

# FUMBLE 44

NEWSZINE

DECEMBER 2022



IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE KNIGHTS OF MISSPENT YOUTH



Ho, ho, ho, and merry Crimbo! The time will soon be here for the exchange of presents. I do hope you get many that you want and a few that were truly a surprise. Saying that, this time of year is not all about tangible gifts; it is also about the moments shared with family and friends. Being part of a gaming group helps with the latter and sometimes makes the former more bearable when such is not possible. The world has changed dramatically over the last ten or more years and staying in touch is easier than before, even if you can only do so over a screen supported by a suitable Wi-Fi signal.

Alas, BDP is still experiencing delays as release dates for forthcoming publications continue to slip. This is partly due to editing constraints and necessary revisions but we are working through the backlog to get things back on schedule.

## Master Sage

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**Knightshade RPG**  
**Campaign I: Calliban Rising**  
**KSCAL03 Forgotten Violation – Part**  
**Five: The Phantom Strikes Again**  
**Wednesday, 04<sup>th</sup> May, 2022**

The rains swept down from the north, cutting across the town of Tiera, bolstered by tempestuous winds and an unseasonal chill that left frost on the ground and turned the precipitation to hailstones big enough to worry the most avid outdoorsman. The threat of the Raven may have passed but other dangers were harrying the Cabal that required attention before the Patriarch looked to intervene. Neophyte Umbra had a plan to draw the Phantom out, and it involved his adopted mother. She was no longer of concern to the Cabal and could provide no further information. While Prefect Pallin Eckard still had some questions to answer, he too was of lesser importance in any ongoing investigations. Still, Interrogator Malys was not quite done with him.

Neophyte Umbra retreated to his *cabin in the woods*, taking Tekla with him. He hoped that the Phantom would come to them in seclusion. Malys

theorised that the rune had been cut from the other Raven with purpose, perhaps to permit the Phantom to breach the boundaries of the town, or even to allow him to cross over the threshold of the Maidens. Theodore took a covered wagon with Tekla on board and Warden Farris Braeker concealed inside and set off to his *cabin in the woods*.

Meanwhile, Malys solicited aid from Sister Bella Kole to administer a broth to Widow Sadie Kart to calm her so that she might be more receptive to the questions he posed. She did so but also discovered that the wounds the old woman had received during her return journey to Tiera had all but dissipated. Her mind may have been fractured but Widow Kart was otherwise in good health. This cast doubt on the validity of the trial and the execution of the Prisoner Transfer Guards who brought the old woman back to the town. On questioning Sadie Kart, Malys discovered that she had been well cared for on her journey home but she had been troubled by nightmarish dreams from a past that only now began to reassert itself. She had once been 'Theron' like Agnes was 'Keryn'. She had been part of a Cabal stationed in the fallen town of Lare. They had been tasked with protecting the Patriarch's Repository but they had failed. She had been disavowed, cast out of the Cabal and tasked with a new purpose – protecting the nine children of Tiera. She did not remember what happened to her Cabal. They were gone now. So too was Lare and the Repository.

Malys went to question Prefect Eckard again but he could offer no further insight into the past. He did not know anything of a previous Cabal but it

could be possible. While he was with the Priest, one of the Watch boys came to find him at the request of Sheriff Interrogator Reinheit Folgen. His compatriot stated only that he had seen the Phantom. He found Reinheit near the Umbra home. He stated that he had seen what he believed was the Phantom running towards the woodlands in the direction of the Maidens. He sent the boy to get Warden Silas Green to search the area. The Ranger found tracks consistent with those seen around the caves in the hills where the Phantom resided. Malys became concerned. Neophyte Umbra and Tekla could be in trouble. He set off at pace with Silas, acquiring mounts and braving the gathering storm to make haste towards the *cabin in the woods*.

Neophyte Umbra had settled his mother into his upstairs room, placed the worried horse downstairs and closed all of the interior and exterior shutters to provide added security for his cabin. Warden Farris remained concealed in the wagon and kept a watchful eye for trouble. He did not have to wait long.

A dark mass formed into a humanoid form and circled the cabin as if it was looking for a way in. After scrutinising and then following the target, Farris became concerned that it was not the Phantom but some shadowy manifestation intent on reaching Tekla. Firing two arrows from his bow, he quickly learned that they were of no use. He then spied a second dark shape on the roof and pounded on the door to gain entry as the weather worsened. He joined Neophyte Umbra in his efforts to protect Tekla. The young Raven called on the Prayer, Shadow Eyes and sent the perceptive extension of his sight up

the chimney and outward to verify Farris's claims of some disembodied enemies tasking his *cabin in the woods*.

At that moment, Malys and Silas arrived, quickly dismounting when they became aware of the enemy as one of the *Shadows* detached from the roof and moved to engage them. The second *Shadow*, on learning of the vulnerability of the *cabin in the woods* via the chimney, moved to attack those sequestered inside. Neophyte Umbra and Warden Farris stood to bar its way.

On the ground, Malys and Silas entered into a fray with the first Shadow, but the battle did not go well. The gathering storm, darkness and a dangerously unpredictable enemy made combat uncertain. Malys hit Silas as he in turn hit the beleaguered Interrogator. In the cabin, the battle was not going any better as Farris shot one of the Phantom's arrows into his own foot. Neophyte Umbra's Prayers were proving effective against the creature but not enough to dissuade it.

Malys learned that Jalen Harm's armour protected him against the *Shadow*. Alas, it was less effective against the attacks of Silas. The Phantom entered the fray, sending a volley of spinning arrows into the maniacal creature as Neophyte Umbra shielded Tekla from the second *Shadow* and moved to flee from the upper room which had become a trap. Though sorely wounded, Warden Farris bravely held his ground to give them time to escape.

Outside, the first *Shadow* fell to a barrage of attacks. Malys and the Phantom used their strength against the main door to the cabin and broke the spar to gain entry. Tekla wore an amulet given to her by the real Theodore. It told him

that she was in danger but revealed his proximity to others by glowing brightly. Farris fought valiantly despite the severity of his wounds. The Phantom and Malys raced up the stairs and attacked the remaining *Shadow*, soon destroying the creature. Farris was alive, but the wound required immediate tending. Though Malys was able to staunch the bleeding by using a brand from the still-burning fire, the struggling Warden would never fully recover from this crippling injury. The companions barely had time to take stock. They were weary, wounded and still at risk. The Phantom made no threatening moves. He gathered up his arrows, shouldered his bow and moved to leave. He promised to return in three days when the weather changed. Only then would he answer any questions. However, Malys saw the bracer on his arm, wrapped around the fleshy rune taken from the other Raven, bonded in blood to his arm. As he surmised, the rune permitted him to pass into Tiera, and might yet let him trespass into the Maidens. The Cabal needed answers but now was not the time. Everything they had learned seemed to lead back to the Maidens. If the Repository in Lare was in transition, where was it moving to? If Widow Kart had been part of another Cabal tasked with protecting that Repository, what then was the reason for this sect and their coming to Tiera? Where was *Wally* now and did he know the truth? Malys remembered the chamber beneath the Maidens. So too did Father Horus. Perhaps they could find answers there, but first, a competent healer was required. If the Repository was in transition, what had triggered its downfall?

**Knightshade RPG**  
**Campaign I: Calliban Rising**  
**KSCAL03 Forgotten Violation – Part Six: Divine Punishment Part One**  
**Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2022**

Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> Day of Apry, 726 AR. Returning to the town of Tiera did not prove possible for Wardens Farris and Silas both suffered grievous injuries. The Phantom promised to return on Moonday, the 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Juin and the Cabal had no cause to doubt his word. In the meantime, healing those injured by the *Shadows* was of paramount importance, as the wounds were not to be taken lightly. The weather worsened, and while the Phantom promised that it would change, for the interim, the storm showed no signs of abating. Help was needed. A healer, provisions and perhaps some divine counselling. Father Horus and Sister Bella Kole were summoned, undertaking the journey to the *cabin in the woods* despite the storm. They reached Neophyte Umbra's dwelling uncoerced and set to the task of healing their compatriots, catering to both their physical needs and their spiritual necessities. Given the fury of the gales, the heaviness of the rain and the dropping temperature, prayer was needed to steady nerves.

Later, huge hailstones fell, followed by thunder and dangerous lightning. The cabin seemed proof against this storm and those within had no choice but to wait it out. The whole night sky lit up and arcs of lightning seemed to be concentrated in the distance – around the Aleria Tree. Neophyte Umbra spied fire over the top of the great tree in the distance but he could not be sure without an investigation. Father Horus and

the Raven set off to scout the area. They found that the Aleria Tree had been split by lightning and the top of this monumental site was on fire. Through the bark, Father Horus spied what appeared to be stone, but that which was consistent with the rune stones of the Maidens. Lightning rained down on the Aleria Tree forcing Father Horus and Neophyte Umbra to withdraw.

Afterwards, the intensity of magical influence in the area seemed to swell, even in proximity to the *cabin in the woods*.

The storm dissipated as the Phantom predicted. Scouting the Aleria tree, the Cabal found that it had all but been destroyed, leaving behind an immense monolith. Luckily, the town of Tiera seemed unaffected by this turn of fate. While there were a few unsettling tremors, nothing else had occurred. An overcast day heralded the arrival of the Phantom but as the uncertain light gave way to evening, there was still no sign of the other Theodore. As night fell, he arrived but called out from outside in shrill tones that told of his perilous state. The Phantom had been harrowed, but what had done this to the young man? He was near death when he reached the cabin but it was too late for him. With his last breaths, he offered up his bow and enchanted arrows. He surrendered the Raven's dagger. He conceded the stone amulet linking him to his mother, Tekla and he imparted a warning that when his last breath escaped his lips he would die but return as a creature of darkness. The only way to contain him was to trap him inside Jalen Harm's armour. Neophyte Umbra undertook the task and bound the Phantom after he said farewell to his weeping

mother. In the last gasp, he removed the bracer bonding the Raven's rune to his arm, tapped the wrist and pointed to Agnes. The meaning was obvious. In the same way that he had used the rune, she could do likewise.

Reinheit arrived and brought word that he had questioned Widow Kart at length. He learned that she had been like Agnes – bound to a Cabal in Lare. She told a tale of woe in which she and one other escaped the fate of the Repository which they were charged to protect. They failed in their duty. She was disavowed by the Patriarch and set to a different service. She had been marked with the Cabal's rune in the past. She had suffered greatly when the Repository fell, set upon by *Shadows* who almost destroyed her mind as they violated her body. The Prisoner Transfer Guards who brought her home were innocent. Something broke the old woman in the mines and led to a resurgence of her nightmares. They spilt out and affected the men tasked to bring her home in a shared nightmare. The last member of the old Cabal still living was Father Walder (Wally) Rhole, now Master Prefect Rhole of Calliban. She said that if Reinheit wanted to know more, he would have to find... Wally.

The answers had to be in the Maidens. Neophyte Umbra believed that the chambers Malys and Horus had seen under the rune stones marked a way into the Repository. He also realised that the eight doorways and the plinth were significant to the Cabal. With the Phantom's rune, they might have a way in without Jalen Harm's spirit. However, the Cabal would have to go together. Once Tekla was safe, Neophyte Umbra set off with his compatriots in a final

gamble to gain some understanding of why the Patriarch had sent them to Tiera.

Arriving in the Maidens as the light of day waned, the Cabal worked quickly to get into position as directed by Neophyte Umbra. This was a gamble but the young Raven believed he was right. Agnes was bound to the Phantom's bracer and took up the ninth position with Theodore on the plinth. Petitioning Thyrr, they appeared in the chambers below. Neophyte Umbra set to work to understand the intricate runes on the floor and discovered the central marking to be a depiction of the Cross of Ayre, sometimes known as the Cross of Thyrr. He also found minute runes that corresponded to the rune stones above.

The young Raven figured out that the south passage was in flux, leading to the past and the fallen Repository. The passage west led to the chamber where Malys and Horus had petitioned for the cure for Agnes. He warned against stepping into this corridor as the hands would demand payment in kind. The Cabal followed the passage north. Soon after they encountered an old man carrying a lantern who said that he was Kain James, a former member of Widow Kart's doomed sect. He warned them to turn back as the Repository was not ready. He told that the others who had fallen were here and now stood as guardians of this place. The Cabal withdrew and took the east passage. There they encountered Kain James again who scolded them for not listening – the Repository was not ready. When asked what would happen when it was ready, he replied that as long as everything was in place and nothing was missing, the Patriarch would charge his new Cabal

with its protection. If anything was missing, he would send forth the divine punishment. The Cabal withdrew but another problem presented itself. The floor had turned. It took time to figure out that it had rotated one turn for each passage traversed. Neophyte Umbra and his compatriots had to remember where each had stood in order to escape this place. Thankfully, Thyrr was on their side and they appeared in the Maidens none the worse for wear. The truth had been revealed. The Cabal were about to realise the duty that had brought them to Tiera but only if the Repository was intact. If anything was missing, they would be subject to divine punishment, something that had unravelled their predecessors in the past. They had one chance, to gather everything that had been taken and restore it to the Repository before Kain James gave his final reckoning to the Patriarch. Only then would he rest and the new Cabal take over. They also knew a back way into the Repository but time was running out. The Cabal returned to the *cabin in the woods* to plan the final incursion.

## **Knightshade RPG**

### **Campaign I: Calliban Rising**

#### **KSCAL03 Forgotten Violation – Part**

#### **Six: Divine Punishment Part Two**

**Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2022**

The Cabal spent two days preparing to venture forth, gathering the items taken from the Repository and healing. Equipped and ready, they set off to the Maidens after prayers with Father Horus and attending morning service in the church. There could be no further delay. Jace Oxwen had dug up Jalen Harm's armour. The entity within seemed to be inert, though Neophyte Umbra would

later surmise that it had been rendered so by the presence of the augmented Seraphs and their Missives.

The journey took half a day and required an arduous trek upward to within a mile of the Maidens. There, Theodore called on the Prayer, Shadow Carpet and set off in advance of the group with Matron Agnes and the trapped entity inside the armour. While the Raven set about preparing to open the doorway to the transient place below, Agnes fastened ropes to the plinth. When the others arrived, all was ready.

Taking up their previous positions around the Maidens, Matron Agnes petitioned Thyrr to let them into the access corridors to the Repository and the Cabal appeared in the last locations where they had formerly stood.

First heading north, Malys spied a dark mass on the floor of the passage and detected some movement as it seemed to manifest claws. Behind them, Neophyte Umbra noticed that a portcullis was slowly descending to bar their retreat – one that seemed to be made from shadow. The Cabal made haste and returned to the central chamber to try the east corridor. The portcullis stopped descending. Alas, the east passage proved no better as another dark mass was spotted along with the appearance of a second portcullis. The entity formed and the Cabal were forced to fight. Malys and Reinheit kept the *Shadow* at bay while the others hugged the walls and passed uncoerced. In the end, Theodore called on the Prayer, Shadow Serpent and dispatched the entity. However, this was not the end of their woes as hands erupted from the walls on the right side of the passage and attempted to grasp hold of Father

Horus. They almost succeeded until Farris attempted to fire an enchanted arrow and failed to hit the target while Malys struck out with his sword and severed the hands. The Cabal continued with urgency. They reached the entryway to the Repository proper but it was almost too late. Depositing all of the items here in the outer chamber, they made a hasty retreat as they could see the old man (Kain James) with the lantern, approaching, muttering to himself that he had to find the missing items.

The Cabal traversed the passages and returned to the central chamber after dispelling the Portcullis. They appeared in the Maidens and undertook the journey home. Three days later, Grand Marshall Bale Thurrow, the White Judge, arrived with a retinue of 180 Soldiers and 60 support personnel to herald that the Patriarch was coming to Tiera and would arrive shortly. He had come here in advance of Jarresh Keryn to deal with the matter of a '*witch*' in the town. He had come for Bella Kole. She was busy working in the kitchen and overheard the conversation. She ran, pursued by Malys who overtook her with ease. Bella pleaded for him to let her go saying she had done no wrong; she had only helped and healed the Cabal on many occasions. Malys let her go. He told her to run.

Returning to Keryn Hall, Malys reported that she had escaped. Grand Marshall Thurrow set his men to the task of pursuing her and informed the Cabal that he would be staying in Tiera for thirty days and would be quartered in the church while his men set up camp on the outskirts of Tiera to await the Patriarch's arrival. The Cabal knew why he was coming, but they did not relish

the prospect with any degree of enthusiasm. Raven Umbra offered his quarters in Keryn Hall to the Grand Marshall who gratefully accepted. A tide of apprehension had descended on Tiera. The Patriarch was coming, and there was no telling what secrets he would yet discover. Blessed be Thyrr. Blessed be the Patriarch. Blessed be the Cabal...

**Knightshade RPG**  
**Campaign II: Calliban Rising**  
**KSCAL04 Raven's Curse – Prequel:**  
**Dying Prayer Part One**  
**Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 &**  
**Dying Prayer Part Two**  
**Wednesday, 01<sup>st</sup> June, 2022**

Starday, 7<sup>th</sup> Day of Juin, 726 AR. Preparations abounded for the coming of the exalted Patriarch of Calliban to the town of Tiera. Clothes were mended. Uniforms and real swords were handed out to the new young members of the Watch. Every inch of the town was scrubbed in readiness, flowers and bushes pruned, fences mended and painted, and weeds plucked to make Tiera a place to instil pride in the locals. Inquisitor Reinheit was busy preparing a list of those who would attend the special service to be conducted by his eminence, Jarresh Keryn. Children were warned to behave under the strictest penalties. Reinheit's list was unforgiving, consigning many to maintain a respectable distance for being too rustic, too muddy, smells of onions, odours of turnips, too loud, sickly or pale, too short or tall, sniffles a lot, cries too easily and a whole myriad of innocuous reasons that might upset his efforts to maintain a strict decorum. Three houses in close proximity to the church were painted and refurbished for use by the

Patriarch's contingent, the former occupants quartered elsewhere for the duration of this most profound visit. All was at the ready but Sister Bella Kole, branded as a *witch* by Grand Marshall Bale Thurrow, was still at large. Sheriff Reinheit was tasked to assist the soldiers scouring the region for the young girl's capture. In the interim, he was called to a meeting of the Cabal to discuss the forthcoming visit and to ensure that all members of this sect were on the same page. Inquisitor Malys managed to persuade Reinheit that he would best serve the Cabal and the Patriarch by remaining loyal to both and if he could not find it in his heart to come to terms with all that they did in service to Thyrr, he would be greatly displeased. The Sheriff returned to his duty as Raven Umbra went in search of Sister Kole in an effort to keep her from harm. Ranger Farris also set off towards the periphery of the Maidens to expand the search. While Theodore's efforts proved fruitless, Farris came upon the beleaguered young girl in the process of being captured by four soldiers of Grand Marshall Bale's contingent. He intervened, dispensed with the shackles they were securing her in and took charge of the prisoner, knowing that she would fare better in his company. He took her to Jace Oxwen and had her placed in a cell to await trial, something that would not be conducted until after the Patriarch's visit. Bella was despondent and believed she had been doing Thyrr's work when using her gifts to heal and tend to the Cabal.

The fanfare heralding the arrival of Patriarch Jarresh Keryn could be heard throughout the town of Tiera. If Grand Marshall Bale Thurrow's entourage was

impressive, it was dwarfed by that of Calliban's Pontiff. As the contingent of Soldiers, Priests, Inquisitors, Seraphs and his huge retinue approached, they turned to make way for a rather bland carriage that wound its way into the town and came to a halt outside of Keryn Hall. Bearers swept the road as the Patriarch descended from the carriage. The whole retinue and those gathered bowed before their devout personage. Jarresh Keryn stood a little over six feet in height. His blond streaked hair was cropped tastefully at the shoulder. His piercing blue eyes exuded intelligence and wisdom beyond his years. His flawless skin belied his supposed age. His mouth curved in an unpretentious smile as he stepped passed Grand Marshall Bale to take the hand of Father Horus Black, and then greeted each of the Cabal in turn, ushering them inside while asking the White Judge to remain outside. Two Priests followed him into Keryn Hall carrying a crate, a gift he had brought for... Inquisitor Malys Fortimyr. The Patriarch sat and assumed the head of the table as he conversed openly with his Cabal. He urged Malys to open his gift. The two Priests left and returned again a few moments later, each carrying a sword wrapped in cloth. Malys was surprised when he found the crate contained the armour he had been forced to return to the Repository. The swords were those that had also been found in that dark place. Malys accepted the gift as the Patriarch cast him a telling look. Jarresh Keryn then asked for a muffin with a dash of honey and when Agnes came in to provide this service, he stood up and embraced her declaring that he also had a gift for the Matron. The exchange was subtle but

when he took his hands away from her wrist, the obvious symbol of the Cabal's rune was left behind. Agnes misunderstood and asked for Bella Kole to be forgiven.

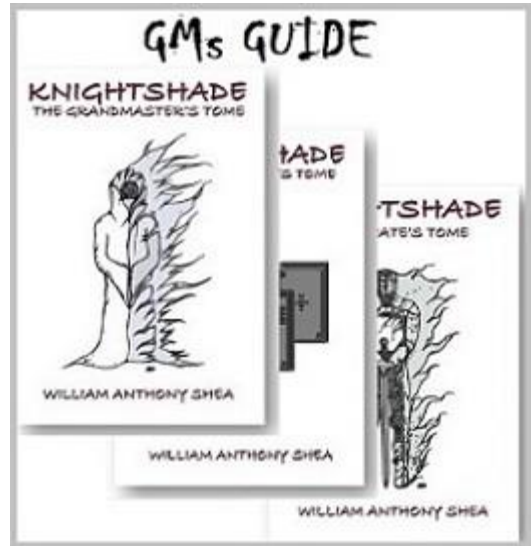
The Patriarch was not what the Cabal expected. He was warm and disarming. He went to lengths to make his subjects comfortable in his presence. In the end, he departed to walk among the people of Tiera, noting to Father Horus that he was so looking forward to his sermon. As he left Keryn Hall, there was a brief exchange between the Patriarch and Grand Marshall Thurrow that left the latter uneasy. He did not follow thereafter.

Later, in the Church of Thyrr, the ceremony was about to begin. The Patriarch took his place to the fore of the pews to the left, an empty seat away from Widow Sadie Kart. The old woman looked much restored and content. The vacant seat stood out. The doors to the church opened once more and Sister Bella Kole was brought to be seated beside the Patriarch. He gestured for the service to begin. Prefect Eckard Pallin spoke briefly before handing proceedings over to Father Horus Black. The Priest gave an excellent sermon followed by the rather bland diatribe of Father Tom Dollandar. Adjutant Father Karis Dale spoke next but even though his words struck a firm cord, it was clear that Father Horus had stolen the show. The Patriarch addressed the people of Tiera and his Cabal and noted that he was looking forward to hearing their confessions. He also spoke of Sister Bella Kole whom he declared an acolyte of Keryn Hall. He noted sternly that those who had laid hands upon the young woman had been severely dealt

with. The soldiers had been executed as a cruel reprimand directed at Grand Marshall Bale Thurrow.

Once proceedings in the church were concluded, the Patriarch met again with the Cabal and noted that they were now charged with further duties as Protectors of the Repository. The Tree of Aleria was no more and in its place stood the monolith entrance to a place that exuded the deific influence of Thyrr. The Cabal had come full circle. This was the divine task for which they were chosen. The sigil that marked each of their wrists was also imparted to Sister Bella Kole. The Cabal were the law in this region and would hitherto report only to the Patriarch in that regard. Grand Marshall Bale Thurrow was dismissed and tasked to return to the territory under his remit. He was not to interfere again in Tiera or with the Cabal.

The Patriarch remained for a short time thereafter, long enough to converse personally with each of those who now resided in Keryn Hall. He shared food and drink and spread an unsettling cheer wherever he roamed. In the end, he departed Tiera leaving the Cabal equally disconcerted by his overtures of amity weighted with menace. Did he really see all? Was Jarresh Keryn the physical personification of Thyrr's will in Calliban and all of Ayre? They were charged to protect the Repository but from what? They were also forbidden to venture into this bastion of unknown arcane lore. For all that they had learned, there were still secrets heaped on secrets within that place. Could they really avoid the temptation of transgressing across the threshold and delving into the teasing truths contained therein? Only time would tell if they were equal to the task.



## HEALING

A Character heals at a rate of one point per day without assistance. With the aid of a competent Healer, this rate is increased to two. Certain magic can assist in enhanced healing and the details are provided in the relevant text. However, it should be noted that no wound can heal at greater than five points per injury per day even with the assistance of Arcane or Divine influences, including the proximity of powerful Rune Stones.

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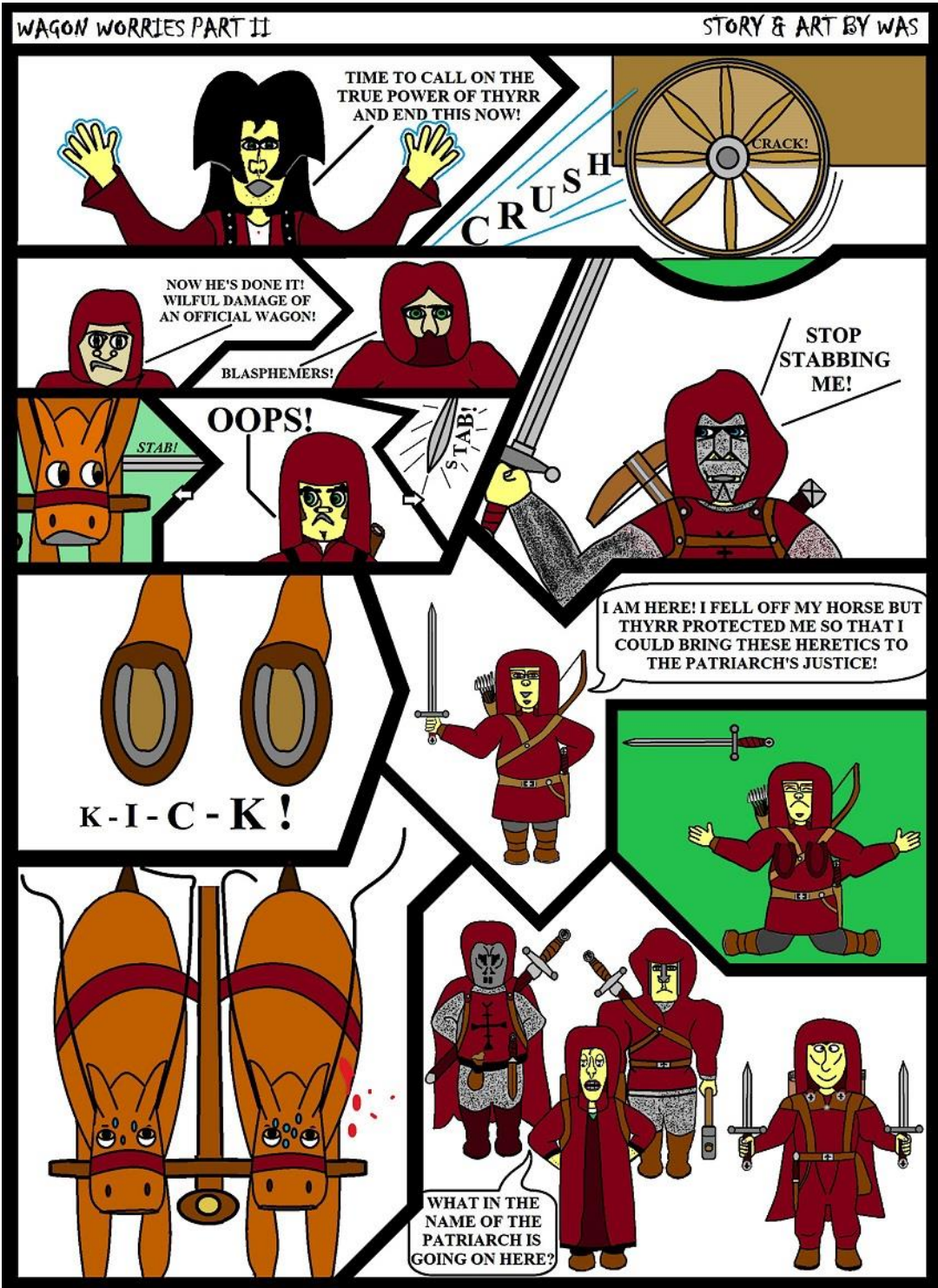
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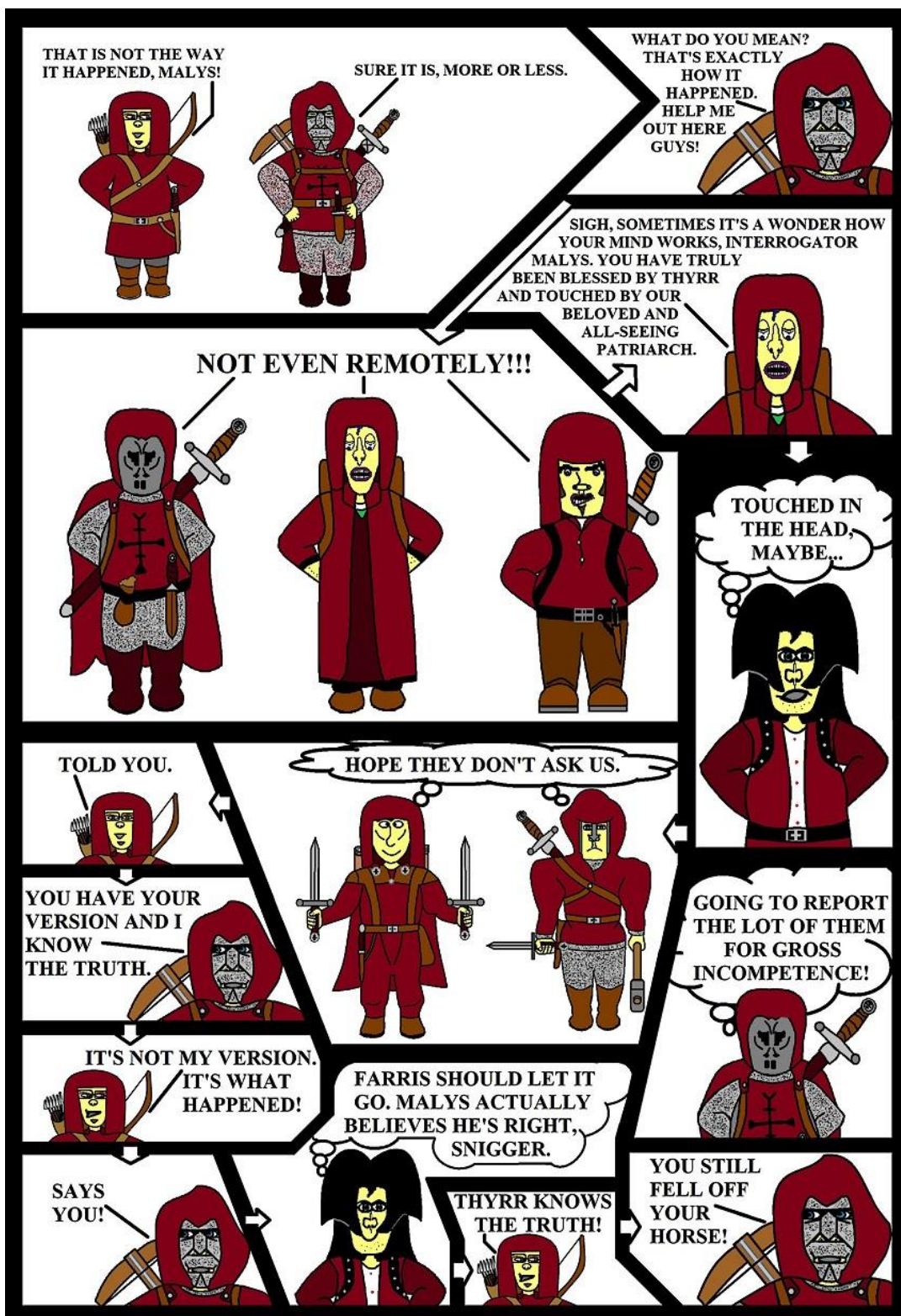
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# SHORT TALES

## WEEPY HULLOWS

**SOMETHING NASTY THIS WAY  
COMES! – Part VI**

**WILLIAM ANTHONY SHEA**

The signs were all there even if no *Hobbo* ever admitted to taking a peek out into the night with the coming of the Santy Claws. Sure, even looking upon his boorish malevolence was said to be enough to bleach skin and set hair follicles to a pattern that inevitably ended in baldness. And yet, how else did the stories do their rounds if no one knew for sure whether the Crimbo fiend was real and not just a convenient robber taking advantage of an equally opportune myth? *Hobbos* often told tall tales and outright lies, but this was somehow different. There was a real cause to be afraid. Santy Claws had been around for as long as anyone could remember and no one could deny the inquisitiveness of those on which he perpetrated his nefarious trade. He was real. Someone had seen him. There was no way in all this time that the unrivalled nosiness of *Hobbos* did not win over the inconvenience of crippling dread that the mere mention of his name brought to the region. The bells added audible chimes of terror to support his coming. The absence of the Crimbo present bags on each of the chimney tops the next morning was another corroborating fact. No one had ever found the doomed Warden Ranger Loostus Againfoot after he brazenly declared he was leaving nothing out for the scandalous fiend

three winters back. His cabin in the woods (nothing scary going on there) had been reduced to a crumbling pile of logs and everyone gave the place a wide berth thereafter. And now the *Hobbo* bois dared not just to deny the Crimbo fiend his due, they were intent on a plan that did not border on genius, it went full flood into the regions of utter insanity.

Kenner and Fosco had very little time to scramble out of the way to be sure that they would not be detected by the slashy, knifey Crimbo fiend. Alas, making it appear that no one had stood on the roof by the chimney took president. The snow had stopped falling and would not conceal their presence. The bells were still distant but Santy was coming and the moments remaining could not be gauged with any certainty. Urgency turned to dread as a sense of self-preservation instilled a modicum of witless reason into proceedings and the *Hobbos* in the line of fire were stirred to risk all.

Fosco rolled frantically about in the snow to flatten away the footprints as if he had suddenly been set alight and desperately needed to put the flames enveloping his body out. Kenner used his hands to do likewise but in the middle of the act he suddenly stood up as if someone had tossed a fistful of snow down his back inside his clothing. The ginger-haired *Hobbo* then began a frantic tearing at his clothes and reached into his tunic to pluck out the offending instrument of his discomfort, brandishing the icy block as if he had been oblivious to its presence on his person. Kenner had the forethought to pack a hot water bottle and place it inside his clothing. He had forgotten that he had

done so a moment after dropping the warm delight strategically into the interior of his winter woolly wonder undershirt. Unfortunately, the water had cooled rapidly in the chill night and was reduced to a block of ice that began to sap away any heat that the *Hobbo* boi had gleaned from the ill-advised implement. Before Fosco could cry out in alarm, Kenner unceremoniously chucked the ice water bottle down the funnel of the chimney with disastrous results. When he saw the full vein-popping rage that consumed his *brood* brother's face, the ginger-haired *Hobbo* let out an audible expulsion of gas that would have floored Fosco if the wind had not offered a timely reprieve. The quiver in Kenner's lips testified to the trembling tremors of fear that wracked his body. The chatter of his teeth was more a consequence of the aforementioned chilly contrivance. Fosco looked at his *brood* brother with murder in his eyes.

The recklessly idiotic deed was done and could not be taken back. In the room below, the others heard the crash and a rush of air expanded the tarp momentarily like a balloon. This startled Jadzia and she turned positively paler than usual. However, while her reaction was somewhat benign, that of her *brood* mates proved less so. Byron and Bobbin erupted into a barrage of attacks on the tarpaulin with solid wooden staves taken from the stables in the interim. They attacked with irresponsible abandon while Snudge shrieked and prodded at the offending bubble with a wholly inadequate spatula as if he were haplessly smoothing the ingredients of a cake and not engaged in attacking a villain of truly ferocious intent. Jadzia shrieked in tune with Snudge as

mayhem ensued. Bobbin and Byron could not gain purchase on anything significant and fell into the tarp dislodging the ties that held it in place. Lomdath frantically tried to restore order to the oily canvas while offering shouts of encouragement to his *brood* mates to '*have at him*' and '*whip his evil ass good*'.

A typical *Hobbo*-like unbridled chaos followed. Fosco had less than a moment to react and yet he looked up into a clear sky full of a myriad of stars like he had become transfixed by a portent of doom. The hair rose on the back of his neck in warning. The feeling turned his stomach as if he had just consumed sour unfiltered milk. Worse, his eyes widened in real fear as signs of a crystalline moonbeam rainbow had begun to form to herald the approach of the ox-driven sleigh of Santy Claws. Soon it would sail across the sky and descend on Weepy Hullows. If Kenner had not concealed himself by then or Fosco remained out in the open, neither would live to see the morn of Crimbo Day. Their flayed corpses would adorn the roof like hapless bloody snow angels with entrails set forth in the portrayal of grisly wicked wings. The demented *Hobbo* choked down his fear and resisted the urge to immediately throttle his ginger-haired counterpart as he launched his body onto the roof in a desperate gamble to reach the ground with haste. He hit the temperamental snow-covered tiles with a grunt of disapproval. Fosco rolled for all he was worth, cascading over the edge of the upper story to fall almost two *Hobbo* heights to the veranda below. He did not halt even when his plummet tore a hole in his breeches and pierced the once

delectable underpants he wore, revealing a protruding patch of black wiry hair that covered the *Hobbo* boi's boorish bottom. There was no time to spare if they were to have any hope of surviving a gamble that would be firmly blamed on him if it failed. Of course, they would all be dead so recriminations hardly mattered unless dear old Bill the benevolent truly had a quirky sense of humour and decided to let them into an afterlife where his *brood* mates could lambast him for an eternity in a purgatory that would feel very much like hell for the demented *Hobbo*. There was an unsettling and sobering thought. Still, Fosco had no choice but to behave like getting out of this alive was possible or there was no escaping a bout of perpetual suffering for more sins than he had any hope of remembering had he been even moderately sane. The demented *Hobbo* kept rolling until he reached the ground despite the penetrating chill that iced his right buttock to a numbness that had hitherto been thought unlikely without a serious infusion of robust raspberry dashed cider coupled stout. The fall was less of a concern at this moment. The alternatives were mounting persuasively in his hopelessly impractical psyche. Thankfully, the buffering snow took the brunt of the impacts and cushioned him enough to stand. However, he was not quite right. The dizzy spell that ensued overwhelmed his balance and he staggered forward like someone drunk out of his skull. If Fosco had been senselessly inebriated he might not have cared enough to acknowledge a glaringly annoying survival instinct that took the fun out of his wooziness. There was a fleeting moment when he thought to run away and let

his *brood* mates bear the brunt of any reprisal. He was in no fit state to comprehend a reasonable path out of here let alone a direction in which to flee. The inclination was swallowed by a surge of emotion that might have been attributed to the churning of his stomach contents. The burrow beckoned. Twice he hit the wall on either side of the door and poised with fists raised to retaliate against an offender that was not there. Twice more he stumbled before managing to focus on the one in the middle (he saw three doors) and erupted into the parlour to cry out in shrieking alarm that made one question just where the brunt of the blows had occurred on his downward spiral.

Fosco steadied his voice as he reached for the nearest wall to do the same for his beleaguered sense of balance.

'For the heck of Bill, Stop thrashing the tarp!' he bellowed in deeper tones more in keeping with his natural gravel-like voice. 'He's not in there yet!' roared Fosco when they did not respond.

Byron was utterly red-faced from the exertion. The sweat pouring out of his head had smoothed and subdued his vivacious curls under the watery distress but the beads still flushed his skin in rivulets of uneasiness. Bobbin had become tangled in the folds of the tarp. He had in essence strait-jacketed himself into a worrisome welter that he could not escape without assistance. Snudge had eyes full of tears as the hopelessness of their plight sent pangs of panic through his whole being that would not save him from this disastrous fate even if he gave up all he had to stave off his inevitable cruel culling by the villain, Santy. Lomdath furiously employed every frantic present-wrapping wit he

had in trying to secure the tarpaulin with unfashionably crude knots that were more in keeping with what was needed given the situation. He had not noticed that one of his careless loops only added to Bobbin's miseries as it curled about the woefully wrangled *Hobbo* boi and strangled every attempt he made to cry out for assistance. He was quite literally tongue-tied in a knot of bristly hemp that raked his protruding muscular mouth organ with its rasp-like restriction. Jadzia looked livid with the lot of them, her peeved gaze possibly capable of turning stone to wisps of terrified sand or imbuing an inanimate object with the motion of life so that it could scurry away. Fosco had no time to give into any further horror to add to his already overwhelmed sliver of reason.

'He's coming!' cried out a terrified voice from above.

Fosco groaned and called out to Kenner in a shared panic that was already thumping his heart like a thundering quake of tempestuous pomposity under the weight of his struggle to be responsible enough to care for his *brood* mate. He could not hold on to this unbearable emotional distress that bordered on *touchy-feely* affection without lasting harm. He would vehemently deny any accusation that he persevered under this crippling distress because he was fond of Kenner if they lived long enough to quibble about such preposterous matters. If the ginger-haired *Hobbo* was dumb enough to die up there, well... Fosco shuddered at the thought.

'Get into hiding or he'll slice and dice you into little ginger pieces!' he bawled.

The moment was here and nothing could save them now if the plan went

awry. Right now, there was little to encourage the demented *Hobbo* that he had made a very grave mistake. He should have given into his first instinct and stolen one of the presents from the roofs of *Weepy Hullows*. If he had not seen the tarpaulin covering Reggie's stables he might well have committed that unscrupulous act of thievery. The devilish plan had come to him out there in the cold like a tip of Bill's thought whip had hit him on the noggin to turn the demented *Hobbo* from a path that now seemed surer in its uncomplicated indolence.

Lomdath unravelled Bobbin from the tarp. Byron gulped down a fitful jug of ale to calm his heart. Snudge produced a delightfully white cotton hanky and dabbed his eyes before holding it firmly to his nose to blow a snotty expulsion of distressed nostril stuffiness outward to render the cloth tainted beyond any hope of recovery. He discarded the accessory in a waste bucket as if it no longer mattered. Jadzia fixed her hair, set a colour to her lips and let out a sigh as she picked up an ample cleaver to ready herself for murder. Fosco had recovered his sanctimoniously sarcastic symmetry and picked up Bobbin's discarded stave with intent. He tossed it to his speech-impaired *brood* mate as he tested the weight of Jadzia's heavy iron pan and took up his position in waiting. They might not be ready for what was to come but any chance was better than none. If it all went horribly wrong, at least they would die together... except for poor gullible Kenner Gingerfoot – he would die first, and alone, out there in the cold...

**NEXT ISSUE: WEEPY HULLOWS**  
**SOMETHING NASTY THIS WAY COMES! – PART VII**  
**WILLIAM ANTHONY SHEA**



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All events in the game year 2022-2023 will be subject to change without notice. The details provided are correct at the time of publication.

## NEXTCON

As noted in FN43, there is nothing set in stone for Next-Con but UK Games Expo 2023 and a return to Birmingham is currently the forerunner with three votes. However, the final decision is up to those who are most likely to attend. With that in mind, please note any preferences to the Seneschal so that your voice may be heard. Please copy the details below and tick the required boxes or fill in the blanks where necessary or just forward your preferences.

### Where to go?

- Birmingham** ☐
- Edinburgh ☐
- Frankfurt ☐
- Liverpool ☐
- Manchester ☐
- Munich ☐
- Newcastle ☐
- Don't care ☐

### Should there be fewer Alcohol-based venues/activities?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- Don't care ☐

### Should there be more than one Cinema Event?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- Don't care ☐

### Should KOMY provide funds for the event instead of hosting KennelCon?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- Don't care ☐

### Should NextCon be abandoned as an Event for KOMY?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- Don't care ☐

### What month in the year is best to host NextCon?

- Specify ☐
- Don't care ☐

### Should KOMY Events be restricted to Members Only?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- Don't care ☐

### How many days should attendance at an Event be limited to?

- 1 ☐
- 2 ☐
- 3 ☐
- 4 ☐
- 5 or more ☐
- Don't care ☐

And so it begins – Details of NextCon will be provided in FN45 Fumble Issue Forty-Five.



Local gaming and comic shops need your support in this very trying time. Below is a reminder of some of the stores in Cork that need your business. Please practice all necessary COVID-19 safety measures when visiting these locations. Cork spent a long time with little or no gaming outlets. Support our own – shop local where possible.

### COMIC VAULT

15A Oliver Plunkett Street Lower, Cork, T12 DP86

### OTHER REALMS

Unit 1, Paul St. Shopping Centre, Cork

### SANDBOX

Unity House, Lower Glanmire Rd, Victorian Quarter, Cork

### WARHAMMER

Unit 1, 2 St Patrick's Quay, Victorian Quarter, Cork, T23 CY5X

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# KNIGHTSHADE

## THE ROLE PLAYING GAME (RPG)

KST01: The Initiate's Tome – Released!

KST02: The Grandmaster's Tome – Released!

KST03: The Loremaster's Tome – Released!

KST04: The Questmaster's Tome – NYR#

KSTCAL01: The Initiate's Tome: Calliban Edition – NYR#

KSCAL01: Calliban Rising: Eye of the Patriarch – NYR#

The Loremaster's Tome is a Handbook or Guide to the Land of Ayre, the Campaign World in Knightshade the Role Playing Game. This book includes all the necessary details to play in that world, outlining every country and region of note. Included are new Talents, additional rules, major political influences, and detailed maps to enrich the Role Playing experience.

BDP ID: KST03LOREMASTERBDP02

## KNIGHTSHADE THE LOREMASTER'S TOME



WILLIAM ANTHONY SHEA



# THE KNIGHTS OF MISSPENT YOUTH

## Seneschal's Declaration



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year, I do hope that Santa brings you lots of cheer. Enjoy the holidays and embrace the fun but be careful out there. The weather is likely to have taken a turn for the worst and this will see me heading to far-off places to embrace a little rest and recuperation with the hint of a sunrise that holds just enough warmth to satisfy these weary old bones.

The games will be back in the New Year and January may yet bring a physical return to WarpCon in University College Cork (U.C.C.), something that I am personally looking forward to as the hint of normality returns to a world that still requires some measures of care to keep those who are vulnerable and those we love safe. COVID-19 has not gone away and to behave otherwise is to invite the illness in. As such, the measures used to protect the Kennel from any such occurrence will remain in play. If you feel under the weather, do not attend the physical game.

At the time of writing this column, Birmingham UK and a return to UK Games Expo seems to be the forerunner in our bid to find a venue suitable for a Knights of Misspent Youth gathering that will be marked by a number of our Knights reaching a milestone age. How time flies. So many games have been played over the intervening years but it still seems like only yesterday that some of our younger members came into the group. I am sure that no matter where

we end up in 2023, the occasion(s) will be marked well by all. One word of caution, the location of NextCon will be dependent on the availability of flights and accommodation. While this will be largely dictated by the Cork contingent, the inclusion of a survey in FN43 & FN44 has been provided so that the voices of our members can be heard. If you do not specify preferences, then there can be no complaints thereafter.

Once again, I must stress that the Club Fund is being supplemented by the few. KOMY does not run on good-will alone and if the required fund minimums are not met, there will be no KennelCon in 2023. This is currently scheduled for September when the next Seneschal will take over the daily running of the club. If you are interested in this position, you must let the current Seneschal know before the end of June 2023. This must be submitted in writing and not as part of a casual conversation in some pub over a few drinks that is likely to impact memory. As noted many times before – be sure that you want to take on the work.

Happy Birthday to those KOMY members who celebrated a milestone thus far in our current game year.

No Game Calendar has been included in this issue of Fumble Newszine but the schedule is available online through our KOMY Facebook Group Page.

**SENESCHAL: WILLIAM OF SHEA**

# *COMING*

## *NEXT ISSUE*

### *FEBRUARY 2023*

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#### **ILLUSTRATED**

*ANATOMY OF A RUST MONSTER PART ONE*  
WAS

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#### **SHORT TALES**

WEEPY HULLOWS  
*SOMETHING NASTY THIS WAY COMES PART VII*  
William Anthony Shea

\*

#### **INNER CIRCLE**

Game updates from the Knights of Misspent Youth

\*

#### **CONVENTION CUBE**

*KOMY'S CONVENTIONS*  
Conventions and Events

\*

#### **THE GMs GUIDE**

*BDP's RPGs*  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

\*

#### **DEAR FUMBLE**

*CONTACT US*  
Letters from our readers & Notices

\*

#### **THE SENESCHAL'S DECLARATION**

*SIR WILLIAM*  
Words of wisdom from the Seneschal of the Knights of Misspent Youth

