

The Scarsinvale Saga

Conemur iterum

June, 2024 A.T.
Year of the Dancing Mouse

Undead Forces Swell Near Scarsinvale

The region's undead woes continue to multiply. In addition to the continuing crisis in Hammerfrost and the more recent discovery of the necromantrix's forces led by the undead Empress' general in Riverwood, a new twist has entered consideration.

In the area of a nearby Athan temple, a large force of undead Grimwalkers has congregated. It appears that they have bolstered their forces using abducted persons from nearby farms and

settlements. Although their current aim appears to be the creation of further Grimwalkers, this growing force may grow to include other undead forces such as become available.

The growing undead threat in the Reach has stirred rumours of a Diet of Scarsinvale, an agreement that may allow nearby goodly-aligned nations to assist the forces of the Broken Reach in withstanding the undead threat. Whatever their individual politics or beliefs, these nations

have no interest in the rise of a force with the power of a nation antithetical to all mortal life.

At present, these forces do not seem to be aligned in intent, but it remains a possibility that this may emerge in the near future. Whatever else may happen, the threat of these forces individually would be multiplied if they should join forces. Residents are advised to put their fallen beyond the reach of any necromantic forces that might try to raise additional troops.

Aurora Borealis Marks the Night Sky Near the Broken Reach

The night sky has been lit up this month by the dancing Auroras, a nightly phenomenon that is typically confined to the northern parts of the continent of Ariel. These dancing lights paint the night sky with greens, reds, purples and blues, and resemble fire in the sky.

Although unusual, these dancing lights are generally considered nothing to be concerned of, and are indeed considered a positive omen by the people of the North. Some legends state that they are a manifestation of the Bastion of Clovis, a legendary shield wielded

by the god of the vigilant, acting as a further barrier against infernal incursion.

Astrologers concur that this unusual effect will only be with us for a little while longer, and will eventually dissipate. In the interim, *The Adventurer* encourages artists, painters, poets, and anyone else who feels so inspired to take inspiration from this stellar phenomenon.

The odd appearance of the Lights may indicate strange portents coming from the North, so anyone with information about same is encouraged to contact us.

Harodom Nobleman Exonerated: Framed For Treaty Violation

Lord Donovan of Yorik, a nobleman of Harodom was recently named by thugs that sought to make war against Scarsinvale. The Saga has confirmed that this has been investigated thoroughly, and that under the unresisted effect of a truth spell, Lord Donovan was able to deny any involvement.

This appears to be an attempt to stir up trouble in the region, potentially stirring up a new war between Harodom and Eldershire. It would not be appropriate to speculate on who would

best benefit from this deception, but facing several forces that grow their armies through dead bodies does provide several suggestions.

Whatever the cause, similar attempts to frame Harodom for violating the treaty that forbids interference with the politics of the Broken Reach have occurred in nearby towns and settlements. These accusations have been credibly and categorically denied by Harodom spokespersons, and the Saga encourages people to dig for the truth.

Creature Feature: Skeletons

The Saga seeks to highlight a few of the strange creatures that adventurers may find in their travels, so that people can better learn about them before they get jumped. In this edition, we will talk about skeletons.

A common sight in many a tomb and the legions of necromancers, skeletons are typically a complete set of the bones of a humanoid creature that has no further use for them. Granted animation by use of necromancy, skeletons move without muscles and see without eyes, rending them a potent force for night assaults.

Although more powerful skeletal undead exist, skeletons are typically mindless creations that will attempt to literally carry out the last order given to them by someone that they view as an authority figure, typically the caster that reanimated them. Left to their own devices, they will seek out living creatures and kill them.

As skeletons do not think for themselves, it is often the case that necromancers will carry some kind of visible badge or symbol that identifies persons other than the initial caster as an authority from whom the skeleton takes orders.

The strength and resilience of skeletons will largely depend on the creature from which they were made. Lacking internal organs, skeletons are immune to assassination and body blows.

When fighting large groups of skeletons, beware of deep water or snowbanks. Skeletons do not need to breathe, and it appears that they have some sense beyond sight for the passage of living creatures, making bodies of water a useful place from which to ambush. Skeletons of all kinds will often resist damage from non-blunt weapons.

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)

Open yourself to new experiences and the investment of your time will surely pay a dividend. Do not invest too heavily in a new endeavour, in case it is not to your liking, but do try to undertake a new endeavour, so that you may at least find out.

The Harp (Jan 29th – Feb 27th)

Your faith in something will be deeply tested this month. There is a decision that you will be forced into making; you can choose to wait for the last possible minute, or upset the expectations of those who believe that they know how you will choose.

The Fount (Feb 28th – Mar 30th)

We are responsible not merely for ourselves but for those around us and their well-being as well. This month, you will find an opportunity to help a friend, a neighbour, or possibly even a rival. Doing so will pay great dividends in the long run, but may seem hard to countenance at first.

The Dice (Mar 31st – Apr 28th)

While it is important to not judge a book by its cover, some villains are not subtle or clever, but simply do what they say

they will. Try to see the good in everyone, but when someone tells you that they mean you harm, do not allow them the chance to do so. This is a balancing act that will take a great deal of your art and skill.

The Arrow (Apr 29th – May 27th)

Seek to find a new direction in which to grow. While you don't have to do everything yourself, understanding how other people live and what they do can help you to better empathize. Let others help you, and help them where you can – a small good turn can have great reward.

The Stone (May 28th – Jun 25th)

Your destiny is in your hands; although there are likely outcomes to your chosen course of action, your fate is in the wind, and only you can determine its outcome. Your lucky colour is blue, and your lucky numbers are seven, eleven, and nineteen.

The Coin (June 26th – July 28th)

There is travel in your near future, in a way that you may not anticipate; it may be an emotional or a physical journey, but it will take you to a place you have not previously been, and you will learn an important lesson from the journey. Beware of perils along your path, and trust in the advice of **The Fount**.

The Spade (July 29th – Aug 30th)

Remember that the powerful will often extend favours – for a cost. It can be worthwhile to do business with them, but never forget that they may expect something in return, even if the price isn't mentioned up front. You will face such a decision soon.

The Blade (Aug 31st – Sept 27th)

Not all who wander are lost... but some definitely are. If you're finding that you don't know your way, it can be worth stopping to ask directions, or even just for help from a friend. You will face a warrior dressed in black, for good or ill.

The Mask (Sept 28th – October 31st)

The infernal will have an impact on you in the near future. Something you value may become vulnerable in the near future. Do not fret unnecessarily, but do not act incautiously, or the thing you value may be lost, possibly forever. Not all that glitters is gold – or at least, coin.

The Shield (Nov 1st – Nov 29th)

You will be presented with strange gifts, that will have meanings beyond what you immediately apprehend. If you should accept these items, keep them close to hand, because such items are rarely dispensed carelessly, and prizes that seem so very precious that are not hard won often come with odd strings attached. Check early and often to ensure your friends have all the support that they need.

The Hearth (Nov 30th – Dec 30th)

Things are heating up, and you will have to go from withstanding the cold and the weather to the heat. Be steady, bold, and resolute, and offer shelter to those that need it; an act of kindness to one in need will reveal your character to someone who is watching. Do not be afraid to take a chance this month, but as always, be wary of foolish bargains.

Editorial: Proper Planning Prevents Piss-Poor Performance

A bureaucrat myself, I understand that my kin are not broadly welcome in Scarsinvale.

Broadly, I understand why. The reputation for bureaucracy slowing things down is not undeserved. A system is built to accommodate for the potential of error, and to deliver reliable results, not necessarily good ones.

As a consequence, red tape will often slow desired activity,

but there is a reason to have the paperwork.

While Scarsinvale may not need an estate, it may suit the town well to have a central planning area, where meetings can occur, and projects can be tracked.

By tracking a project you can ensure that those involved get paid, that equipment that is needed is ordered (and delivered), that work is not being duplicated without cause,

and that important documents like receipts, treaties, maps and trade arrangements are kept safe and easy to access upon need. It can also track guard reports, and make sure that someone reads when someone writes something important down.

I would strongly encourage Scarsinvale to consider building a central planning office, to help it thrive and take its rightful place as a nation state.

- Oren D'vann, Editor.

Matters of Faith

Holy Days Just Past

May 9th: Order's March (Brack)

Brack's holiday is often observed with the renewal of vows and contracts, and it is considered an auspicious time to pursue new endeavours of this kind. The worship of Brack is most often evident at this time; otherwise quiet civil servants, judges, magistrates, and other members of civil office may be more likely to wear prominent religious symbols, if they so worship.

May 27th: Twilight Festival (Sasha)

The Twilight Festival is celebrated as a recognition of the mysteries and wonder of magic. Beginning at sunset, in places that have strong representation either in the church or of wizards of all kinds, a dusk-to-dawn meal is openly prepared, more lavish in areas where the working of magic has borne wonders in the past year. Rainbows are often seen come the dawn.

Forthcoming Holy Days

June 12th: Mother's Blessing (Atha)

The Feast-day of Atha recognizes the gift of the Earth mother as the last of the spring crops begin to come ripe. It is common for gifts of food and coin to be donated to temples, and farmers and miners will often seek the blessings of Atha upon their labour. The Feast of Mother's Blessing is also a common time for new priests of Atha to formally take up their vows.

July 10th: Hand's Day (Astrid)

The holiday of Astrid is one on which you should keep track of your belongings! The god of Thieves encourages their followers to be daring and cunning upon their holy day, and extends them a little extra luck in such pursuits. Belongings kept in the open may vanish – and belongings kept in tight security may be choice prizes. Many merchants will sell locks and traps in advance of this holiday.

A Message of Faith

Let us take a moment to discuss sacrifice.

Sacrifice can be for a cause, a god, or an ideal. The aim of the sacrifice – whether it be to gain respect, acclaim, to advance a purpose, or for whatever cause – is bolstered by what you give up.

A great deal of magic – particularly components – are built around the idea of sacrifice. What you give up is gone.

But the most meaningful sacrifice must be personal. If someone who had a thousand gold income per year 'sacrificed' a silver of it in tithing, it would hold little significance. Nor would someone else doing that sacrifice for them, or a sacrifice of something worthless to the recipient.

We learn then that to be of meaning, a sacrifice must be real, meaningful, and personal – as all faith must be.

Rumours and Clues

Strange rumours have circulated to the Saga publishing house. These have been passed along, unverified, for your erudition, but we cannot guarantee their complete accuracy.

Several arguments between local farmers have been witnessed, they cannot seem to agree if unseasonal heat or unseasonal frost is damaging their crops. With both types of weather occurring in short order, it is possible that both is true – then again, there may be a mystical source for the different views.

There have been several bog witch sightings in the farmlands surrounding her swamp. terrified farmers speculate she is tampering with their crops.

Charred corpses have been found occasionally throughout the winter. Most have been burned to the point that they have been unrecognizable but some have been found to be at least humanoid in frame.

Several travellers report seeing a scarecrow in odd places along their journey. While the scarecrow has not been seen to move under its own power, it is visually distinct and appears to have been the same scarecrow in different locations.

Travellers should be on the lookout for such a scarecrow, which has been consistently described as ‘unusual and disquieting’, and to inform any locals in the region of such sightings.

Suspicious Dave’s Stews Presents:

Memories of Fine Footwear

“People have said our stew beef reminds them of boot leather. Yes.”

Community Board

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

The *Saga* is calling for donations to be raised in support of the Hammerfrost refugees. Offering up aid and succor to these refugees will help to show Scarsinvale’s

character on the international stage, and also prove a chance to do real good.

A small cache of polished stones was found in a sock at the bottom of a well.

A code-book thought to date back to the Estovic crisis was found in a woodcutter’s cabin

not far from Scarsinvale. The paperwork dissolved when touched.

A hen laid an egg four times in a ferocious windstorm.

Portents: Aurora Borealis. The scent of lavender on the winds. A stone cracks open, revealing an ancient secret.

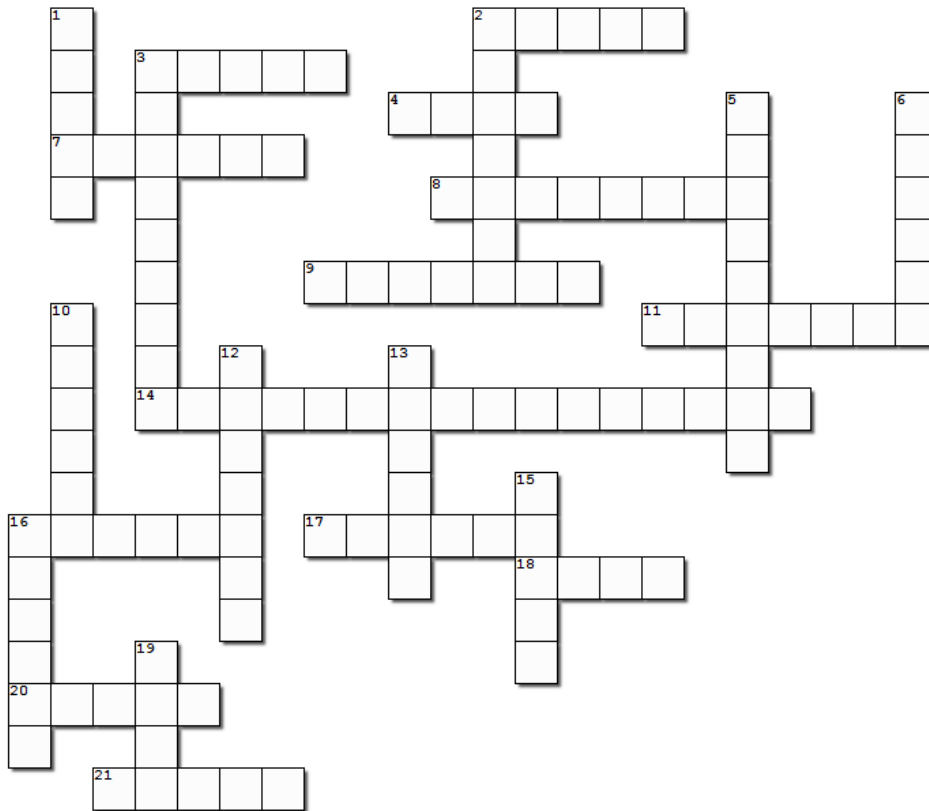
The Saga is brought to you by our Generous Advertisers.

For the duration of the Hammerfrost Refugee Crisis, all proceeds from advertisements will go to the relief fund.

You know advertising works – because you saw it here!

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 *Saga* is happy to help you reach a broader audience!

Crossword



Across

2. A hard covering
 3. A magical well wish to keep safe from harm
 4. On the head, in strands
 7. Milk gone solid
 8. Spell that heals all injuries
 9. Wood like steel
 11. Mixtures with strange effects
 14. Sasha's holiday, May 27th.
 16. Large cunning lizard

17. Magic-resistant feline humanoids
 18. A gel or slime that may attack.

Down

1. A stick with burning light
 2. Do not fight them in caves
 3. First meal of the day
 5. A doctor or surgeon
 6. The art of the arcane
 10. Protective metal or garments
 12. An oracle or seer.

13. A portable wall.
 15. Hyena-Like aggressors
 16. A more militant knife
 19. The Earth-Mother

Riddles

Riddle 1:

I am a feathered wand'rer,
 I leave a trail behind,
 I have no beak or talon,
 Often to a well confined.

Answer 1: *nep lliuq A*

Riddle 2:

A sybilant sound escapes me
 An 's' my body make,
 So should you chance to see me,
 Understandably you quake.

Answer 2: *tnepreS*

Riddle 3:

I hold the longest days,
 And I mark the shortest nights;
 And the fields are green and grassy,
 All thy pastoral delights.

Answer 3: *remmuS*

Riddle 4:

I have four brothers,
 Point, longest, love,
 And also pink,
 Within a glove.

Answer 4: *bmuhT*

Riddle 5:

The beginning of Eternity,
 The end of time and space,
 The beginning of the end,
 And the end of every place.

Answer 5: *'E'*

Riddle 6:

My roots grow deep,
 White crown is high;
 But scale and fall,
 And you shall die.

Answer 6: *naitnuoM*

Recipe of the Month: Apple Strudel

The last of the winter apples need using up and a gnomish pastry seems to be just the job. Goes well with coffee – or tea – and good company.

- O Freedman

Ingredients

6 Sheets Phyllo pastry
3 apples (peeled, cored and diced)
1/4 cup white sugar
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup raisins (which have been soaked in hot water for 5 minutes and then drained)
1 Tsp grated lemon rind
1/2 Tsp cinnamon
1/3 Cup (approx) melted butter
1/3 Cup (approx) fine dry bread crumbs

Completely thaw Phyllo pastry if frozen (takes at least 45 minutes)

Finely slice or chop apples. Toss with sugar, raisins, lemon rind and cinnamon. Set aside.

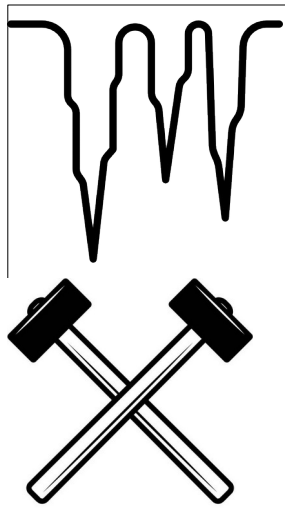
Unwrap Phyllo dough carefully and remove the 6 sheets needed. Unused phyllo can be re-frozen. Cover with damp cloth when not using or it will dry out.

Place 1 sheet of Phyllo on a damp tea linen or cotton tea towel. Using a pastry brush, brush the top with melted butter. Sprinkle with about 1 tbsp of the dried bread crumbs. Place the next sheet of Phyllo on top and repeat the butter and bread crumbs.

About 2 inches (5 cm) from one long edge of the pastry, spoon the apple mixture in a strip about 3 inches (7cm) wide, leaving 2 inches free of filling at each short end. Carefully roll up, jelly-roll fashion, starting at the long edge nearest the filling and tucking in the ends.

Place on a raised edge cookie sheet that has been lined with parchment paper, seam side down; brush with melted butter. Cut 6 to 8 slits in the top.

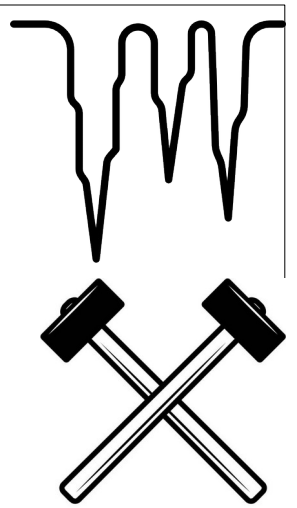
Bake in 400 °F over for 30 to 35 minutes or until crisp and golden. Cool about 15 minutes and then dust with icing sugar (put some icing sugar in a strainer and rub with a spoon). Serve warm or cold.



Hammerfrost Needs You!

Food, equipment and your **good will** are required to take the fight to the undead body snatchers!

Contact Kellskagg of the Scarsinvale Dwarven Enclave for more details!



A Verse By Oren D'vann

Far beyond the city limits,
In a place that isn't, quite,
Gather strange and kindly
merchants
Eyes aglow with distant light.
Should you trust unearthly
sellers?
Gathered in the forest glen,
Offering unlikely wonders,
Miracles beyond our ken?
Buy, perhaps, a perfect moment,
Trapped in amber, cloaked in
frost;
Never pause to ask the merchant
What such trapped perfections
cost.

Or if you, a city dweller
Will not past the outskirts roam,
In abandoned storm-drain sewers,
Come the merchants in the
gloom.
Seek amidst the storm's wrath's
run-off
Miracles that one might dream,
Deep within the city's bowels,
Where the lost things pool and
gleam.
Here, you buy a resolution,
Or a goal that might entice;
Know that it is thought distasteful
For to haggle o'er the price.

Finally, to tempt the seeker
Who with peril cares to tread,
Moonless night go to the boneyard
Which contains the ancient dead.
Here reside the merchants dreadful,
Here the human seeming tears;
Here they know the squeamish
shopper
Has no interest in their wares.
Here are struck the crossroads
bargains,
Which at leisure we repent;
Here we know the dreadful
merchants
Know a coin that's spent is spent.

Comic Strip



Omens and Portents: Visions, Dreams, and Prophecy

*With the visible aurora borealis, a number of rumours have circulated about what such an event might mean. The Northern Lights are thought to serve as Clovis' shield against infernal attacks, but they're not alone in marking unusual tidings. In this section, we will try to discuss **visions**, **prophecy**, and **dreams**, and the ways and care with which they can be interpreted.*

Visions are often akin to waking dreams. Most often, visions are received by diviners of any level of expertise, as training in divination will have the effect of making one receptive to such messages.

However, clerics may also receive visions, as will those who strongly align themselves with an ideal, a cause, or a way of being.

Visions can be illuminating, but should be treated with care. It is often the case that visions will express themselves in a non-literal fashion, and as a category, visions are **sent** by a powerful being, including gods, infernals, fae, and so forth.

Dreams can sometimes overlap with visions. While **visions** may happen at any time, dreams of foretelling will mainly occur when the dreamer is asleep. Although technically the providence of the goddess Bard, a dream may occur spontaneously, as a manifestation of psychic trauma, or as a way for the dreamer's sleeping mind to tell them about something important that they may have observed but not realized.

Dreams will often reveal themselves through symbolism

and metaphor, and interpreting them literally may not be useful.

Some creatures, such as demonic **Nightmares**, can stir up unusual dreams.

Prophecies occur mainly when something of considerable import is imminent. Prophecies tend to be **specific**, and will describe events, persons, or occurrences with accuracy. Prophecies are often subject to some interpretation however.

Prophecies more than a year in advance are generally inaccurate.

Be careful of **self-fulfilling prophecies**, dress in the world of prognostication that seeks to bring about an end or situation instead of simply foretell it.