



Volume 6 • Issue 2

Mithra

"All I ask of a firearm is that it be reliable, accurate, and capable of dropping a god at 500 meters."

Well, it's that time of year again. Jack Frost is nibbling at my nips, the Salvation Army is whipping their bellboys into shape, and suicides, not so coincidentally, are skyrocketing. Must be Christmastime! December 25th is the one time of the year when people around the world put aside their petty differences and come together in a spending frenzy (like a feeding frenzy, only more blood).

It wasn't always like this. Long, long ago, in a distant galaxy...whoops, wrong story -when Jews were building pyramids and Rome was getting its ass kicked by the Celts, the Living God was being a nebbly-nose in the area of the Middle East. I'm not talking about Jesus and his jolly band of ex-fishermen and whores. No! I'm talking about that other Living God. You know, the one that was as well admired as cleavage in Hollywood. He was thriving in the Roman Empire 200 years before Christianity rode in on His coat tails.

Mithra started out as a major minor deity of Zoroastrism (It's sort of like being the star player on the local dairy company's softball team, or like being the manager of a 7-11). You may remember the Zoroastrians for bringing us such joys as "The Modern Zodiac," the word "Magician"[†], and providing cool names for books that go "bing!"

With so much Mithranic liturgy and symbolism hinged upon the Iranian culture's deep dependence on zodiac symbols and meaning, not to mention their astounding good taste in clothing, much of the moving drama of Mithra has been reduced to non-sensical innuendo. Nevertheless, I'll try to outline some of the high points.

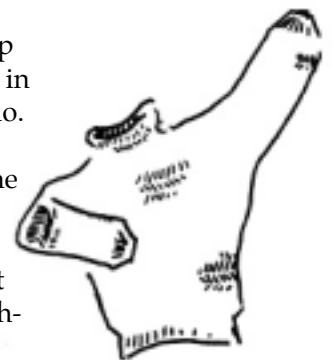
Symbolized as a trinity (bringer of light and life, the emblem of cold and death, and the ever-present invincible God), Mithra was the God of the sun, often symbolized as a coiled snake. As the protector of truth, antagonist of falsehood and error, and bane of Ahriman (a supremely evil entity in the Zoroastrian etherical melodrama, kind of like Pat Robertson, but with better dress sense), Mithra was the mediator between the unapproachable and unknowable God and the masses of humans huddled in fear on the globe listening to Tony Bennett and Mel Torme on 8-tracks. Well, it was a very long time ago!

As a sun god, it's only natural that his day of celebration would be the winter solstice. Held on December 25th, it represented His return after the cold, dead winter. Curiouser and curiouser.

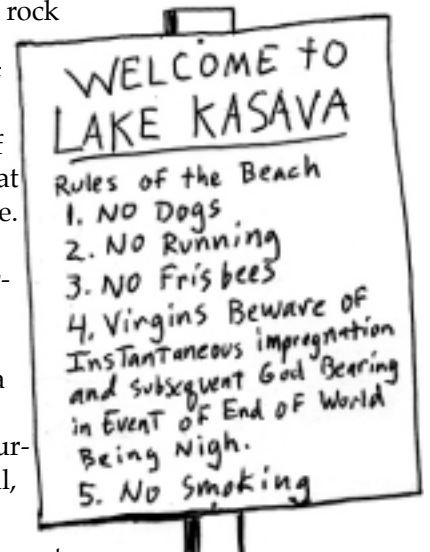
Mithra's birth is subject to some interesting scrutiny, as well. He was born from a rock that became known as the Rock of Generation. As he emerged from his igneous womb, shepherds heralded his arrival and offered the divine infant the first fruits of their flock and harvest. Oddly enough, there were no humans or many plants, or even a whole heck of a lot of animals at the time. There were, however, a plethora of mushrooms, slippers, and an old red sweater. Where the red sweater got the idea that there were people mucking about is the subject of a great deal of theosophical debate. It seems that all sweaters are sentient beings, but lack any sort of linear time reference. That is totally beyond the point of this article, and in hindsight, this whole portion should have been banished to a footnote.

As Mithra grew older, he undertook a series of Herculean labors at the request of Heaven, one of which was the capture of the only animal in the world at that time: a large bull. After chasing the beast into exhaustion, Mithra bound the creature and dragged it across a road strewn with obstacles. It might sound silly to us, but His journey with the bound bull was known as the Painful Journey, *Transitus*. For the faithful, it became a symbol of human suffering. Like we need another...

[†] "Hi, I'm Troy McClure, you may remember me from such religious documentaries as, 'Watch your step, there's a god down there,' 'Heaven, nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there,' and 'Venus...Cool.' The word magician comes from the name of the Zoroastrian priests, the Magi. Yeah, these are the same guys as the three wise men who came to heap presents on Jesus in the story of the Nativity...or was it Mithra in that cradle?"



I MUST Find
"The Child"





Publisher: C. Diablo

Head Editors:

Kelly Gunter
Sean Hammond

Layout:

Kelly Gunter
Sean Hammond

Proof Editor:

Damn

Guest Illustrator:

Troy Liston

Writers:

Michelle Amoruso
Kelly Gunter
Sean Hammond
Christopher Lane
Troy Liston
Damn

Contributors:

Michael P. Cosby
Heather Danielson
Josh French
Robert MacKay
Mark Nowak

© 1996 Gracies Dinnertime Theatre

In time, the bull escaped and Heaven ordered Mithra to slay the beast. Although Mithra did not wish to, he sacrificed the creature. From the corpse, all animals, plants, and life sprang forth. Like the Hindus and many other Indo-Iranian peoples, time was considered a subjective concept and the bull was a powerful symbol of...well, bull. It was the first animal domesticated and symbolized a great deal. It was food, cheaper labor, and made a great idol. In slaying the bull, Mithra made the ultimate sacrifice in the eyes of His worshippers; one that allowed death to bring forth new life that was richer and more fecund than the old.

With his tasks finished, Mithra and his companions celebrated in a Last Supper, after which they ascended to Heaven. The entire ritual of the last supper was recreated by the faithful for those confirmed in the faith during their masses. Little is known of the Mithric communion, mainly due to the systematic destruction of all Mithric temples and literature.[∂] The only remnants are in the form of Christian commentary that makes it clear that the pagan Mithrans used bread and wine in their service.

After his retirement in the eternal salvation, it was said He would return. The Avesta (Zoroastrian holy book) said that semen from Zaratust would be kept safe from demons by preserving it in Lake Kasava and protected by 9,999 spirits of righteousness (They couldn't have found just one more). At the end of the proscribed time for the earth, the virgin Eredat-fedhri, would be bathing in the lake and would conceive. Her child would be the Savior, Saoshyant (i.e., Mithra in human form).

In those end days, Mithra will awaken the dead and judge them. For a job like that you really do need a god; it's not as if you can nudge a corpse long enough and it will come back to life just to smack you. He will slaughter a another sacred bull (New and improved Sacred Bull-- Now comes with Stain Guard!) and, using fat from the sacrifice, will consecrate wine and bestow immortality to the just. Ahriman and all the evil in the world would then be devoured by a divine fire from Heaven and the chosen would spend eternity playing cribbage and drinking prune juice. Forever. "Saoshyant with his helpers shall restore the world, which henceforth will never grow old and die, never decay and never rot, ever living and ever increasing, and master of its wish, and the dead will rise [like yeast?], when life and immortality will come, and the world will be restored at its wish."



UM, ... You'd Better throw it Back. That's Godseed, not eel...

With so many similarities, it

is not surprising that Christianity quickly gained a hold in the Roman Empire. Only after Constantine was converted was the power of the Mithric mystery cults totally destroyed by roving bands of Christians. Knowing their enemies, they would slaughter the Magi in their temples, thus rendering the temples unfit for worship, making a holy ruckus, and spoiling a damn good afternoon.

So when Santa is getting ready to squeeze his fat tuckus down your chimney and you're chugging your 'nog, give a few moments of thought to Mithra.

Merry Mithramas.

[∂]Remnants of Mithra remained in Europe as late as the Middle Ages, when the Inquisition stamped out the final traces of Him. Before that time, heretics could be heard to mumble, "Lord, have mercy upon us," at the rising of the sun each morning.

GDT is desperately seeking a new illustrator.

If you're interested in joining a gaggle of creative people with too many ideas and not enough illustrators, please contact GDT via diablo@csh.rit.edu or sth8884@rit.edu

U of R inmates encouraged. Warning: GDT is not an equal opportunity employer. Idiots need not apply.

Literary Scavenger Hunt

GDT's second, and possibly last contest (though probably not). For the next few weeks we will be printing a series of quotations from various literary sources. Some will be very well known, others less so. Each quote will have a point value associated with it, based on the difficulty of the question, in addition to periodic "Bonus Questions." The winner of the contest will be the person who gets the most points. The prize will be \$75 dollars, and if the winner chooses, they may also become privy to the secrets of "Cafe Diablo," the most diabolical coffee in the world (and the official drink of Hell Inc). The winner's name will be posted in the first issue of volume 7. All answers must be sent to GDT by February 25th, 1997. GDT bids you good luck.

This Week's Hunt:

4. (1 point) "Out on the lawn there arose such a clatter
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter."
Name the author and story.

5. (2 points) "At one time most of my friends could hear the bell, but as years passed, it fell silent for all of them. Even Sarah found one Christmas that she could no longer hear its sweet sound. Though I've grown old, the bell still rings for me as it does for all those who truly believe."

Name the author and book.

6. (3 points) "Did you ever notice, the only one in A Christmas Carol with any character is Scrooge? Marley is a whiner who fucked over the world and the hadn't the spine to pay his dues quietly; Belle, Scrooge's ex-girlfriend, deserted him when he needed her most; Bob Cratchit is a gutless toady without enough get-up-and-go to assert himself; and the less said about that little treacle-mouth, Tiny Tim, the better."

Name the author.

Bonus Question: Name the relationship between the author of the story quoted in question number four and the person it was written for.

Valkyrie Air (a subsidiary of Hell Inc), Gracies Dinnertime Theatre, and Troy Liston are proud to present the ultimate guide in making travel plans...

MartyrLogue

-Troy Liston

Welcome to the *Martyrlogue*: a travel guide (of sorts) to shrines, relic sites and places of general morbid religious interest throughout Europe and the Americas. This week we look at **St. Andrew** (for those who like to cook, his Feast Day is **November 30**). St. Andrew is the Patron of Scotland, Greece, Russia, fishermen, sailors and spinsters. He is invoked against gout and neck problems.

Andrew was a fisherman who, along with his brother, Peter, became one of the original disciples of Jesus. Andrew was present for both Christ's Passion and Crucifixion. He traveled and preached widely and is said to be responsible for the evangelization of Greece and Asia Minor. It was there, in Achaia, that our saint was martyred; he was crucified on an X shaped cross for baptizing the local Roman governor's wife.

TRAVEL PLANS: TO VISIT ST. ANDREW'S, A TOWN ON THE EAST COAST OF SCOTLAND NAMED AFTER AND CONTAINING A PRE-REFORMATION SHRINE TO OUR SAINT THAT ONCE HOUSED HIS RELICS, TRAVEL TO EITHER EDINBURGH (AND GO NORTH) OR DUNDEE (AND GO SOUTH). ST. ANDREW'S RELICS (MINUS THE HEAD) ARE NOW HOUSED IN THE TOWN OF AMALFI IN SOUTHERN ITALY. THE HEAD (STOLEN CENTURIES EARLIER BY CRUSADERS) WAS RETURNED TO ISTANBUL (NOT CONSTANTINOPLE) IN 1972 BY POPE PAUL VI, WHERE IT STILL RESIDES.

GDT Literary Scavenger Hunt Rules and Regulations:

This contest is open to everyone, with the exception of the two head editors of *Gracies Dinnertime Theatre*.

Additional...

...because our readers on the University of Rochester have break while GDT continues to print issues, they will have a special insert in the 26 January, 1997 issue of GDT. That will bring you up to date with everyone else in the world and keep you competitive.

Send answers to diablo@csh.rit.edu, or send replies to: GDT, 472 French Rd, Rochester, NY 14618

If you should happen to miss any of the issues from volume 6, you may find them on our web site: <http://www.rit.edu/~diablo/gdt/extras/contest.html>

The Fore people live in the eastern highlands of Paupa, New Guinea, practicing horticulture and ritual cannibalism. Their claim to fame is the 100% fatal kuru (which they exclusively are afflicted by), a degenerative neurological disease. It is unique because the causative agent contains no nucleic acid; it is an infectious protein (prion). The disease is transmitted through consumption of human brains (yummy... Now introducing at Taco Bell, the Kuru brain wrap, the perfect gift of revenge). Annual deaths of kuru have dropped from 200 to about 10 after cannibalistic practices stopped around 1960.

As for social control, Fore women have a unique monopoly on marital power. Husbands live in fear of their wives polluting them with their menstrual blood. Imagine if American females had this same ability. Instead of hoarding cans of Mace and Pepper gas, women could carry around used tampons in a holster (tampon by day, wand of death by night). In case of assault, just whip it out and use your best fencing moves. And if that doesn't work, I hear the seven layer brain burrito doubles quite nicely as a shield.

A Holiday Message from Damn:

Dear Readers:

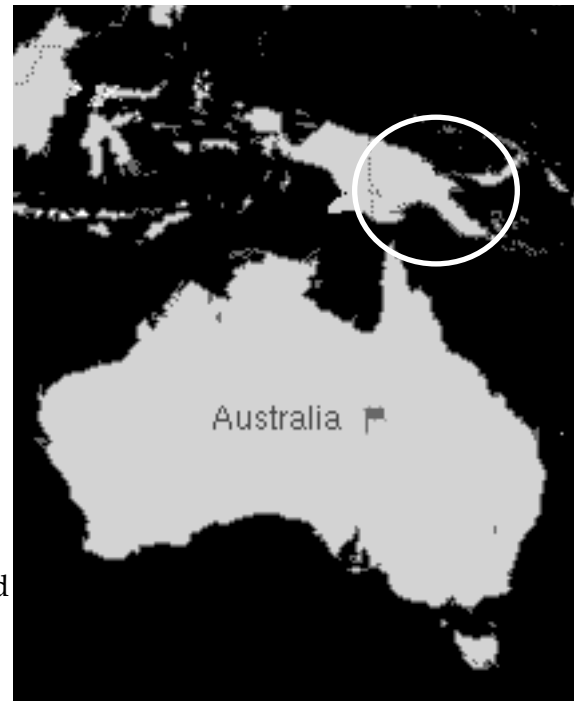
Happy Yom Kippur! Now, I know that every February your family usually does get together for this grave, solemn occasion for the typical bacchanalian revelry that happens every year during these Hispanic festivals. BUT, this year, I shall not let a single day of the Kwanza pass me by without letting someone know how much it means to me (I'm sending cards out rather than personal notes for the other days, Rosh Hashanah and Hanukah, in the Canadian nationalists' celebration).

Even though I don't really like wearing green, on this day I am proud to display the stars and stripes of the little pixies of Wales. And, of course, no Yom Kippur would be complete without the decorating of the maple tree or the caroling of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speeches through the streets. I hope that your family is also remembering to give thanks for that first day where the pilgrims got together with the Indians and their sacred cows and had that giant barbecue.

Yes, as the snows melt and we take pride in Alaska's joining of the Union, on this Really Great Friday no one should forget to lay out his sleeping bag, kneel facing the west, and pray to Mohammed in the fully automated city of Mecha. Oh, and happy Father's Day. It is so terribly unfortunate that you still haven't been able to conceive.

In case you didn't know, Yom Kippur also encompasses the fierce patriotic spirit of Presidents' Day and Benedict Arnold Day, and just happens to coincide with Three Kings' Day, where we all set our clocks back one hour for each of the three royal members of the house of Saudi Arabia. Plus, it's a terrific occasion to commemorate National Secretaries' Day (I'm not making that up!) and to thank relatives for gifts of all kinds.

Lovingly yours,
Damn



The Religious Wrong

"You don't dare say America or Christianity is a better way of living. When I said during my presidential bid that I would only bring Christians and Jews into the government, I hit a firestorm. 'What do you mean?' the media challenged me. 'You're not going to bring atheists into the government? How dare you maintain that those who believe the Judeo-Christian values are better qualified to govern America than Hindus and Muslims?' My answer is, 'Yes, they are.'"

-Pat Robertson, *The New World Order*.

"[There is] no difference, frankly...between blowing up an abortion clinic or blowing up a gas chamber in Dachau."

-Dan Treshmen, leader of
"Rescue America."

"Our culture is not equal to other culture; it is superior because the root of our culture is Christianity, Catholicism, the truth that makes men free."

-Pat Buchanan, 1993

(Behind the Rusty Curtain) -Christopher Lane

By some strange confluence of fate, Christopher Lane, a RIT photo student who decided to study abroad for a year, arrived on Byzantium's last shore, Bulgaria. He now studies at the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG), teaches English, broadcasts an Alternative music radio show, takes the occasional weekend adventure, and hangs out with the wrong crowd as much as possible. Feel free to email him at CPL960@JMC.AUBG.BG

As the evening wears on I watch the weary mix of people around me. There's middle class businessmen reading Cyrillic newspapers and porno-novels. When ever we all burst into laughter or start shouting at each other in English, they peer over the papers suspiciously. A group of three Gypsies crouch by an open window passing a bottle of Raquia (a very strong Bulgarian fruit-liquor), and pausing to grin at our laughter or spit out the window. I watch their brown, wrinkled faces and field-scarred hands as they share cigarettes and mumble to one another in heavily accented Bulgarian. Old women in brown babushkas shuffle past scowling this way and that, looking for an empty corner to sleep in. Later, the girl with the bruised face comes to stand with us and smile shyly at our jokes. Her name is Virginia (hardly a common Bulgarian name!), her mother is an English teacher, and she wants very badly to study in the US. We reassure her that she will. She says she ate the entire chocolate bar immediately. As I watch her, I see the thin anemic skin and the grey circles under her eyes. Her limbs are all terribly thin. I wonder if she has an eating disorder. (Apparently this is a big problem for Bulgarian young women, the sudden explosion of Western media here having left them feeling incredibly deficient in the face of the elegant super-models on TV and in the magazines.)

Virginia wants to see our ID's, drivers licences, passports, and snapshots. She marvels over them and asks shyly if she can show them to her mother. She runs off and soon returns toting her own Bulgarian ID and several snapshots of her graduation party and her new dress that she wore. I am struck by the preciousness that photographs have for Bulgarians. (I have observed this behavior several times now, sometimes having to page through great stacks of snapshots in order to be polite.) The photos are invariably unexciting. But they seem to hold an incredible value to Bulgarians as fetishes (or tokens) of personal identity and connection to society, family, and love interest.

Sometime after 3AM, I stick my head out of the window to blow smoke into the wind and notice that we have left the mountainous terrain of inner Bulgaria and are crossing the huge expanse of the Danube floodplain (This plain spreads out for hundreds of miles North and South of the last 200 miles or so of the

Danube. It is some of the richest farmland of both Bulgaria and Romania.). By the light of the almost-full moon, it seems that we could be crossing South Dakota...wheat and corn fields stretch out forever in all directions. I smile into the wind and the smoky voice of Kerouac rolls a great jazz tale of moonlit fields seen from train windows across my mind as I think of my own wild-hearted adventure.

At a small stop (a concrete pad, 2 streetlights and a tiny ticket shack) somewhere in this huge agrarian nocturne, we notice a few seats open up in the next car. We get to sit for the last few hours of our journey. I doze a little, but am too excited to really sleep.

Friday 8/29/96--

At 6:30, I see the creeping light of dawn through the windows and lean out to have a look. We're heading along the edge of the great C-shaped Bay of Burgas. The view deserves the bracing pain of an early morning smoke. The skyline is held by great rusting freight-cranes, who lean over little blue-grey freight cars to snatch colorless loads and deliver them to the great slug-like freight ships that seem to hover in the thick, oily water. It is the cold, grinning, caterpillar dawn of the wreck of industrialism. Even the first rays of sun seem to be stained by grease and oil smoke. Everywhere are great refinery tubes and pipes, crawling up to burned-grey towers burning their hideous smoking flames. I feel like I've rolled onto the set of some gloomy no-future sci-fi movie. At the station we stumble wearily onto the concrete pad and try to avoid getting run over by a train-car load of hollering kids arriving for summer camp who spill like a grinning blond river around us. Martin points out the buses heading for Sozopol, then leaves to visit his mother's house.

We decide to find coffee and breakfast before getting on another moving vehicle. At the little sidewalk non-stop (what Bulgarians call 24hr cafes) we sip espresso (the only coffee Bulgarians drink -- they claim that Americans drink coffee-flavored water) and eat chewy chocolate croissants. Suddenly a swarm of mosquitos descend upon us and bite Kara repeatedly. Finally we are forced to leave the cafe in a rush to escape being eaten alive.

To be continued next issue...

RIT's Twelve Days of Christmas

To be sung to the tune of (duh) "The twelve days of Christmas"

On the first day of Christmas, a RITard gave to me...
A HUNDRED-THOUSAND DOLLAR DEGREE

On the second day of Christmas, a RITard gave to me...
TWO ROOMMATES YELLING,
AND A HUNDRED-THOUSAND DOLLAR DEGREE.

On the third day of Christmas, a RITard gave to me...
THREE DRAGQUEENS KISSING,
TWO ROOMMATES YELLING,
AND A HUNDRED-THOUSAND DOLLAR DEGREE.

On the fourth day of Christmas, a RITard gave to me...
FOUR-POINT-O,
THREE DRAGQUEENS KISSING,
TWO ROOMMATES YELLING,
AND A HUNDRED-THOUSAND DOLLAR DEGREE.

On the fifth day of Christmas, a RITard gave to me...
FIVE MILLION BRICKS,
FOUR-POINT-O,
THREE DRAGQUEENS KISSING,
TWO ROOMMATES YELLING,
AND A HUNDRED-THOUSAND DOLLAR DEGREE.



On the sixth day of Christmas, a RITard gave to me...
SIX KEGS OF BEER,
FIVE MILLION BRICKS,
FOUR-POINT-O,
THREE DRAGQUEENS KISSING,
TWO ROOMMATES YELLING,
AND A HUNDRED-THOUSAND DOLLAR DEGREE.

On the seventh day of Christmas, a RITard gave to me...
SEVEN FEET OF SNOW,
SIX KEGS OF BEER,
FIVE MILLION BRICKS,
FOUR-POINT-O,
THREE DRAGQUEENS KISSING,
TWO ROOMMATES YELLING,
AND A HUNDRED-THOUSAND DOLLAR DEGREE.

On the eighth day of Christmas, a RITard gave to me...
EIGHT FRATBOYS PUKING,
SEVEN FEET OF SNOW,
SIX KEGS OF BEER,
FIVE MILLION BRICKS,
FOUR-POINT-O,
THREE DRAGQUEENS KISSING,
TWO ROOMMATES YELLING,
AND A HUNDRED-THOUSAND DOLLAR DEGREE.



On the ninth day of Christmas, a RITard gave to me...
NINE DEBIT DOLLARS,
EIGHT FRATBOYS PUKING,
SEVEN FEET OF SNOW,
SIX KEGS OF BEER,
FIVE MILLION BRICKS,

FOUR-POINT-O,
THREE DRAGQUEENS KISSING,
TWO ROOMMATES YELLING,
AND A HUNDRED-THOUSAND DOLLAR DEGREE.

On the tenth day of Christmas, a RITard gave to me...
TEN FINGERS SIGNING,
NINE DEBIT DOLLARS,
EIGHT FRATBOYS PUKING,
SEVEN FEET OF SNOW,
SIX KEGS OF BEER,
FIVE MILLION BRICKS,
FOUR-POINT-O,
THREE DRAGQUEENS KISSING,
TWO ROOMMATES YELLING,
AND A HUNDRED-THOUSAND DOLLAR DEGREE.



On the eleventh day of Christmas, a RITard gave to me...
ELEVEN LADS A' CHEATING,
TEN FINGERS SIGNING,
NINE DEBIT DOLLARS,
EIGHT FRATBOYS PUKING,
SEVEN FEET OF SNOW,
SIX KEGS OF BEER,
FIVE MILLION BRICKS,
FOUR-POINT-O,
THREE DRAGQUEENS KISSING,
TWO ROOMMATES YELLING,
AND A HUNDRED-THOUSAND DOLLAR DEGREE.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, a RITard gave to me...
TWELVE GRACIES LADIES,
ELEVEN LADS A' CHEATING,
TEN FINGERS SIGNING,
NINE DEBIT DOLLARS,
EIGHT FRATBOYS PUKING,
SEVEN FEET OF SNOW,
SIX KEGS OF BEER,
FIVE MILLION BRICKS,
FOUR-POINT-O,
THREE DRAGQUEENS KISSING,
TWO ROOMMATES YELLING,
AND A HUNDRED-THOUSAND DOLLAR DEGREE.



© 1996 Mary Huguenor, Mindy Proscia, Tim Miller, Adam Miles, and *Gracies Dinnertime Theatre*

Gracies Dinnertime Theatre
welcomes comments.

Send submissions, hate/fan mail, or suggestions to diablo@csh.rit.edu or Gracies Dinnertime Theatre c/o 472 French Rd, Rochester, New York, 14618