



# Don't Split the Party

*Rich Burlew*

Download now

Read Online →

## Don't Split the Party

*Rich Burlew*

### **Don't Split the Party** Rich Burlew

Divided by the events of War and XPs, our heroes struggle to reunite in this fourth compilation of the popular online comic, The Order of the Stick! With their leader, ah, indisposed, Haley leads the quest to bring him back from the, uh, the place that he is at. (Hey, some people only read the comic in book form, I don't want to spoil it for them.) Meanwhile, her love Elan contends with new threats at sea, including some direct competition for her man! And how will these problems drive one of the Order's own to take an offer they should have refused? Find out in the exciting continuation of the OOTS story, Don't Split the Party! Here's what the book contains:

- \* All of the comics from #485 to #672, inclusive.
- \* More than 15 bonus comics, including two all-new deleted scenes: "Elan's Underwater Adventure" and "Get Roy".
- \* Ten pages of author commentary which will be horribly misquoted to support the more outlandish fan theories.
- \* A special dedication to Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, creators of Dungeons & Dragons.
- \* Preface by Roy Greenhilt.
- \* A recap of events-to-date by Belkar Bitterleaf.
- \* Printed on 50% recycled paper.

The next stage of the stick figure action-comedy-drama-fantasy saga is here at last, and it's just waiting for you to add it to your growing collection of fine The Order of the Stick trade paperbacks.

### **Don't Split the Party Details**

Date : Published November 2009 by Giant in the Playground Games

ISBN : 9780976658061

Author : Rich Burlew

Format : Paperback 272 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Sequential Art, Comics, Graphic Novels, Humor, Webcomic, Fiction

 [Download Don't Split the Party ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Don't Split the Party ...pdf](#)

### **Download and Read Free Online Don't Split the Party Rich Burlew**

---

## From Reader Review Don't Split the Party for online ebook

### Shannon Appelcline says

So RPGs say don't split the party because it inevitably leaves some of the group sitting around twiddling their thumbs while the rest of the group adventures. But, that's not necessarily a bad thing for a comic book, because it gives the author a chance to spotlight individual characters, and that's exactly what happens here, with everyone getting some really nice screen time.

However, splitting the party in a story tends to have a disadvantage of its own: it tends to derail the ongoing plots, replacing them with a getting-the-band-back-together plot, and that's exactly what happens here too. The big "Gates" block from volumes 2-3 is almost entirely lost.

As a result, *Don't Split the Party* isn't quite as good as its predecessors. It doesn't have as much humor as volume 1 and it doesn't have as much ongoing plot as volumes 2 or 3. Still, it's a very nice continuation of the story to date, primarily for its focus on character.

---

### Spiros Kakouris says

A great volume, with a much needed balance between the dramatic plot and the hilarious jokes!

---

### Harold Smithson (Suicide punishable by Death) says

Even with the absurd storyline involving a half-orc ninja with a crush this is my favorite arc in the comic, and the only one I feel somewhat comfortable giving three stars, even though the third one had some powerful moments and the fifth pulls off some interesting plot twists.

Not only is the fourth arc the best paced-character arcs introduced in this arc have the courtesy to conclude within the act-it's also the cleverest, for what that's worth. The afterlife section was particularly fun. Get a good look, because this is the last time the strip won't fall to endless self-reference in an attempt to elicit laughs, at least until/if the sixth arc progresses to a point where it isn't bad.

But what sets this arc apart is Vaarsuvius' character development, which was unexpected but made perfect sense given his/her previous actions. I was actually impressed by Burlew's ability to take what had previously been simple running gags and twist them into character insights and sources of drama. Vaarsuvius' actions even form the basis for one of the most interesting moments in the fifth arc, though sadly the rest of that arc isn't particularly good.

So, yes, The Order of the Stick does have something good and, honestly, I'm glad I read this arc. Whether or not it's worth the rest of the series is up to you.

---

### Heidi The Hippie Reader says

And the story continues. Thank goodness there's more of this comic posted on the web- this particular entry

---

ended on quite a cliffhanger. I wish they'd make another physical compilation... now I'm going to have to stare at a computer screen to read more about the Order of the Stick! #bookwormproblems

---

## Joshua says

I'm going to be assuming that you've read the first three volumes (or at least volumes 2 and 3) of The Order of the Stick, because, frankly, I don't think I can write a review of this without mentioning certain events from the third volume.

Don't Split the Party is probably not going to be considered to be Rich Burlew's magnum opus. That honor belongs to volume five, Blood Runs in the Family. And that, far from being a downer, is actually a very, very positive thing when you consider the comic as a whole. This book is the Empire Strikes Back of this webcomic. It's shrouded in darkness, moral ambiguity, and a marked increase in quality and understanding of the characters. And if THAT'S not the best this comic gets, imagine how good the next volume will be!

The Order of the Stick is separated by distance. Their leader is dead. A bloodthirsty lich and his cunning goblin subordinate occupy the world's greatest stronghold of good. Scheming nobles and divisions between Resistance leaders mean that the situation isn't going to go away anytime soon. Things don't look good for the Order of the Stick. But if they can manage to resurrect Roy, reunite the group, and get to the next gate before Xykon does, they might just have a chance.

Easier said than done, of course. In Don't Split the Party, Burlew presses our characters harder than they have ever been pressed before. Some break under the pressure. Others become stronger. Character development is the name of the game, not just from the morally sound members of the party, but from the morally ambiguous ones, too. Especially them. Hailey, Belkar, and Vaarsuvius endure great struggles in the name of their causes, and the experience changes them irreparably. Perhaps even for the worse.

Another thing that I particularly admire is Burlew's ability to have several different plots up and running at the same time. At the most chaotic, he's juggling maybe four different plots all happening in markedly different locations and involving different characters. Yet each plot remains extremely distinct and separate. I obviously don't want to give away any spoilers, but none of these plots could come without the character development these characters have gone through.

Naturally, of course, this book isn't without humor. Part of the best thing about the Order of the Stick is its willingness to provide humor in addition to, and many times alongside, the extremely serious nature of the plot. Yes, it's a story about the destiny of a world, about a lich far eviler than many villains, but it's also a story that makes sure that you're able to laugh as well as cry at events.

And cry you will, for this is perhaps the most emotional impactful volume that we've experienced thus far. You really start to care about these characters, these stick figures. Their struggles become yours. It is a shame that the medium of the webcomic has been so marginalized, because the Order of the Stick is glorious.

---

## Mike says

Don't Split the Party is the fourth (and currently latest) of The Order of the Stick webcomic and contains strips #485-672, plus a number of new comics and author commentaries. \*\* Note: there are no spoilers for

Don't Split the Party in this review but are MAJOR spoilers for the first three OotS volumes. \*\*

OotS has become an epic tale and is the most consistently excellent webcomic there is. As of now there are about 850 strips of the webcomic, 4 print collections and another 3 print only books.

This being the fourth volume I am going to assume anyone reading this review is familiar with the basic concept of OotS. If you are not I highly recommend going back and starting with the first collection (Dungeon Crawling Fools).

The events of Wars and XPs cut our heroes to the bone (and further) and this volume picks up following their defeat at Azure City, with Haley and Belkar left hiding out in the city and Durkon, Elan and V having escaped with the paladin fleet (and Roy... well, you've read War and XPs. RIGHT?). Their stories move in parallel, highlighting the difficulties the Order has when forced apart and the toll events up to this point have taken on them. Some of the supporting cast grow into more prominent roles, and most of the Order have pivotal character moments within these pages.

Don't Split the Party has a somewhat different feel than the rest of the strip up to this point, since the team is not working (nor even adventuring) together. This doesn't hinder it though, as the personal journeys are important to the characters' growth and their ability to function when rejoined, and as usual everything is OotS carefully lays groundwork for future events.

Familiarity with D&D will add depth, but is not necessary to read and enjoy. The humor grows fairly organically out of the characters and situations, and by this point readers should have an idea if it's to their tastes.

As always OotS's art uses "fleshed out" stick figures. See the cover for an example. This "simplified" art style is used to great effect and fits the comic perfectly, and even with this style you can see the evolution and refinement of the art as time progresses.

I highly recommend Order of the Stick in general, and Don't Split the Party continues to reinforce it's excellence.

---

## Ines says

I found a webcomic that's better written than most of recent YA fantasy and some epic fantasy (I'm looking at you, Chronicle of the Unhewn Throne). A webcomic. With stick figures. *Stick figures.*

Seriously, that was ... wow. Amazing.

Belkar may just be undergoing some actual character development (as much as he wants to pretend he's only faking it). Vaarsuvius crossed the Moral Event Horizon ... hard (was that overkill of a spell really needed, V?). Elan is not just a ditzy comic relief. Roy is the best proof that D&D fighters don't necessarily have to have Intelligence only as a dump stat (also, the part with his little brother made me cry ... a comic with stick figures made me cry). I never liked Clerics, but Durkon is making me reconsider that stance (Thor's Might!). And Haley ... well, I always loved Rogues.

And on the other side, Xykon just became absolutely terrifying. As fun and ditzy and downright cliché (in a good, entertaining sense) he can be, he's still a villain. And as much as Redcloak thinks he can control him, Xykon is a lot smarter than he looks like.

... Yes, I'm a huge nerd. Even though I don't actually play Dungeons & Dragons that often anymore. Freaking deal with it.

---

## Mary Catelli says

Spoilers ahead for the earlier volumes.

For once there is a preface by a character, and Burlew's introduction, but no foreword. Usually he had a noted fantasy writer or something who was a fan write one. This volume, he has a page about Gary Gygax and David Arneson, to dedicate the book to their legacy. (This also has the two tribute comics.)

It opens with -- well, for two pages we have Belkar doing a Masterpiece Theater recounting the story thus far -- or rather a bunch of vignettes that most readers will recognize the source of, featuring him as the main character -- only for Haley to interrupt and give a brief but accurate summing up of the story thus far -- but it really opens with Roy on a cloud outside the mountain that is the Lawful Good afterlife.

His father is also there -- stuck there because of the Blood Oath that is not yet fulfilled, and which had passed to Roy at his death and is now on Julia's plate. A deva arrives to evaluate Roy. . . .

After some afterlife stuff, Roy, surprised to find that months have passed, looks below (which takes some work) to find out that he hasn't be raised because Durkon, who can raise him, is on shipboard with Vaarsuvius and Elan and the Azure city refugees, while his body was recovered by Haley and Belkar, still stuck in Azure City with the Resistance. As he observes in the Foreword, this book is about what happens when the motivating central character is removed.

Answer: things fall apart. In some respects this is more dramatic than The Order of the Stick Volume 3: War and XPs because it plumbs the characters' motivations and flaws. Parts I didn't like because of characters acting idiotically, but that's my pet peeve, not an artistic flaw; it never happens in a scene except where you have to say that yep, that's exactly what that character would do in that situation. They are not, at the end, fully developed and having overcome the flaws that will hinder their victory, but they have definitely worked on them.

---

## This Is Not The Michael You're Looking For says

The fourth collection of the webcomic, *Don't Split the Party* takes the characters in a somewhat different direction than in the previous books. Without giving away any spoilers, I found it to be a rather mixed bag...some of it worked really well and some of it was a bit lacking. While an overall good story, I think the digression this book represents, while important for character development and setting up certain plot elements (as well as delivering on earlier twists and jokes setup in previous books), failed to mesh as well as the previous two books. Still, it represents the middle point of the full story, meaning things should pick up momentum as the move forward toward the eventual conclusion of the full arc.

---

## Darth says

Just as good as the others, but I was a little disappointed that this huge novel led pretty much nowhere. I

mean there was some movement, but for the most part the fact they \*still\* haven't reached the big fight with the big bad boss. I know there's another comic, but I wonder how much more there are after that.

Just kinda want this to end...

---

### **Ben says**

Not quite as good as the previous the previous books (which were excellent), but still very good. Part of the problem I think was that the book is a connection between one big event (the end of the previous volume) and the next big event (whatever comes next). Plus the story felt a bit drawn out, though that was mostly a consequence of having so many different story lines to follow.

---

### **Martin says**

So good. I am pretty impressed by how well Rich Burlew plans ahead his plots. Sadly, there is one really huge problem with all of these collections: the between chapter text is FULL of spoilers. For a while, when I got to one, I would then go back to the last one and read it, because mostly it was spoilers for the next chapter. But then one of them contained spoilers further ahead, and so I've stopped reading them entirely. Which is a shame, because they are interesting.

Anyway, on to book 5!!!

---

### **Aaron says**

If you're a fan of the webcomic there's not a whole lot new. On the other hand, the material is of the same high quality as the previous compilations. It manages to pull off the very literary story while still keeping the jokes coming. Even being a stick figure web-comic, Order of the Stick has a very deep story and dynamic characters.

In keeping with *War & XP* which preceded it, the story is fairly serious. There's a different dynamic with the character as a direct fallout from that volume. Things have changed and Rich Burlew clearly took the time to explore that and tell stories with it that he wouldn't otherwise have been able to. As always, the author commentary sections are quite interesting and insightful (for those so interested), especially for such a character driven arc.

And it is a very character driven drama-comedy in this arc. Almost all of the main characters, and some of the minor characters as well, are developed further in this arc. Whether you liked it or not seems to have varied a lot for readers. Personally, I appreciated it a lot. Even unexpected characters gain some depth, which is always interesting. It's quite interesting to see how these complex characters act and grow.

That's not to say there isn't a lot going on. Following on *War & XP*'s heels, there couldn't not be. The big events intersect the character drama later in one of the biggest jolts of plot since the end of the previous book. Lots going on there.

And jokes. Plenty of jokes. Belkar manages to steal plenty of scenes and he makes a new friend which only

ups the comedy potential.

All in all, *Don't Split the Party* is another excellent installment in the series.

---

### **Brian Rogers says**

OotS continues to provide a ton of fun - it's really the best example out there of mid to high level campaign adventuring because it both acknowledges the structures of D&D without letting them get in the way of a good story. The characters remain well fleshed out and grow on believable ways, the story contains good mysteries and turns, the prior foreshadowing pays off in interesting ways. If you've ever tossed a d20 in a D&D game, you owe it to yourself to be reading Burlew's work. As always his commentaries on the process and the plot are a great addition and a reason to buy the collections (aside from the issues of refresh time on your monitor being slower than you can read....)

---

### **Lissibith says**

[On the good side, some of the characters get some get their first real change to grow through an arc. But on the bad side, for them at least, it doesn't come easily. (hide spoiler)]

---