



For Your Garden

The

# Poodle Mulch



Progress Report

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Sponsored by Bill Cosby's Evil Pudding Skin. Better than a cheesy episode of Star Trek!

Issue XVI

Down Shade, Livia, and Aster, our intrepid Misifts found themselves below an elven shrine on a small island in the middle of a small lake. They had just defeated a storm giant when Aster finally got the tune right and put it to sleep. With the clock ticking on when the next elven paladin shift change would occur, the smaller group got to work.

The first room's walls were plastered with little plaques like the one they recovered in the giant's room. They all had elven symbols. Someone in the party noticed one of the plaques had a number on it. The item was recovered without a problem, and the party moved on.

Squirk got on her hands and knees, thanking god that Curtis had created such an awesome world for her to live in. She entered a room with a very low ceiling. At the far end was a shaft of light illuminating another plaque. Confident that there would be no traps or surprises, Squirk grabbed the plaque, which had another elven number engraved into it.

At that moment, a stone slab dropped to cover the door as hundreds of hungry scarabs went after the li'l gnome. Much to the DM's dismay, Squirk had tied a rope around her waist, with the other end running back to the others in the hallway. Noctis also had taken his great axe and wedged it in the doorway to keep the stone slab from dropping all the way. The other heaved and pulled a bloodied and bitten Squirk out of danger before Noctis pulled the axe away and let the stone slab fall to seal the room.

The next room presented a challenge where there were two pedestals in the center. When someone entered, a squalling infant appeared hovering over one and another plaque over the other. An elven priest appeared behind them and said that only one could be taken, and that they should choose wisely.

Of course, Merle wasn't too keen on babies. He wanted to grab the plaque. Andromeda was a more thoughtful and gentle soul and said that they should save the baby that evidently had been taken from Wilthorn. They both decided to grab at the same time. Andromeda won and grabbed the kid, causing the party to teleport back into the first room they had come to. The baby was on the floor in an elven baby carrier making a fuss. Squirk had the bright idea of searching around in the carrier and found that another plaque was there.

Roger, being the whiny little wuss that he is, had begun complaining about a horrible headache that had started in the morning and gotten worse. He couldn't explain why, but assured everyone that he could keep going. The others felt certain that putting Roger on baby duty would help.

Pressing on, the Misfits came to a room where three heiracosphinxes awaited them. Behind them were three riddles on the wall. The sphinxes told the party that they had 10 minutes to solve all three riddles. Andromeda, Squirk, and Merle won the day and solved them. The sphinxes gave the party another plaque before disappearing.

The next room had a chair against the far wall with a plaque on the floor beside it. When someone stepped inside, a pissy little svirfneblin appeared and said that only someone really smart who could defeat him could have what they wanted. A shimmering transparent wall of energy appeared in the middle of the room blocking the party's way. Then, an arcanic sphere appeared in the middle of the room. Knowing that a wizard's duel was afoot, Squirk shook the few remaining scarabs from her hair and prepared for battle.

The two wizards used their minds and knowledge of the arcane to move the sphere against each other, doing damage each time it hit. Eventually, Squirk overpowered the Svirfneblin and caused him to wink out of existence. The wall fell, and another plaque was gained.

The next room had a mound of dirt in the middle. Each wall displayed a mural of a hill within the effects of the different seasons (i.e. rain, sun, wind, cold). Thinking quickly, Noctis poured some water on the mound of soil in the room, causing a small plant to sprout. He then held his torch above the tree to provide (sun)light, and the plant grew into a small tree. The party members then began blowing on the tree, and the leaves all fell off. Squirk then cast a cold chromatic orb against the ceiling above the tree and caused cold bits of ice to rain down, killing it. A plaque appeared at the base of the tree.

The next room contained a stinky mass of corpses piled high in the center under a small cage hanging from the ceiling. Inside was a small jar of opaque liquid with some writing on it and something inside. Totally unaware that the corpses might animate and attack if the cage was disturbed, Noctis managed to get the cage open and get the hell out of the room as the zombies woke up. A nice battle took place before the door was finally pulled shut so the zombies couldn't get out.

The final room had a barrier of acid with three blocks just below the surface. On the far side of the room was a plaque and three levers. Squirk had the idea of shooting the levers, which caused the blocks to raise up just out of the acid. Noctis took some acid damage getting to the plaque.

About this time, the zombie had begun punching their way through the door. With Andromeda holding them off, Noctis got back to safety, and everyone else (including a newly-arrived Livia) headed back to the first room to try and solve the puzzle. When the plaques were placed at first, an hourglass appeared, indicating the party only had a few minutes to solve it.

Livia joined Andromeda to fight off the zombies while the others wracked their brains. Finally, Roger remembered something that helped, and the puzzle was solved! Hauling ass to get back, Livia and Andromeda rejoined the others to find the force field had dropped over the door. Everyone made their way down to a cavern filled with stalagmites, a pool of black liquid, and some treasure.

Unfortunately, when anyone approached the treasure, the black pool moved to block. Eventually, it rose up as a gooey semi-humanoid shape that introduced itself as Armus and that the party would not get the treasure.

Some of the stalagmites revealed themselves to be ropers, which attacked and snared most of the Misfits before pulling them in for a snack. With everything looking grim for the party, Armus stopped the ropers and parlayed. He said he would give the party the treasure if he could temporarily merge with someone so he could escape this place.

Ever the one to accept a merging challenge, Noctis said that he would act as the conduit as long as the purely evil skin that had been discarded from the ascended elven priest Elovorond pinky swore. \*rolls eyes\* The two came together, and Noctis found himself having to concentrate to keep from being consumed by Armus's personality. The deal was that the party would take Armus 2 days' travel from this spot. After that, Armus would disengage from Noctis and ride off into the sunset. The important part was that the party got the LOOOOOOOOT!

After leaving the helpless elven baby with the bound bare assed elven paladins, the party struck out west. As they got ready to sleep, Noctis noticed Roger tossing and turning. Roger woke up, his face sweating like crazy, and a very fine layer of hair on his face. After a few minutes, the hair was gone, and Roger felt better. HmMMMMM.

After some more travel, the party decided it was time to stop and let Armus off at the bust stop. Noctis at first wasn't too keen on letting the entity go, but a bout of strong willpower allowed him to get rid of the evil skin. Armus slid onto the ground and into the water of a nearby pond. Unfortunately, no one in the party noticed the cottage across the pond, where a farmer and his wife were working peacefully. Uh, oh.

Squirk and the others had a bout of conscience before the gnome wizard blasted Armus with a fireball. Undaunted, the entity continued on toward the farmer. Making a decision, the party began running around the pond to the other side to warn the couple. The couple, not being too bright, didn't notice until it was too late.

Armus arrived and used his mind to lift the farmer out of the air and bring him closer. The party made a game effort to try to save the farmer, but it was too late. Armus swallowed him and swam away out of reach. The party battle cry became "Hey, at least we tried." Leaving a screaming farmer's widow at the house, the Misfits journeyed back to Wilthorn. Sorry, ma'am.

The party arrived at Wilthorn. Ever mindful that they had assaulted a pair of holy knights, broken into and pilfered a sacred shrine of Em'Sharfhei, stolen its treasures, and released the evil entity imprisoned there, the Misfits took every precaution to remain unseen as they . . . walked straight into . . . town . . . ummmm. Anyway, some elven guards spotted them and took them into custody before taking them to the temple of Em'Sharfhei, where I'm sure everything will work out . . . just . . . fine . . .

