



## No Cure for the Paladin Blues

*Rich Burlew*

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The Order of the Stick is back in action (and in color!) in this second volume compiling the popular fantasy gaming satire webcomic in convenient book format. Watch in amazement as The Order of the Stick, everyone's favorite band of hopelessly incompetent adventurers, leaves the dungeon behind (probably a good idea, considering they blew it up anyway) and ventures out into the great outdoors. Thrill to encounters with bandits, dragons, assassins, and perhaps the most terrifying of all--paladins! Watch in amazement as the Order of the Stick finds itself caught between the forces of Good and Less-Than-Good as their stupid little adventure turns into a stupid epic adventure to save their very world! What's in No Cure for the Paladin Blues, you ask?

- \* A hefty 244 pages of full color comedy; that's a full half-inch thick!
- \* Printed on high-quality paper to ensure your book lasts longer than the current edition of the rules it satirizes.
- \* Enjoy 14 all-new bonus strips that fit in (mostly) seamlessly with the existing story.
- \* Skip past more than 12 pages of self-absorbed author commentary.
- \* Foreward by Scott Kurtz, creator of the webcomic PVP.
- \* Preface by Vaarsuvius, elven wizard.
- \* A detailed recap of the events of Dungeon Crawlin' Fools by Elan the Bard.
- \* And yes, the book contains a complete translation for all of Haley's cryptograms.

### No Cure for the Paladin Blues Details

Date : Published January 1st 2006 by Giant in the Playground Games

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Author : Rich Burlew

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## From Reader Review No Cure for the Paladin Blues for online ebook

### KG says

Not as engaging as the first volume, I think. Still, the characters are somewhat charming, and they have begun to grow on my a bit. However, I found that many of the comic strips suffered from excessive explication, and the jokes were less clever. I didn't feel as strongly compelled to turn pages in this compilation. This won't stop me from moving forward with the series...eventually, but it has made me think that I need to take a bit of a pause from binge-reading it. I'll come back to volume 3 soon.

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### Patricia says

The story continues with humor and more stick figures. The humor included a joke about a druid and a tree that had me laughing so hard we had to pause while I moved into silent laughter territory.

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

The Order of the Stick's second arc is marginally better than its first by virtue of kickstarting the plot and providing some welcome character development.

However, the addition of character arcs to the narrative also served to highlight the issue that very little happens over the course of a single arc. Burlew even lampshades it at the end of the first and second arcs by having Roy talk about everything they accomplished while the images show all the plot threads that haven't been wrapped up. It's a cute idea but the joke isn't that funny and I'd much prefer a tighter plot.

Admittedly the strip is a little funnier this time around, though the jokes (outside of a select few) are not what you'd call clever. Of dubious distinction is a Harry Potter parody that comes off as token, unfunny, and ham-fisted.

Look, it's dissecting fantasy clichés! Isn't that great?

Actually, that's more or less standard procedure for modern fantasy, and that it's played for laughs doesn't make it any more unusual. I would also appreciate it if a series dedicated to making fun of clichés wouldn't itself fall to clichés. Oh, look, paladins. Love within the party. Racist goblins. A pantheon of gods. Liches. An ancient evil sealed away.

But at least Burlew tries to make his audience laugh. At least he tries to put on a good show. Too many fantasy authors write books for themselves, throwing in every single idea they have with little regard for pacing, plot or characters—the only things that actually matter to the audience—until the end result feels bloated and faintly masturbatory.

So I suppose that, in a way, Burlew is a bit different from his contemporaries. That doesn't make him great, but his works are more fun to read than those of an average fantasy author.

## **Spiros Kakouris says**

The Order of the Stick moves on full speed, in its wild adventure. Lots of laughs to be had in this installment as well, which obviously pokes fun on the stereotypical Paladin class

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

The Order of the Stick finally hits its stride with this, the second volume of the online comic. The first book was basically just a dungeon crawl, but with this book not only do the intrepid heroes get dropped into the world-at-large, but the elements of a longer, grander plot are put into motion. With this book, the focus also starts to shift away from D&D rules jokes (although it never completely escapes) and moves into more broadly appreciable humor.

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## **Becky Galambos says**

The Order of the stick is always good for a laugh, even for those of us who aren't gamers ourselves. I picked up my brother's copy (he's the gamer of the family) and loved it.

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## **Mike says**

No Cure for the Paladin Blues is the second collection of The Order of the Stick webcomic and contains strips #122-300, plus a number of new comics and author commentaries.

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 second 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).

Particularly since Paladin Blues is where our story starts really starts to build. While humor remains a vital (and generally excellent) part of the comic, there are less "D&D jokes for the sake of D&D jokes" than in volume 1 and the humor is intertwined more tightly with the escalating story. Volume 1 was a dungeon crawl, and while it had a decent progression it was in some ways a prologue. We've met the main players and now the Order leaves the dungeon and begins to face a much larger world (with much larger threats).

Roy has to find a reason to keep his party together now that they (incorrectly) think they've accomplished the task he hired them for, and various consequences from volume 1 will plague our heroes. This leads to Roy starting to learn what it really means to be a leader, as well as the expected rip-roaring adventures. The Order (and the readers) learn a great deal about their world, a major threat, and what their next mission should be.

We also see glimpses of other characters and forces putting their own plans into motion. The threads and

conflicts that will be woven together in future volumes begin here.

Familiarity with D&D will add depth, but is not necessary to read and enjoy. D&D parody humor is still used, but less so than the first volume and the comedy grows more organically out of the characters and situations from here out.

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 compared to volume 1.

I highly recommend Order of the Stick in general, and No Cure for the Paladin Blues is an excellent follow up to Dungeon Crawling Fools that raises the stakes for our heroes considerably and gives the first glimpses of the sprawling epic it would become.

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### **Ben says**

Mmmm....more Order of the Stick goodness...

More rollicking fun with the Order of the Stick. There's a bit of shift from gaming related humor to more character and situation related humor, but it's just as enjoyable (and more engrossing).

It's also interesting that it's such an enjoyable read even though the big climax is almost all exposition and dialog. It's a testament to Burlew's writing that a talky ending is still so absorbing.

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### **Martin says**

Yes, it actually took me 5 and a half years to finish this book. But it sat on my currently reading pile that entire time. It took my daughter picking it up and reading it about a month ago to get me to finally get back into it. I went to the shelf and got her the first one, but she plowed through it faster than I could finish this one. A day or two later she had her bookmark farther into this volume than I did. BUT I FINISHED IT FIRST!

Onto volume 3. Hopefully it won't take me another 5 years.

Oh yeah, my review? Mostly D&D jokes. Worth reading. Funny.

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### **Andre says**

I've been following the webcomic for years and it's done an amazing job of taking a metagaming funny webcomic (drawn using stick figures...) and making a "serious" work of it while keeping its funny tone. I look forward to every new comic and reading them in the book format, with the comment and a better flow as I do not have days (weeks) between panels, makes me appreciate them anew.

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## Joshua says

The Order of the Stick is renowned, and justly so, for its stunning plot; its beautifully characterized characters, both main and supporting; and its pleasing balance of comedy and drama to make a story that is both epic and enjoyable. However, this doesn't happen right away. The plot really starts to pick up in Volume 2. By the way, don't buy Volume 1. It's awful. But volume 2 starts to flesh out the nature of our characters and introduces us to vital supporting characters.

Part of the reason for this change in pace is psychotically zealous paladin Miko Miyazaki, who is charged with escorting our heroes to Azure City to be put on trial. For their own reasons, most everyone cooperates with Miko, but the tension between her and the other members of the party allow us to see what makes the party members tick. Matters get more dangerous in this volume, with the true threat posed by the villains revealed with a flurry of exposition.

Of course, it's not perfect. Burlew's blend of drama and comedy, mostly spot on in other volumes (excepting volume 1) is still being perfected here. There's more comedy than drama in the early part of this novel, but once the Order arrives in Azure City, this volume stops being a cliché D&D parody comic and starts becoming something else. Something more glorious.

Meanwhile, of course, the villains of the piece – the hilariously evil Xykon and the evilly hilarious Linear Guild – continue to make schemes and plot their twisted plans for revenge and world domination. One of the things I love about the Order of the Stick is their villains, who manage to be hilarious at times, but still quite, quite evil. Xykon is a terrifying threat on the scale of such villains as Voldemort and Darth Vader, and despite his many jokes, Burlew never lets you forget this.

No Cure for the Paladin Blues is a transitory novel at its heart, and this transition may seem awkward at times. But the transition is necessary, because once you get past this book into the third book, War & XPs, you will be rewarded with one of the best and most interesting volumes of fiction ever. And, you know what? This book is pretty damn good on its own, too.

Also, by the way, if you're wondering why you should purchase this book if it's available for free online, I should point out that the book version comes with bonus strips and creator's commentary. Is that worth the price? You be the judge.

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## Mary Catelli says

In which the Order of the Stick gets plotting -- it does continue what was started with the first one, so there are spoilers for that ahead -- and (ta-da!) leaves the dungeon. I note that Burlew's commentary on the story is interesting, but does also contain spoilers, so you may want to skip them unless you've followed it online and know who's who.

The last page of Dungeon Crawlin' Fools exploited dramatic irony to the hilt by showing that the things they were certain they had done were -- not quite so final as they thought. So in town, the important interaction is keyed by the escaped Linear Guild, and leads to a side quest in the best tradition.

Meanwhile, a mysterious figure in blue is tracking them.

Two subplots show the Linear Guild and Xykon both recuperating from their losses to become serious

menaces again. And the Order ends up heading south. It involves Durkon interpreting Thor's will in a storm, Belkar taking a level in barbarian, assassins with standards enough to avoid killing innocent bystanders, one reason why Haley wants the gold (besides being greed), her reaction to losing treasure, and an old man with a cat.

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### **Kathryn says**

My Order of the Stick Kickstarter swag finally arrived! *No Cure for the Paladin Blues* was part of the package, and I read it very quickly.

As with the other OotS books, *No Cure for the Paladin Blues* is a compilation from the online strip with interesting author commentary. I felt - perhaps unfairly - that there weren't as many bonus strips as with *Dungeon Crawlin' Fools* and *Don't Split the Party*, but the ones we did get were great.

I recommend the books to OotS fans, and I recommend Order of the Stick to people who like fantasy. (You don't have to get the D&D jokes; the comic moves away from the D&D gag-a-day format to plot by the end of the first book.)

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### **Lissibith says**

If you largely want gag-a-day strips, you're going to be disappointed, as the story moves more into an overarching design which eventually turns into an epic. But the strengths of OotS in this book move smoothly from the spoof aspects and comedy into character and a strong grasp of continuity. It never forgets its roots, but in this book, it grows to something more than it had been in the first volume

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### **Miss Ryoko says**

I'm really happy for Rich Burlew, I truly am. How wonderful and amazing it must be to start something you put up on the web, thinking maybe 10 or 15 people might find it and enjoy it, only to find thousands and thousands of people did and suddenly your work is so popular you are able to publish it in books. It's great... the only problem is now Burlew's work is taking on more of a storyline and less of a hilarious way to joke about table top fantasy gaming.

I loved the first OOTS. It had a storyline that was appropriate and very relatable, but why it was so great is the gaming humor. It was fantastic, and such good humor that gamers could totally appreciate it. But with the success, Burlew decided to focus more on an overall story and less on the humor. He even wrote about it in the Intro to the third OOTS book. And there isn't anything wrong with that. It's just, for me, what I liked most was the gaming humor. And it's still there, but there is less of it.

Having said that, I enjoyed the second book as well. It was still funny, and the characters are still enjoyable. Burlew talks a lot about how many people criticize him for his art style, and I truly don't understand. The stick figure artwork is absolutely fantastic and incredible appropriate for the work he's presenting. I, personally, love the artwork because he focuses a lot on facial expressions, and it's always a bit hilarious. I love it.

If you are a table top gamer of fantasy RPG games, you **MUST** read these books. They are so much fun with some great characters and classic moments that nearly every gamer has experienced at least once in their gaming career. I'm looking forward to reading the next one. What shenanigans will ensue?

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