

The Adventurer

September, 2025 A.T.

abyssus abyssum invocat

Ghostly Grief Pesters Pugilistic Pirates

The gathering of the ‘Pirate King’ that took place in August of this year was interrupted by an unexpected visitor – the ghostly and undead captain and crew of the pirate ship ‘The Grief’.

An artifact recovered from the sea floor, which held strange properties involving the sharing of magical effects among the people touching it, was the apparent objective of this visit. The Grief’s crew demanded the artifact, and with no apparent

way to defeat these ghosts in martial combat, it was surrendered to them after a short bout.

The *Grief*, not confirmed to have been seen upon the Ire in many years, was a strange ghost itself. The physical hulk, mostly submerged in the water and far from seaworthy, was supported by its ghostly shell. The hull was only visible to those with the ability to see spirits, or beneath the moonlight, suggesting this may have been the spirit of the

ship itself. This reporter was unable at the time to see what would have happened had the Grief been resurrected.

The sought after artifact was the prize awarded for a fighting contest held on the island through the day. It is supposed that other contestants may have fled the island when the Grief arrived, or have been slain by that crew.

No word as to the fortunes of those that sponsored the contest.

Leviathan Slain At Last

Under the guidance of a capable Leviathan hunter, adventurers hailing from the general area of Sandy Bay were able to put down a creature badly wounded during a festival local to that area.

As reported exclusively in the *Adventurer’s* April edition of this year, a large monster native to the Ire was drawn forth during an annual festival local to the Sandy Bay area. Adventurers present at the festival were able to drive off the creature, and had believed it to have been seriously or mortally wounded.

This same creature was found to have beached

itself on the island of the Pirate King, with the possible intention of laying eggs or otherwise reproducing.

Adventurers that had gathered at the island worked together to take the battle to this creature, which still bore battle marks from the initial fervor with which they opposed it during the winter.

After considerable effort, the adventurers were able to defeat the creature, learning from the Leviathan hunter how to harvest parts of its shell, horn and claw in order to use them for crafting purposes should we encounter another.

Home Again, Home Again

After a protracted period away, the adventurers that predominantly hail originally from the barony of Yorik are once again returning to the region of Sandy Bay.

At the request of His Grace, Duke Hayden of Gelrich, adventurers of a hardy and adventuresome disposition have been asked to investigate an area near the shores of the Ire, with an eye toward establishing a permanent settlement.

Although an early expedition met with some resistance from locals, meeting at a party in January led to positive entreaties. A local

festival honouring the defeat of an enormous waterbound monster turned this into a rough alliance, although raised further questions about those that live in the region.

Since then, the adventurers have fallen into a strange magical trap for a couple of months, fought off the incursion of aggressive vegetation, and have been carried away to a pirate island for a festival.

Now, they find their way back to the region of Sandy Bay, with an eye toward revisiting that original mission. Who knows what they’ll find?

Weapon Focus: The Sling

The Adventurer attempts to improve general knowledge about the various tools available, in the hopes that this will be useful to those that make their living undertaking dangerous endeavours. In this edition, we will focus on the Sling, a weapon with a rich and storied history.

The sling is a commonly found weapon in Harodom, and for good reason: it is simple to make, requires very little training to use effectively, is affordable to use, and can be used with devastating accuracy.

A sling typically has a small cradle or pouch in the middle of two retention cords, where a projectile, often made of stone, clay, or lead, is placed. This 'bullet' is then whirled at the end of the length of the cords, until one of the cords is released by the slinger, sending the projectile flying at tremendous speed.

Although some slingers prefer to shape their ammunition, suitably sized stones can often be found in most locales for this weapon. This makes the use of a sling economical even in places where arrows can easily be found, as it requires no monetary cost whatever.

Too, a sling is often viewed as a peasant tool or weapon, used by shepherds, hunters, and the like, and carrying one in the wilds rarely draws any particular attention.

Nevertheless, slingers, especially in large numbers, can be perilous to challenge and should be done so cautiously if at all. The nature of the sling's use allows the application of strength in throwing stones, meaning that a well conditioned and capable slinger may well be able to stun a foe with a well placed stone.

The history of the sling is difficult to determine; due to its nature as a 'low status' weapon, slings are rarely found in tombs of the great and powerful. They wear out with sufficient use, and are often made of braided cloth or other materials that will decay with the passage of time.

Although slings can be very simple weapons, master weaponsmiths can create more advanced slings that can be wielded with greater efficacy. Those looking to have a low-profile weapon that can easily be used on them may consider seeking such a weapon.

Although they also 'sling' stones, the 'sling shot' which uses an elasticized fabric to throw stones is not a proper sling. Because of the similar types of ammunition and the fact that the sling shot has some resemblance, the name is in honour of this older weapon.

Survival Strategies: How to Avoid Attracting Wild Animals to Your Camp

As the townsfolk in and around the Lakes Region have had disruptions to their normal patterns of life, they may find that they are in an area rich with local wildlife. Here are a few tips to avoid attracting wild animals to your camp.

People who, for whatever reason, find that they need to spend time in the wilderness may face challenges unfamiliar to townsfolk. While an encounter with a wild animal may be exciting, this kind of excitement may not be one that you are specifically seeking out.

For this reason, it can be useful to prepare your camp in such a way that wild animals will not be drawn to it, and may even avoid it.

As any experienced adventurer knows, not all threats in the wild are animals, and these pieces of advice may not have the same effect on other such threats – use your best judgment!

Avoiding Attraction

- Don't set up camp in places where wild animals are likely to be foraging.

If you set up your camp where wild animals gather food, such as in the middle of a patch of berries, you may find that animals seeking food will come to the location that they know food to be. You can camp close enough to gather food yourself, but distant enough to avoid intruders.

- Store food securely, and off the ground.

Animals will often have strong senses of smell, and may be able to detect your provisions. Hanging food in a bag from a tree will make it less likely that it can be raided by animals, and if you can wrap it up in sealed containers, the scent is less likely to waft. Don't leave temptation easy to find!

- Dispose of garbage promptly, and away from camp.

Similarly to foodstuffs, garbage that has the scent of food (or food past) may draw wild animals. Dispose of it promptly and away from camp.

- Maintain a fire if possible, and make noise.

Most animals including predators are naturally skittish around unfamiliar creatures. Having a fire and making your presence known will prevent curious creatures from wandering in.

- Avoid sleeping on the ground directly.

Mostly useful for avoiding lizards and snakes that may choose to cuddle up for your body heat, this advice is not a bad suggestion for anyone who wants to avoid insects as well.

Ask a Magistrate

Some questions of law have been asked, and Magistrate Oren D'vann is here to answer them! Please consult a magistrate or guardsman for case-specific legal questions.

Question: How much discretion do judges and nobles have in regards to sentencing?

One of the key parts of ensuring a fair legal system throughout a land, barony, duchy, and kingdom, is ensuring that similar crimes are tried in similar ways. If the same murder would be answered with imprisonment in one part of the duchy, a fine in another, and with execution in a third, justice is not

well served.

A murderer might flee to a jurisdiction that treats that murder more leniently, or which might hesitate to send them somewhere that they would be executed.

In service to this, details of recent decisions of court are circulated throughout the Duchy of Gelrich, to provide for what amounts to a common law. While not binding, having these cases to review allows local nobility and judges to compare apples to apples, and treat comparable crimes similarly.

However, it should be noted that this

practice is not binding, and that there may be other complications that lead to different justice being served.

It is the right of local nobility to enforce the law to their best discretion within their lands (within the boundaries of broader lawful behaviour). Too, past behaviour and other complicating factors may lead to more lenient or harsh punishments, such as a first offender, someone who was unaware of a local ordinance – or, conversely, a serial murderer being treated more harshly than someone pushed to a point of extremity.

It is the goal of the law to be just, and to be enforced fairly, but many things can complicate this effort.

Oren D'Vann is offering a princely sum of 5 pieces of Gold to any who reach an “Adept” level of proficiency in the skill and art of sailing (Labourer: Sailor 5).

**This commission to be paid within one month of a demonstration of such skill.
Training available.**

Horoscopes

The future is an unknown country. However, ideas and visions of the future may stem from information of the present; your decisions help to make the world you live in tomorrow. To that end, we have published a generalized horoscope for each of the Calendar Birth Signs, and hope that it will serve to amuse and enlighten. Horoscopes provided by Seer Oren Freedman.

The Shroud (Dec 31st – Jan 28th)

There will soon come a time of strife that will challenge some of your preconceptions. You may find this quite paralyzing – not knowing what you believed to be true is true anymore – but this can be forestalled. Decide what is important, and what you will fight for.

The Harp (Jan 29th – Feb 27th)

You will soon have an encounter with someone who tries your patience. Whether you are able to persist in maintaining that patience will reflect upon your character, and will help to determine key factors about your future from that point.

The Fount (Feb 28th – Mar 30th)

This month you will face off against an intractable opponent who seems not susceptible to reason. Consider how you wish to approach this person – you may find that argument is not an effective tool in this matter, and that a more direct approach better suits your purposes. Lucky numbers, 7, 3, 14.

The Dice (Mar 31st – Apr 28th)

Chance will seem to play a large part in your near future, but it bears analysis of how much of this is actual chance, and

how much is a combination of preparations, your own skill and ability, and the actions of others. Chance is very real in this world – but freedom of the will is as well.

The Arrow (Apr 29th – May 27th)

The direct path will serve you best this month. Lies and prevarications may be useful as tools in some circumstances, but relying on them to the exclusion of other solutions will often lead to a future that you do not prefer. If you must tell a lie, you must be careful – it is easy to fall for your own deceptions.

The Stone (May 28th – Jun 25th)

This month will be marked with a challenge unlike any that you have previously faced, but it may come in a form that you do not expect. If you have a chance to do so, take a moment to take stock of your friends, possessions, and advantages.

The Coin (June 26th – July 28th)

Be cautious. Winter is coming, and it is coming to be time to prepare for the challenges of the world that come when new growth ceases, and the world is in slumber. You will find that there are going to be some new issues that will arise even when your ability to grow is limited, so be prepared!

The Spade (July 29th – Aug 30th)

Some things that you might have thought gone forever are only shallowly buried – be ready for some issue you thought put to bed to rear its head once more. There is a strong probability that you will have to deal with some kind of organizational challenge this month.

The Blade (Aug 31st – Sept 27th)

Grave action is not the same as decisive action. Just because something is terrible to undertake, it does not mean that undertaking it serves your best interests or is necessarily the correct course of action. Sometimes a hard thing to do is still bad.

The Mask (Sept 28th – October 31st)

The face that we show others can tell us about ourselves. It may come time to drop a mask – not all, but at least one – in the near future, as who you truly are becomes most important. You may find that this radical honesty helps you to better interact with your community.

The Shield (Nov 1st – Nov 29th)

Learn from the mistakes of others – because you won't live long if you have to make them all yourself. This works the other way too – you will find that there are those who are eager to learn about both the good and the bad things that happen to you, because learning about those things helps them to grow as people, and avoid making mistakes that can be avoided.

The Hearth (Nov 30th – Dec 30th)

Be prepared to defend the hearth and home! The world is perilous, but having a good place to which to return can make all the difference and help to ground you! You will find that there are those who will attempt to bargain with you, offering things that seem too good to be true – it's worth maintaining a healthy skepticism about these offers.

Better Know a Faith: Alejandro

The Adventurer would teach of the faiths of the world and the nature of their faithful. In this issue, we will speak regarding Alejandro.

Alejandro, Child of Apenca and Beldon, and sibling to Arkady, is the god who holds the divine portfolio of love (of all sorts, such as filial, ideological, romantic, etc.), verse, the harp, and song. This last is shared between several gods, with Alejandro's focus being on lyrical and harp music.

Although not evenly distributed through the peoples of Harodom, the

worship of Alejandro is commonly found among aristocrats, and taking orders of the faith is not an uncommon life path for descendants of nobility unlikely to inherit.

Alejandro is closely allied with Arkady and Apenca, owing both to the familial relations, and similarity in domain. Life and beauty being tied to love follows, in a divine sense.

Alejandro (and faithful of same) are opposed by Iccula, with many theologians believing that this is purely ideological; that cruelty,

worked deliberately and with malice, is a part of the faith of the divine portfolio of Pain and incompatible with love.

The faithful of Alejandro will predominantly preach the positive aspects of the faith, but will quietly acknowledge that included within the portfolio are unrequited and obsessive forms of love. While these are not broadly held to be positive parts of love, some theologians believe that it is important to acknowledge the less positive parts of the faith as well.

There is no centralized

Church to Alejandro in the Lakes Region, although faith groups and mystery cults pepper the area. Leadership in such groups often falls to the most charismatic (or only) invested clergy.

Although some of the faithful of Alejandro will shun deliberately causing pain to others, many are fierce warriors, believing that standing up for their faith – and their love – is a noble calling that bears defending.

The holy day of Alejandro, “*Lover's Dance*” is marked on February 14th, when that constellation dominates.

Community Board

This section is reserved for information about the community, and may include unverified information as well as community events.

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The *Adventurer* continues to offer a full year-long patronage or any artist or artisan willing to produce one piece of sponsored work within a calendar year.

Pirate and smuggling activity has returned to normal levels in the areas of the Lakes region surrounding the Ire, following a temporary dip.

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Locals to the area of Buriden's Elbow have begun to celebrate a new holiday that they call ‘coin day’, when (they say) it is good luck to put a coin in the shoe of family or friends.

Pie purloining dire pigeon on the loose! Several sightings have described a massive pigeon swooping in and stealing baked goods from carts and windows where they have been left to cool.

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Omens: Blood on sand and ice. A snowfall in midsummer, a sudden balmy breeze in midwinter, a disruption.

If you have **news**, an **announcement**, a clever **contribution** or a piece of **art** you would like displayed, don't keep it to yourself! The *Adventurer* is happy to help you reach a broader audience!

Ghost Pirates Want Your Entrails, to Keep Their Ships Warm!

***Shiver. Their.
Timbers.***

Sunbeard Forge Armour is worn by warriors, wizards, knights and lords – all of them alive.

“When in duress, dress for success!”

Editorial: Building Together

Once more we have returned to Sandy Bay, and the various projects that have been of limited success at best in this region.

By all rights, this will be a challenge. Previous attempts to settle the area have met with limited success, whether it be to mischance or to more personal misfortunes.

Still, we prevail. The area has strong potential for trading, and can help to build a local

industrial base. That prosperity can be used to help maintain local traditions, while making luxury goods and services available in the region.

What's the takeaway? Working together – building a future in a place that has had trouble with the past – can give us a chance to lay a foundation that will help make a future worth living in.

I can't pretend that there won't be challenges, both physical

and social. Marking any new development is two groups that have become accustomed to doing things their own way. But I do believe that we have more in common than we have dissimilar.

I also recognize that there are threats and challenges. Magic, monsters and mayhem – what else is new? We have faced all of these things before – and I would be frankly shocked if we let such a trivial matter as a monster that wants to kill us stop us now.

Oren D'vann Freedman, Editor

Matters of Faith

Holy Days Just Past

July 10th: Hand's Day (Astrid)

It is thought upon this date in July that the god of thieves was hanged as a mortal, with followers secreting away a stolen hand from the corpse, and wrapping it as a reliquary to the fallen hero of thieves – who then became a god of same. Although the worship of Astrid is severely restricted within these lands, it may be wise to mark this day by keeping a close eye on your possessions.

Aug 8th: Mushroom Feast (Blythe)

The holy day of Blythe, divine of poison, disease, and rot, is often a day to visit the physician or the Apencan, in search of balm for the potential for disease. But too, recently, festivals celebrating wine and ale, pickles and cheeses, and all the things made good by the natural process of decay and the mild toxins of alcohol and brine, have sprung up around this holiday.

Forthcoming Holy Days

Sept. 18th: Day of the Blade (Hemulis)

Celebrating the god of heroes, soldiers, and battle, the Day of the Blade is recognized by the followers of Hemulis as an auspicious day for training and battle. Although Hemulis is truly on the side of all soldiers, on this day, he descends to the mortal realm, and trains with a group of his faithful that are devout and work toward his glory, before resting for twenty-four hours.

Oct. 6th: Dreamers Wake (Bard)

The holy day of Bard recognizes the day when, less than twenty years ago, the Dreaming God was woken from her slumber and once again rejoined the pantheon. Traditions for this holiday are far from uniform, with some blessing pillows and blankets, and other staying up until dawn telling stories in honour of the goddess of tales and dreams.

A Message of Faith

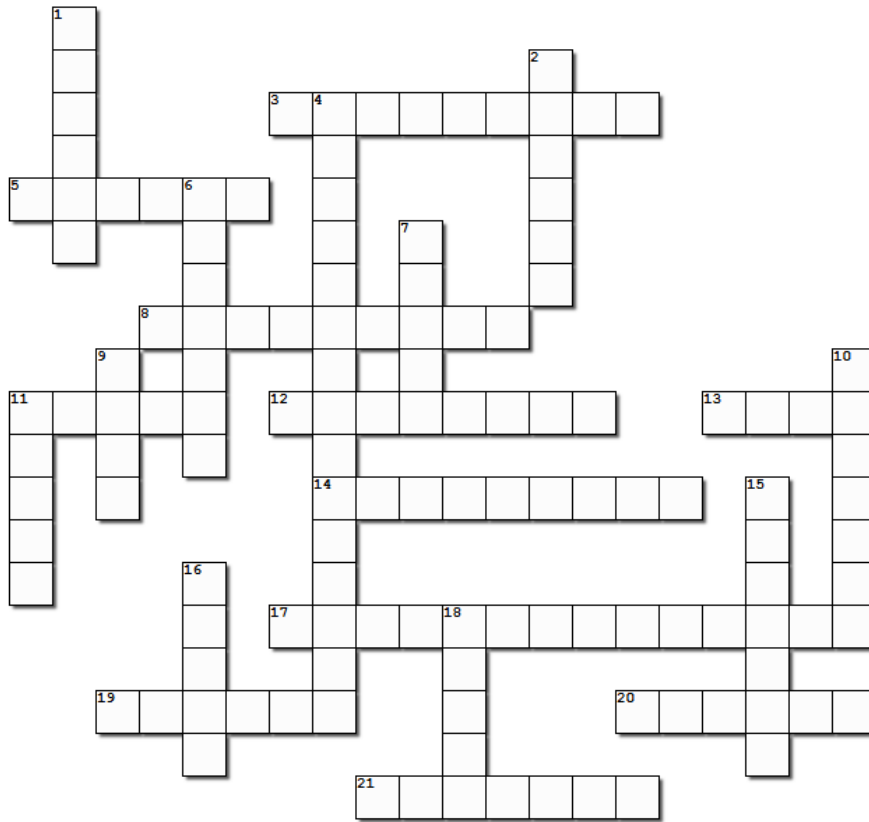
I would like to speak on a matter more practical than most that are covered in this column: the question of zealotry.

Zealotry is broadly an uncompromising set of beliefs that become fanatical, and lead to intolerance of opposing views. It is likely that many in matters of faith hold one or two keystone beliefs zealously, and as the advancing in levels of investment does require devout and sometimes fanatical faith, this is hardly surprising.

However, I warn against true zealotry as a vice. It is true that clerics are expected to hold fast to their beliefs – a belief that you would not hold fast to is at best something you like to believe that you like to believe. This said, clerics are not the gods themselves; we seek to see their work done on the prime plane.

Remember that it takes an amalgam of all divine domains to make this one.

Crossword



Across

3. Doctor or medical worker
5. A typically metal hat
8. Capitol of Harodom
11. A handheld rock
12. Metal shaped into nails, screws, etc.
13. Going out on a limb, bark worse than bite, laying down roots
14. Siege engine with hinged arm and counterweighted beam
17. Bard's domain
19. A portable bulwark personally held
20. A servant of a god, and miracle worker
21. The duchy that Sandy Bay is in

Down

1. Stewed stimulant bean juice
2. Worker of the arcane arts
4. Herbal performance enhancer that kills you
6. A spell for a short-term strength boost
7. Long, short, rapier, epee
9. A sweet smelling flower associated with Arkady
10. Has a holy day September 18th
11. A simple weapon made of cloth that throws things
15. A military unit using horses
16. 'The food of love' - in tones
18. Refined iron used in many projects

Riddles

Riddle 1:

I have no weight
No mass
No colour
But put me in a bucket
And the bucket weighs less.

Answer 1: *eloH*

Riddle 2:

I have legs, but no knees,
A back, but no neck,
Arms but no hands.
What is my name?

Answer 2: *riahC*

Riddle 3:

I have a voice that's only
yours,
And nothing new to say.
What am I?

Answer 3: *ohcE*

Riddle 4:

I start with an E,
And end with an E,
But I carry one letter inside.
What am I?

Answer 4: *epolevnE*

Riddle 5:

I have two faces,
But only one head
If I end on my side,
Your luck is dead.

Answer 5: *nioc*

Riddle 6:

I have royalty,
Weapons,
Jewels,
Organs,
Tools.

Answer 6: *sdraC*

Room to Grow: Construction Update

In an effort to keep you informed about construction and growth in our community, the Adventurer intends a bimonthly column that will update on the status and needs of existing construction projects, and of potential upcoming projects that townsfolk can become enthusiastic about and work toward completing.

Construction Project: *The Expansion of the Town Guard Barracks*

Status: Complete

Overview: Town barracks are the home base and offices of town guardsmen. Completing the reconstruction of the barracks, the barracks are now being improved and expanded to better serve the public.

Progress: As of this month, this project is complete. Professional rangers and guards should receive the full benefit of this project effective immediately.

Construction Project: *Further expansion, paving, and patrolling of local roads.*

Status: Complete

Overview: The highways and roads of Harodom allow for most of its trade commerce. By expanding and patrolling our local roads, we reduce the chance for banditry to be successful, eliminate some wear and tear on carts and wagons, and allow for the easier transit of persons and tonnage between towns, cities, and other settlements in and around Harodom. This will help to increase merchant and local profits.

Progress: At time of printing, this project is complete. Please make your opinion known about future projects that would benefit the area, or the creation of which would help make life more comfortable, accessible, or otherwise improve the life of those local to this place.

Update:

At this point, further community projects are being explored in service to the common good.

If you have a community project that you would like to see come into the common sphere, reach out with a proposal, and roughly what you would estimate such a project might require. It's your community, so helping to build it out can really both empower you and help you to connect with your friends and neighbours.

Having a voice in how a community comes together, the projects that it pursues, can also be really empowering. Take some time to think – do you think that your friends and relatives would benefit from a school? A new pub? A library?

There is no deadline on submissions, but coming up with a roughly costed plan is always a good pass-time.

Creature Feature: Leviathans

The Adventurer wants to encourage adventure – and a part of that includes helping people to be prepared for the kinds of creatures that they may face when out in the broader world. In this edition, we will discuss the broad creature type known as 'Leviathans'.

Although not consistently seen in the waters around Harodom, large creatures known as 'leviathans' are to be found in the bodies of water in the Lakes region. Most recently, this writer encountered one in the vicinity of the Ire.

Although the specific creature seen favoured salt water, 'Leviathan' appears to refer to a broader category of creatures, most notably marked by their mammoth size. Comparable in physical scope to an adult dragon (or larger), at least some of these creatures can breathe air, and may make landfall for specific circumstances, such as laying eggs or breeding.

Nevertheless, these creatures are more agile and adept in the water, where buoyancy helps to support their massive size, much like whales and other watergoing megafauna.

The majority of these creatures avoid contact with terrestrial mortals, although by definition it is difficult to discern if a ship was taken or sunk by one if all hands were lost. These encounters may be the cause of legends of sea or lake monsters – as any adventurer knows, a great many legends have at least some basis in truth, often by someone who saw or understood only part of the situation at hand.

Leviathans that exist in the Lakes region likely either rely on plant life for some of their diet, or hibernate for extended periods, as creatures of this size that are forced by their diet to predate on flesh will make a noted impact on local fish populations and may be more often visible to ships as they prey on them as well.

The majority of the peril poised by the Leviathan recently encountered by the adventurers local to the Sandy Bay region came from its bulk. Massive jaws capable of rapid movement could easily sever a person's head or limbs; enormous tentacles capable of lashing out, able to fully bind a bipedal mortal. A thick protective shell that kept lesser attacks at bay with aplomb.

There exist some who hunt these massive beasts, and are capable of harvesting the beasts' thick hides and defensive natural weapons to be used for arming and armouring with tools that work well underwater. One is forced to presume that such harvesting is infrequent, leading to a princely price for such items.

Although there may be many types of Leviathan local to the Ire, this writer has only encountered the one. It may be safe to assume that features of such a creature may be deduced further if and when they appear.

Dwarven Numbers Game

In this traditional dwarven accounting game, no number should appear twice in a vertical or horizontal line, or in the same square of nine numbers.

8		9		6				4
3		4			7			
	6			9			2	
1	7		5		9			
		3	8		1	9		
			6		3		8	1
	5			1			4	
			9			8		7
2				3		1		9

		6		8	7			
							6	5
3			1		5	7		
	6	2	7					3
	9						4	
4					9	2	1	
		5	4		1			6
2	1							
			5	7		4		

Recipe of the Month: Mushroom Rolls

Mushrooms grow in Harodom in spring, summer, and autumn, with different varieties fruiting at different times. It is my opinion that some of Harodom's mushrooms are among the finest that I've had, but I would strongly recommend not foraging your own, unless you have done all of the living you intend to do for the near future.

- O.

Ingredients:

Filling:

- 12 ounces cremini or brown mushrooms, finely chopped.
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter.
- 2 shallots, finely chopped.
- Kosher salt
- 1 tsp. Finely chopped fresh thyme
- ¼ cup freshly grated parmesan cheese
- Freshly ground black pepper.

Dough:

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling.
- 1 tbsp baking powder

- 1 tsp. Sugar
- ½ tsp. Kosher salt
- 6 oz gruyere cheese, coarsely grated
- ¾ cup buttermilk, cold.
- 6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 1 egg

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Finely chop mushrooms and shallots. Add shallots to a skillet over medium heat with the butter, and cook, stirring, until they begin to soften (about two minutes).

Adjust heat to medium-high, and add salt and mushrooms, stirring until they release their juice, and then it evaporates fully (about 9 to 12 mins). Add thyme and cook for another minute, until fragrant.

Take off of heat and add in parmesan cheese, stirring in salt and pepper to taste.

Spread out flat to cool.

In a bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, sugar, and salt. Add the grated Gruyere, and whisk to combine.

In a small bowl, whisk the buttermilk and melted butter to combine. Add the buttermilk mixture to the flour mixture. With a sturdy spoon, stir to form a sticky, chunk dough.

Turn the dough onto a floured work surface, and knead until it holds together and is mostly smooth.

Roll or pat the dough into a roughly 12 by 18 inch rectangle, and brush out excess flour.

Spread the mushroom mixture evenly across the dough (it may be thin at parts). Along the long side, roll the dough into a tight, even, compact cylinder, and cut about 14 pieces. Brush with egg and water so that the pastry will brown.

Bake about 18 mins, until the buns brown, turning halfway through.