



For Your Garden

The

Poodle Mulch



Progress Report

February 29, 2020

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Issue XXXIV

Fresh after visiting the dwrven city of Bodlia, the party decided to go back into the valley to the south to visit the interesting gold dragon. Armed with a couple of barrels of dwarven ale, which is guaranteed to stunt your growth, they entered the valley where they had first spotted the dragon.

Squirk, always the first to open up yakkin' festivities, began yelling out for Vathroxi. Eventually, the dragon popped its head up and began licking its lips at the sight of the ale. He invited the party up into its cave, which happened to be a huge concealed palace.

After several hours of yakkin' and eating some fiiiine vittles, during which Squirk blurted out that Lucieth was a wererat, the party decided to stay the night. Needless to say, Lucieth was not happy and exited the premises. Vathroxi was able to taste some of the tainted wizard's blood that Noctis had before announcing that the final ingredient was the blood of a disenchanter.

Also, Squirk was hailed by the communication globe that she and Filoriac shared. But instead of Filoriac contacting her, it was another Dirolgian wizard Squirk had met named Leevee. The distraught Leevee said that some assassins had entered their wizards' guild and killed some wizards while injuring others. Filoriac was in serious condition but would likely pull through. She also relayed information saying that their research had uncovered that those who were mostly nobles and/or high-level officials that are campaigning against wizards are all followers of the god Ya-Nu. She ended the communication saying that she might have more information about the disease in a couple of days. Squirk relayed the news about the final ingredient to the disease.

Brynhildr also mentioned that she had news from her visit to the temple of Kharsallis in Bodlia. She discovered that the head priest, along with head priests from the various Karsallis temples across the Dwarflands, were converging in Veradic in a few days to meet with the high priest himself. Bryn had little information other than it had to do with the wizard fiasco.

The next day, Vathroxi offered a deal to the party. He wanted them to journey to a valley to the northwest and "Walk the Path of Ghoragdush", which is the god of the orcs. They were to recover a stone box that Vathroxi desired. In exchange, the golden dragon would answer a single question asked by each person, which could prove to be valuable indeed. The party agreed and set out toward their destination.

After a quick stop in Bodlia, they moved on toward the valley, the words of the Path of Ghoragdush still fresh in their minds.

On the first day, Ghoragdush arrived at the mountains at edge of the world. There, he met the ancient dragon of Moroloth and did engage it in combat. After several hours, Ghoragdush realized that he could not defeat the beast. With sudden inspiration, Ghoragdush lowered his great spear and allowed the dragon to devour him whole. Inside, Ghoragdush cut himself free of the dragon. The beast died, and Ghoragdush emerged victorious. After resting for a day, Ghoragdush proceeded into the mountains to the river of Irith's blood.

On the morning of the second day, Ghoragdush came to the river of Irith's blood and looked upon death below. Across the way, he saw the brass doors leading to the entranceway to heaven. Within, he knew not what he would find, but his determination gave him no pause as he jumped across.

Ghoragdush left the edge of the world of mortals only to be met by the gods among whom he sought to walk and represent his people. But the gods did not want this upstart mortal from a bastard race to ascend into their ranks. They feared he would contaminate them and give the orcs of Irith more power than they should ever deserve. Only by walking the correct path through the fire from the mortal realm would Ghoragdush be allowed into the heavens as a deity equal, lest they destroy him for his insolence.

Undaunted, the orc legend walked flame and braved peril to find that path that only an immortal of true spirit and courage could endure. And to the dismay of those who would see him fail . . . he succeeded . . .

Ghoragdush passed through the celestial forest that ringed Ahfoleah and was met by the god of his peoples' greatest enemy . . . Em'Sharfhei. "Let me pass in peace," said Ghoragdush. But Em'Sharfhei met the peaceful request with the tip of his sword and laid into Ghoragdush. For two days they battled. Em'Sharfhei took one of Ghoragdush's eyes, nearly killing the orc. But Ghoragdush drew upon the flame burning in his chest and rose again. He came at the god with such fury that Em'Sharfhei was forced to flee. Ghoragdush passed out of the forest into Ahfoleah proper at dusk of the third day.

After having gone through so many trials and adversities, Ghoragdush arrived on the unforgiving frigid plane of Xelgratia in hopes of resting in peace after his ordeal. Before Ghoragdush could relax, however, he saw a figure approaching. He realized that he would have to face one of his greatest enemies . . . himself. It took the entire fourth day for Ghoragdush to prevail, but he was victorious. And on the night of the fourth day, he passed into the mountains of Verelorn, the keeper of the dead. For only by cowing the crooked Father of the Gone could Ghoragdush hope to hold sway over the orcs in heaven, as well as on Irith, and truly become the God of the Orcs.

And on the night of the fourth day, Ghoragdush met Verelorn. The Keeper of the Gone bid the dead rise up and strike down the interloper, but Ghoragdush was too powerful . . . too determined. He beat back the dead and bested Verelorn, causing the ruler of the realm of the dead to bend his knee. It was then that Ghoragdush became master of the orcs of the dead and of the living, both in heaven and on Irith. It was then that the orcs found their way in the hostile world of men and elves and dwarves, guided from the Fortress of Frozen Despair on Xelgratia, by the shining, all-seeing gaze . . . of Ghoragdush.

The Misfits came to a plateau high in the mountains and found an orc village. Merle waltzed into the village and announced she wanted to walk the path. Not so easy, mamma jamma. The priest said that she had to fight their champion to earn the right. She did, and opened up a barrel of whoop s on him. Having won, she could proceed to the valley below with anyone she chose.

After traveling WAAAAY down through the mists into the valley below, they found a dead end in the valley. Carved into the stone was the gaping maw of a huge dragon's head. Of course, a red dragon appeared and licked its chops for din din. Lykos did some fast talking and convinced the dragon that they could get it some extra cow rations. Lykos traveled back up top to the orcish village and bought some extra sacrificial cows that the dragon happily consumed.

Now Saurk, with no more secrets about Lucieth that she could blab to anyone within earshot, got bored. She began planting beans from her bag 'o beans. At first, she only got some colorful frogs that had no secrets. She then planted some seeds that produced 5 eggs that had no secrets. But the dragon saw the eggs and looked hungrily interested.

Squirk took the eggs to the dragon, who promptly gulped them down. Unfortunately for the dragon, thens was some of them thar 'splodin' eggs. The subsequent explosion blew a small hole in the dragon's neck. It squealed like a piggy, causing a second dragon (with no secrets) to emerge from the mountainside. The battle was ON!

After a tense few moments of battle, during which Noctis saw the light at the end of the tunnel, the Misfits prevailed. First came the dragon slicing, and then the LOOTIN'. In fact, there was so much loot that they didn't have the ability to carry it all. A bag of holding would sure have been nice. Anyway, the party moved into the dragon's mouth to find that they were in a massive cave hollowed out in the shape of a dragon's insides.

After a long rest, the Misfits followed the dragon's tail to cliff overlooking a river of lava flowing by. Across the way was a pair of huge brass door. Using flying brooms and carpets, the group made it across. After one of Noctis's freed slave girls picked the lock and opened the door, the party saw a room with huge black posts rising from the lava below. On either side were the statues of six different gods (with lots of secrets).

Using various testing methods, including the use of a mechanical horse and Merle, the posts were tested to find the right path. Stepping on the wrong one caused one or more gods to animate and attack. It took some time, but the party found the right one. Will they be ready to face the remaining trials to reach the ultimate end of the path? Not if the DM has anything to say about it.

