



And now, because at this point you probably *would* expect the Spanish Inquisition, here's something...

# COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

Volume: Zambesi Issue #3 February 1, 2004 Working today for a sillier tomorrow

## Talking Toys reviewed by Fred Coppersmith

Way back at the end of June, 2003, Andy Livingston, the Marketing and Promotions Coordinator for Diamond Select Toys, sent me an e-mail. Would I, he wondered, be interested in running a story in *Completely Different* about DST's new talking *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* action figures? At the time, they were just preparing to release the toys, which (according to the press information that Livingston sent me) would be "the first action figures from this fan favorite that have a voice playback feature, allowing each figure to quote lines from the film."

After some months of thought and trying to work the material into an issue, I let Mr. Livingston know that I didn't think I would be able to use the write-up he'd sent me after all. At this time, I said, I would prefer to reserve the newsletter for original material by club members. (Not that they ever send me any.) While reviews of Python products certainly could fit that bill, promotional material simply didn't. Unless he was able or willing to send along product samples as well, I didn't think there was much else I can do by way of review.

And then he surprised me by sending me three of the toys by UPS. So then I was stuck having to write this review—just as soon as I stopped playing with the action figures and got to work.

Calling these "talking figures" is perhaps just a tiny bit disingenuous. It's actually a small, separate, battery-operated base that does the talking—each with three lines of dialogue from the film. The figures themselves, though, do look incredible—if not *exactly* like King Arthur, Sir Bedevere, or Sir Robin. (The amount of painted detail is impressive, but I think it falls just short of the "dead-on likenesses" that Diamond promised in its initial press release.) Each figure boasts nine points of articulation, which essentially just means that you can move them around a lot and put them in different poses. However, they *don't* have elbow or wrist joints, which can make posing with the sword or shield difficult—and which is surprising, since they *do* have knee joints, even though bending the figures at the knee can be very difficult beneath their soft rubber clothing. Each figure also comes with a shield, sword, and scabbard. Again, the detail on the shields is terrific, but the swords can be a bit of a problem if you're not careful. To start with, they may be difficult to remove from the scabbards, and because they come in two parts—the blade splits from the handle before it can be inserted and re-attached in the figure's hand—they are easily broken. (Which I discovered, much to my dismay, when the plastic tip of King Arthur's hilt broke off easily in the sword, rendering it pretty much useless.) All that being said, however, they *are* very nice looking toys. I'm not entirely convinced they're worth the \$13 retail price (\$10 would probably be more sensible), but it *will* be difficult to finally part with the figures and let someone else play with them for a change.



## From "Dedicated Idiocy" by Alyce Wilson

The following is taken with permission from Alyce Wilson's personal history of the Penn State Monty Python Society, "Dedicated Idiocy" ([alycewilson.tripod.com/python](http://alycewilson.tripod.com/python)). Wilson is currently the editor of the online quarterly literary magazine Wild Violet ([www.wildviolet.net](http://www.wildviolet.net)).

This definition of curry was tucked into my journal with no explanation. Perhaps I had intended to slip it into the newsletter but never found space for it:

**Curry** (kûr'e) n.pl. -ries 1. *Curry powder.* 2. *A heavily spiced relish or sauce made with curry powder and eaten with rice, meat, fish, or other food.* 3. *A dish seasoned with curry powder.*

What is the significance of lemon curry in today's modern society? We often take for granted the spicy things in life that make things more enjoyable. We fail to relish our good experiences (such as when we're sauced), and we powder over our good times with a rice-white melodrama. We don't have any meat in our lives (a prospect that seems fishy to me), and we don't take enough time for food for thought. What is the world coming to when small children can yell "Ni!" at old grandmothers? I'd rather stuff them full of lemon curry so that they'll shut up.

## Weekly Horoscopes

**Aries:** (March 21—April 19)

Learn to set attainable goals this week. Maybe building a robot army, conquering the moon, and threatening to incinerate the Earth should wait until you've put on some pants.

**Taurus:** (April. 20—May 20)

An unexpected turn of events could leave you looking at life through new eyes this week. So could freak, experimental ocular surgery, but the stars will leave that one up to you.

**Gemini:** (May 21—June 21)

Give others space to grow this week. At least, that is, until you discover an antidote to the weird alien moss that's completely covered them since the night that meteorite fell to Earth.

**Cancer:** (June 22—July 22)

You may be shocked by another's behavior this week. But it's the strategically placed electrodes that will probably end up doing most of the shocking.

**Leo:** (July 23—Aug. 22)

Be open to new ways of thinking this week. There's no reason you have to make things *easy* for Dr. Mysterio and his evil mind-control beam.

**Virgo:** (Aug. 23—Sept. 22)

Your creativity emerges with others in a brainstorming session. But so, too, does that evil alien parasite that's been slowly gestating in your stomach. So, you know, it's all a wash really.

**Libra:** (Sept. 23—Oct. 23)

Sometimes, you just have to move past a difficult decision and swallow your anger. But hey—it's new chocolate-coated mocha-berry anger! With sprinkles!

**Scorpio:** (Oct. 24—Nov. 21)

You may want to make your own decisions this week, rather than accepting the will of the group, but the Great Glorious Leader is probably going to be upset when you refuse to drink the special Kool-Aid.

**Sagittarius:** (Nov. 22—Dec. 21)

Hard work and determination can take you to the top, but it's that special willingness to beat up toddlers that will keep you ruler of the jungle gym.

**Capricorn:** (Dec. 22—Jan. 19)

You'll want to make an effort and go the extra mile in a new relationship. Maybe *then* that angry torch-wielding mob will stop chasing you.

**Aquarius:** (Jan. 20—Feb. 18)

A new business opportunity could fall into your lap later this week. Unfortunately, so, too, could a sixteen-ton weight. You just never know.

**Pisces:** (Feb. 19—March 20)

The stars, being masses of incandescent gas held together by their own gravity in which the energy generated by nuclear reactions in the interior are balanced by the outflow of energy to the surface—and the inward-directed gravitational forces are balanced by the outward-directed gas and radiation pressures—think you ought to stay in this week.

## Reader's Poll: So, what's new with you?



"I'm in a Super Bowl betting pool at work. Do you think it's likely the New England Patriots will lose by ten points in the fourth quarter because of a mountain lion attack? I've got fifty bucks riding on it."  
- James Clerihew



"Well, tomorrow's Groundhog Day, so that's a pretty big deal. Frankly, the world could use a few more magic weather-predicting rodents."  
- Tobias Pantoum



"I've been trying to get back to the basics. My life-sized Jello mold of Graham Spanier is almost complete."  
- Dominic Sestina



"Oh, you know, the usual: frightening small children with gardening implements, declaring my trousers a sovereign nation, eating paste. It's a good life."  
- Billy J. Haiku

## The Quest for the Kumquat by Matt Rudy

As I sit here typing, I'm trying to add extra sugar to my glass of Tropicana White Grape Kiwi Wave. Why? Because I'm trying to wash away the taste of pure evil from my mouth. What is the taste of pure evil, you ask? Well, I'll give you one hint: it grows on a tree in Pittsburgh. That's right, the *kumquat*. (Just seeing that word makes me shudder...and it also seems to bring back the taste that is now burnt into my taste buds. Hold on while I rub salt on my tongue.)

Ahem. Where was I? Oh yeah... So at one Python meeting, long ago, we all discussed the inherent humor found in words beginning with "K", words like kindergarten, kangaroo, Kokomo, and kumquat. At another meeting soon after, the merit of the word kumquat was the subject (it even spawned a small, unusual sketch). And thus began my personal quest to find (and eat) an actual kumquat. Strangely enough, I found a kumquat tree in Pittsburgh of all places; just look at the innocent, unknowing and ignorant grin on my face. Oh yeah, did I mention that kumquats can be purchased at almost any grocery store these days? So this past Friday, I found myself at Wegman's, right next to a wicker bin of kumquats. After building up my courage (and checking to see if I had any change), I bought a handful of kumquats for 82 cents. (One moment...the taste is back, where's my bottle of vinegar?)



And, in preparation for writing a beautiful extended metaphor about life and kumquats for the club newsletter, I finally tried a few. At first I found the delicate balance of sweet citrus and sour pulp to be quite pleasing. But with each additional kumquat came a greater desire to gouge out my tongue with an X-acto knife. Oh the horror! I thought about stopping after the second one, but I thought that maybe (just maybe) the next one might be better. But the hellish after-taste of each bite-size fruit brought out a worsening bitterness in each subsequent one. Words cannot describe these foul and putrid morsels. So now I sit here (with my tongue soaking in dish detergent), writing this down to save others from the same awful punishment of the kumquat. So heed this warning: **SEEK NOT THE KUMQUAT, YE CLUB MEMBERS. THE KUMQUAT IS THE BRINGER OF EVIL AND THE DESTROYER OF EMPIRES. ALL WHO TASTE OF ITS ORANGE FLESH WILL NAUGHT BUT WITHER AWAY INTO SOULESS OBLIVION.**

## Pennsylvania: That Place Where They Do That Thing

The Pennsylvania Office of Tourism is currently looking for a new slogan. From November 17 to December 17, 2003, they held a contest called "Penn a Phrase for Pennsylvania". According to the official rules, entries were to be "short, to the point and uniquely Pennsylvania", with the winner receiving "a 7-day 6-night Pennsylvania Dream Vacation for up to four (4) people." Leaving aside the question of what exactly constitutes a "Pennsylvania Dream Vacation", they eventually chose five (5) possibilities:

- Pursue Happiness
- Discover our good nature
- Liberty's Landscape
- Liberty Loves Company
- The State of Independence

Online voting at [www.visitpa.com](http://www.visitpa.com) commenced on January 14, 2004, and will continue until February 12. Currently winning by a narrow margin is "The State of Independence". Here at *Completely Different*, however, we think our readers could do one better than that. None of those suggestions are...well, *silly* enough. So we're asking you—you're the readers we mentioned just now, remember?—to send us your ideas for silly state slogans. What does Pennsylvania mean to you?

## And You Can Quote Me On That

"All I know about the ceremony is what I saw on *Monty Python*." – Microsoft Chairman, Bill Gates, on what he expects when he receives an honorary knighthood from Britain's Queen Elizabeth at still undetermined later date (1/26/04)

Editor: Fred Coppersmith

*Completely Different* is the mostly weekly newsletter of the Penn State Monty Python Society. For best results, use regularly and massage thoroughly into skin. Back issues available at [www.clubs.psu.edu/Python](http://www.clubs.psu.edu/Python). Submissions always welcome. For more information, write to [different@unreality.net](mailto:different@unreality.net)