# GIANT in the PLAYGROUND...

# News



#### having fun with games

### News

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by Rich Ruclay

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#### 2021-10-13 — AMFES: Summer 2, Now with Digital Tokens Included





So we had a series of technical problems that pushed this way past its namesake, but I'm happy to finally announce the release of *A Monster for Every Season: Summer 2*, available to buy right now on my Gumroad page. If you've bought any of the previous sets, you basically know what we're doing here. It's a set of 425 monsters (and heroes) that you

can print out and fold up to use as miniatures in your fantasy roleplaying game. For this set, we focused on sailors, celestials, and psionics, along with a smattering of dragons and bird-people and such.

And for the first time, we're including those of you who play online, too. This set will include a complete set of digital tokens like the nice birdfolk pictured above that you can import into your favorite tabletop simulator program. Now you can enjoy your stick adventures when the whole party can't all be in the same place. Which is a thing that happens. And since I know this is going to be the top question I get, yes, these will be added to the older sets on <a href="Gumroad">Gumroad</a>. I have no idea how long it will take for me to go through and convert them all (and frankly I hope by this point we all realize that every attempt I make to predict how long something will take me is unrealistically aspirational, at best). Until then, you may need to have some tightly focused adventures, thematically speaking, so I'll try to hurry.

#### 2020-11-27 — 2020 Holiday Ornament and Black Friday Sale



The 2020 OOTS Holiday Ornament is available now, featuring Minrah vs. Greyview in a battle that was difficult to keep in the boundaries of a tiny ceramic oval. No new t-shirt designs this year; I just didn't have time to get them done and here we are at the holiday shopping part of the year already.

Speaking of things that I *didn't* put on sale, there's not going to be a wall calendar this year, either. I mentioned this on my Twitter but last year's calendar was

fiasco-adjacent in terms of getting it printed and mailed to people before the start of the year which it depicted. As much as I loved drawing the big images, there were a lot of unhappy customers and I didn't want to do that to everyone again. Thanks to all of you who bought calendars in the past, and hopefully by this time next year I'll have thought up a new (less time-sensitive) annual product. For now, we'll have to settle for a massive Black Friday sale on OOTS stuff at Ookoodook. 50% off or more on most OOTS products, now through Monday.

Finally, there will be one more product announcement coming in the next week or two, but it'll be digital. The main thing I've been working on that's left me with so little time (other than the regular comic) is the sixth installment of the print-and-play miniatures, *A Monster for Every Season*. I'm adding something new for this volume that people have been requesting since the first set but it's added a substantial amount to the production time. I really wanted to

get that finished in time for this announcement, but, well. Yeah. Next week, fingers crossed.

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#### 2020-02-22 — The Forums Are Back!

If you haven't noticed yet, the forums are (finally) back. We ended up having to make a lot of behind-the-scenes changes, including splitting them off to their own server, but they should be running a lot more smoothly now. If you want to read more about this, I made a forum announcement. The main takeaway is that we expect this to be stable going forward, but there are a few options where we won't be 100% certain until we see how it reacts to the full load of all the forum users. So we may need to take them back down in a few weeks and change some options, but we'll do our best to tell you when that's about to occur.

#### 2020-02-03 — Support GITP and OOTS with Patreon

Welcome back to the new story arc of *The Order of the Stick!* If you haven't been keeping up with the site during my hiatus, we've, uh, had some issues. Mainly, we need to move to a new server, and I said over the weekend that I would have more information about how we plan to make that happen. The details about when the forum will actually be back online are still being hashed out, but there has been progress on the financial side. I'm happy to announce that Giant in the Playground <a href="now has a Patreon page">now has a Patreon page</a>, with the funds raised being dedicated to paying for a new server (and for the work needed to move the forum database to it). A surprising number of readers suggested that they'd be interested in me setting something like this up when I mentioned the server expenses, so now I have.

One thing that I know some of you might be worried about is that many creators will post a lot of exclusive new content behind the subscription wall at Patreon, and I definitely want to reassure you that I'm not going to do that. It's just another way for people to support the site if they feel like it, I'm not going to be pushing it like crazy or locking new comics away for patrons. It's 100% optional, you're not going to miss out on any OOTS if you don't participate. I will be fielding questions from patrons over there every month, but even then, the answers will be free for everyone to see.

Anyway, I wrote a longer piece about it and why I'm doing it over on that page, if you want to read it. We'll try this out for a while and if it can help fund a new server, that'll be great. If it can't, well, it was worth a shot.

#### 2020-02-01 — Why the Forum is Shut Down

By now, those of you who frequent our forums will have noticed that they've been shut down for a few days. You may have also noticed the weeks (months?) of persistent slowdowns and time-outs that preceded this, in which case you were paying more attention than I was; I had been deliberately avoiding the site while I took my hiatus to focus on plotting the upcoming story arc and failed to notice the problem until this past week. Sorry about that. At any rate, I talked a little bit about what's going on in my <a href="Twitter">Twitter</a> feed, but I thought I should reiterate and expand upon that here.

I asked my technical guru (you may know him as Rawhide from his forum name) to take a look at what was causing the problem. He turned off the forum and ran some diagnostics, then came back to tell me that it was definitely the forum causing the problem (rather than the comic). The database of all the posts built up over the years had simply gotten too large for the server on which the site is currently hosted to process quickly. But worse than that, if he turned the forum back on, it would immediately grind the entire website to a haltâ€"making it impossible to access the comic, or even to turn the forum back

off again. The only viable solution would be to move the forum to a hosting situation with more memory, an endeavor that would be neither anisk nor free

So that's what we're doing. The forums will be shut do work behind the scenes to move them to a big shiny new s well as this News page) mostly won't be affected during thi new OOTS comic scheduled to arrive this upcoming Mond

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planned. I also would like to reassure everyone that no content from the forums has been lost, and the forum isn't going away, either. If you were playing a play-by-post game or posting your creative work to the forum, it will all still be there after the move. The only open questions are how long the process will take and how much it will cost. We should have more information on how we plan to address at least one of those topics on Monday.

#### 2019-12-02 — End-of-Book Hiatus (and Holiday Ornament)

Today's comic is the last for this volume, and as usual, I'll be taking a little bit of a hiatus before starting the new story. In addition to general planning and writing that I would be doing to prepare, I also need to take a little bit of extra care because this next arc will be the final volume in the *Order of the Stick* saga and I want to make sure I have all my proverbial ducks in a row for the big finale. Don't get too worried that the comic is about to end, though. The last two books took five years *each*, and this final book has the potential to be even longer than either one of them. So there will be years and years of OOTS left, even as the story is headed toward a conclusion.

But as far as the volume ending *now* goes, I'm happy to say that the printed editions of Book 6, *Utterly Dwarfed*, have arrived at the Ookoodook warehouses and at our retail distributors. Those of you who pre-ordered should be getting your copies soon (maybe a touch later if you added in the calendar, since that's not arriving until Wednesday), and those of you waiting for it to arrive on store shelves should start checking in a week or two. And if you're waiting for the digital edition from <u>Gumroad</u>, that will go on sale on December 10. I'll <u>tweet</u> it out when it's available.

Finally, the 2019 OOTS Holiday Ornament is <u>now available</u>, featuring O-Chul and Redcloak, along with a selection of new t-shirt designs. You can check them out in <u>this</u> forum thread, or go right to the <u>OOTS shop</u> at CafePress.

#### 2019-08-26 — Reduced Pre-Order Shipping Rates to Canada and Europe

An update on the pre-order for <u>Utterly Dwarfed</u> (and the <u>2020 calendar</u>): Ookoodook has made a pair of deals with local companies in both Canada and Europe to offer reduced postage prices for any order shipping to those regions that includes a pre-order for one or both products. In some cases, this is as low as \$11, as opposed to the rates that were higher than the book themselves that we were stuck with before. If you already ordered at the higher price, check your email for a link on how to get a refund of the difference. Since this only applies to pre-orders, this rate will only be available until the book is in stock in early December.

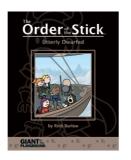
This includes your entire order, by the way, up to 5 kg (~11 lb.) so if there were other books you were thinking of getting but have been avoiding ordering due to shipping costs, now might be a great time to throw them in the cart. In particular, you might want to grab a copy of <u>Snips, Snails, and Dragon Tales</u>, since we only have about 70 copies left before it's sold out in print and we won't be reprinting that one.

I would love to take credit for the reduction in postage and say that I made it happen in response to feedback from customers, but the truth is that I didn't have control over the prices before and I didn't have control over lowering them, either. The people at Ookoodook were able to make these deals by continuing to look for options after we had launched, and their job was made

easier by the fact that they had a certain number of orders in hand for each region. So if you ordered at the higher price, you helped us leaves the price for everyone. Thank you!

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#### 2019-07-29 — Book 6 - Utterly Dwarfed (and the 2020 C





I'm thrilled to announce the sixth book in our main storyline, The Order of the Stick: Utterly Dwarfed. This book will cover all the material in the main strip from #947 until the end of the current storylineâ€"basically, everything since the art upgrade. I know you're probably thinking, "Wait, did we get to the end of the current

storyline?" No, dear reader, we did not. But we're close enough for me to have a pretty good page count for how much is left. The last time we did a new book, it was the smoothest and most hassle-free printing experience I've ever had, by far, and a large part of that was the fact that it had a much longer than usual window between announcing the book and it sitting on store shelves. Therefore, I've decided to keep that same longer pre-order period, which in turn means that if I want to have this book in everyone's hands by Christmas, I need to put it on sale now.

Which I just did! You can pre-order it <u>right now from Ookoodook</u> if you want a printed paper copy or <u>from Gumroad</u> if you want the digital version. We're aiming for the first week in December for the printed copies to start shipping out, with the PDFs releasing to everyone on December 10. You can learn more and ask questions on the <u>forum thread</u> for the book, or check out our <u>product page</u>.

I'm also putting this year's OOTS calendar on sale now. Yes, this is absurdly early. But I didn't want people who were also planning to buy the calendar when it came out to feel like they had to wait to order the book. This way, if you want both, you should be able to order them together now at a lower postage rate and have them both show up at the same time in December. This year's calendar is themed around spellcasting, with each month featuring a different OOTS caster weaving a different spell. You can preorder that through <code>Ookoodook</code>, too, or through <code>Gumroad</code> if you just want a PDF copy. There will still be holiday ornaments and t-shirts as usual, but I won't be announcing them until closer to Thanksgiving (since they ship from a different location anyway).

#### 2019-05-21 — AMFES Vol. 5 - Spring 2 is here!

Hey, so remember when I put out the last set of A Monster for Every



**Season** and I told you I was eventually going to continue it with a second set of four volumes? Eventually is today, my friends. I'm happy to announce **Spring 2**, the fifth set in the series. This one covers Bards and Lycanthropes and some Celestials and a bunch of other stuff. A lot of animal-people, actually. Did you know how many different types of animal people there are in the game? So many. If you want to see what's in it, you can check out the **full list of contents**. Or you can go to the **product page**. Or if you are tired of reading and just want to go get it already, you can go right

to Gumroad, do not pass go, do not collect 200 gold pieces.

I've got no clue when the next set will come out, so if you want to be sure not to miss it, you can either watch this space or sign up for email notifications about my Gumroad releases <a href="here">here</a>. Oh, and they recently added a five-star rating system, so I would consider it a favor if any of you went to that last link

and rated any of the PDFs you already own. It's OK if you don't want to, though.

#### 2018-11-26 — Hey Look, It's the 2019 Calendar (and Ho





OK, so I'm running a little late getting this calendar and the holiday ornament and the new t-shirt designs up, but they are now available to order.

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This year's calendar is the 2019 Magic Item Calendar, featuring encounters between your favorite OOTS

characters and your favorite classic magic items, with the implicit understanding that they may not be your favorite at all because there are a lot of characters in the strip and a whole lot of magic items published, and there are only 12 months in a year. Still, lots of characters, lots of items. We're offering this calendar in printed form from <a href="Ookoodook">Ookoodook</a> and digital PDF form from <a href="Gumroad">Gumroad</a>; both of those are pre-orders at this time. The paper calendars should ship out some time around December 10, and the PDF will be automatically sent to your inbox on December 17. I'd like to remind everyone that we have sold out of the hard copy editions during the pre-order before, so if you want to be sure to get a printed calendar, order in the next few days. Like with previous years, we'll be giving \$2 from each calendar pre-ordered to charity, in this case to help the victims of the California wildfires.

And the holiday ornament showcases Lien and Oona this year, with additional new shirt designs that feature Bloodfeast, Greyview, Oona, Zhou Bo, Saha, and literally the entire Outer Planes. You can pick all of those up from <a href="CafePress">CafePress</a>.

For more information or to ask questions, head on over to the <u>forum</u> <u>thread</u>. Thanks, and I hope everyone's having a good season so far.

#### 2018-08-29 — Good Deeds Gone Unpunished Now Available

I just wanted to give everyone a quick update on the status of *Good Deeds Gone Unpunished*, to kind of close the book on the, uh, book. All preorders have shipped and it's now in stock and <u>ready to be ordered from Ookoodook</u> normally. Likewise, the digital PDFs have gone out to all who preordered that version, and you can buy and download an ebook copy right now from <u>Gumroad</u>. Finally, the books are working their way through the retail distribution chain and should start showing up on game store shelves as early as this Tuesday, September 4th.

So that's it! Everyone who bought the book should have it, and it's now available for everyone who didn't buy it yet to remedy that. To be honest, I almost forgot to announce this here because this project has been the smoothest book launch I've had since I started publishing. Usually, this would be the point where I'd be explaining why they're going to be late, but nope! All cool. Weird.

#### 2018-07-13 — Project Wonderful Shutting Down (and Book Update)

On Wednesday, Project Wonderful, our longtime ad provider for the forums, shut down once and for all. We found out this was coming last month, so we had some warning, but it's not a stretch to say this was still a surprise. This site has never been entirely dependent on advertising revenueâ€"in fact,



we've never put paid ads on the actual comic page, just the forumâ€"but " ha be a significant portion of c In particular, the income we much steadier than the mo sales, which tends to ebb a on whether I've published ...,

recently. So it will be missed, and we've had a few conversations on ways to replace it. One thing we probably won't be doing, though, is

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using a different advertising service. The reason we went with Project Wonderful for so long is that it avoided all of the awful features you think of when you think "website ads." No tracking, no pop-ups, no autoplaying video. As of yet, I haven't found a service that can guarantee not to screw with the site experience everyone has come to expect (horribly dated as it is) from Giant in the Playground. Whatever we do, it won't be that.

Also, special shout-out to Alea Tools, a company that makes tracking doodads for your tabletop games, for being our top advertiser over the years that we were with Project Wonderful. If you have an urge to support a company that's supported us, you could do worse than to take a look at their stuff.

The other thing that happened this week is that the proofs for the <u>new</u> book, Good Deeds Gone Unpunished, arrived at GITP World Headquarters (i.e. my living room). Approving those was the last step that I have any direct hand in, so it's up to the printers and distributors now. We're looking pretty good on the schedule, too; I don't see any reason it won't be available at Ookoodook's GenCon booth as planned. Worst case scenario, we overnight ship a few boxes to cover those of you who pre-ordered it to pick up at the convention. But I fully expect that they'll have enough on the table for anyone who wants to buy it on the spot.

#### 2018-04-30 — New OOTS Prequel: Good Deeds Gone Unpunished!



The next Order of the Stick book is coming, and this time, it's all about Azure City. The Order of the Stick: Good Deeds Gone Unpunished is a collection of five original not-available-online stories about your favorite heroes from the South, including *How the Paladin Got His Scar*, the preguel tale about O-Chul that helped launch our Kickstarter back in 2012, and Spoiler Alert, a story about Therkla's day off that was requested by one of the high-end pledges. But even if you already read those, this book has three all-new stories that no one has ever read (except me,

obviously, and my wife) about Lien, Kazumi and Daigo, and Mr. Scruffy. It's our biggest prequel book yet, although it isn't really because it's not all prequelâ€"the story about the Katos takes place in the present day of the comic, in their new island home. So it's like a side-quel, too.

You can pre-order the new book right now at either Ookoodook (for paper copies) or Gumroad (for digital PDF copies), and the books will be mailed (or emailed) to you in August when they're released. Or, if you're planning on attending GenCon 2018, the folks at Ookoodook have offered to let people pick their books up in person if you select that option when you order. (I won't be there, though, so don't choose that option just because you want them autographed or something.)

For more information, you can check out the product page with all the technical details, or this forum thread where you can ask questions (which you can also do on <u>Twitter</u>, if they're short enough).

The fourth volume of A Monster for Every Season, our set of print-and-play miniatures for your game, is now available on Gumroad. The even though Spring started a few days finished it now, and it's not like I'm going wait another nine months for their tiny p That would just be cruel. For more infor.



at the <u>product page</u> or check out the full <u>list of contents</u>.

As this completes the first cycle of four seasons, there will be a little bit of a break before the next release while I get other work done. But the series will be continuing,

because the response from all of you has been really positive so far and there are just too many monsters left to draw, not to mention whole character classes I haven't touched. One of the nice things about this project is that I can draw a monster or two at a time without it really impacting the rest of my work, so we'll just see how long it takes to build up enough for the next set and publish it when its ready. Probably during the wrong season.

#### 2017-12-06 — Battle Ornament 2018 and New T-Shirt Designs

Just a quick update to say that the holiday ornament and some new t-shirt designs I alluded to in the last update are now available at CafePress. This year's piece features Durkon and Malack throwing down with magical fire. We've also put the five older ornaments in the "battle ornament" series back on sale in case you missed one and want to be sure you have the whole set of six. If you want to see what designs are available and see some nice zoomed-in pictures of them before shopping, you can head over to the thread I started in the forum.

#### 2017-11-28 — 2018 OOTS Calendar, Now for Pre-Order

It's that time of year, when I have a bunch of new stuff to sell that I hope



you buy for whatever holiday you celebrate. The first such thing is the 2018 Stick Tales Calendar, the fifth annual Order of the Stick calendar that we've done. This year, the characters are continuing the tradition of acting out classic public domain stories that was first seen in Snips, Snails, and Dragon Tales and continued in *Haleo and Julelan*. Every month, they'll take on a different set of roles, and then tell a bunch of jokes about it in the bottom half. But for the first time, we're offering the calendar in both printed and digital formats simultaneously. The printed version from Ookoodook will look great

on your wall, but the digital version from Gumroad will get you all the humor with fewer shipping costs.

Please note that both versions are pre-sales: the printed version will not arrive in the Ookoodook warehouse until December 11 (assuming no printer delays), while the digital version will arrive in your email inbox on December 18. The extra week is because I really don't want people who spend extra for the print version to get spoiled on everything before they get their package in the mail.

Also, keep in mind that last year, the printed calendars sold out during the pre-sale period. The reason that happened is that I need to place the order with the printer after I see only the first few days of sales, so I'm forced to estimate how many to get. With something like a book, I order as many as I can, but with calendars, I err on the side of not having a bunch leftover. So if you absolutely want a printed calendar, your best bet is to order as soon as possible. Oh, and if you wanted to add a game to your order, Ookoodook is taking 50% off the price of all board and card games from now to the 10th with the code **CYBERMONDAYPLUS** which I know was yesterday but it still works. even on the OOTS board game.

Finally, watch this space for further announcements in the next week or so, especially if you're interested in getting this year's holiday shirts or something like that.

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#### 2017-10-31 — AMFES: Autumn is Here



In honor of Halloween, the **Autumn** edition of **A Monster for Every Season** is now available. Actually, it was available a few days ago, but I had some technical difficulty updating this News page. Anyway, it's here now. If that's something you're interested in, you can <a href="head-over to Gumroad">head-over to Gumroad</a> to pick it up, or you can check out the <a href="product page">product page</a> to learn more.

**PDF**Shift

Oh, and with regard to the last News post below: No serious flood damage was incurred at the Ookoodook warehouse during the storm and everything worked out for everyone. The floors got wet, and that's about it. So, good news all around.

#### 2017-08-29 — Ookoodook Update, plus AMFES Summer (Vol 2)

Two pieces of news, one serious and one fairly trivial.

The important news is following up on a <u>tweet I made on Sunday</u> to let everyone know that Ookoodook, our direct retail partner, is located in Houston, Texas. I'm sure you're aware that Houston has been going through some historic flooding over the last few days, but as of my most recent contact with Ookoodook's owner Kevin, he and everyone he works with is safe and doing OK. But obviously, they're not going to be shipping any orders any time soon, so if you're waiting on some books or board games, you should expect some substantial delays. We honestly don't even know what the status of the warehouse is at this point; we may be looking at a lot of ruined books. But for right now, what matters is that everyone is safe. I will <u>tweet</u> any additional information I get when I get it.

The second piece of news literally does not matter at all, but here we go anyway: The second set of **A Monster for Every Season** print-and-play gaming miniatures, **Summer**, is on sale now at Gumroad. If you liked the Spring set (see post directly below this one), hopefully you'll like this one, too. You can check out the <u>product page</u> to look at the cover and learn more about it, or go directly to <u>Gumroad</u> and pick it up. I know this may be arriving a little bit too soon after the last one, but I really wanted to release it before the end of the actual season being referenced on the cover, just for the sheer novelty of finishing something on time.

#### 2017-07-05 — New Product Line: A Monster for Every Season!



So this is possibly my favorite unexpected thing that came out of the Kickstarter, and I'm finally bringing it to the general public after five years. Late in the pledge drive, I committed to giving the backers a set of OOTS-style print-and-play monster miniatures for use in their home tabletop games, and then eventually four such sets. I called them A Monster for Every Season, and this first set, Spring, is on sale now at Gumroad. The file contains a whopping 334 creatures to print, cut, and fold before unleashing them in your next adventure. The set includes many nature-themed creaturesâ€"animals, plants, fey, druids, and rangersâ€"as well as a bunch of green

monsters like goblins, orcs, and trolls. You can download a complete list of every creature in the set here. And it's only the first of four seasonal sets; the

Summer set is even bigger and should be available in the next few months (though this one was supposed to be up before June 22, south

There's a lot more information on our <u>product page</u>, ar questions, you can ask in the <u>forum</u>. I'm just excited to be a with everyone finally, since I really am happy with how well hope they make everyone's gaming experience just a little

because it's hard to get a miniature for a pack mule otherwise, and what else are you going to use to carry your 70,000 copper pieces to town?

## 2017-02-21 — New "Haleo + Julelan" Story and Blood Runs in the Family, Both in PDF





So last year I released the first of the Kickstarter exclusive stories, *Uncivil Servant*, to the general public to buy through Gumroad. Today, that process continues with the second such story, *Haleo and Julelan*. This is a Elan's retelling of the classic Shakespeare play *Romeo and Juliet*, with all the roles being played by your favorite OOTS characters (ike they did with Hamlet in *Snips, Snails, and* 

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Also, the most recent main story compilation book, *Blood Runs in the Family*, is also <u>now available</u> in PDF format for the (very low compared to the print version) price of \$19. So if you've been collecting those, there you go.

#### 2016-12-15 — Calendars Now Available as PDFs (Because We Sold Out)

Hey, so, it turns out we sold out of those calendars pretty quicklyâ€"earlier than we ever have before, in fact. So if you wanted to get one and didn't get there in time, I've put the 2017 calendar up on Gumroad as a digital PDF. It includes an explicit note on the back letting you print it out for personal use, so you can bring it to the local print shop and get a copy for your wall. Or you can just look at it on the computer, that's OK too.

In fact, since this is a thing that some of you have been requesting for a while, I've put the previous three calendars up as PDFs at the <u>Gumroad store</u>, too. Obviously, they aren't terribly useful as calendars, necessarily, but they're still filled with art and jokes, and you can still print them out either in whole or part. So don't think of it as a calendar, think of it as a bundle of mini-posters. And speaking of bundles, there's a special <u>30% off bundle</u> if you really want all four (it's OK if you don't).

#### 2016-12-05 — Ornaments for 2016 (and Earlier!) On Sale Now

As cleverly foreshadowed in my last post, the 2016 Order of the Stick Holiday Ornaments are <u>now on sale</u>. The "battle" ornament features Belkar and the magic of the season, which in this specific case turns out to be an enchanted knife for killing hobgoblins. Meanwhile, this year's "snowfall" ornament features the whole Order, and that's because it's going to be the last in this particular design series. This was our first set stretching back to 2004, and starting next year we'll have a new design (or we won't have two, I haven't decided yet). Since these designs are being retired, we've also got one last





chance to get any that you missed (or last to yuletide acc previous "s available no the end of t will wander



wastes, never to be seen again.

Normally, I release a slew of t-shirts with these ornaments, but this year I've been drawn

away from my desk more than normal by a pair of back-to-back family emergencies. Something had to fall by the wayside, and I chose the shirts. Maybe I'll add a new slate sometime in the Spring, if things work out, but it's just the ornaments for the holiday season.