

# The Deck of Many Things: The Future of the Undead

by j. a. DOHM



Welcome to 2019. We're here, hopefully Christmas was amazing. And per usual, it's time to drop the New Year's predictions on everyone. But first-

## Let's Review the 2018 Highlights:

Last year can best be described as a productive mess. The global economy was generally volatile from start to finish, but the local economies were booming. Money had finally made its way from the market makers all the way down to middle class, and everyone was spending like drunken sailors. Retail numbers were up, job growth was up, and online sales were bonkers. As long as you were set up for e-commerce and keeping a good balance sheet, you were ringing the register. Overall, great year for sales!

From my own personal data from *Buccaneer Collectibles* and *20 Eyes Entertainment INC*, we have a few points of interest to take note of. For one, there was a correlation between the price of Bit Coin and volume of sales on high-end collectible items. As Bit Coin profit-taking accelerated, more and more money was dumped into miniatures, graded CCG cards, and 'bling-ed out' versions of board games. It was interesting because it indicates that the Millennials have figured out a trick that some Baby Boomers have built their entire fortunes on. They figured out how to invest in nostalgia.

From the mid-nineties onto the late 00's, the Boomers created an Antiques economy that was valued in the billions. It happened because of Nostalgia for their childhood. Tin toys, Beatles memorabilia, original rock show posters, and other such artifacts from their childhood went for hundreds of dollars more than they should of. On the high end, people were buying Tiffany glassware, colonial furniture, and a variety rare coins and stamps. These were all Greatest Generation items that were likely heirlooms which provided the comfort of what America was like back in the "good 'ol days". It was all nostalgia for the *John Wayne Era*.

## Millennial Nostalgia items are much different than their Baby Boomer counterparts:

Whereas the Boomers are all about Americana Nostalgia, the Millennials aren't. In fact, Millennials could care less about what their grandparents were into. They were raised on adventure and high fantasy by Gen X. Their nostalgia revolves around *Dungeons and Dragons*, the *Goonies*, *80's cartoons*, and every intellectual property *Disney* currently

owns. Millennials fancy escapism and they are teaching their kids to do so as well. When Bit Coin made a bunch of tech savvy folks in their mid-thirties rich for the first time in their lives, they went out used *PayPal* and *Square* to convert their sketchy cryptocurrency in hard assets from their childhood like graded *Magic: The Gathering* cards, fantasy artwork, and *Pop! Funko* figures depicting their childhood idols like *Lion-O*, *Deadpool*, and *Bob Ross*-

Well, not so much *Bob Ross*-

## But anyhow, the takeaway from this point is:

If you are an older retailer, it doesn't matter what you like. (If you are from Gen X like me, it REALLY doesn't matter what you like and possibly, never did.) Stock the items that give your Millennial customers all the feels and your sales will increase. Nostalgia is money. Buy the nostalgia, and ring the register.

## Alright, the next point of interest leads me straight into my predictions for 2019 regarding the Gaming Industry.

### Predictions From Beyond: 2019 Edition:

#### #1 The Undead TCG's Will Rise Again

This prediction is corollary to the most messed up sales trend in 2019. Just after *Gen Con*, there was a serious upward tick in the prices of cards from "Dead" CCG's. I can't exactly explain why this happened, but it did. Between August and November the prices for product from *Highlander CCG*, *Raw Deal CCG*, *Jihad CCG*, *Rage CCG*, and *Warlord CCG* went bananas. Sealed boxes of these products were at least two times original MSRP and certain rare single were very high. It all culminated with the sale of a *Medusan Lord* card from *Warlord CCG* for north of \$1000.00.

After further review, these incidents aren't quite as insane as originally thought. All of those CCG's were good games that had considerable followings previous to the Great TCG Crash of the mid-2000's. The only reason manufacturers stopped making those games was because the 2005-2008 economy couldn't support their sales. It would stand to reason that some of these product would make a comeback one day.

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*The Future of the Undead - continued from previous page.*

My prediction for 2019 is that a manufacturer of one of the *Undead TCG's* will run a Kickstarter to revive it and be rewarded with an ungodly amount of funding from the general public. This will, in turn, trigger a wave of TCG's returning to the market in a non-LCG form.

## #2 Wizards of the Coast Sinks Into the Ocean

Man, did *WotC* stick it to everyone in 2018. Let's take a look at the tale of the tape:

- *WotC* stuck it to brick-n-mortar retailers by allowing *Amazon* and *WalMart* to undercut them AND ignore street dates with no repercussion. Bad business.
- *WotC* stuck it to their artists, past and present, by cancelling their status as Guest of Honor at Grand Prix events. This caused an artist boycott of future Grand Prix's. Bad policy.
- *WotC* stuck it to MTGO players by launching *MTG Arena* and rendering their MTGO collections useless. Potential class action law suit.
- To wrap up the year, *WotC* sticks it to the paper Magic player base by ending the Pro Tour brand of events and invests 10 million into a new e-Sports brand called the Mythic Championships. Bad brand management.

### There's an old saying that applies here:

*"You always dance with the girl that brought you there, not the one you just met."*

*WotC* is about to dump their cardboard date for a sexier new digital version. In this brave new world where Ivory Tower C-Suite offices seem to be built a few stories above the clouds so that the occupants can no longer see the city below them, I've seen a number of companies take giant leaps away from their good senses in an effort to cash in on the evergreen pastures of online micro-transactions. Forcing micro-transactions through brand management is tough to begin with, but it is incredibly difficult if your product isn't inherently a digital one. *Magic: The Gathering* is not a good candidate for this type of digital monetization transition, especially after *WotC* went out of its way to aggravate about half of the player base.

What are the odds that a MTGO player will transition to *MTC Arena* right after their online collection suddenly became void of secondary market value?

*"My guess is low".*

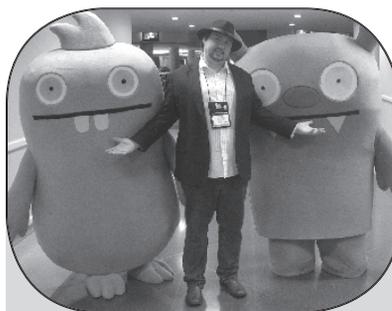
My prediction is that *WotC's* utter disregard for its community's stake in the game will finally hit home. It will start with low attendance at Magic Fests and move onto the failure of *MTG Arena*. *Hasbro* will then, of course, blame the decision to go digital on *WotC's* CEO and possibly remove him by 2020.

*WotC* is in for some dark days. A company can't possibly dump on this many people in a calendar year and avoid consequences.

## #3 The BOOM Continues

2019 should be an awesome year. No elections to provide distraction, lots of money floating around, and plenty of employed folks. There will be money to spend, so I predict the conventions will all do well. We are going enter into the sweet spot for the economy for a few years until it eventually overheats and recesses. I think we have a few years of solid profit-taking before any calamity occurs, so enjoy!

Well, see you at GTS Reno!



*J.A. "Dread" Dohm has been a fixture in the Adventure Gaming Industry since the 1997. He has experience in every area of the*

*Industry, but most notably in publishing, game design, screenwriting, and retail asset management. Dread owns Industrial Dream Mills, makers of Steamfortress Victory RPG, and is currently serving as Greater Games Industry's Brand Manager. If you have questions, he can be contacted at ggicadsales@gmail.com.*