

The Scarsinvale Saga

Conemur iterum

September, 2024 A.T.

Griffon Dissolved: Griff Under Possession Influence

The people of Scarsinvale are not afraid to stand up for their rights – and doing so has earned them an unexpected dividend.

Griff, former tavernkeeper and recent self-imposed ruler of Scarsinvale (renamed Griffon for the duration of his rule by those who were working with him) was revealed in a dramatic twist to be possessed by an undead presence in service to the powerful undead spellcaster known as the ‘Empress’, in the middle of a fight.

This shocking revelation led to the dissolution of Griff’s pro-tempore government, as the bounty hunter was appalled at his own controlled behaviour.

This constitutes a significant escalation from the forces of the Empress, and the exact reasoning behind it is still unclear. While it may have simply been an attempt to prevent Scarsinvale from taking a place as a centrepiece within a growing city-state that it has been trying to coalesce.

Continued efforts to dig and mine in the area by the undead do suggest other possible reasons for Scarsinvale as a central target for this takeover. Are the undead looking for something in a ruin beneath the town?

Whatever the reason, the town is now undergoing the slow process of rebuilding and setting right what was put wrong by the undead controlling Griff. Let us be mindful of anyone behaving so unusually in the near future, as they may be under the same influence

Undead of Riverwood Burrowing, Building Giant Dome

The undead forces operating out of Riverwood appear to be building a stone dome around their stronghold, and building lengthy tunnels that plague the terrain between Riverwood and Scarsinvale.

These tunnels, ten to twenty feet underground, allow for sudden ambushes, as well as a large cache of additional undead troops, supplies, and listening posts. Although every effort is being made to locate and identify the areas most threatened by these tunnels, it is difficult to

do so effectively.

The question as to why the undead are doing this is on everyone’s minds. Are they seeking some ancient artifact, lost in a ruin buried underground, or simply seeking a place to store their supplies and garrison their forces?

Whatever the answers, the *Saga* expects that we shall learn the truth soon. With the recent attempt to co-opt the settlement of Scarsinvale, it’s clear that the undead do not intend to remain cooped up within Riverwood for much longer – and they will bring trouble to us.

Athan Holy Site Cleansed: Magic Gem Found?

A local holy site of Atha, goddess of the Earth, and plantlife, was until recently plagued by the forces of the undead, that had overtaken the area and forced out the followers of Atha that would ordinarily congregate within this holy site.

Recently however, it has been discovered that these undead have been removed or removed themselves from the area. Either left behind or a part of the force that led to the removal of the undead was a gem, found in the center of the grove.

The gem, cradled in a work of cast iron, does not appear to be involved in any ritual effects or other complex magical workings. There does not appear to be any active magical effects in the area, and there are no other persons in the area to provide an explanation.

Anyone with any information regarding what may have happened in the area is encouraged to pass along this information to the townsfolk of Scarsinvale, or to contact the *Saga* to accomplish this informative task.

Play the Game You Want To

Between infernals, powerful undead, fae, and other creatures that want to draw mortals into their games, it can be overwhelming when you have to deal with some of these beings without preparatory time.

The *Saga* has the following advice for someone confronted with a bargaining or wheeling and dealing creature that is claiming that they have the only solution to your problem.

1. Consider what your interests are in the situation. It may seem obvious, but some of the beings that are offering what they claim to be ‘the only possible solution’ are more interested in their benefit than your own. Taking a moment to consider the resolution

that you actually desire can help you to ensure that the outcome that you get – whether you choose to partner with these beings or not – is the one that you would prefer.

2. Take some time with friends to brainstorm other possible solutions before you accept. When a problem is new, and the knock-on effects it carries with it are obvious, it can be easy to get carried away by someone providing a solution. If they are really interested in resolving the issue, then they won’t mind if you take a few minutes to try and come up with other solutions. Even if they mean well, other solutions might cover things that they hadn’t previously considered – ways that might be easier or even cheaper.

3. Think about the timeline that you are actually on. If someone is trying to rush you into a decision, they may be trying to befuddle you by not giving you time to think or consider other options. The truth is, many crises that have already realized negative outcomes may have a delay before any further negative outcomes could possibly come about. If that is the case, you may have some time to forestall the next problem.

If you carry these three pieces of advice with us, you will be more resilient against possible bad actors trying to convince you to make decisions in the heat of the moment that might lead you to outcomes that you would not otherwise have chosen.

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)

Learn from the small signs in the world, that happen all around you. Trust in the gods, but cut the cards. You will be visited with opportunities if you can but grasp them, but beware; some of the choices presented to you will lead to undesirable outcomes.

The Harp (Jan 29th – Feb 27th)

If fate is a song, then as you sing it, avoid the discordant notes where you can, at least for the near future. While it may well be that you can survive strife, taking chances beyond what is needed at the moment may put you into more peril than you would ordinarily face.

The Fount (Feb 28th – Mar 30th)

Learn from the mistakes of others – you’ll never live long enough to make them all yourself. You will be given opportunities to re-evaluate your perspective on something important to you in the near future. Beware beings wearing red that offer you deals without a clear payment plan.

The Dice (Mar 31st – Apr 28th)

You cannot just cut away the parts of yourself that you would rather not have. Instead, learn to deal with the parts of

yourself that you find troublesome, because in the near future you will find them inescapable. Good things are likely to come in threes, but be warned; ill omens come in fives.

The Arrow (Apr 29th – May 27th)

A new venture is likely to come your way, and you can profit greatly by it if you but reach out your hand. There will be an opportunity to build your acclaim by taking a risk, but be careful of who you step on when you are on your way up; you will face them again if you should suffer a reversal.

The Stone (May 28th – Jun 25th)

We are often called upon to plant trees that we will never enjoy the shade from. Something that is being presented to you now will give you a chance to impact people you have never even met; however, this will be a ‘sunk cost’ that you will not realize in your lifetime.

The Coin (June 26th – July 28th)

Find solace in the small things in life. The near future will challenge you in ways that you may not find agreeable; it is at these times that you must find comfort where it may be found, and accept that there are simply unpleasant things that you will have to cope with that cannot be easily overcome.

The Spade (July 29th – Aug 30th)

None of us can do what all of us can do. Seek aid, guidance, and collaboration with people who are like and unlike yourself, and you will find that the outcomes that you realize will be greater than any that you could have accomplished on your own.

The Blade (Aug 31st – Sept 27th)

A blade carried too long will eventually cut the hand that bears it. You do not need to absolve yourself of the burdens that you carry, but be mindful of them, because in the fullness of time you may find that if you do not rest, rest will take you.

The Mask (Sept 28th – October 31st)

There are some people that, despite your best of intentions, you will not be able to trick or gull; to that end, be ready to be direct and thoughtful in your action. It does not hurt to prepare now for challenges that will come later. Your resolve is likely to be tested; do not be found wanting.

The Shield (Nov 1st – Nov 29th)

Mistaking bluntness for candor is an easy mistake, but not one by which you will profit. Understand that there will be times when a soft answer might turn away wrath – what you do when wrath has turned away, is between you and your scruples. Undead are likely to dog your steps in the near future, and although many are mindless, this means that they are also difficult to overcome through guile.

The Hearth (Nov 30th – Dec 30th)

Keep the home fires burning. There will be enemies at your gate in the fullness of time; already the wolves are prowling. Since you have the time to build, build now, and you will find that your time taken is likely to pay dividends far higher than rapid action in the direct face of an adversary. You will face a stranger in red or black who will offer you a deal.

Editorial: The Hidden Machinations

Sometimes, the plans of an adversary are obvious.

Sometimes, they are less so.

It seems a simple dichotomy, but it can be easy to assume that without an obvious common thread that several events happening at the same time may be unrelated. And while sometimes this can be the case, it's also worth considering whether or not it's actually *true*. After all, many streams can feed a greater

river, and many actions can lead to a greater consequence.

Beings – especially immortals or near-immortals such as celestials, infernals, gods, fae, and undead – may operate on a longer timeline than any mortal would consider reasonable for the gains that they mean to realize. For this reason, when dealing with these creatures, time spent at the library is time well spent – many of them are incapable of creativity, and may be repeating schemes

that have previously appeared in history.

Do not be paralyzed by indecision – obviously you have to deal with the issue in front of you. But it is definitely worth wondering from time to time whether several events that occur around your community are being orchestrated by a single third party.

And catching them off guard is so very satisfying indeed.

- Oren D'vann, Editor.

Matters of Faith

Holy Days Just Past

August 8th: Mushroom Feast (Blythe)

The holy day of the god of rot, poison, and disease is one most often celebrated with a visit to the local physician. While the faithful of Blythe may be abroad on this day – and every reasonable care should be taken to avoid them – in Harodom and tradition has formed for ensuring that your own health is good... and not leaving your food or drinks unattended.

September 18th: Day of the Blade (Hemulis)

The festival of Hemulis is frequently viewed by His faithful as a chance to test their mettle against one another in holy combat. However, it is also a day to begin great quests, and in military or guard organizations, it is also frequently a day upon which new officers or NCOs are named. Hemulis famously trains with his faithful on Ariel upon this day.

Forthcoming Holy Days

October 6th: Dreamer's Wake (Bard)

The servants of Bard commemorate this day as the day that Bard returned to the world. The goddess of stories and dreams, Bard's servants often mark this as a day of rest, or a day to tell tales, both tall and true. Most importantly, it is observed as a day when anything, even outlandish things usually only found in fairy stories, can happen. Join friends in telling stories of times past or dreams yet to be realized.

October 15th: Harvest Song (Arkady)

The celebration of Harvest song is a celebration of the beauty of autumn, and the joys shared at the harvest. Harvest song traditionally notes the changing of the colours of the leaves, and is celebrated with a large feast. Primping and preening before the feast, and donations to Arkady are traditional.

A Message of Faith

I would speak now on a matter of faith and hierarchy.

With understood 'tiers' of investment in faith, it is easy to understand why some people might come to believe that all faiths organize themselves based on levels of investment.

Indeed, being a more invested cleric might mean that you have a *deeper personal relationship with your god*, but not necessarily that you would be able to act as a good *priest* of that divine patron. Someone could, quite reasonably, be an excellent priest and cleric of Beldon, without having the interest or ability to keep or maintain a church, with the requirements of accounting for donations and ensuring that bills and servants are paid.

It is good to respect those deeply invested in their faith in the same way that it is good to respect anyone who has put effort into excelling at what they do. But this does not translate into 'good at all things'.

Thinking Above Your Weight Class

While Scarsinvale and its denizens have never shied away from a fight, there are times when the world throws at the townsfolk more than they can ably manage.

With this in mind, it behooves us to plan, to think, and to act in conjunction with preparation. When facing off against the mindless undead, remember that unless controlled by a greater undead being or spellcaster, they do not think or plan, making them susceptible to simple traps – even a trip wire or barrier pit can make

a difference for someone fleeing for their lives!

Running into a fight can be laudable when the costs are well weighted, but Scarsinvale's greatest victories have come when we have used sense and reason in conjunction with our martial might. If, for instance, we sought to inconvenience a bonelord that we did not have the capacity to banish, severing its limbs will not allow it to generate a new body, but will severely hamper such a beast.

Adventurers, explorers, and heroes are at our strongest when we best leverage our advantages. Take what you know, and use it to keep the enemy wrong-footed. For intelligent foes, hurl insults, jokes, anything that they might not expect; a demon that has fallen to its knees laughing is likely to lose a fight as surely as one that has been mortally wounded.

Remember that you have friends and allies, and work together.

Scarsinvale can be dangerous.

Monsters might try to kill you.

Don't put up with that shit. Get some armour.

The only cheap thing at Sunbeard's Forge is the price!

Armour so good that the smith wears it himself!

"When in duress, dress for success!"

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 *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 recent shipment of figs has been recalled by a local merchant who has discovered small phials of an unidentified fluid being smuggled inside the figs. The figs bear no markings from the outside, so how these phials got there is anyone's guess.

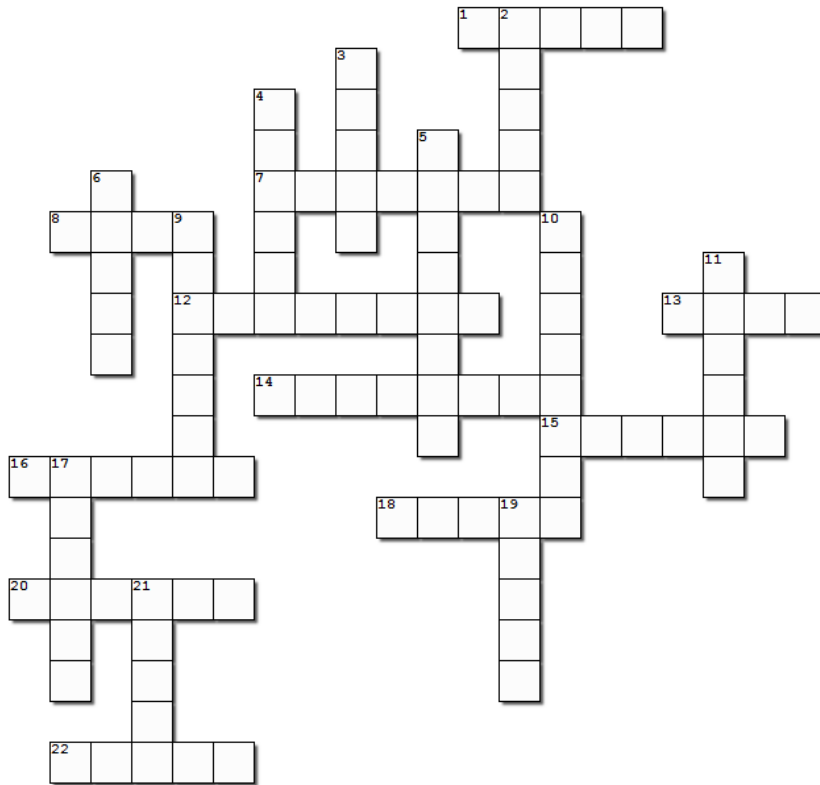
The roots of a fallen tree came up with an unexpected find; the perfectly intact but inanimate skeleton of a giant mole, cause of death so far unknown. Its bones were carved with an intricate, delicate pattern..

*

Portents: A frog with three eyes. Dreams of freezing fog descending and a feeling of certain dread.

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

- 1. Put your back into cleaning!
- 7. Mage-bane metal
- 8. Frozen Flakes
- 12. A spell to discover magical properties
- 13. A highway or path
- 14. An addictive intoxicant, often illegal.
- 15. Orange-brown metal easily bent.
- 16. A pub or bar.
- 18. Twinned leather bearing a heavy load.

- 20. A waxen pillar topped by flame.
- 22. A story told in sleep.

- 11. A brown stimulant fluid.
- 17. Goddess of beauty.
- 19. A fact or un-lie.
- 21. Rhythmic movement to music.

Down

- 2. The act of making something cooler
- 3. A dish or piece of armour
- 4. A shambling corpse.
- 5. What Scarsinvale briefly was, recently.
- 6. A short, personal blade.
- 9. A barely spoken word.
- 10. A building for armed forces.

Riddles

Riddle 1:

I'm stillness where life
Once found a home
An end to strife,
No longer roam.

Answer 1: *htaed*

Riddle 2:

Name me,
And so break me.

Answer 2: *ecneliS*

Riddle 3:

My name has three syllables,
But I contain only a single
letter.

Answer 3: *epolevne*

Riddle 4:

Smith's friend,
Chef's tool,
Burns you in
The hands of (a) fool.

Answer 4: *eriF*

Riddle 5:

A mighty army guards me,
And I am a golden hoard,
Your victory is sweet with me,
You need a comb, not sword.

Answer 5: *yenoH*

Riddle 6:

The first in my name
Is the shape of my form,
I'm naked less 'd'
To follow

Answer 6: *ekanS*

Recipe of the Month: Olive and Fig Tapenade

Small bite meals can be perfect for when you might be called to a fight and don't want to linger over-long over a plate.

- O Freedman

Ingredients:

3 - 4 Fresh black mission figs, chopped ((about 1/2 cup))

1/2 cup Kalamata olives, pitted and chopped

3 Tbsp olive oil

3 Tbsp balsamic vinegar

1/2 clove garlic, grated or finely chopped

Fresh ground pepper to taste.

Instructions:

Wash the figs and then slice in half and then chop.

If the Kalamata olives have the pits inside, using a knife push on the olive and the pit will come out easily. Chop the olives.

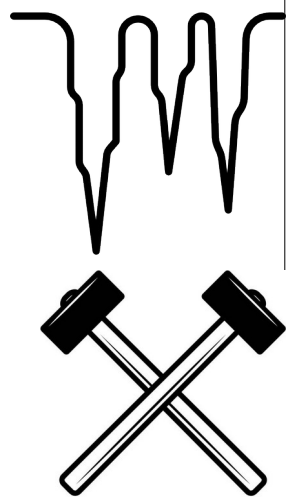
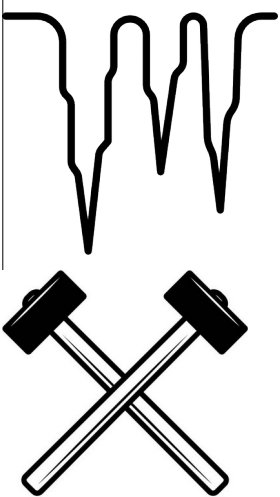
Add the figs, olives, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, garlic and pepper to a food processor and pulse all the ingredients.

Serve with thinly sliced baguette or crisp crackers.

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

“Experience is teacher”
Is a thing I’ve heard before,
But errors made by others
Can be teachers ever-more.

For whether you’re a dwarf,
Or a minotaur, an elf,
You’d surely die before you try
To try all things yourself.

So learn from your experience,
And never think to shy
Variety’s society,
Of all the things to try;

But don’t put on a pedestal
Experience alone,
And hear of tales of hills and dales
You’ve not seen on your own.

Should you see the whole world over,
And you sip each proffered glass,
Your tale is through with much to do,
So take a masterclass.

You have wisdom born of hardship,
And of struggling and strife,
I must agree that what you see
Can educate your life.

But “experience as teacher”
Is far from the final word,
And to think to spurn what you could learn
Is patently absurd.

So see what you experience,
And do what you can do;
But learn and grow from others’ know;
And you’ll live longer too.

Combating Greater Undead

With undead becoming prevalent to the point of ubiquity in the Broken Reach, it doesn't hurt to be aware of their weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

When facing off against the undead, it can be easy to panic. There is an inherently unnerving nature to seeing the dead move autonomously, in ways that resemble but do not closely mimic the movements of the living.

Keeping your head is the surest way to keep your head. Remember these techniques, and you will have a fighting chance at surviving your encounter

and even coming out on top! In this, we will discuss Greater Undead.

Greater Undead cannot be made by more commonplace spells – some may be made using spells of legendary power, while others arise only naturally or through complex ritual unavailable to battle magic.

Skeleton Lords, known elsewhere as **Greater Skeletons**, are created through a terrible curse that rots the flesh off of a body. This curse can be cured only while the subject is still alive; skeleton lords will return

unless a ritual is performed to unbind the curse from their spirit, or their spirit is banished. They are resistant to all damage that is non-magical.

Lyches are powerful undead spellcasters thought to retain much of their identity from life. They come into being by way of a powerful ritual that leaves them with **spirit holds**, vessels for portions of their souls that prevent them from being truly destroyed. A Lych is a more powerful spellcaster than they were in life, but can derive no pleasure from earthly delights.

Revenants are familiar to the Reach, but arise only in the presence of powerful magic, and there is no known battle magic that compels their creation. They may only be slain how they were slain in life, and if dropped, their body will vanish as soon as eyes are no longer upon them. The use of a **Death's Delving** can be used to determine the original cause of death when the subject is incapacitated.

Remember that while these undead may be able to speak, reason, or express desires, that with undead transformation comes a hatred for all living beings.

House Toth

Premium merchant goods at quality prices.

The best quality goods produced by Harodonian crafters, available to you.

Please allow lengthy shipping delays for service outside of the borders of Harodom.

New Monsters and Novel Challenges

There may come times when you are facing off against something wholly new. This can be a difficult challenge; with many forms of monsters and challenges, there is at least some manner of precedent. A zombie giant is tougher and larger and more difficult to fight, but at its core is still a zombie.

A creature that does not easily compare to existing threats can be more difficult to find weaknesses or anticipate strengths.

To this end, the *Saga* has these handy pieces of advice for what to do

when a monster or challenge is entirely novel to you.

1. Don't panic. Panic can reduce your powers of observation and can prevent you from coming up with new ideas and things to try. This can take practice to quell within yourself, but will most often help your situation.

2. Look for any outward signs as to the nature of the creature. Beings that are semi-solid such as oozes, may be corrosive or acidic. Beings that are large tend to be strong, but may not be nimble – attacking from a distance

may give it additional trouble!

3. Try to determine if the creature is acting on orders, instinct, or intelligence. A creature that is following orders (like many forms of created undead) is not creative, and may not know what to do in a situation that it has not been prepared for.

4. See if the creature corresponds to anything in your environment. If there is a fire blazing nearby, it may be elementally aligned with fire. If it is specifically *avoiding* that fire, try hitting it with fire.

5. Try to observe the creature physically, so that you can describe it to others. Any observations that you make can then be compiled with observations that others may make if they encounter the same creature, or similar ones, elsewhere.

6. Don't be afraid to retreat. If you find that you are overwhelmed, it is more important that you tell others about this threat than that you personally defeat it. Retreating so that you can do so is the best thing that you can do to help your friends and neighbours.

Comic Strips



Handy To Have On Hand: Further Useful Adventuring Kit

It can be hard to save the region, fight evil fae, and still remember to take care of yourself. In this ongoing series, the Saga will give some tips for keeping your gear in functioning order.

Don't forget – if you look after your gear, it will look after you.

The *Scarsinvale Saga* has previously discussed useful equipment for an adventurer to have on hand. However, we do not claim to have a comprehensive posting anywhere, and would like to propose some supplemental equipment that may be useful to an adventurer.

These items are in addition to items suggested elsewhere in the publication history.

A Quill, Ink, and Notebook: It is not uncommon for puzzles or passwords to be found in the course of an adventure. The ability to take notes – and to leave notes for those that come after you – can be extremely useful to any adventurer.

Marbles or Ball Bearings: These tools can be fruitfully used to determine if a floor is level, or to find the lowest point in a room, useful for seeking out drainage or other tunnels that may be useful for unexpected ingress or egress from an area.

Containers or Bottles: There are times when it may be useful to take samples of strange liquids or fluids, and these containers can be essential for that purpose.

A Stick: Unquestionably the least expensive item on this list, a stick of sufficient weight and heft can be thrown to trigger a tripline, or to prod the floor or wall ahead of you to see if it is real without endangering something you might miss, such as an arm.

A Knife: In addition to being useful as a weapon, a knife can be used as a screwdriver, to prise up a difficult edge, to cut a line, or to take a sample of moss, mould, or something else you may not wish to touch directly.

A Whetstone and Oil: Useful for maintaining an edge on a blade, a whetstone is also useful for maintaining tools and oil can be used both to lubricate and ignite.