



*(Me, Andrea Morrison, as of November of 2015)*

## **How We Killed the Loch Ness Monster**

### ***Biography***

Every summer, my brother Christian and I perform the same ritual: we turn my room into a large fort of pillows and blankets, stock up on snack supplies, and sit for hours on end playing a computer based role-playing game called *Wizardry 8*. This routine might seem trite, but *Wizardry 8* has been an integral part of our lives for well over a decade.

When our father first introduced the game to us, he created our first team to help us get started. He named all six of our characters after family members, and he let Christian and me choose which characters would be named after us. I chose to be a whimsical engineer with a knack for picking locks and pockets alike, while my brother wanted to be a gladiator who could strike devastating blows to all who opposed us. Using our father's original party, my brother and I spent hours upon hours playing *Wizardry 8*; we worked together to better our team, solve extensive puzzles, and survive challenging battles. One of our toughest battles was against a giant sea monster comically named "Nessie." Time after time, she defeated our party, and every time she did, Christian and I were forced to reload and try again. Each time we restarted, we employed a new strategy to help us defeat her. During one of our sessions, as we played through the night and into the early hours of the morning, our party had been reduced from six characters to two; my brother and I were the only ones left. However, we had weakened Nessie quite a bit,

and a well aimed strike from either of our characters could finish her off. We were the closest we had ever been to winning the battle, and as Christian and I sat huddled around the computer, afraid to start the next round of combat, we took a deep breath and reminded ourselves that if we didn't win that time around, we would simply try again.

We would persevere, and perseverance, like many of the skills *Wizardry 8* taught me, has been invaluable in my every day life. Games may be primarily for fun and entertainment, but many games also encourage players to develop versatile, indispensable skills. A game taught me patience and diligence, and that the inability to do something once didn't mean the inability to do it *ever*. A game showed me the role of process in progress by encouraging me to make observations and apply them to problem solving. A game helped me see how well a team could function when they worked together and used their individual strengths to help each other.

But what does any of this information have to do with killing the Loch Ness Monster? It's simple. By honing our skills and testing new methods, we were able to defeat her with a shot from a tinkerer's gun and a blow from a warrior's sword.



*(Left to right: Christian, age 3, and Andrea, age 5)*