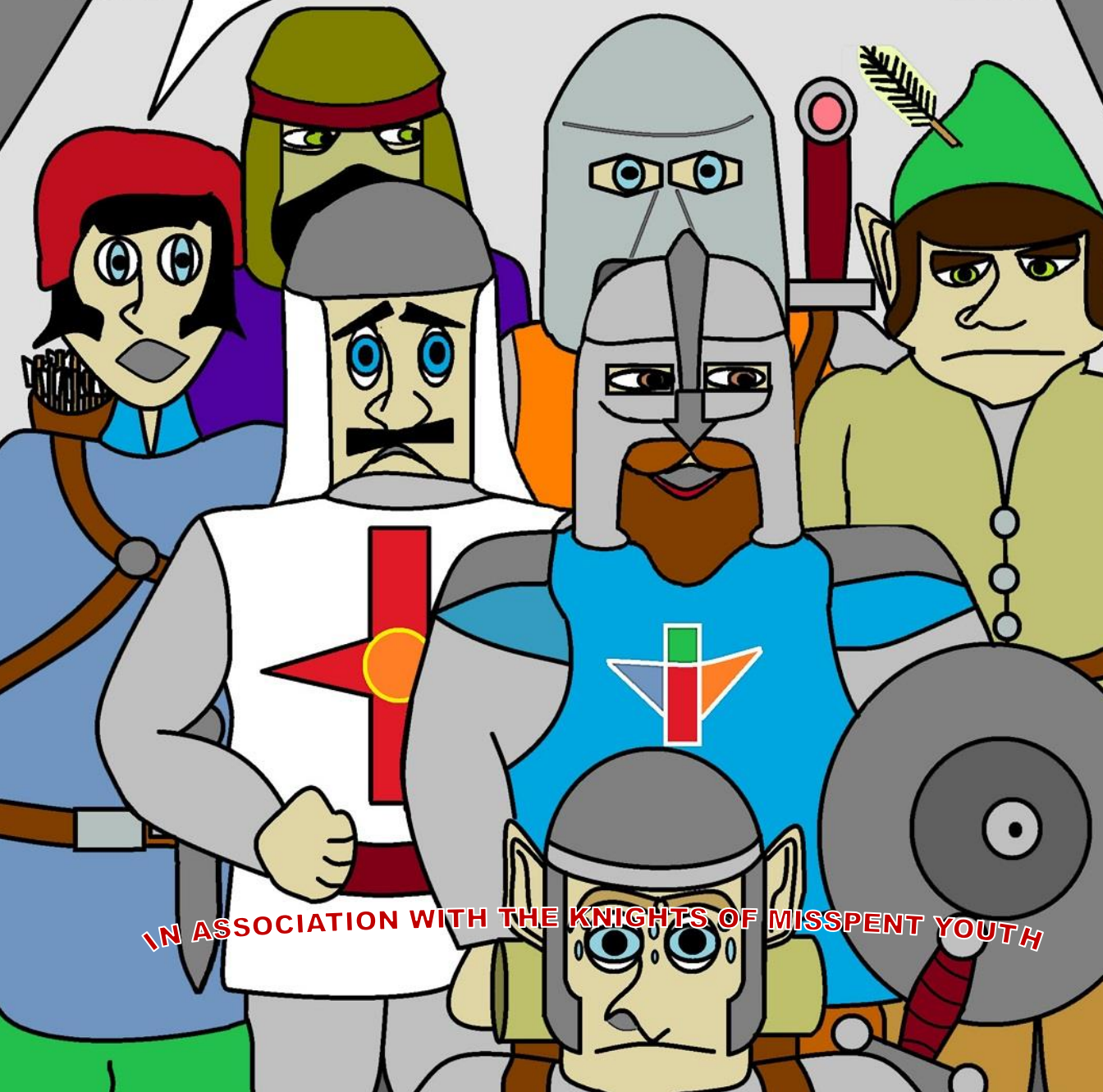


FUMBLE 45

NEWSZINE

FEBRUARY 2023

WHY ARE WE RUNNING AWAY FROM RUST MONSTERS?



IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE KNIGHTS OF MISSPENT YOUTH



I hope you all had a good year thus far. January can be such a dismal month. February is somewhat better for those who have found love. For everyone else, you have to make the best of life. There are many moments in between that can be a cause for encouragement. Playing the games we love can be some of those that offer cheer on the darkest nights following gloomy days. The weather may be fickle but when precipitation prevails or the cold remains persistent, you can always use these elements to add ambience to your games. Alas, if you, like so many others, are feeling the pinch of the soaring costs of inflation, there may be little to be cheerful about. Still, try to embrace the games, revel in moments of fantasy and gather for mutual warmth and friendship. If nothing else, this will help to pass the time until something better comes along or the weather improves. Meanwhile, you can spend a little time reading this Newszine or catching up with friends on those moments in past games when the world seemed truly a

better place.

2023 promises to be a better year with the return of physical conventions. While many were forced to take the route of a digital offering, others were halted completely by the pandemic. The return of WarpCon in U.C.C. in January and UK Games Expo in NEC Birmingham is a good sign, the latter of which returned in previous years under tighter restrictions.

Master Sage

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Original D&D In Search of the Unknown: Part 0 Wednesday, 21st September 2022

A Character squirrelled away on a shelf or retired because of a Player's unhealthy attachment to same will never know the glory of the old days. A legend in his 'own' mind misses out on living a full life in the here and now. Even with the possibility that a Player's beloved Character might be short-lived, isn't it worth the gamble to saddle up one last time and embrace the adventure?

Some, if not all of the companions, have gathered, but where is the infamous, Tubby Bluebeard? He's probably scowling at the prospect of life being too hard out there to risk death or grievous injury. His self-indulgent myth will

continue to gather dust while others take up the challenge of facing the unknown out there in a world that offers up true adventure. One wonders what happened to the renowned ponce, *Elven* – frolicking with his stolen Pegasi no doubt.

The story begins at the entrance to the fallen bastion of the infamous Fighter, Roghan and Mage, Zelliger. This is a tale that encompasses facets of Module B1: In Search of the Unknown which will mark the beginning of an Original D&D Campaign to explore the past by delving into some modified classic adventures.

And so it began, as the adventurers set up camp at the base of a mountainous slope close to the entrance to the former bastion of Roghan and Zelligar. The dark, gaping maw that marked the entryway beckoned but the party knew that this was not a time to become complacent. This was only the start of an expedition that could conceivably take several weeks.

A large pavilion tent was erected. An impressive fire pit was prepared. Provisions and equipment were unpacked and set conveniently in place. Weapons were cleaned and set aside for use. Bedrolls were unfurled and each of those present marked his place within the huge canopy of the tent. When all was settled into place, the time had come to reflect on why they were here.

This expedition into the unknown had been financed by the Lords of Jarus – Jestist Hawk and Chaerus Lovarian, known far and wide as '*the Destroyers*'. The Lords reside many leagues to the south beyond the mountains of Mistamere in a fertile valley of rivers and vast forestland amidst a wholly thriving and

hospitable community of cultural diversity. This openness is due in no small part to the Lords of Jarus who came to the idyllic region almost 60 years ago and colonised the land in the wake of the destruction of their former home.

And so the adventurers gathered... Alnon (Fighter), Alton (Thief), Be-Low (Magic-user), Burt (Fighter), Cookie (Halfling), Fleetwood (Fighter), Greegan (Thief), Ken (Cleric), Mendle (Fighter), Oakey (Halfling), Sûe (Elf) and Thorm (Dwarf).

Original D&D

In Search of the Unknown: Part 1 Wednesday, 28th September 2022

Deep in the wilderness, the ambiguously motivated adventurers Roghan and Zelligar constructed their stronghold Quasqueton. Rumoured to have been hewn from the rock by their servants and orc slaves, it served as their holdfast for many years. It is said they perished in a great battle with barbarians over the mountains. Some believe that they fell victim to the great destruction enacted by the Lords of Jarus nearly 60 years ago. However, it came about, now their stronghold lies open, ripe for the picking. Dare ye enter?

Down on their luck, newly raised, gained a bit of tavern weight, or perhaps the legend waned and not even the Stable Boy knows the names of the Characters now, let alone the exploits for which they became famous or infamous. When a rare opportunity came along in the guise of the Lords of Jarus, the chance to shine and gain some worth and a little notoriety could not be passed up. This might be their last chance to carve out a little respect before fading into a hapless footnote in a history that

promises obscurity with the passing of each day.

The partially concealed passage into the entrance of Quasqueton was 10 feet wide and 15 feet high, characteristics that would prove prevalent throughout this fallen bastion carved into the mountain. The stone was grey and solid with little to betray anything else. A short way in, the party came upon the desiccated remains of what might have once been an Orc. Examining the body provided a startling insight. The bones crumbled to dust, the fragments of clothing reacting similarly to any touch. Something had quite literally removed every trace of moisture from this fallen guard. His positioning when he fell implied that he had been running away towards Quasqueton.

The party found a solid door, marking the entrance proper, 60 feet from the opening. The door seemed to be made from a durable hardwood but the handle (placed on the right about midway) seemed to be of an unusual metal or it had been coated in something that could not be recognised. Listening, checking for traps and searching all around the door proved fruitless. Alton and Greegan worked to unlock the door. As it would prove with the majority of doors, this one opened inward and to the left. Stale air greeted the party, but also a troubling revelation – the floors, walls and ceilings of Quasqueton were remarkably clean, devoid of any debris or living remnants of moss, weeds, insects or any other signs of decay. The air was chill but not overly so. The passage beckoned as the darkness retreated before the advancing light of the party's torches and lanterns.

Further in, two hidden magic mouths

appeared within the recesses of opposing alcoves. The east mouth stated: 'Who dares enter this place to intrude upon the sanctuary of its inhabitants?' After but a moment, and drowning out any attempted response by the party, came the reply from the west mouth: 'Only a group of foolhardy explorers doomed to certain death!' Then both mouths shouted in unison: 'Woe to any who pass into this place – the wrath of Zelligar and Roghan will be upon them!' The mouths end this one-sided dialogue with loud and raucous laughter, which faded in intensity as they disappeared from view. They proved a permanent feature of the stronghold and reappeared each time the party passed this point.

As if in response to the noise created by the magic mouths, the stirrings of something moving in the dark drew the attention of the party. They pushed on to find the desiccated remains of five bodies, now little more than brittle bones and time-worn rags. No metal objects could be found on the bodies. Soon, the reason behind the absence of anything metallic became obvious – Rust Monsters! No one said there would be RUST MONSTERS! The party retreated in the face of this dangerous enemy, fearing for their armour, swords and anything even remotely metal. The scurrying in the dark became more obvious as these fiends from the depths were drawn to the items worn by the party, and there ended the opening encounter – not with a heroic advance but in full flight!

Original D&D

In Search of the Unknown: Part 2 Wednesday, 05th October 2022

Why would the party run from Rust

Monsters? Yes, there were quite a few in this place but still... heroes don't run away. Spurred on by the shame of having backed off from this threat, the party worked to surround the Rusties and clear the way. Alas, these creatures had other ideas and a battle ensued that resulted in the loss of two breastplates and a little dignity, the former from Alton and Ken. A slaughter ensued as the Cleric realised that many of the Rust Monsters were little more than hatchlings. Greegan took particular delight in skewering a curious youngling who merely peeked out of a nearby burrow. The true horror was to follow as the party gathered up the remains of Rusties and sent them out to the campsite to be used as rations and utensils by Cookie. Cleric Ken could hardly contain his nausea. After a short search followed by a rest and some sustenance for those who could stomach the food, the party pressed on. North led to two rooms that proved troublesome for the party as a green spore seemed to cover everything in the areas searched. Alton and Greegan led the way south again, back towards the entrance to Quasqueton in an adjacent passage that showed promise until they came upon an obstacle – the way was trapped. A pressure plate on the passage floor was set to dislodge a large stone block from above. However, given the dimensions of the passage, and in particular, its height, both Alton and Greegan believed that if the block was triggered, it would not prevent the party from continuing as it would leave a 5-foot gap at the top to climb over. The party dislodged the block by using the weight of two dead Rust Monsters to trigger the trap resulting in an unsettling squishing and an equally disturbing

splatter. One by one, the party were hoisted up and passed over the five-foot gap at the top. Oakey went last because he had Boots of Levitation and provided a shoulder stool for his penultimate companion to gain a bit of extra height. With the trap sprung, passages cleared of Rust Monsters, the way ahead beckoned... does a Rust Monster taste like chicken?

Original D&D

In Search of the Unknown Part 3 Wednesday, 19th October 2022

Beyond the block, the passage stretched to the west but nothing barred the way of the party until the path turned north again. While Greegan and Alton detected nothing unusual about the passage, Cleric Ken called upon his divine power to be sure. He detected a glow ahead that warned him of danger. There was another block trap but a short distance beyond this point a curious lever protruded from the wall. Oakey used his Boots of Levitation to traverse the trap safely and elected to pull the lever. This locked the nearest block in place but activated another trap behind the party in the west passage that they had already come through. The party pressed onward until the passage veered off and curved westward before turning east. Oakey detected a strange faintly glowing red crystal embedded in the wall. The air became stale but it was tainted with an odour of death. Sûe and Greegan moved to investigate. While the Elf did not feel anything untoward, the human Thief detected signs that he was ageing unnaturally and retreated. Sûe had a longer lifespan and did not feel any immediate effects but he too withdrew. Oakey used his Hammer of

Returning to smash the crystal rendering it inert after a flash of eerie light retreated away from the party. Pressing on a short distance beyond the curving passage, the party came upon the possible source of the nauseous odour – an immense Gelatinous Cube wedged in the passage as it turned north. The creature appeared to be dead. After some deliberation, the party poked at the unresponsive Cube until its innards trickled outward to form a pool of acidic goo that looked dangerous. Sûe cautioned the party to withdraw as he enacted the spell, Fireball, and assaulted the dead creature's remains with mystical fire. The party were forced to retreat for a time as the flames caused a gaseous cloud to fill the corridor. They withdrew to safer ground until the potentially fatal haze had dissipated but not before Fleetwood recovered an enchanted Heartshield.

Original D&D

In Search of the Unknown Part 4 Wednesday, 26th October 2022

With almost half the monstrous dead Gelatinous Cube cleared from the corridor, a door was revealed to the right of the passage. Oakey saw what appeared to be a wider passage veering off to the left through the murky mass of the creature. Sûe Cashtus withdrew to check the passages behind them. Alnon Cirois returned to the camp to rest after a lengthy exertion of clearing the way. Fleetwood, Oakey, Alton, Greegan, Ken & Be-low pushed on. Unlocking the door revealed eight decrepit Skeletons of Kobolds and Orcs. Their armour and weapons looked to be amazingly preserved but the animated creatures appeared to be less so. They succumbed quickly to the party.

Another door revealed an immense table but there was something off about this seemingly harmless piece of furniture. While Oakey pondered on how such a large table could have been placed in the room, Greegan ventured forth to check it out only to be attacked by what appeared to be a demented undead magic carpet that nearly cost him an arm. Something was wholly wrong here in Quasqueton. Other than the Rust Monsters, everything else appeared to be dead and monstrously disproportioned. The table proved to be an undead Mimic, fed on by a demented magic carpet that survived by draining the moisture over decades from the creature to which it had become attached. The party destroyed the carpet and the Mimic. Cleric Ken healed Greegan and the party moved on in the only direction available to them as the monstrous dead Gelatinous Cube made taking the other route impossible. Alas, the next chamber proved equally taxing as the party unleashed the remains of what appeared to be an undead Owlbear, now little more than a brittle skeleton but no less deadly in its intent. Defeating the creature led to another injury for Greegan. They pressed on, traversing the passage north when Cleric Ken detected something amiss with the corridor. Another trap presented itself and Oakey moved to investigate using his Boots of Levitation. He found the source, another pressure plate, but it seemed to linger beneath a dark recess in the ceiling that held a black mass rather than a stone block. Oakey reached out but thought better of poking the unknown. The party took the large Mimic table from one of the previous rooms and set it across the passage to prevent any possibility of

triggering the trap. This seemed to work but crossing over the table felt wrong as the supposedly hard surface appeared spongy.

Sûe backtracked down the way they had come to ensure that nothing was following the party. He had a feeling like they were being watched ever since his experience with the life-stealing gem embedded in the wall.

Further down, the passage continued but also spurred off to the east. Cleric Ken became unsettled as he peered into this corridor at what seemed to be a door concealed in the dead-end wall. There was a marking on the hidden entrance – a symbol that the Cleric failed to recognise as *'Faithless'*. However, seeing it gave him a peculiar feeling as Greegan insisted they ignore the side passage and move on. The next door proved equally troublesome and would not yield to lockpicking without some effort. Inside the chamber, the party found a golden chest, though they were confused as Cleric Ken stated there was nothing in the room. Even after unlocking the chest and revealing its contents, an act that triggered a pin trap that pierced Greegan's finger, he was unconvinced. Showing him the gold only made him more confused. The chest had a false bottom in which rested a large vial of a bluish liquid and three scrolls. Be-low gathered up the scrolls as the Cleric took the vial. The gold and the chest appeared to be covered in yellowish dust which for some strange reason, Greegan elected to taste test. It seemed to have no ill effect. Returning to the previous corridor, the Thieves worked to open the concealed door to reveal a wall of endless darkness. Three feet into the dark corridor could be seen

but only in a short curvature – just enough room for someone to stand inside the door without touching the darkness when it closed. When a torch was thrown into the corridor, it disappeared into the darkness and no noise emanated from within.

Cleric Ken Heine was still affected by the emblem for the *'Faithless'* but it seemed limited to his perception. He could only see the Gold Chest when it was taken from the room and the coins when they were passed into the possession of the group. Only the Cleric seemed to be affected by the *'Faithless'* rune, though both of the Thieves did notice something unusual about the door. Below the Magic-User also noted the rune as something peculiar but it did not affect him which implied it may be divine in nature. The party continued onwards, shutting the concealed door rather than risk entering the dark and silent passage beyond. Greegan withdrew to find Sûe rather than advancing with the party. The others pushed on. Turning into a west passage, they came upon a curious mound of rock debris that revealed a large gaping hole in the wall and floor that descended into the depths of Quasqueton. Oakey used his Levitation to investigate but withdrew from the hole as it seemed to spark something in the depths. The party had disturbed something below.

Original D&D

In Search of the Unknown Part 5 Wednesday, 09th November 2022

So... ambushed by a giant Purple Worm. The party split as Greegan and Sûe found themselves on the wrong side of the monstrous creature. Sûe cast the spell, Fireball, only to cause a bigger

poisonous gaseous cloud to fill the surrounding corridors. Sûe and Greegan were forced to run. On the other side, the party had managed to reach a temporary save room in the hopes that the Purple Worm might withdraw. Alas, there was little chance of that happening. A battle ensued as Oakey heroically saved Alton from certain death when the Fighter collapsed in a puddle of his own drool, dead if not for the 6D8+6 healing potion that Cleric Ken recklessly poured down his gob to save him. The corridor was blocked from ceiling to floor for 50 feet by the Worm's carcase and there was only one way forward from here. One would think this was the DM's plan all along...

Original D&D

In Search of the Unknown Part 6 Wednesday, 16th November 2022

The party on the far side of the Purple Worm came upon an ornate door unlike any seen in Quasqueton before now. This door had a strange combination lock that required someone to put their hand into the circular recess in the middle of the door and turn the handle – left or right? Oakey elected to take up the challenge and turned the lock left. The door yielded as it pushed inward. The sight that greeted the party was wholly disturbing. An armoured humanoid form was trapped in a necrotic Green Slime and stretched in place across the room by his extremities. The Slime had invaded every aspect of the ornately armoured desiccated human. The prisoner lifted its head and pleaded: 'Kill... kill me now!' The party acquiesced to his wishes and destroyed the necrotic Slime freeing this tormented soul from his terrible fate. They took the armour

and the prisoner's equally ornate dagger and a curious sword hilt marked with an Elvish rune that no one here could read. Oakey also removed a ring with a blue stone from the dead man's finger. Pressing onwards in the hopes of rejoining Greegan and Sûe as well as finding their way back to camp, Cleric Ken detected a trapped passage with a stone block. Oakey ventured forth and found a lever but another life-draining blue crystal that seemed to have no ill effect on him but it made the ring he had in his possession glow. The lever negated the block trap here but activated a terrible spiked pit trap just ahead of the party. This was easily traversed with Oakey's Levitation Boots and a little patience. The party quickly figured out the blue stone ring afforded protection to the wearer and anyone in close proximity to him and that the blue crystal was life-giving. A twist and turn lead to a grotesque demon-like stature with a gaping maw guarding a passage and a door that led into darkness and silence. Alton braved the strange chamber. Therein he found two magical bands tucked safely away in circular recesses at either end of this darkened vault, left there to tantalise a thief to don the duo to save his life. Alton quickly found out that he could not leave the vault without blindly accepting the bracers.

Meanwhile, Sûe and Greegan returned to the camp only to find it in trouble! The long night was only beginning...

Original D&D

In Search of the Unknown Part 7 Wednesday, 23rd November 2022

Venturing onward the party found another block trap and came upon a Giant Undead Rat drooling an icky black

slime as they traversed passages constructed by a madman - what secret lay beyond the hidden door on the wider inclined passage? Another combination lock proved troublesome but not overly as the wall pushed inward to reveal a curious secret room – could this be the vault of Roghan and Zelliger?

Original D&D

In Search of the Unknown Part 8 Wednesday, 30th November 2022

So more darkness, a bit of glue sniffing, a pair of jugs, some construction equipment and... a Mirror Vault. Alton descended into the unknown through the mirror as he dropped 200 feet into a chamber of horror where a sarcophagus rested on a raised dais secured with 12 ornate and rune-marked metal spikes. Alas, the Thief had to climb out and seek clarification and recover a circular stone that was needed to open the coffin. He found that each time he passed back into the mirror the way was impeded by advancing serrated metal spikes protruding from the walls and his progress was unnaturally slowed. In the end, he released a mummified corpse, gathered up the ritual pitons that secured the sarcophagus and exited the mirror prison. As he contemplated his good fortune, the mummified corpse began to stir to life when it was removed from the depths below. The body inside the bandages did not feel like a corpse but more supple – like a living being. The mirror had become inert. There was no turning back. What could possibly go wrong? Ah, darkness, pits, eerie spike-filled descents into the... unknown. There's no better love than D&D love...

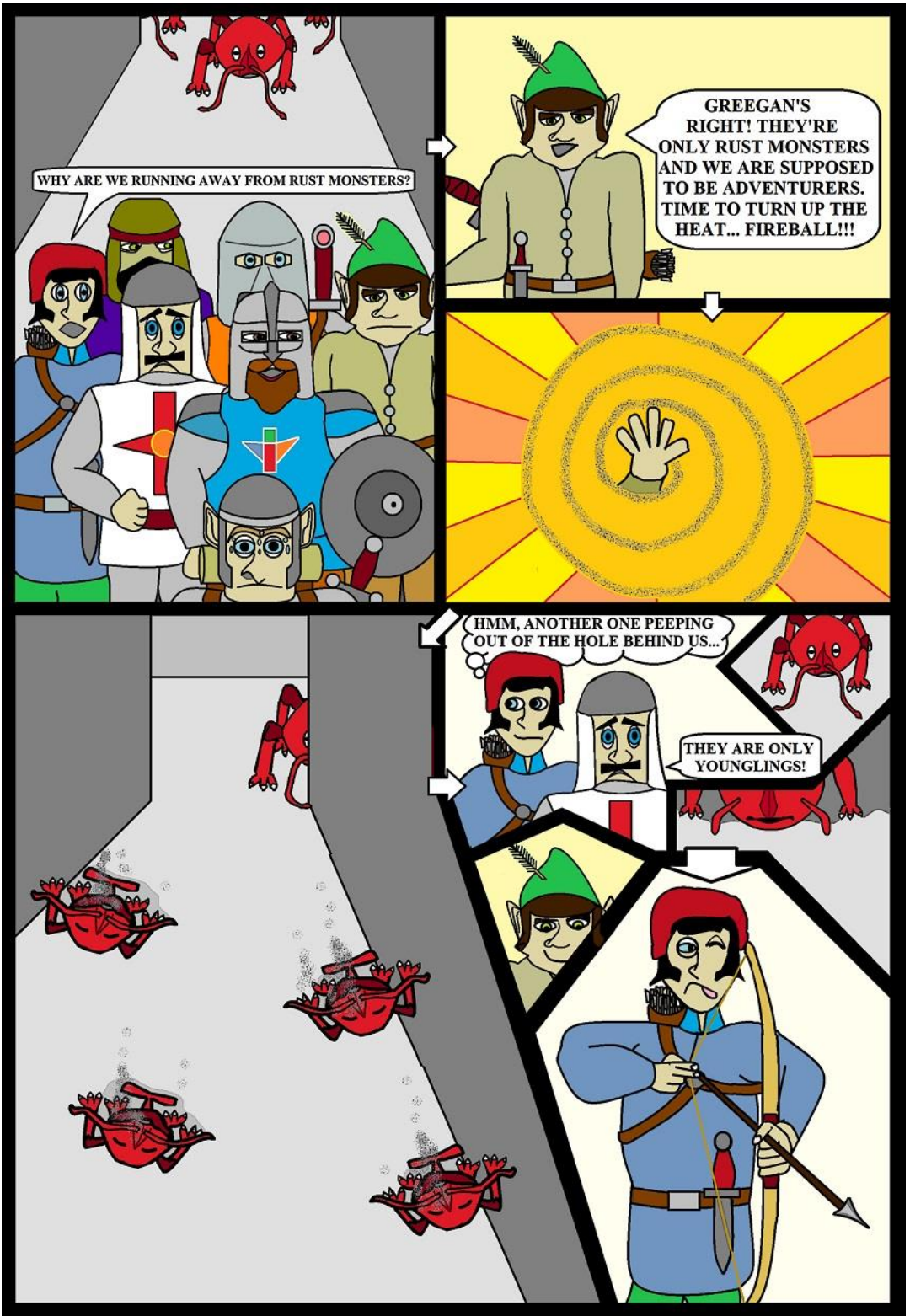
Original D&D updates will continue in FN46 Fumble Issue Forty-Six due out in May 2023.

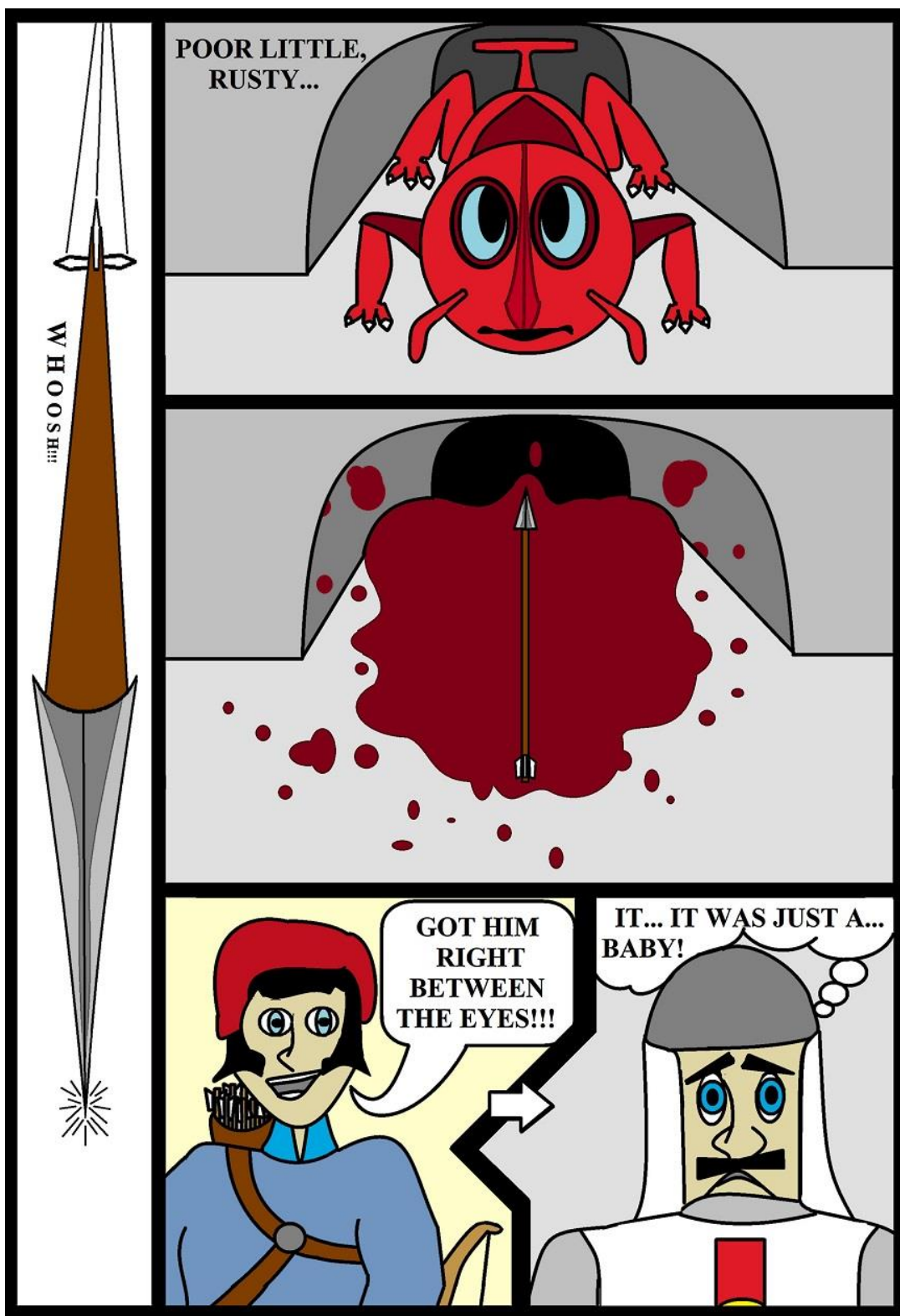
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ANATOMY OF A RUST MONSTER

WAS







SHORT TALES

WEEPY HULLOWS

SOMETHING NASTY THIS WAY COMES!

Part VII – Finale!

WILLIAM ANTHONY SHEA

Snow is falling, all around me, blood is weeping from my eyes, children crying and someone screaming. *Hobbos* dying in the night... and now the fun really begins!

There was nothing left to say as a hush fell over the parlour. The Crimbo fiend was coming. He might very well already be here already and taking his time in devouring poor Kenner Gingerfoot, but then they would hear their *brood* brother's piteous cries, wouldn't they? Santy was after all a slicey, dicey 'C U next Thirstday' kind of fecker and not known for the subtleties of verbal intercourse when murder would suffice in getting his homicidal *less-than-happy* holiday point across. The silence was not an endorsement that an absence of mayhem existed. Kenner was cerebrally precious and might not even have the sense to cry out until it was too late. He had become inured to the vagaries of overzealous physical tomfoolery and been tempered in daring digs, thundering thumps, whacking wallops and the occasional kick in the knackers when the boisterous fun took a turn that ended in bruises, cuts and when things got truly out of hand... a broken bone or two. If he perceived Santy's violence as some sort of excessive foreplay then the only evidence of any duress might just be reduced to murmurings of disquiet carelessly lost on the tempestuous gales buffeting the burrow. The ginger-haired

Hobbo was no stranger to conflicts resulting in physical duress. And yet, the silence was something to fear. Right now, waiting seemed the hardest, but very soon this might be the least fatal time of the night. A deafening quiet had spread out over all of *Weepy Hullows*. Everyone was quiet and there wasn't as much as a squeak from a mouse or a soft snore to upset the eerie hush that had cast a blanket of terror over the whole region. When the sounds did come, they were not a relief. Even the most regular resonances stirred the *Hobbo* hearts to greater anxiety. There was a solace to be taken from the fact that the noxious Kenner was cast in the role of a hidden popsicle and not here to unleash an odour of intestinal distress on his *brood* mates. *Weepy Hullows* was under a blanket of snow and silence. This was a terribly cold night and every other *Hobbo* would be wrapped up tight in their beds with ample cosy covers, heavy blankets and extra-woolly socks and nightwear to stave off the seasonal chill. Even now, the icy freeze had begun to creep into the burrow. Plumes of exhalations filled the parlour as the temperature continued to fall without respite. There was no time to gather up enough coverings or don additional winter woollies to set things to right. Stamping of feet was out of the question lest the sound carried outward and alerted their quarry. The silence was to be expected by the seasonal fiend. True emanations of fear were anticipated with his coming. No chimney was ever lit in the *Hullows* on this night of all nights, and in truth, the now inert smokestacks were often swept clean lest they irritate a response that would end in death or some other awkward

reprisal. The burrow of the *Hobbo Bois* was as it needed to be when the Santy Claws swept down from the snowy swirls to claim his due. There was no backing down until the deed was done.

This could not stop Snudge from a pointless wayward dream. A roaring pine-filled fire would have been welcome right now but then such cosy comforts were forbidden on this particular night. Any hint of smoke would most certainly alert Santy Claws that something was amiss other than the failure to offer up a sack of delights to send him on his way. They needed him to come down the chimney. Any trace of smoke or fire would have forced the Crimbo revenger to seek an alternative point of ingress. He was a true fiend. Not content with practising his particular brand of Crimbo terror, he denied the *Hobbos* the relief of fiery warmth to stave off the chilling bite that ensued with the arrival of this murderously malign villain.

Fosco felt the numbness creeping into his toes and fingers to pester his hands and feet. The nails on each of his distressed digits twanged painfully to resonate awkwardly at the tips in denial of the deadness worrying the rest of his body. He knew that the others were feeling a similar discomfort but he did not care that they shared his pain. He felt it and such aches were often offered up without the empathy of an emotional connection. He was not made for such touchy-feely sentiments. He could tolerate real pain inflicted with malice. And yet, it was the waiting that seemed to make his efforts to deny the cold wholly unbearable. He imagined Kenner up there under a mound of snow as the cold wrapped its icy warmth-stealing hands

around the ginger-haired *Hobbo*. He might already be dead if he could not stay awake. He might soon wish for the blissful sleep of lifelessness in the wake of a worrisome chill that only served to torture his body further. If the cold didn't get him, the Santy would. The icy hurt would not last but Kenner was sure to feel every torturous touch from the Crimbo fiend's claws in reprisal for his grievous trespass that no amount of presents was likely to alleviate. Dead was dead. The boi would not appreciate the irony that in being so he would no longer feel the cold.

A horrible scratching noise reverberated down the funnel of the chimney to alert Fosco and the others that things might very well be about to kick off. The noise became louder and the demented *Hobbo* surmised that this may have been the slicey one's ox-driven sleigh. When the rattle and thumping increased, he was sure even though he had never heard such a raucous racket before because he usually succumbed to a drink-induced coma prior to the onset of Crimbo Eve. Santy had never felt the need to set down in *Weepy Hullows* in what might be Fosco's soon-to-be shortened lifetime. He merely swooped by in his sleigh as the bells rang out in warning to stand clear. He had no cause to take an interest when the sacks were left at the ready. The absence of one on this particular burrow probably irked him to no end and from the sounds; he did not seem thrilled at the prospect of a murderous rampage in reprisal for the audacious slight. A cruel killing would be enacted to set things to right. Muffled curses filled the night. Words could not be deciphered beyond their malign intent to resound with all the nuances of

indignant curses.

And then it happened. The clarity of the words echoed down the tarpaulin-lined funnel to send discords of distress into the freezing parlour below.

‘And what do we have here?’ grated the gruff voice of a fiend as he spied something amiss. Kenner had surely been seen or the covering that lined the chimney had been spotted. In either case, the jig was in all likelihood up. And yet, the sudden plaintive shuddering cry of a wailing banshee ensued. Santy was killing Kenner! There could be no other reason for such a wailing lament. The sound of metal hitting stone offered a churlish interlude but this only added to the distress of those who lay in waiting.

A guttural scream replied with all the weight of a tortured lamb who had found the inclination to defy the ram’s proclivity to have its boisterous way. There was indeed a struggle going on but to what end, only Bill could scarcely guess. The raucous became a nightmare of thumping, scraping, tearing and pitiful crying and then the awful thing happened. The fall of something heavy filled the night as the tarpaulin ballooned with the arrival of a quarry that might well have rendered Kenner lost to the cuts and thrusts of the Crimbo fiend. There was no time to hesitate. If Kenner had offered up a gift in the throes of his nightmarish death, the *Hobbos* could not waste such a sorely won boon. The mass within the tarpaulin suggested that Santy Claws had descended unceremoniously and unwillingly into their midst. Poor Kenner would be remembered bravely.

‘Kill him! Kill him now!’ screeched Jadzia as she leapt like a wild Wiccan of

old full of blood rage for the loss of one of her brood. Even Snudge could not deny the modest hint of violence that stirred him to jab dolefully at the tarpaulin with reckless abandon for his perfectly manicured nails and soft pampered skin. He slapped and jabbed as if he were giving hell to the dough he plied when making soft-baked cookies to delight his pallet. Byron beat at the tarp with abandon, each wilful thrust a hammering blow of lament to anything contained therein. Lomdath struck out, screeched, dropped his chosen implement, picked it up, sobbed, and struck out again and again, repeating the act of attack with precision until he did less to worry their quarry and more to increase the sweat that showed on his brow which he woefully protested was wholly distasteful to the precise lines of his distraught clothing and the olfactory disdain enacted on his body. He might as well have been fanning the flames of a fire rather than being engaged in a conflict that was sure to see them all undone and his clothing in need of more than just a good cleaning. His body too would not fare well in the aftermath of failing to subdue an enemy who was likely to be unforgiving in a way that implied a separation of extremities in a most gruesome manner.

Fosco was singularly surprised by Bobbin. He swatted, beat, punched, hammered and screamed with a ferocity that paled Jadzia’s efforts in equal measure. While the demented *Hobbo* of the brood would never see him as a warrior in this regard, he did let a telling smirk curve his quivering angered lips to acknowledge the efforts of his brother-in-arms.

And what of Fosco himself? Well,

the deranged *Hobbo* boi took to the ensuing battle with all the aplomb of one overcome with a homicidal rage that mirrored one of his cider-infused manias of epic proportions. The tarp yielded to every blow. Each impact sent sounds of distress echoing up the gaping funnel of the chimney. His flurries were precise, frenzied and recurrent in their efforts to beat the Santy Claws to a bloody pulp until nothing remained but a mass of broken bones amidst torn and bludgeoned flesh. The wails of lament that emanated from within were almost bestial in nature. When the final whimpering cry rang out, Fosco knew the deed was done. And yet, he did not relent. When his brood mates had long given up the fight due to exhaustion, disgust and crippling fear, Fosco fought on and pummelled until the implements he used broke under the distress of repeated misuse. He fought on until his fists were bloodied with the impact of pounding their quarry into the very stone floor on which it now most certainly had been rendered as an artist's macabre painting of utter mania. The tarpaulin would serve as a canvas of woe in the aftermath of this brutalisation of the Crimbo fiend. Whether or not he had deserved his lot for the seasonal terrorising of *Weepy Hullows* one would never know. The thing that rested beneath that canvas was long beyond caring. The silence of the season continued unabated. Crimbo day had come as the first light of a nervous dawn touched the horizon outside and the dawn crept into the room to stir the *Hobbos* from their murderous intent. The deed had been done. Only Kenner had been lost in the daring gamble. The time to mourn would follow.

In time, Jadzia stirred to curiosity. She needed to know the truth that this had been worth the gaping loss in her heart. Fosco rallied to her aid. As did Byron. Bobbin was spent. Lomdath and Snudge were cradled in each other's arms sobbing quietly as they offered consoling words of encouragement that clothes could be set to right and distressed nails would heal under the proper pampering care. Fosco groaned inwardly but let them to their fanciful ways. They had served their part as a distraction and might have got one good blow in between them. Bobbin deserved some praise but that would not be forthcoming from Fosco.

Jadzia had already begun to carefully cut the tarpaulin away as Byron assisted her by holding up strips of the distressed canvas. Soon the odour of blood and death filled the room and the more telling smell of something unsavoury reminded them of Kenner's bowel emanations. However, they quickly became aware that all was not as it seemed when the lifting of the tarp revealed the gruesome mass of ginger hair. Jadzia almost swooned at the sight. Bryon was taken aback. Fosco leapt into the troubled canvas and tore it asunder. In moments he revealed the bloody mass under the tarpaulin. It was not Kenner Gingerfoot but the bloodied and battered remains of a ginger-haired ox, the mythical animal thought to be the one that pulled Santy Claws's sleigh through the snowy swirls as he practised his reign of terror on the unsuspecting Hobbos of *Weepy Hullows*. But where was Kenner Gingerfoot, and where was the Santy Claws? To find that out, you will just have to wait for the forthcoming title – *Hobbos Book One – Weepy Hullows...*



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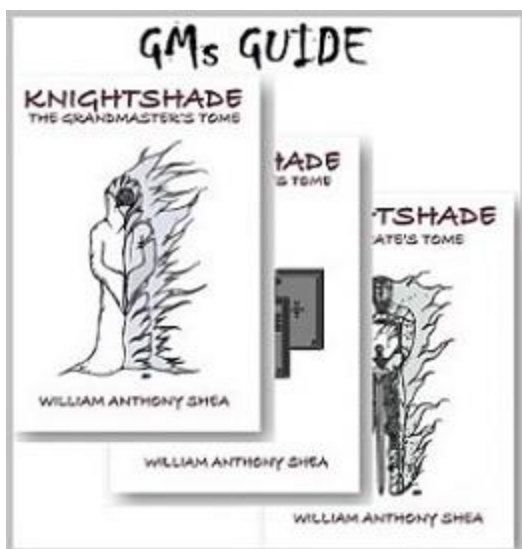
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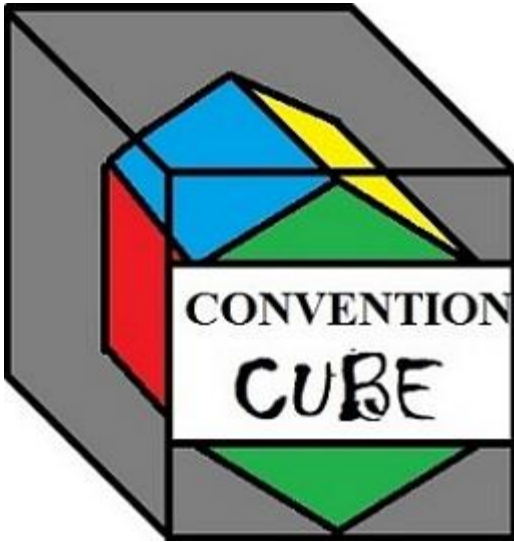


Expendables: Feed, Rations & Light

The GM is obsessed with tracking feed for horses, rations for the Characters and the expenditure of oil and torches to light the way. He accounts for every Copper Hawk, Silver Falcon and Gold Dragon owed to those who provide services to the party. He is a stickler for the rules regarding consumables to the point that the Players are beginning to feel put out by the sheer level of paperwork required to keep the adventuring troupe going. The story is painstakingly detailed but dealing with the mechanics is starting to feel very much like a real-life chore.

Alas, some effort is required in supporting the mundane in Knightshade the Role-Playing Game (RPG) to cater for those expendables that will get used up during the course of a game. Some GMs just add up the number of days in the end and multiply this by the number of Characters present, adding a reasonable

overspill and noting the cost. Such a method can often fail to take into account the possibility that the adventuring party could run out of such necessary items in the middle of a story. The use of rations and other consumables is a reasonable method to separate the Characters from some coin while providing enough realism to cater for the mundane needs of an adventuring party. Players may be frustrated with a GM who wants to take a more detailed approach but that is the nature of finding the right balance between pushing the story on and adding a hint of real-world necessities. Some Players often alleviate this need to keep track of perishables and consumables by appointing the task to one individual in the group – a pseudo quartermaster. In the end, the Players must be fair to the GM. Behaving like they have an endless supply of food, feed, water and oil while flaunting the treasure gained in a story to their advantage must have a balanced approach. There will be times when the adventuring party run out of money. They may not be able to purchase sufficient oil and torches to make that foray into a dark and desolate place to supplement their coffers. Maybe they will have to cut rations and water to traverse the vast desert standing between them and their goal. Tracking expendables is necessary and the GM must employ the fairest method while keeping the story in motion so that the mundane does not impede the reason for playing the game – and that is to have fun! In turn, the Players must not take liberties with their Characters. Take the time during the game to chalk off any consumables and the coin that was used to purchase same. Be fair to the GM in turn.



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

A.K.A. FORTYCON
BIRMINGHAM, UK
UK GAMES EXPO 2023

UK Games Expo (UKGE) is the largest Table-top Games Convention in the UK - where all aspects of the tabletop gaming hobby are represented under one roof. The next UK Games Expo will be from Friday 2nd June to Sunday 4th June 2023 at the NEC, Birmingham and Hilton Metropole Hotel.

Friday 02nd June: Depart Cork via Ryan Air @ 07:00 – Arrive in Birmingham @ 08:15. Train to New Street, City Centre.

Breakfast in Wetherspoons Briar Rose, 25 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham B2 5RE followed by a 2-minute walk to drop bags at Premier Inn. 3-6 Waterloo

Street, Birmingham, B2 5PG.

Drinks, cards and shenanigans!

Dinner: To Be Confirmed!

Saturday 03rd June: Breakfast in Wetherspoons followed by UK Games Expo as soon as the group are ready (or capable) of undertaking the journey to NEC.

D&D 5th Edition

Lost Mine of Phandelver Part One

Dinner: The 40th(S) Birthday Bash.
The venue is to be confirmed.

Drinks, Cocktails, Spirits & Cheer.

Sunday 04th June: Breakfast in Wetherspoons followed by UK Games Expo as soon as the group are ready (or capable) of undertaking the journey to NEC.

D&D 5th Edition

Lost Mine of Phandelver Part Two

Dinner: To Be Confirmed!

Drinks, Cocktails, Spirits & Cheer.

Monday 05th June: Breakfast in Wetherspoons.

Comic Book Stores & Cinema Outing.

Dinner: To Be Confirmed!

Drinks, Cocktails, Spirits & Cheer.

Tuesday 06th June: Breakfast in Wetherspoons.

Check out of Hotel.

A foray around Birmingham with a few drinks and a bite to eat.

Depart Birmingham City Centre for the airport @ 16:00 – Depart Birmingham @ 21:30. Arrive in Cork @ 22:30.

Please Note: If you are participating in Special Events, all costs are shared.



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

FUMBLE NEWSZINE STAFF

Editor: Master Sage.

Associate Editor: Wimpy Troll.

Technical Editor: Webster Troll.

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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!

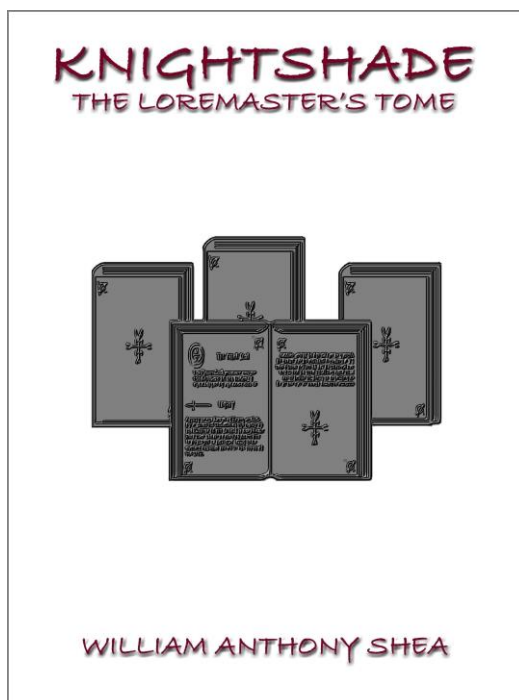
KST04: The Questmaster's Tome – NYR#

KSTCALO1: 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, add-itional rules, major political influences, and detailed maps to enrich the Role Playing experience.

BDP ID: KST03LOREMASTERBDP02





THE KNIGHTS OF MISSPENT YOUTH

Seneschal's Declaration



Recently, I have started to feel both tired and elated with playing games. As players begin to trickle back into the Kennel (Knights of Misspent Youth - KOMY Games Room), the latter feeling has dissipated. I began to unpack my archive, principally the products that were to do with Dungeons & Dragons. I was surprised by the number of items accumulated but even more so by those that to this day have remained unused after over forty years of gaming. On reflection, knowing that a number of our members will turn 40 this year makes the revelation all the more significant. I have game material that is older than many of the members in my group. I guess the nostalgia started to kick in as the weight of that admission took hold. Over forty years and we are all still here. There must be something special in playing these games. In truth, the stories we have shared matter but I have to believe that it is the connections we made along the way that elevated the games to meaning more. KOMY has been a significant part of my life for over thirty years. I have seen members married and have children of their own, some due in no small part to playing the games and attending conventions. I have seen friends stick together through many trials, not the least of which have occurred in recent times with lockdowns due to COVID-19 and an unsettling war in Europe. Through it all, KOMY has survived and we are still here, albeit

with a greater online presence that might not have come to pass for some time yet had it not been for these unfortunate events. The use of technology to keep the group very much together has had its challenges but overall these have proved a benefit. Still, I miss the purely physical game with many of our players sitting around a table engaged in an adventure that holds the attention of all. The Kennel was purpose-built for such moments. Mixing the physical with the digital was always inevitable.

With a relaxed COVID-19 view, WarpCon has returned to its physical forum. While not all members were able to attend, being back at the convention felt right. This year, KOMY will venture forth to UK Games Expo for the first time since 2015. While this is not my favourite Con, it might be nice to return to a more conventional event-driven excursion and to the familiar territory of Birmingham, UK.

The year is only beginning and while we are halfway through the current KOMY game calendar 2022-23, time has a way of catching up all too soon. This year will mark the changing of the guard as my KOMY 2nd term comes to an end. If you have an interest in taking up the mantel of Seneschal of KOMY, please do let me know in writing, but as noted before – be sure that you want it! And just to be clear – **BE SURE!**

SENESCHAL: WILLIAM OF SHEA

WEEK	DATE	GAME	GM/DM	SLOT	MANAGE
VK38	21-Sep	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 0	MS	1	1
VK39	28-Sep	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 1	MS	2	2
VK38	30-Sep	FN43: FUMBLE ISSUE FORTY-THREE	KOMY/BDP	N/A	N/A
VK40	05-Oct	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 2	MS	3	3
VK41	11-Oct	BIRTHDAY: WIMPY	N/A	N/A	N/A
VK41	14-Oct	BIRTHDAY: WEBSTER	N/A	N/A	N/A
VK42	19-Oct	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 3	MS	4	4
VK43	26-Oct	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 4	MS	5	5
VK45	09-Nov	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 5	MS	6	6
VK45	12-Nov	BIRTHDAY: HIPPIY	N/A	N/A	N/A
VK46	16-Nov	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 6	MS	7	7
VK46	18-Nov	BIRTHDAY: JULIUS	N/A	N/A	N/A
VK46	19-Nov	BIRTHDAY: SULLY	KOMY	N/A	N/A
VK47	23-Nov	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 7	MS	8	8
VK48	30-Nov	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 8	MS	9	9
VK48	01-Dec	FN43: FUMBLE ISSUE FORTY-FOUR	KOMY/BDP	N/A	N/A
VK48	02-Dec	JOES CHRISTMAS NIGHT	KOMY	10	N/A
VK49	07-Dec	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 9	MS	11	10
VK50	13-Dec	BIRTHDAY: TIED-ON	N/A	N/A	N/A
VK50	14-Dec	BIRTHDAY: RANDO	N/A	N/A	N/A
VK50	14-Dec	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 10	MS	12	11
VK52	31-Dec	BIRTHDAY: DUPLEX	N/A	N/A	N/A
VK02	11-Jan	Knightshade RPG: Legacy of Knighthawk	Julius	13	12
VK03	18-Jan	Knightshade RPG: Legacy of Knighthawk	Julius	14	13
VK04	25-Jan	Knightshade RPG: Legacy of Knighthawk	Julius	15	14
VK04	27-Jan	WARPCON	KOMY	16	N/A
VK04	28-Jan	WARPCON	KOMY	17	N/A
VK04	29-Jan	WARPCON	KOMY	18	N/A
VK05	01-Feb	Knightshade RPG: Legacy of Knighthawk	Julius	19	15
VK06	08-Feb	CARDS with KOMY	KOMY	20	16
VK07	15-Feb	Knightshade RPG: Legacy of Knighthawk	Julius	21	17
VK08	22-Feb	KNIGHTSHADE RPG: Calliban Rising: Raven's Curse Prequel	MS	22	18
VK08	25-Feb	FN43: FUMBLE ISSUE FORTY-FIVE	KOMY/BDP	N/A	N/A
VK09	01-Mar	KNIGHTSHADE RPG: Calliban Rising: Raven's Curse Prequel	MS	23	19
VK10	08-Mar	KNIGHTSHADE RPG: Calliban Rising: Raven's Curse Part One	MS	24	20
VK11	15-Mar	KNIGHTSHADE RPG: Calliban Rising: Raven's Curse Part Two	MS	25	21
VK12	22-Mar	KNIGHTSHADE RPG: Calliban Rising: Raven's Curse Part Three	MS	26	22
VK13	29-Mar	KNIGHTSHADE RPG: Calliban Rising: Raven's Curse Part Four	MS	27	23
VK15	05-Apr	Knightshade RPG: Legacy of Knighthawk	Julius	28	24
VK15	12-Apr	Knightshade RPG: Legacy of Knighthawk	Julius	29	25
VK16	19-Apr	Knightshade RPG: Legacy of Knighthawk	Julius	30	26
VK17	26-Apr	Knightshade RPG: Legacy of Knighthawk	Julius	31	27
VK18	03-May	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 11	MS	32	28
VK18	04-May	BIRTHDAY: GULLY	KOMY	N/A	N/A
VK19	09-May	BIRTHDAY: OZZIE	KOMY	N/A	N/A
VK19	10-May	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 12	MS	33	29
VK20	17-May	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 13	MS	34	30
VK21	24-May	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 14	MS	35	31
VK19	24-May	BIRTHDAYs: KLUTZ & KRAVE	KOMY	N/A	N/A
VK20	26-May	FN43: FUMBLE ISSUE FORTY-SIX	KOMY/BDP	N/A	N/A
VK22	31-May	Dungeons & Dragons: B1 In Search of the Unknown 15	MS	36	N/A
VK22	02-Jun	NEXTCON 2023: Free Day	KOMY/BDP	37	N/A
VK22	03-Jun	NEXTCON 2023: UK GAMES EXPO BIRMINGHAM & 40th	KOMY/BDP	38	N/A
VK23	04-Jun	NEXTCON 2023: UK GAMES EXPO BIRMINGHAM	KOMY/BDP	39	N/A
VK23	05-Jun	NEXTCON 2023: Cinema	KOMY/BDP	40	N/A
VK23	06-Jun	NEXTCON 2023: Free Day	KOMY/BDP	41	N/A
VK23	07-Jun	BIRTHDAY: TIPSY	KOMY	N/A	N/A
VK24	14-Jun	Knightshade RPG: The Augur Stone Finale Prep	MS	42	N/A
VK25	21-Jun	CARDS with KOMY	KOMY	43	N/A
VK26	28-Jun	KOMY/FUMBLE AWARDS	KOMY/BDP	44	N/A
TBA	TBA	KENNELCON: THE KENNEL PARTY 2023	KOMY/BDP	1	N/A

NOTE: KOMY Schedule is subject to change.

COMING

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MAY 2023

ILLUSTRATED

ANATOMY OF A RUST MONSTER II

WAS

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SHORT TALES

Extract from DP07 Darkling Pool

The Vampire's Last Kiss Part One

William Anthony Shea

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INNER CIRCLE

Game updates from the Knights of Misspent Youth

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CONVENTION CUBE

KOMY'S CONVENTIONS

Conventions and Events

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THE GMs GUIDE

BDP's RPGs

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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DEAR FUMBLE

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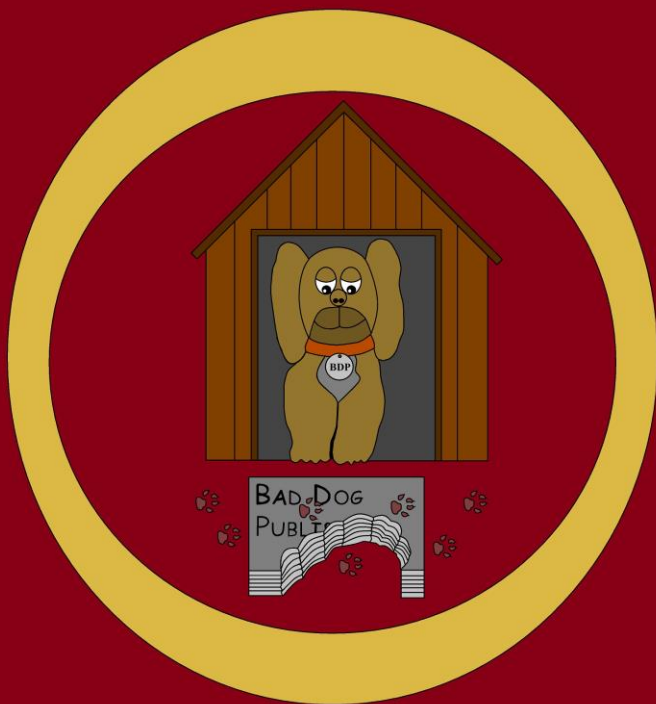
Letters from our readers & Notices

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THE SENESCHAL'S DECLARATION

SIR WILLIAM

Words of wisdom from the Seneschal of the Knights of Misspent Youth



FN45

FN45FUMBLEBDP02