



The

Poodle Mulch

Progress Report

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Issue IV

Take one low level party and frog and put them into a blender. What do you get? A greenish, grayish mulch that's still low level and broke and unable to earn money or jump very far. Hey, I was reaching on that one. Anyhoo, our misfits awoke with a full day of activities. First on the list was a trip to the Oriental Rapier to speak with Hubys the elf.

Located in the seedier part of the non-dwarven section of Kheylar, the place appeared more than a bit run down; the perfect place for a party with no money to spend. With Lucieth, Roger-Roger, Noctis and Merle waiting outside, the others met the elf and had a conversation about some work. At the top of Hubys's list of jobs was a dwarf named Othewadah, who had made an agreement with Hubys's unnamed client. Aside from various food and supplies that were to be delivered to Othewadah's new home--an abandoned watchtower a few miles to the northwest in the mountains--the dwarf also received a giant telescope and frame. After having paid half up front, Othewadah has since reneged on the remaining money.

According to Hubys, his client (whom he refused to name), sent one and later four men to have a word with Othewadah about the debt. None returned. After hearing that they would make some significant gold for the job, the party agreed to sign the contract with Hubys. Of course, when all you have is lint in your pockets, any gold is considered "significant". They had only to find a bank in Kheylar that both they and Hubys could agree upon to hold the 500 pieces of "up front" gold. The rest would be paid later.

Later, the party went to the courthouse to be interviewed about the slavers they had brought there upon arriving in the city. Once done, they left to kill time until the next day when the court would render a decision about the slavers. Merle still hoped to be doing some whippin' as part of their punishment.

On the way out of the courthouse, one of the gnomes that worked there named Krimli Doo approached. He asked Squirk if she wanted to have a drink and play a gnomish game called Kalliclack, which involved a mechanical spider climbing a tower of small blocks that the players put in place as it climbed. Once the spider fell and the tower collapsed, the game would end. Squirk decided it would be fun and agreed.

With Squirk and Merle heading off the get spells and look for a nice dress for the little gnome princess, Merle noticed a man following them. Later, upon Uncle Rockfist's recommendation, the misfits decided to visit the Gray Anvil Bank, a reputable dwarven institution with another branch in Bog Boldur. Noctis was able to hang back using his cloak of elvenkind and spot the man following the party, but the man saw Noctis and beat feet out of view.

After a nice tour of the bank, the misfits decided the bank would do. They summoned Hubys, who agreed with their choice. The gold was delivered and the deal done. Noctis, accustomed to being asked to stay outside, stayed outside. He did grow appropriately pissy when the bank guard asked him about his business. The little kobold with the 'tude them entered the bank and, to the surprise of the dwarven account manager, opened an account. Funny how prejudices change when money is involved.

The party split up to take care of some errands. Noctis tried to continue to train Roger in becoming a blood warrior, but Roger finally declined in frustration. He indicated that he knew how to protect himself with his staff and something else. He wouldn't say what that something else was, instead offering to demonstrate. When told it might be painful, Noctis declined. Wuss.

The good news for Andromeda was that Lucieth offered to tutor her as time permitted in order for her to learn common. It would take about a month, but she wouldn't need an interpreter after that.

Dinner time came. With Merle's help, Squirk emerged from a couple hours of preparation looking cute as a button. Ever see a button? It's as cute as a Squirk. All dolled up, she met Krimli at the Blind Inventor,

a gnomish tavern that had been scoped out by Merle a few hours earlier. Merle is protective of his Squirk. At the tavern, the dapper Krimi was ever the gentlegnome. He and Squirk had din din and drink drinks while playing several games of Kalliclack. They seemed to be enjoying themselves.

Merle, who had been waiting outside during the date, was happy to see her friend emerge smiling if not a little tipsy. Well, a lot tipsy, actually. During the walk home, Merle noticed they were being followed again. To show the man that she was ready, she pulled out what at first looked like a dildo but instead turned out to be a really thick sword. Hey, gotta be ready for dildos at any moment, folks. Squirk tried to cast mage armor a couple of times and failed miserably. To be safe going forward, she should stick to only holding her liquor by the ears. Anyway, they returned to Uncle Rockfist's home with the news about the tail, which, of course, drove the rest of the party nuts.

The next morning, the misfits awoke to a huge breakfast that Roger had prepared as his way of saying how much he appreciated them rescuing him. The masked man had assured them that he was very good at cooking. When the meal began, the party quickly realized how wrong he was. Not all were able to contain their "disappointment" and Roger was crestfallen. He'll live. Well, maybe. At least he's not a horse, or he definitely wouldn't live long traveling with this bunch of people.

The next morning, the misfits went to the courthouse to hear the verdict. Despite his best efforts, Merle didn't get tossed into the clink for sassing the judge when she heard that the slavers would not be convicted of slavery due to a lack of proof. So no flogging, hon. The bad men were convicted of false imprisonment and sentenced to not only 30 days of hard labor but having to each pay Merle 100 gp for what they did. They didn't have the gold now so would have to stay in Kheylar after their hard time to find work and gather the money to pay Merle. Nevertheless, the party marked the calendar as to the slavers' release date. Justice will be served!

Later, the misfits went to the Oriental Rapier to gather the horses and wagons for the trip. They planned to leave in the morning. When they returned home, a note arrived for Livia saying that if she ever wanted to see Krimli alive, she would come alone to an abandoned section of the mines. Not sure who the kidnapper might be, she agreed. Of course, the rest of the misfits followed. Because that's how they roll, bitches.

First stop was Krimi Doo's home. The front door was open and the place empty. After some investigation, the misfits found Krimil's bed upstairs all mussed up . . . quite ungnome-like. Noctis also noticed a broken vase in the hallway with some scuff marks there. Hmm. Squirk found a tinkering room with all sorts of gnome stuff, including a small brass rod with a lens on the end. Better yet, it was magical. After notifying the authorities, the misfits proceeded to the mine.

Livia and her buds, who were hanging back except for Squirk's raven, Eventually, Livia came to a chamber that opened up. At the far end was Krimli sitting with his hands behind his back. When Livia had entered, a familiar voice spoke to her. After a few exchanges, where the man spoke of how Grey Eye wanted her back home, she finally realized that she was speaking to Protorith—Grey Eye's enforcer.

Protorith said that if she came back home to the Defiled Lands with him willingly, neither she nor anyone else would be harmed and that all would be forgiven. It seems that Grey Eye had been impressed by Livia's initiate and had big plans for her. Exciting plans.

With Noctis sneaking into the chamber for a flanking attack if necessary, Livia essential told Protorith to go fuck himself before calling him a coward. A boulder came crashing down, smashing poor Krimli. Livia, Noctis, and the rest of the party sallied forth. Protorith scrambled as his hidden goblin companion lobbed some magical bolts down upon their pursuers.

Livia and the others gave chase, losing Protorith and almost getting the goblin, which disappeared. Pissed, Livia vowed to get that sucker before everything was said and done. The DM sure hopes Pat has his backup character ready. Aw Hell, he hopes EVERYONE has their backup character ready. The good news is that Bryhildr was able to heal Krimli. They took him to his cousin's home for some much-needed rest.

Krimi expressed his sincere appreciation for everyone saving his life. Ever the opportunist, Squirk piped up that nothing says appreciation like letting her keep the cool lens, which she had identified as an item that allowed anyone looking through it to understand what they were saying (provided the wielder knew the

language being spoken). Krimli, wounded and having been near dead and STILL hoping for some pussy, agreed without hesitation.

The next day, the misfits set out from Kheylar. They watched to see if they were being followed but were disappointed. After traveling until dusk, they set camp and enjoyed a quiet evening by the fire. Turning west, they ascended a narrow path until finally coming to a very long set of steps carved into the stone leading up the tower in the distance.

With Noctis scouting ahead, the misfits found an ogre near the top of the stops about 1/3 mile later. It seemed to be watching for anyone approaching. Everyone except Lucieth (because he run fast) with Noctis on his shoulder went back down to the bottom of the steps to wait. When the ogre spotted the monk and the blood hunter, it rolled a rock down the steps. Being quick as a drunk monk with a rock about to crush his ass, Lucieth ran to his waiting friends.

The ogre, surprised at not finding bits of smashed flesh, came down just in time to be ambushed. Its death cry was answered at the top of the steps by its companion. Unable to bait it to come down into a 2nd ambush, the party went up the steps and engaged it there. They beat the ogre and found some delicious ogre loot, which ended the game for the night.

'Til next time, kiddies.

