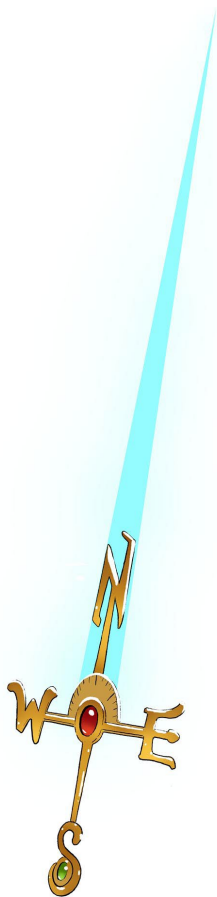


Weather Vein



This was surely the room. Behind the giant stone door, the final chambers we sought.

“There are no lights here!” I told Sharlatan. My flashlight had gone out and I’d left it with the computers.

“No problem,” he said. Suddenly, the room was lit. There were no bulbs or torches; it just suddenly felt like we were outside on an overcast day; not in an underground chamber. The Sharlatan was holding up a magnificent sword.

“Is that making the light?” I asked. The sword had a beautiful blue blade, only slightly glowing; it was hard to tell. I

looked closer, and as I did, it slowly became clear that I was peering into sky. A sliver of heavens.

“The blade is a remainder of the universe as it once was,” explained Sharlatan. “As I hope it will be again...”

All I understood was that I was looking into something impossibly pure and mighty. Clouds of power I saw within, and I heard rumblings of terrible thunder. It didn't light the room like a bulb or a flame. Light didn't beam or emanate from it. The room was just lit.

Holding this slice of sky was a peculiar hilt. It seemed made of brass, shaped

reminiscent of a weather vane.

He held up the sword, and I heard the faint sound of wind. “Dei-drafts,” he told me. “Divine winds moving through my sword Weather Vein. It will aid us in an orientational manner. Tell us which way to go.”

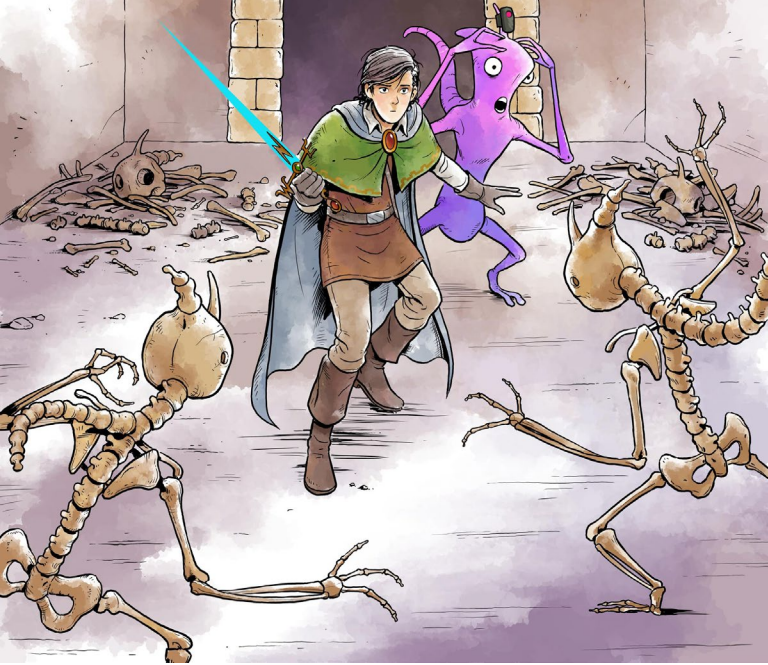
And it did! The tunnels were like a maze, but he took us through with confidence. The hilt seemed to morph slightly as we wandered. Different winds from different places, Sharlatan explained. Soon we were there. The secret chamber which stored the legendary X of Aeronautto. It was the first really scary room we’d found. Actual bones littered the floor. Whole skele-

tons here and there. At the far end, on a dais, sat a box.

“I think your horn-thing isn’t working,” said Sharlatan. “Or maybe it’s something I’m carrying.”

“My horn thing? The noise-cancelling thing?” I looked around and saw that the skeletons were moving. They were actually standing up! “Booby traps?”

“Get to the X!” Sharlatan cried. I was too scared. Sharlatan had already swiped at two skeletons, crumbling them back into bones. But two were still in our way. “They’ll be drawn to my sword!” he shouted. “Go!”



I ran, and he was right, once again. I got to the box and opened it. There it was. I grabbed it and turned back to see how Sharlatan was faring. His blade swung at the skeletons. It didn't cut the bones or harm them. It seemed to pass through them, breaking the spell that moved them, and they fell

apart. I imagined I saw their spirits released, rising away in peace.

But I didn't have time to recover, for that wasn't all that fell apart! The room suddenly shuddered, cracks forming on the floor. More booby traps? Or just the wrath of more woken dead? The floor opened beneath me, and I fell into darkness...

© 2020 Kelly Ishikawa