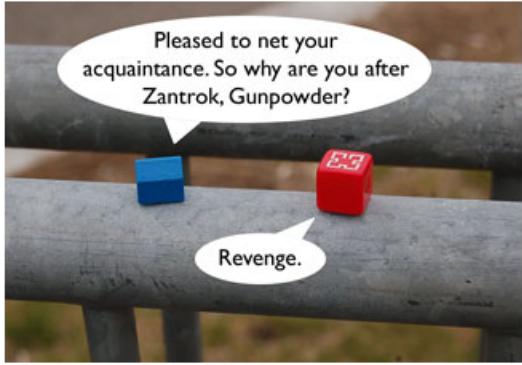
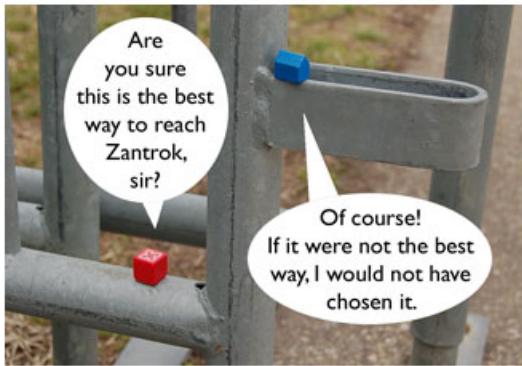
Ben's Notes

Today's camera setup involved a type of lighting that some refer to as 'an organic flash'. And no, it doesn't involve an organ, though that's what I thought originally myself. The particular organic flash involved in today's comic happens to also have the neat side-effect of giving super-powers to certain aliens. Hooray!

I wrote Ben's comments today. -Lewis

Lewis's Notes

Since this new character is portrayed by a game piece from "Settlers of Catan", this is a good time to mention a story from when I first went off to college. A good friend of mine gave me a tiny plastic sheep figurine, a piece of wood, a piece of wheat, and a brick, as part of my going away present. For those of you not in the know, these are the four resources required to build a new settlement in "Settlers", and she was giving them to me to help me get settled at college.



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Being pleased to net someone's acquaintance is non-hollow politeness.

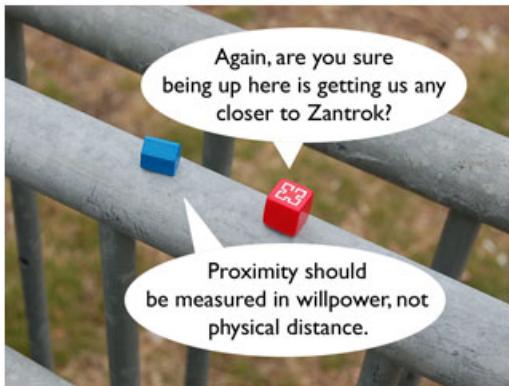
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

You can see Union Station in the background of panel 2. Or you could, if it weren't blurry and covered by a speech bubble.

Lewis's Notes

Helmut Warthog, great guide to Target City, or Greatest guide to Target City? You be the judge.



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Helmut's standard unit of proximity is the voliton.

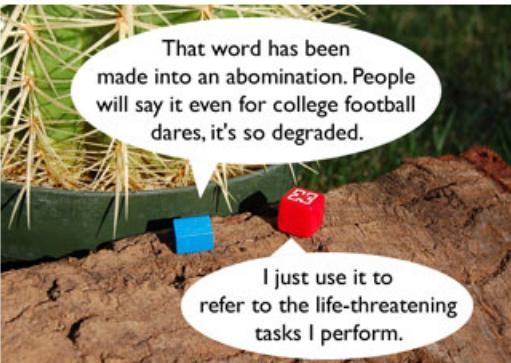
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Getting the message “Sonic The Hedgehog, the world’s fastest hedgehog, has joined the brawl!” in Super Smash Brothers Brawl today made me realize that a hedgehog was an odd animal choice for Sonic. Why did I not see that before?

Lewis's Notes

Many people have asked me whether Helmut's wisdom is real or illusory. The correct answer is that it is both.



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College football dares are a hateful perversion of language.

[Notes, Thoughts, &c.](#)

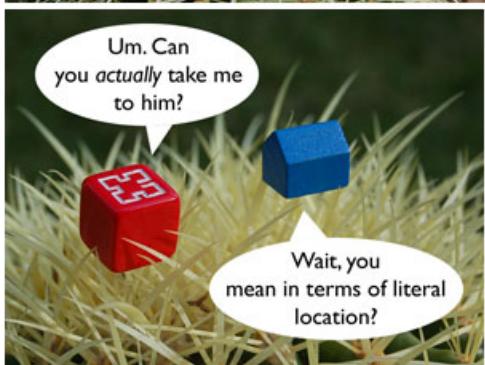
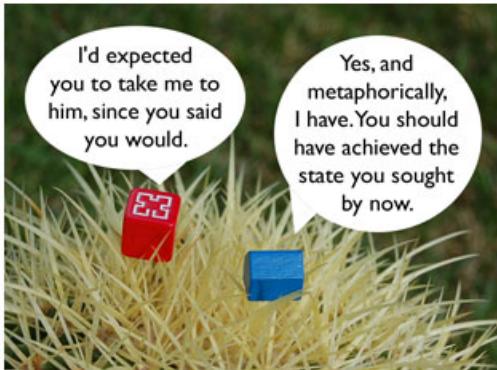
Ben's Notes

Not that I don't like the words in this comic, but I would have liked to not have to cover up the cactus pictures so much. If you feel the same way I do, you might want to check out [this big textless version of panel four](#). Or [this even bigger version](#), for those of you who like large file sizes. (If you don't like large file sizes, just check out the first one.)

Lewis's Notes

I hope you all noticed a tiny picture that now appears near the url bar. This is what we call a favicon, which is internet for 'tiny picture near the url bar.' It was donated to us by a 'mysterious donor' who wanted to release it under a [Creative Commons 'Attribution' license](#). Since the mysterious donor specified that the work should be attributed to a 'Mysterious Donor', I am attributing it that way as much as possible in these comments.

Thanks, Mysterious Donor!



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Gunpowder has bizarre needs.

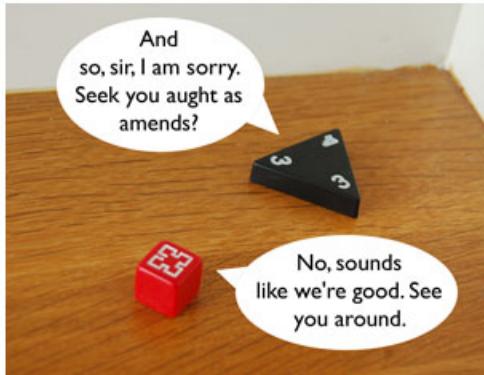
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I'm impressed that they're able to stand on a cactus without getting hurt. I got poked up a bit just trying to balance gamepieces on a cactus, which you'd think would be safer than climbing on one.

Lewis's Notes

I'm at a philosophy convention, so Ben is writing these comments for me. He forgets what the name of the convention is, so let's assume it's PhilosoCon. PhilosoCon 2008. I'm going to be philoso-cosplaying as David Hume. I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Gunpowder's remarks are offensive to crazy locals.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If you're reading *Terror Island*, you're probably an aficionado of jokes about sour grapes. I will assume that you are. And I will draw to your attention [today's Alien Loves Predator](#), which I feel is a very nice execution of the form.

Lewis's Notes

Zantrok talks that way even when he's not in a flashback, because he's half-demon. If he were fully demon, he would never talk that way, even when in a flashback. Genetics and language interact in some odd ways, but we are here to illustrate them for you.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. He is still at a philosophy convention. -Ben



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Like all serious reporters, Ally mostly does restaurant reviews.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This strip is a good example of why I'd kind of like to run a restaurant some day.

Lewis's Notes

The only correction I have to the comments Ben wrote last week is that I was philoso-cosplaying as John Locke, not David Hume. Common mistake.



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Who interviews the interviewers? Waiterman, that's who.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

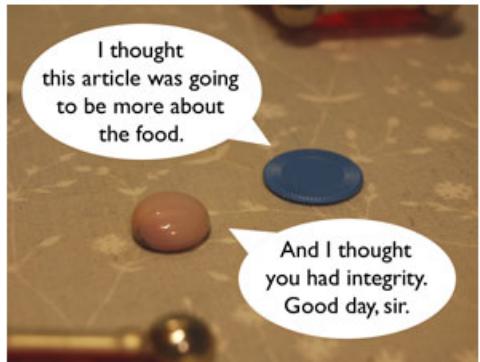
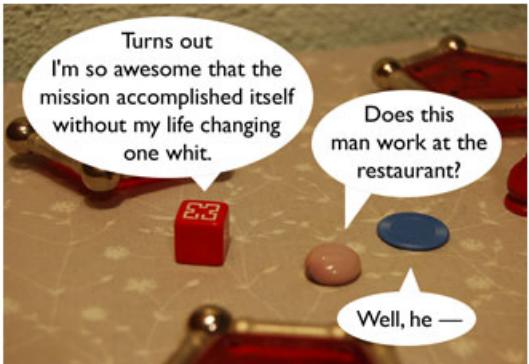
Ben's Notes

I like that in Gill Sans, the italic lowercase a is a different sort of glyph from the roman lowercase a. The italic version of the font is more of a sloped roman than a true italic (not that there's anything wrong with that), but seeing the different a's even in those cases is a good touch.

The italic p is cooler, though. I'm looking for a chance to introduce a character who only speaks in giant lowercase italic p's.

Lewis's Notes

Today I spent a substantial amount of time considering whether it is true that Sherlock Holmes' coat has a determinate threadcount, despite no particular threadcount being specified in the texts. Surprisingly, this is relevant to some of my academic work.



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Gunpowder works at the restaurant, but he does not work for the restaurant.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

You probably already knew that Jame's last name is Palrose. But did you know that:

- Gunpowder's last name is Jackson?
- Ally's last name is Cs?
- I don't remember what Waiterman's last name is?
- Maybe Waiterman *is* his last name?

Lewis's Notes

I am becoming a bit obsessed with the [song chart meme](#). Also check out a blog of such things: [CultureGraph](#).



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The Reportress's cape is the color of evil journalism.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If you like comics that are photographs taken by me, there's a new one you should check out. I'm starting up a side project called [Request Comics](#). It's going to update on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so if you read it and *Terror Island*, you'll get a new strip every weekday.

Lewis's Notes

I hope this council meeting continues for a while, so I have an excuse to use my extensive knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order. Anyone else up for a roll-call vote?



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The Green Grocer doesn't really get anything out of being a supervillain.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

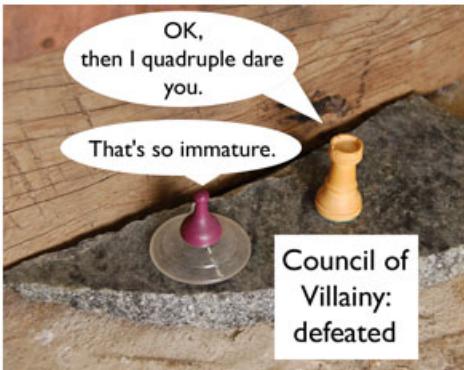
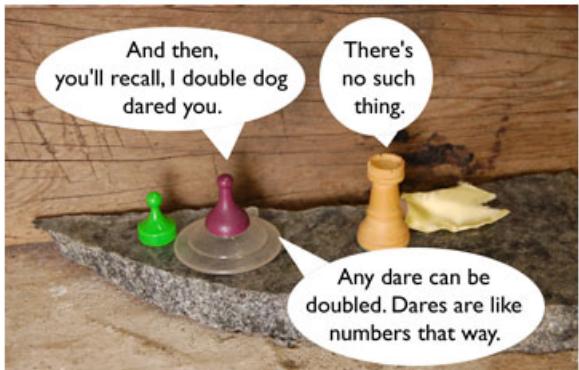
Ben's Notes

I wonder who the Reportress really is.

Lewis's Notes

In case any of you were curious, apparently, one of the hardest things to do in philosophy is make sense of claims that say certain things don't exist.

I'm not kidding, or, at least, I'm not entirely kidding.



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A quadruple dare doesn't even outrank any sort of dog dare.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

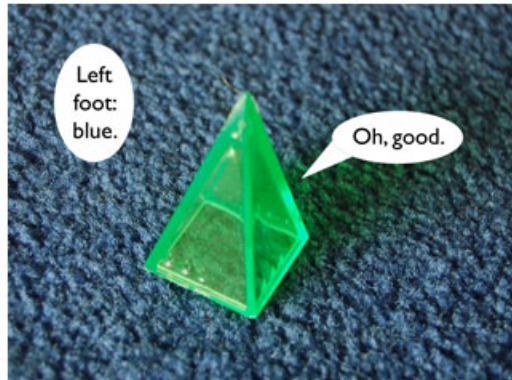
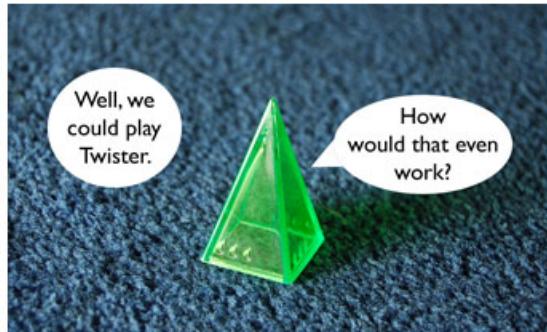
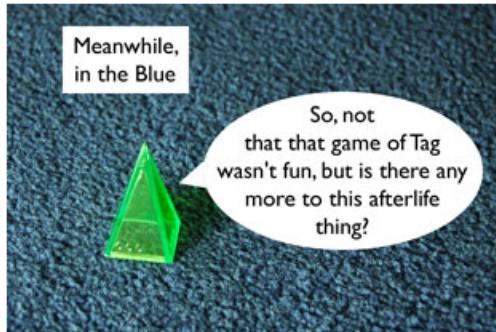
Ben's Notes

A reminder for those of you who forgot my comments from a few days ago: my new photocomic, [Request Comics](#), is still new and exciting.

Now with three strips up! Still no RSS feed, though. I'll see about doing that this weekend.

Lewis's Notes

It is important to remember that Sid and Stephen aren't even super heroes, so they get a $x8$ multiplier to their scores for defeating a council of supervillains. Defeating a council of supervillains is normally adds half again as many points to one's score as one already had, however, sadly, the recursive rules for scorekeeping don't include a base case. While we know that their scores are now $(x + 8*(x/2))$ where x is their previous score, there is simply no fact of the matter as to what their current scores are.



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Yes, even in the afterlife, Aorist has feet.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Do people still play Twister? I'm not sure this is the sort of reference the youth of today will get.

Lewis's Notes

Not many people know that the proper plural of "Walmart" is not "Walmarts," but rather "Walls Mart."



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It's Lights Out for our heroes ... get it?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I'd heard comic strips set in total darkness were supposed to be easy for the artists, but this actually took me a while. I'm probably doing something wrong.

Lewis's Notes

I believe that names are definite descriptions, physical properties supervene on consciousness, and you can derive an ought from an is.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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I, the title text narrator, am afraid of the dark. Eek!

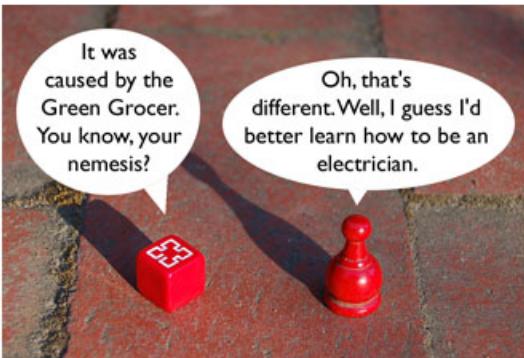
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Since we don't update over the weekend, I'd like to take today to wish you all a happy Ides of April two days in advance.

Lewis's Notes

[Man, Unwinder is so good at comics.](#)



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We work the PSAs into the story. Learning is fun!

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

On the subject of electricity and learning, I heard that it is very easy to learn how to become an electrical engineer. Apparently it's just some applied physics. If you want a 'slacker' degree, I highly recommend studying electrical engineering. If you disagree, please e-mail me and I will argue with you about this.

I wrote Ben's comments today. -Lewis

Lewis's Notes

Say what you will about Waiterman. He certainly has a lot of passion for his job(s).



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By that he means crabwalk.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

From our writing session for this strip:

Lewis: Jame: "Actually, you'd be a better waiter if you were [synonym for hurrying]"

Ben: What if there are a bunch of people from Russia there?

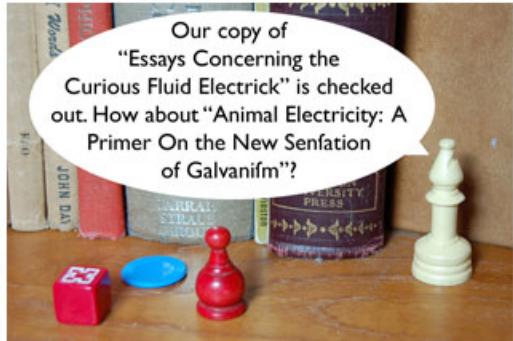
Lewis: stop that thought right there

Lewis: i will kill you

Lewis is pretty good at warding off puns before they can get into the comic.

Lewis's Notes

You're welcome.



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How do you make a dishonest shortcake?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

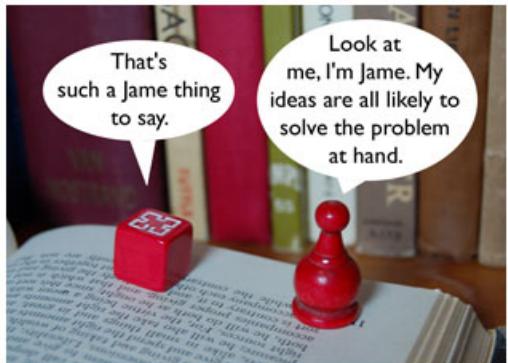
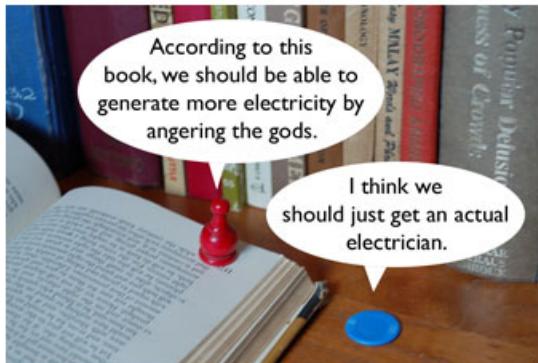
Ben's Notes

Books I used for the Geography City Library set:

- Logic: Deductive and Inductive
- Diccionario Etimológico
- Seven Place Logarithmic Tables
- Advanced Abacus
- Bohemian Club: Bylaws and Officers
- The Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson
- Sundials: Their Theory and Construction
- History Begins at Sumer
- Droll Stories of Isthmian Life
- Advances in Cheese Technology
- Easy Malay Words and Phrases
- The Phonographic Amanuensis
- Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds
- How to Learn an Unwritten Language
- Thought Transference
- Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

Lewis's Notes

Terror Island is regarded by some as the premiere comic about or having to do with libraries. This is unfortunate as it requires overlooking both the serialized comic [Unshelved](#), as well as the wonderful graphic novel, "[Bookhunter](#)" by Jason Shiga.



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*Bizarro Aorist *not* wear white coat for doctor work!*

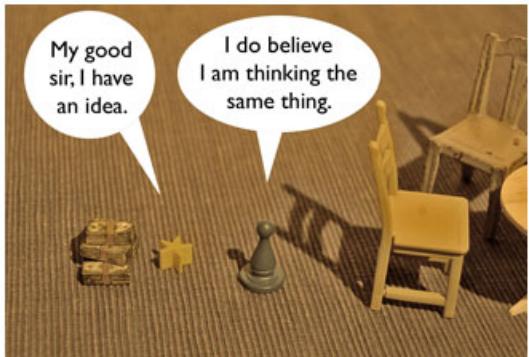
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The identity of the prop I used to represent the book they're reading is not at all important to the comic in a plot sense. Just theme.

Lewis's Notes

Look forward to our forthcoming spinoff, "Dr. Bizarro Aorist" featured above. He is not to be confused with "Bizarro Dr. Aorist" who would actually be a beekeeper, since keeping bees is the opposite of being a medical professional.



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Lord Terror sure is rich.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

It took a while to come up with the initial idea for this strip, but once we had that, the rest pretty much wrote itself.

Lewis's Notes

Man, I can't believe Tarantino was [ripping off](#) Shakespeare.



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Do we have one York of a story for you...

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Don't miss Sid and Stephen's [guest appearance](#) in [Request Comics](#).

Lewis's Notes

I hope you York this York we Yorked up for you this York, Yorks.
I wrote Lewis's York today. -Ben



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Schtick-stealing is so rude

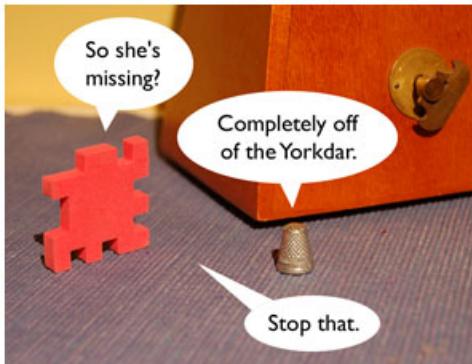
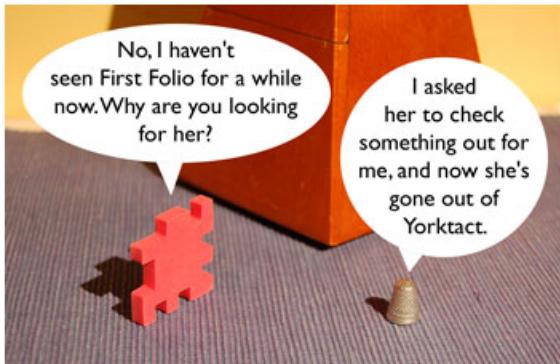
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This is based on times when unscrupulous people have tried to get me and Lewis to sign things.
Fortunately for us, we're illiterate.

Lewis's Notes

You may ask, doesn't it upset the balance to steal someone's schtick? The answer is that schticks have no metaphysical mass, and thus, cannot alter the balance. It's a lot like how pirating mp3s doesn't really count as stealing.



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First Folio has been Yorking in action for a while now.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I hope the darkness panels aren't getting old for you, because that set's going to be around for a *long* time.

Lewis's Notes

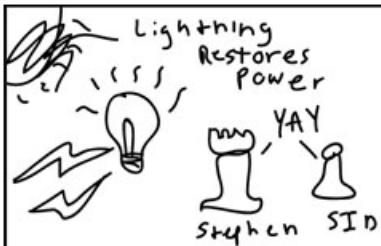
I hope the 'York' schtick isn't getting old for you, because it's my favorite part of scripting these days.



Step 1: ANGER THE GODS



Step 2: ANGRY GODS Respond (LIGHTNING)



Step 3: TAKE PRIDE IN JOB WELL DONE!



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The shading in Waiterman's drawing really captures Jame's personality.

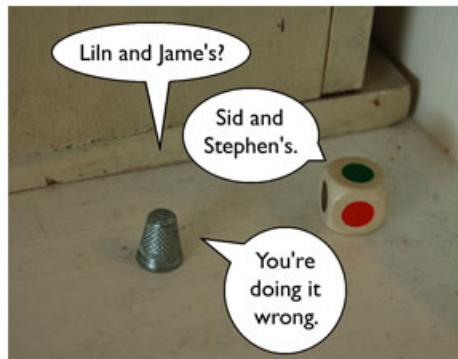
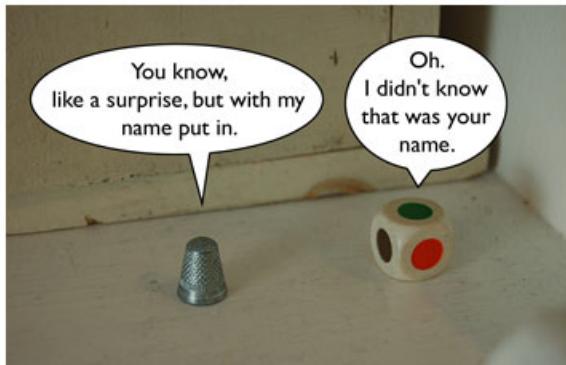
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I only had to do the art for one panel this time. This is the sort of thing I like about the “collaboration” approach to webcomics.

Lewis's Notes

It was really hard to do the art for panels one through three, because I had to reduce my hardcore art skillz for properly representing Waiterman's level of skill. Such is my dedication to the craft of comicking.



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Why does everyone want to steal that schtick?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

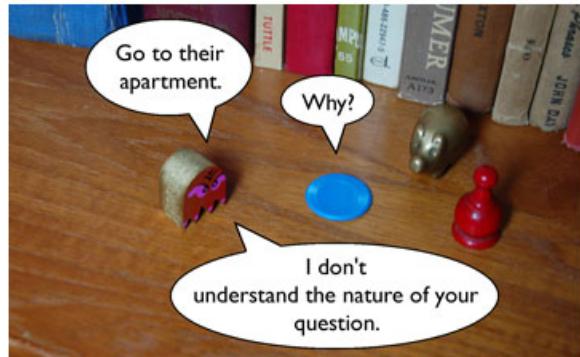
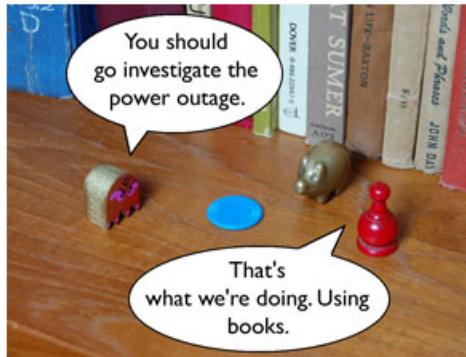
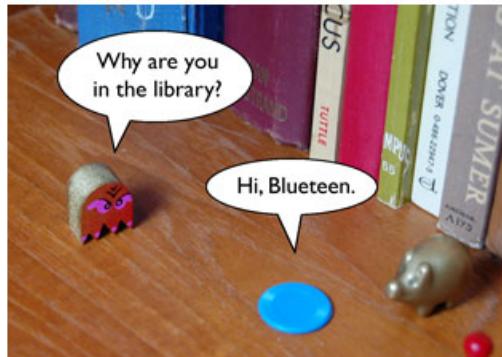
Ben's Notes

You may notice that I've started putting actual borders on the speech bubbles. This is because I couldn't remember why I hadn't been doing it all along.

Lewis's Notes

Despite a huge outburst of support, or, rather, demand, from our fans that we switch the comic to being exclusively drawn by me in the style of Waiterman's plans, Ben and I decided to keep the gamepiece photocomic format that has served us well thus far.

Apologies to everyone who was hoping otherwise.



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Being Czar means not having to answer straightforward questions about your orders.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Technically, hero figures often anger gods. Waiterman is just trying to avoid getting struck by lightning.

Lewis's Notes

In case you are confused, it is important to realize that Blueteen himself is the punchline, and not his dialogue. I hope that helps.



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Whatever's coming up must be big for Helmut to come all the way from Target City!

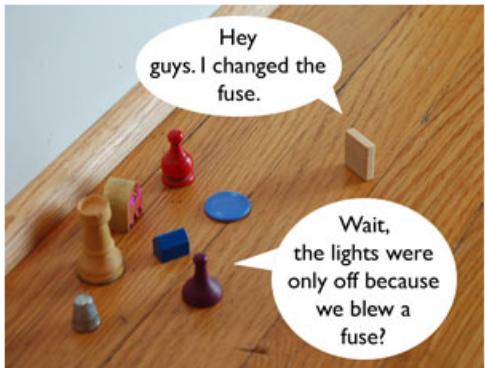
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

It's hard to tell from the first three panels, but we've gone back to the borderless speech bubble style.

Lewis's Notes

I am seriously advocating the 8 day week. Septiweekenarianism is a pretty lame plan, especially when one only has 2 days of weekend. So here's my suggestion: Add an additional day in between Wednesday and Thursday, called, I dunno, "Funterday." Funterday has to be a day off. Octoweekenarians unite!



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It's surprisingly relaxing under their couch.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Bartleby's a handy guy to have around.

Lewis's Notes

Blueteen only lies in three situations: (1) When it will save civilization. (2) When he can derive fiscal advantages. (3) Miscellaneous.



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Is this the real Aorist, or an impostor? You be the judge!

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

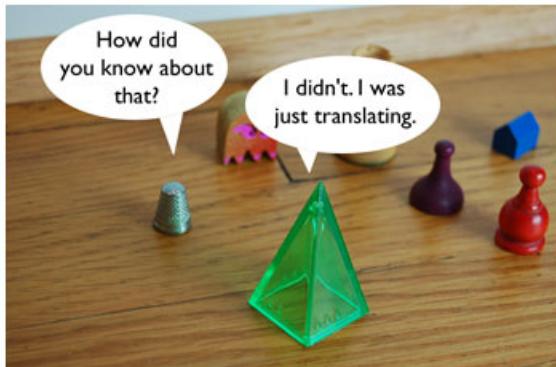
Ben's Notes

Lewis is going to be in Palo Alto this weekend, making this one of the rare occasions when we're in the same city for something other than Comic-Con.

So that means this is a great opportunity for **TerIslFaCon 2008**: the first and best Terror Island Fan Convention of 2008! Fans will be meeting up at 1 p.m. on Sunday, somewhere on California Avenue. Be there or miss out!

Lewis's Notes

Just FYI, Ben and I are fairly likely to kill off a character soon, not sure who, but my guess would be that the character we kill is going to be green and pyramidal, though.



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Aorist dislikes being the center of attention.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

TerrIslandFanCon 2008 update: The convention will be meeting at Stanford instead. Probably at or around Tresidder. Remember, Sunday afternoon. Attendance may be limited, so don't be late! See forum for details.

Lewis's Notes

What if instead, we have the convention at that big Kenneth Snelson sculpture at Stanford? You know, the one near the clock tower.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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York's just happy it wasn't corporate espionage. Or was it?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

TeIslaFaCon 2008 was a resounding success. We didn't sell as much merchandise as I had been hoping, but the video gaming portion of the con was excellent, and there was a special appearance by Albert, who you may remember appeared in [an episode of Request Comics](#).

Lewis's Notes

Today I learned that Ben is not to be left in charge of planning conventions if you want the number of attendees to be greater than the number of conference organizers. This is why TerrorIsFanCon2, which I am planning, is going to be held in July at Comic-Con. The conference area will be a mobile ellipsoid with Ben and I as the foci, and it will be a conference fiat that anyone within the conference area is a de facto attendee.



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Wait, does Jame not like Blueteen?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Ha ha ha!

Lewis's Notes

I am on an airplane or something right now.
I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Yay, amnesia for everyone!

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

It's kind of rude to avenge someone's death without asking them first, but Aorist is being a good sport about it.

Lewis's Notes

Dear readers, if you do not recall Aorist requesting this, perhaps you too have amnesia.



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Don't you hate it when your dentist won't stop talking?

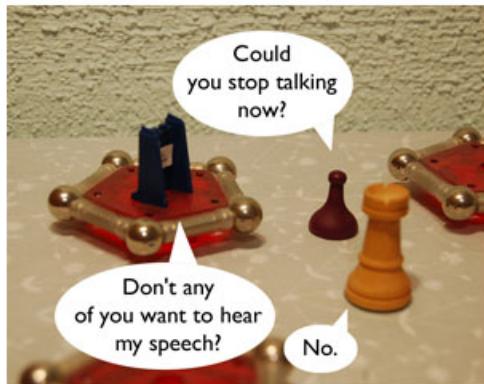
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Warning: spoilers for "Penny Arcade Adventures: On the Rain-Slick Precipice of Darkness, Episode One" follow.
This video game promotes negative stereotypes of mimes, and positive stereotypes of webcartoonists.
This is the end of the spoilers for "Penny Arcade Adventures: On the Rain-Slick Precipice of Darkness, Episode One."

Lewis's Notes

We last saw Ned in [strip 260](#), and I, for one, am eager to find out what all he said in the remainder of the speech. This is also good, as it provides us with a roadmap of the next forty or so strips.



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Ned is standing on the table.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The title text for this strip was almost “To ‘speech’ his own,” but Lewis screens my suggestions for quality.

Lewis's Notes

You may recognize the joke in this strip as stolen borrowed from comedian Jack Benny. I should also note that Ned’s strategy wouldn’t work much better even if listening to the speech meant a guarantee of his not plotting their demise.



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Every good town jeweler stocks diamonds of mythical proportions.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

If there's one thing I remember from optics classes, it's that a laser is only as powerful as its giant diamond energy source.

Lewis's Notes

Note that this is trivially the Green Grocer's most villainous invention yet, since he hasn't really done much inventing. Also, you might want to note that lasers are not inherently villainous.



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Liln drives a hard bargain.

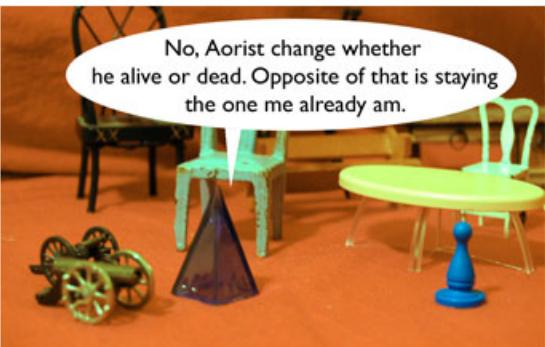
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I'm happy with how panel three turned out here.

Lewis's Notes

Studying Frege, Russell, Kripke, Tarski, Soames, Kaplan, Davidson, Neale, Grice, Bach, Quine, and many, many more.



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This is the opposite of Aorist, who doesn't try to be a good customer, but is anyway.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I hope you're now adequately reassured about Bizarro Aorist's status.

Lewis's Notes

These comments were pre-written, because I am busy taking a very important exam for grad school. We haven't finalized the comics yet (as I write this) but I think I can make my comments appropriate to however this turns out: Man, I can't believe Sid and Stephen were able to get out of that scrape!



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Induction is easier to apply than unicorn horns but harder than hypno-kits.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

We have a [Bonobo Conspiracy guest strip](#) up today.

Lewis's Notes

Pro-science people, I know you are all going to be up in arms about this, and I apologize for the strip taking a stance you might find offensive. Please, though, bear with us while we go through this storyline, you might find you enjoy it even though it has a sort of anti-science stance. Maybe it will even change your minds, you never know.



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The distinction between henchmen and guys who just kind of hang around is vague at times.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I like that in the first panel, Florian's shadow is behind Gavriel as though it's his. Perhaps this foreshadows some interesting new development.

Lewis's Notes

For the love of a mystery no effort is too great.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Maybe they can evade his wrath that easily.

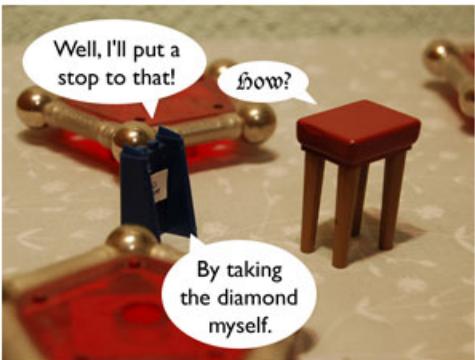
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

As you know, the wine steward is a talking stool possessed by Jamezu, who was the demon created when Sid and Stephen forcibly merged the two demons Buerzu and Demon-Jame together. Probably. I didn't actually check the archives on this one, but I think I'm remembering it right.

Lewis's Notes

Some of you may recall that the stool used to alternate fonts between Herculanium and Papyrus, due to the merged demons. Over time, merged demons stop oscillating between two different fonts, and arrive at the mathematical average of their previous fonts, in this case, Lucida Blackletter. Feel free to check Ben's math on that, but we're pretty sure we got it right.



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Jame is a good manager because he doesn't care about his furniture or his employees.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Happy Friday the Thirteenth! I recommend celebrating this holiday by jumping out at people from behind couches or trees and shouting "Boo!" at them. Once you explain that you're doing that because it's Friday the Thirteenth, they'll laugh and think you're a swell friend.

Lewis's Notes

I hope none of you have forgotten that Ned is a dentist. Unfortunately, his super power only works within the Terror Island universe, and so it may not be obvious to all of you readers that Ned is a dentist. One day Ben and I are going to include a character whose super powers can transcend the fourth wall, but until then I'll just have to remind people about these things.



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No offense meant to legitimate laser researchers

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

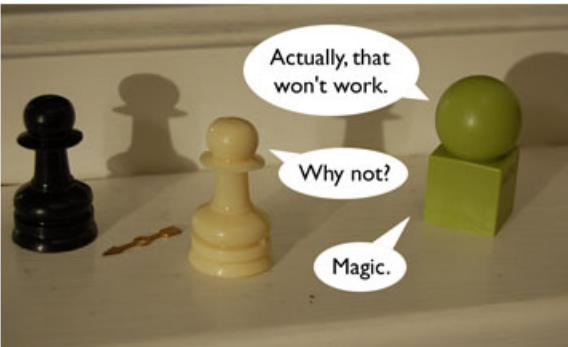
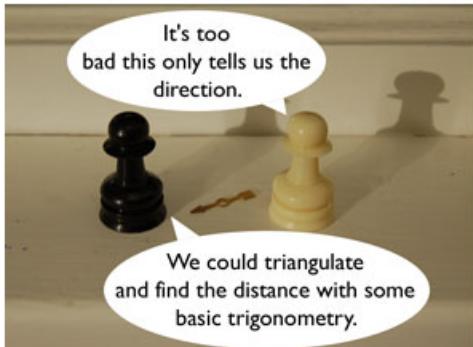
Ben's Notes

Terror Island is two years old today! Or maybe it was last week.

I don't know, I can't keep track of this stuff. What do you think I am, a [time fan](#) or something?

Lewis's Notes

Later, when Florian and Gavriel become a crime-fighting duo, I am totally claiming that panel 3 was foreshadowing. However, if they don't, then it was just a joke without narrative significance.



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Don't mess with magic.

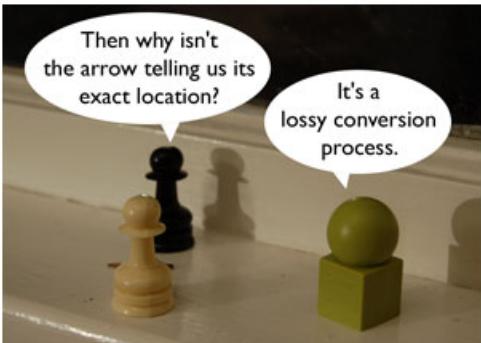
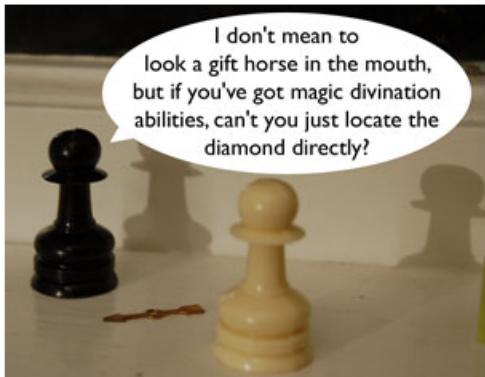
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Wikipedia has some useful information about [triangulation](#), but fails to warn that it won't work with magic arrows.

Lewis's Notes

Before you complain that 'magic' isn't a good answer for why triangulation won't work with the arrow, ask yourself why you would accept 'magic' as a good answer to the question of why it would be able to point at the location of the diamond, when ordinary arrows don't point at the location of the diamond.



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This is why magicians don't rule the world.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

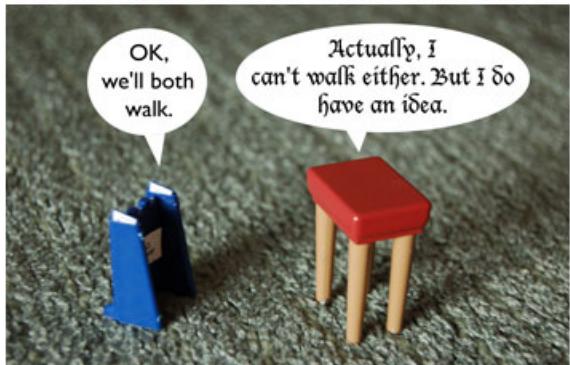
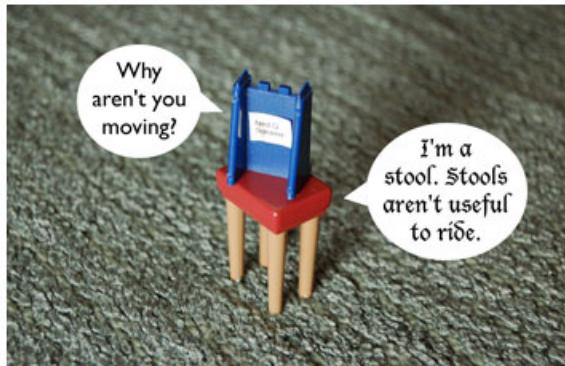
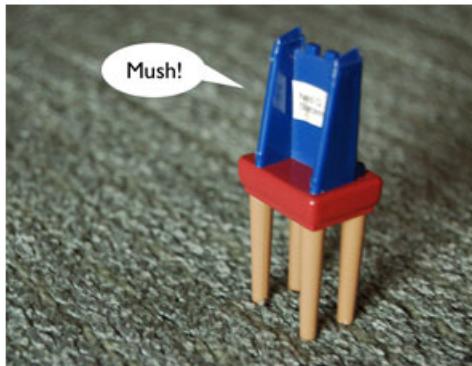
A lossy process involves discarding some information. For example, some methods of compressing image files will result in multiple similar inputs giving the same result, ideally one that looks so much like all those inputs that you won't notice much difference.

The JPEG format we use to make Terror Island is lossy, which is one reason that I keep the original photos around in addition to the strips as you see them. The other reason is that I compulsively hoard data in general.

Lewis's Notes

The thing that's great about Wikipedia is that no matter how ridiculous of an idea I come up with, they have beaten me to it. For example, tonight, I was talking to Ben about the Four Color Theorem, and how some people propose bizarre attempts at counterexamples. I mentioned that it would be more interesting to read someone who, in earnest, kept trying to point out that mapmakers have access to many colors, and even the poorest of map-makers could easily have upwards of ten or twenty colors at their disposal, making the whole question moot.

Suffice to say, Wikipedia was way ahead of me on this, and has [already taken to treating these very serious concerns](#). There should be some sort of award for being the best at systematically missing the point. Something like, "Outstanding Achievement in the Use of Tree-spotting to Avoid Forest Observation".



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The correct command to hasten a dentist is giddyup.

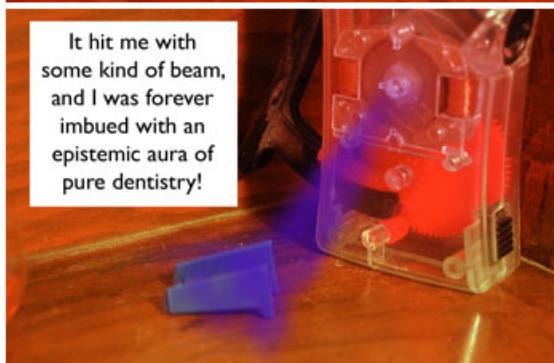
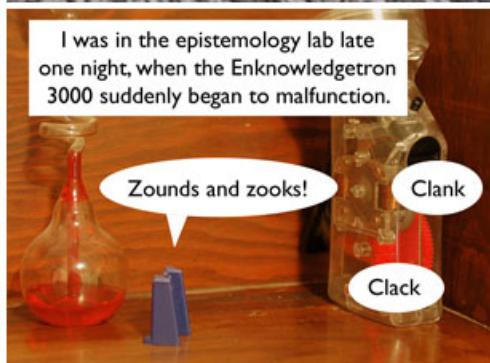
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I kind of worry about attempting sight gags in Terror Island, since my photography isn't always up to the execution. But I think this one turned out pretty well.

Lewis's Notes

Today's comic is a subtle political allegory, much like a political cartoon. Unlike political cartoons, we don't mollycoddle our audience by explicitly labeling the characters with the concept or group they represent. Readers are encouraged to debate and/or speculate as to the content of our message in [the forums](#).



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Being global skeptics, Ned's professors didn't know what to make of the situation.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

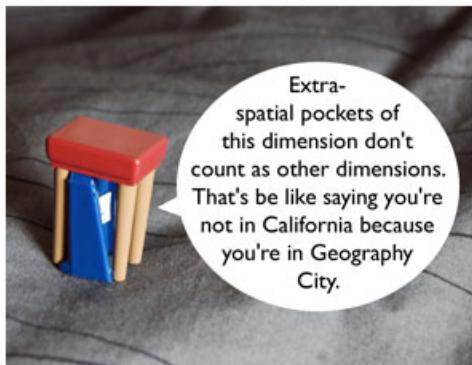
Ben's Notes

Here's how the division of labor breaks down at *Terror Island*: Lewis is the one who comes up with Ned's origin story involving an epistemology machine shooting out a ray of dentist knowledge, and I'm the one who decides that that ray is purple.

Lewis's Notes

This comic is quasi-autobiographical, though I myself tend to work in the metaphysics lab, where the Ontologizing Engine is used by metaphysicians and metaphysicists to create new fundamental categories of being.

We are up to about 15 now.



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Instead of seceding, Blueteen could have just guessed Michigan.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

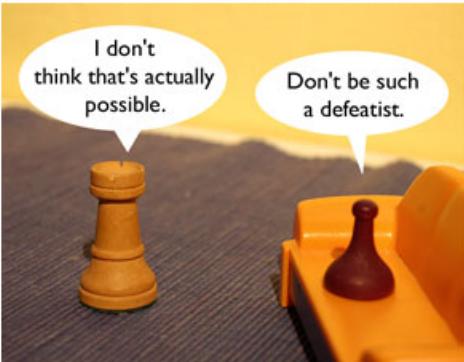
Fans of Aorist and Bizarro Aorist may want to see [yesterday's Request Comics](#).

Lewis's Notes

You may recall that back when the Czar elections were taking place, a fan with a sense of (fiction-oriented) civic duty did cast a vote for Blueteen. While his vote didn't count because (as we all know) Czars aren't elected, it did win him a place in our hearts. Geography City's only registered Mason asked us to pass along [his plea](#), and in the true spirit of Terror Island, I now pass [that plea](#) along to you, despite not really having any idea of what he is about:

[I have a little problem.](#) It's a long story, but I'll sum up: I'm trying to organize a bake sale to help out a debt collection agency. I want them to sue me for the debt they think I owe them, but they are reluctant. I think because they are worried about legal fees. I feel like I need to help them out, since I am involved in this, and since it looks like they are having trouble working this out on their own, it feels like the neighborly thing to do. Don't get me wrong, I'm doing this in some part for my own self interest. I mean I want to see resolution as much as they do. So, long story short, I'm organizing a legal offense fund for them so that they don't have to worry about the court costs when they sue me.

The thing is, I don't think they know how to bake, and I know for sure that I can't... so I am looking to see if there are any volunteers. I don't expect Terror Islanders to actually BAKE anything, I'm not that silly, but you guys do have a reasonably large following. So I was wondering if Blueteen could, you know, get the word out. Just let people know that I'm looking for volunteers.



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The plot thickens?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Lewis is off at a philosophy convention right now. Filling in for his comments is a quote from *Gödel's Theorem: An Incomplete Guide To Its Use and Abuse*, by Torkel Franzén.

Lewis's Notes

"This idea that Gödel's Theorem does not have an ordinary mathematical proof seems to be based on a specific misunderstanding of Gödel's original proof of the first incompleteness theorem: the mistaken belief that Gödel's proof, which shows a certain arithmetical statement G depending on S to be unprovable in S if S is consistent, also shows G to be true."



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Get it? STEAKS?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

"Another aspect of the second incompleteness theorem that needs to be emphasized is that it does not show that *S* can only be proved consistent in a system that is *stronger* than *S*. To say that *S* is consistent is not to endorse the axioms of *S*, and a proof that *S* is consistent need not use the axioms of *S* itself."

Lewis's Notes

Ben is not at a philosophy convention the way I am, but he's lazy enough that his comments are being brought to you by a Torkel Franzén quote anyway.



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The food isn't really giant. Infomercials are misleading like that.

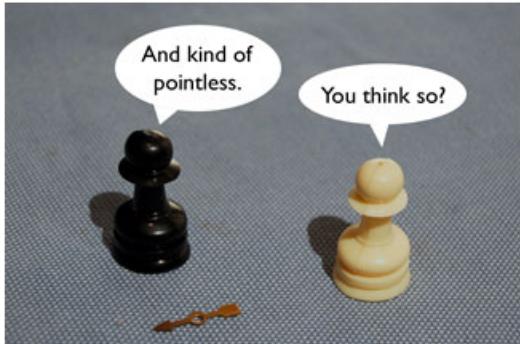
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

"(It is not an observation of any interest that a theory of arithmetic cannot prove that horses are four-legged.)"

Lewis's Notes

"The incompleteness theorem does not imply that *every* consistent formal system is incomplete. On the contrary, there are many complete and consistent formal systems."



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I wish I had a magic arrow.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I'm not sure what all Florian and Gavriel did during those five minutes, but I'm glad their narrative is going well.

Lewis's Notes

I am sure what all Florian and Gavriel did during those five minutes, but I am unhappy that their narrative is going well (they are ostensibly on the side of villainy after all).



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Man, you really shouldn't get Helmut started on quests.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

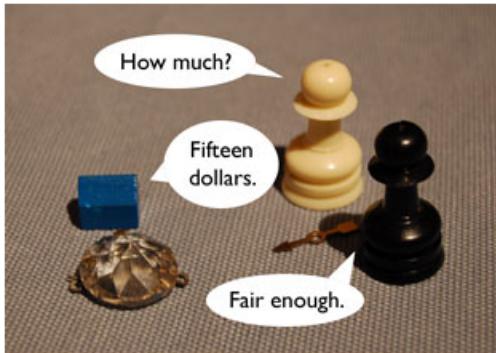
Ben's Notes

I just saw an article speculating that [Dominica might be the next Terror Island](#). Well, Lewis and I had a good run.

Lewis's Notes

Ben, I think there's enough room in the modern world for more than one Terror Island.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Ned was pretty quick to realize he had no use for the diamond.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

The diamond is worth a whole \$15 because it's so big. I wouldn't have paid that much for it, though, because it has the annoying property of looking completely different when the lighting changes, as in panel four above.

Lewis's Notes

I have a new favorite Wikipedia quote: "Finally, there is a complex bit of business involving the knocking off, dropping, picking up and exchanging of hats." Determining the source of this quote is left as an easy exercise for the reader. Attempting to compose a quote which further drops the ball on conveying anything important about the subject, while still being entirely accurate, is left as an exercise in futility.



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Oh, those wacky chess pieces!

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Just a reminder: next week we're going to be in San Diego for the Comic-Con. We won't have a booth or merchandise, but if you happen to see me walking around and want to pay five bucks for a sketch, I'd be up for that.

Lewis's Notes

This has been on my mind a lot lately, so I'm just going to come right out and say it: I don't think operas count as real musicals.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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It will be fun explaining s'mores to the Unity.

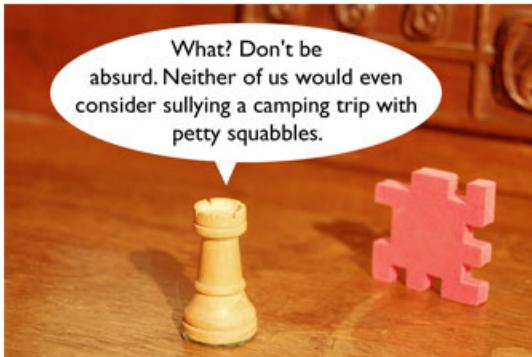
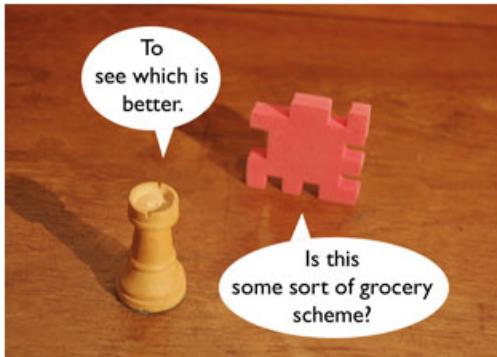
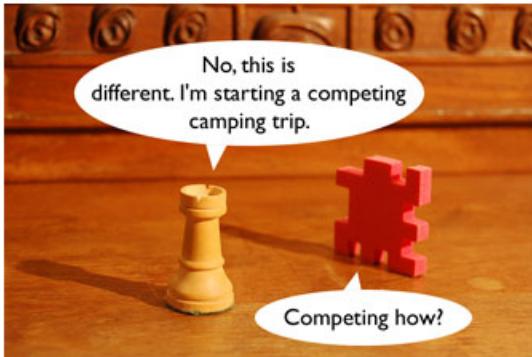
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Terror Island has an in-game clan for [Kingdom of Loathing](#) now, called **Terrified Islanders**. If you're reading these comments, you're welcome to join. Or get whitelisted in so that you can switch back and forth between this and some other clan that you have more history with. With which you have more history.

Lewis's Notes

I am starting to do some apartment hunting this week. So if you are an apartment, *look out!*



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Why is Liln busy?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

[Sam and Fuzzy](#) has been pretty great lately. Don't you agree, Lewis?

Lewis's Notes

I'd like to remind people of our new [Kingdom of Loathing](#) guild, Terrified Islanders. I didn't even have an account there before the guild formed, but now I'm a level seven seal clubber. Now that's savings!

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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The early bird gets the all-stars on their camping trip.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I wonder who Stephen could be talking to?

I wrote Ben's comments today. -Lewis

Lewis's Notes

I know who Stephen could be talking to. I wonder who he is talking to.



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What if Furniture Store Guy builds a cannon and shoots the furniture into space?

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

411redpiranha is named after Zee's girlfriend, not the other way around.

Lewis's Notes

If you want these comments to be funnier, Ben has to work faster at making the comic. (Note: Ben does the lion's share of the work in making the comic, which means Lewis does the lion's share of waiting around. Together, we form a powerful lion.)



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[old-timey music]

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

We wanted to share the con experience with you guys, and the best way to do that was to make this special comic.

Lewis's Notes

Today's comic was made by a process called dice-o-tronic image recycling and our patented silly-scripting technologies. We randomly selected four panels from the strip's archives, and created a non-canonical strip from them, as a special comic-con treat. Hope you all enjoy it!



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Aorist is unemployed because he was dead.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Comic-Con was great fun this year. Came away with lots of books and other merchandise, as well as some food for thought for the next few months.

Lewis's Notes



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Sid means the real kind of fasting, not that reduced-meal stuff.

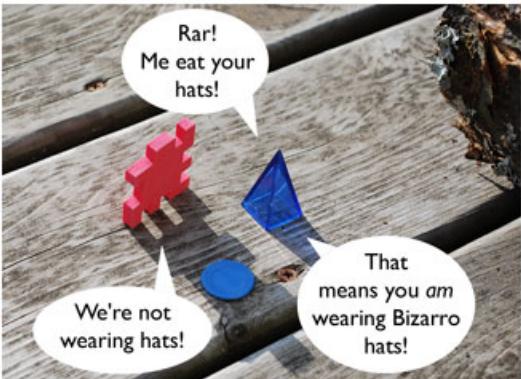
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This is the last of the strips that I made in the San Diego hotel room.

Lewis's Notes

Contest: Explain why First Folio decided a barren desert was the best camping location.



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Bizarro Aorist didn't announce that he was attacking, because hat consumption isn't an attack for bizarros.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

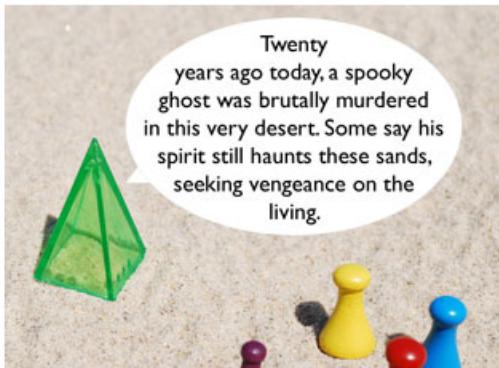
Ben's Notes

Happy September!!!!

I wrote Ben's comments today. -Lewis

Lewis's Notes

I think you mean August, Ben.



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Ghost stories told around the old pile of sand.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

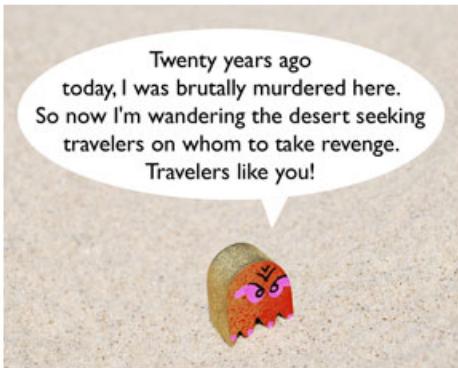
Ben's Notes

I am in Michigan, and it turns out that I suffer from a rare condition of being unable to write my own comments while in Michigan. That's ok, though, since I have to do more of the scripting on my own when Lewis is slacking off because he is moving apartments.

I wrote Ben's comments today. -Lewis

Lewis's Notes

I have no excuse for the lameness of my comments. If they were a horse, they'd obviously have to be shot.



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A Ghost in its natural habitat: the barren desert.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Q: How many ghosts does it take to change a light bulb?

I wrote Ben's comments today. -Lewis

Lewis's Notes

A: Boo!



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Yeah, we totally missed an update. SORRY GUYS!

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Blue Tiddlywink is referring to [this strip](#)

Lewis's Notes

I wanted this strip to be in-canonical, but Ben was all "No, Lewis, this is not canon." Remember, when you have a collaborator, sometimes you have to compromise by not arbitrarily declaring things canon on a whim.



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Strike? More like spare, as in sparing you from poorly scripted strips.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

These comments were totally written by Ben, and not Lewis. You can tell because I am going to talk about the photography. I used a camera.

I wrote Ben's comments today. -Lewis

Lewis's Notes

Hey, remember that one time, when this strip hadn't really broken the fourth wall? Well it still mostly hasn't, because of a little thing called 'strips outside the main continuity'. Or at least, that is what we are telling ourselves.



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Ben hates that stratego piece. A lot.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Stratego pieces are always complaining. I hate them so much.

I wrote Ben's comments today. -Lewis

Lewis's Notes

Ben, what about your principle of universal friendship? The one that Pythagoras stole from you with his time machine?



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There is also a Geography Lake and a Geography Tundra, FYI.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

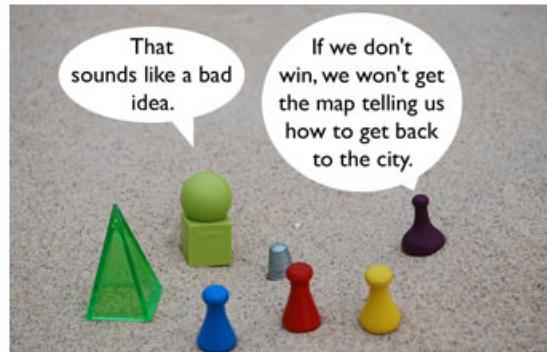
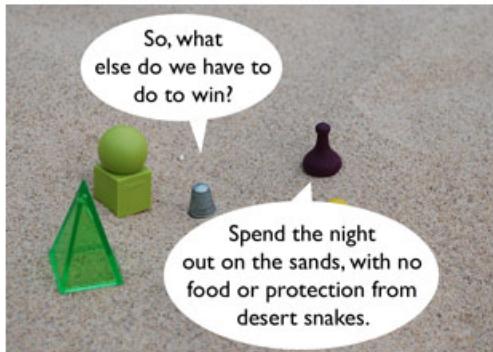
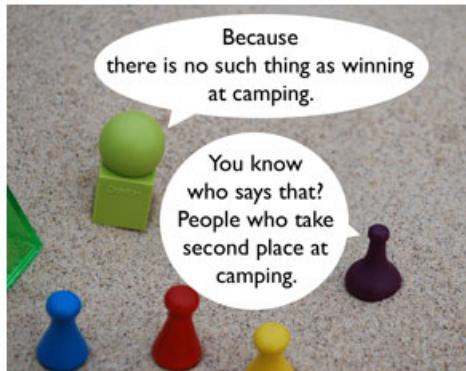
Ben's Notes

That hill in the forest was actually more slippery than it looked. True story.

By the way, I'm back in California now, so the non-canonical strips of last week shouldn't need to continue.

Lewis's Notes

You may not be able to tell, but Panther is so confused by the forest that he is accidentally addressing his comments to the nearby acorn, which he is mistaking for Stephen.



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Watch out for those snakes!

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

This was actually filmed at a beach, not a desert.

Well, not filmed, really, but you get the idea.

Lewis's Notes

This script was inspired by my own trip to Joshua Tree, insofar as that involved desert camping. I had shelter and food, and protection from desert snakes.



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Let's play Spot the Differences.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Abandoned by their camping groups! How will our heroes get out of this one?

Lewis's Notes

They're not just our heroes, Ben. They belong to the world.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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No one knows how to win at camping because it is not actually a competitive event with victory conditions.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Check out Aorist's reflection in York in panel three. This is what happens with metal actors.

Lewis's Notes

Ben is so good at scripting my comments, that I wanted to just let him do it all the time. Unfortunately, he wasn't a fan of that plan, so this is what you all get.



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[slide whistle noise]

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

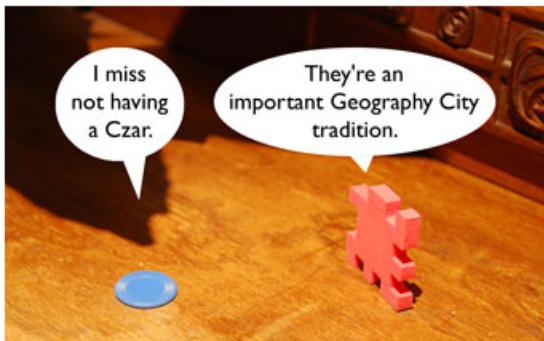
Lewis, aren't bugbears from Europe? Why would they be around Geography City?

Lewis's Notes

Geography City was originally founded by the Spanish, who inadvertently introduced the bugbear to California by not checking the undersides of their ships carefully enough.

Back then, the city was known as *La Ciudad de Geografía*.

I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Sounds like someone's been eating sour grapes.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Do you like webcomics? If you answered "yes," you should check out [Thinkin' Lincoln](#), a webcomic about history and some people from history; [F Chords](#), a webcomic about music and some people who play music; and [Dudley's Dungeon](#), a webcomic about NetHack and some ASCII characters from NetHack.

Lewis's Notes

I think that if there is one point about the plot readers are most likely to forget, it is that Liln and Jame are dating. I'm not entirely sure why this is, since basically everything in the strip revolves around their relationship (the proof of this is left as an exercise to the reader).



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Happy Labor Day!

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

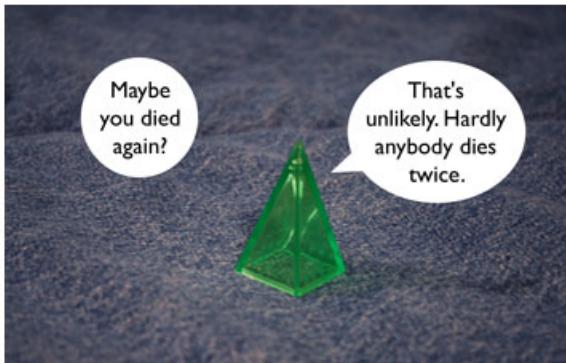
Ben's Notes

Now we see the dangers inherent in having a Labor Day sale. If only someone had been there to warn Furniture Store Guy.

Lewis's Notes

LORD TERROR'S FURNITURE STORE IS ACTUALLY QUITE WELL ARRANGED, WITH THE MORE POPULAR ITEMS ON TOP OF THE PILE FOR EASIER ACCESS.

I wrote Lewis's comments today after accidentally hitting caps lock. -Ben



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The Unity is more visible.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

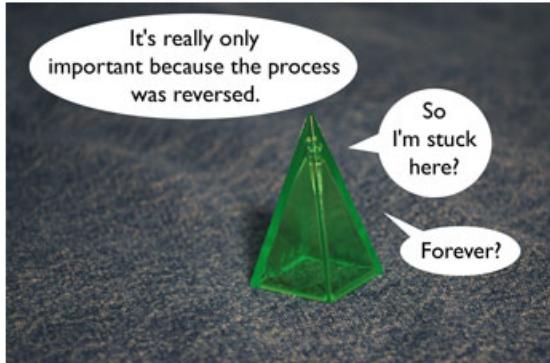
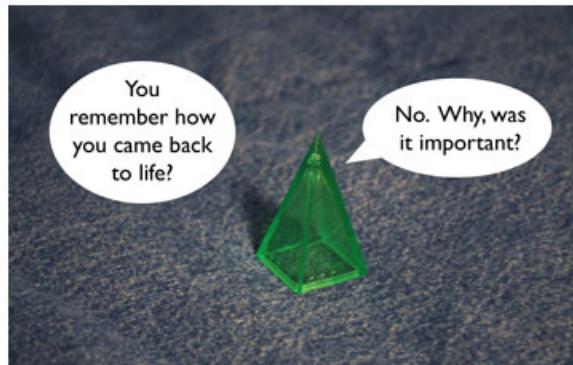
OK, I was going to save these for after the election, but I just can't hold back that long. Here are some AMAZING anagrams of the vice presidential candidates (well, anagrams of their names):

Sarah Plain

Joe In Bed

Lewis's Notes

Wow, Ben, way to politicize our comic.



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This is a really common prank in the Terror Island world, along the lines of our 'Kick Me' signs.

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

I don't remember how Aorist came back to life last time either.

Lewis's Notes

Gotcha!



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Ned didn't even bother learning their last names.

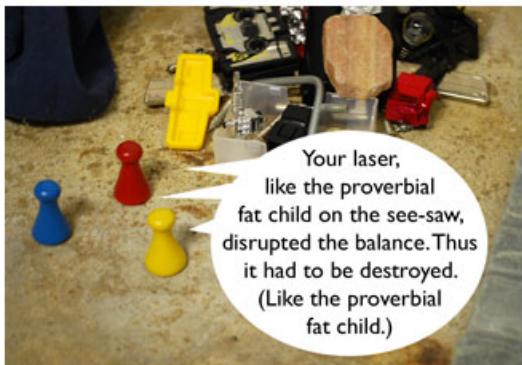
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

See, not everyone is upset about Sid and Stephen being lost in the wilderness. For instance, I'm not, because they're just fictional characters and I don't particularly like them.

Lewis's Notes

I'm not worried about them because logical fatalism has obviated any need to have concern about the future, after all, it is out of our control entirely.



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The Green Grocer went back to his normal life as Mr. Limeton, and lived happily ever after.

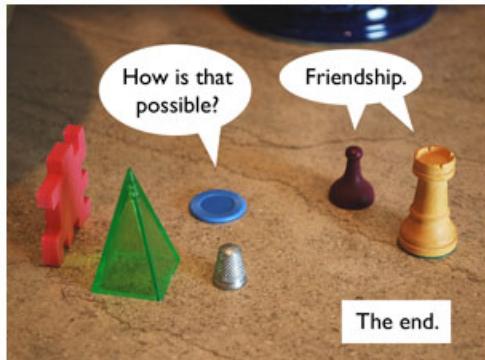
Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

You remember the Green Grocer's [laser plans](#), I trust.

Lewis's Notes

Ben's rough draft for panel three was "blah blah blah balance." I "jazzed it up" a bit.
I wrote Lewis's comments today. -Ben



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Sorry everyone!

Notes, Thoughts, &c.

Ben's Notes

Thanks for reading, everyone. Working on *Terror Island* has been a great experience, but we feel it's reached its end. I hope you've enjoyed the comic and will continue to enjoy rereading the archives. Oh, and if you want to keep up with my webcomic involvement, check out [Request Comics](#). It's not quite the same sort of strip, but it's still a photocomic. You like photocomics, right?

Lewis's Notes

Don't worry too much, Ben and I are in the progress of planning our next collaboration, though we don't have a definite timetable yet. So check back here periodically to find out when Ben and I embark on our new adventure!



The story of Sid and Stephen has reached its end. If this is your first visit, you may wish to read it from the beginning.

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The story is never truly over as long as you have hope in your hearts.

[Notes, Thoughts, &c.](#)

[Ben's Notes](#)

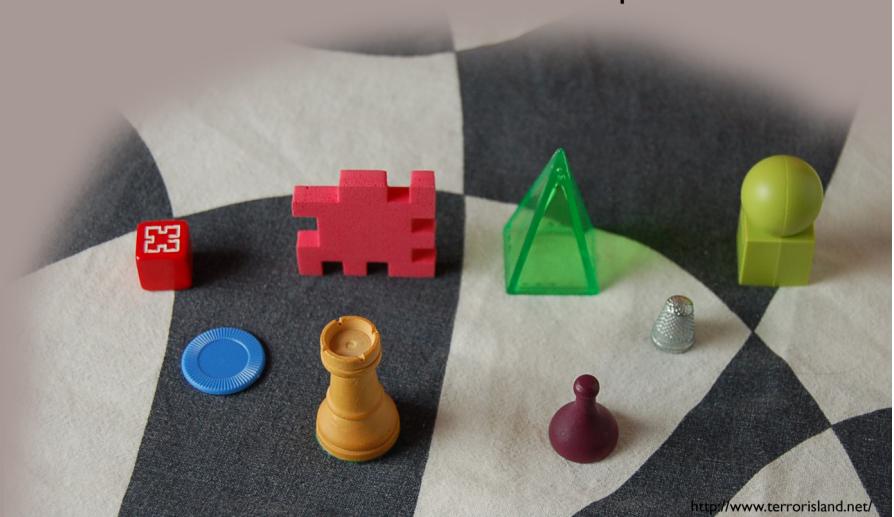
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Lewis's Notes

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Terror Island

Serious gamepieces.
Serious photocomic.



<http://www.terrorisland.net/>

"the photocomic that's not a photocomic"

Serious gamepieces. Serious photocomic.

the webcomic that takes place on a dude's sink and has chess pieces
"some photos of chess pieces don't want to buy groceries?"

Terror Island is a web-based photocomic by Ben Heaton and Lewis Powell. It's named after the philosophic concept of an island which is distinct from all objects, including itself. *Terror Island* is updated thrice weekly; Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

This website was composed using nano, vim, and a limited understanding of html. The images themselves were captured with a Nikon D50 digital SLR camera and adjusted using Adobe Photoshop. The font used in the comic is Gill Sans.



Ben Heaton is photographer and co-writer for *Terror Island*. He currently resides in Palo Alto, CA and recently graduated from the University of Rochester with a B.S. in Mathematics.



Lewis Powell is co-writer of *Terror Island* and webmaster of [terrorisland.net](http://www.terrorisland.net/). Lewis graduated from the University of Rochester with a B.A. in Philosophy, and is currently living in Los Angeles, CA pursuing a Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Southern California.

