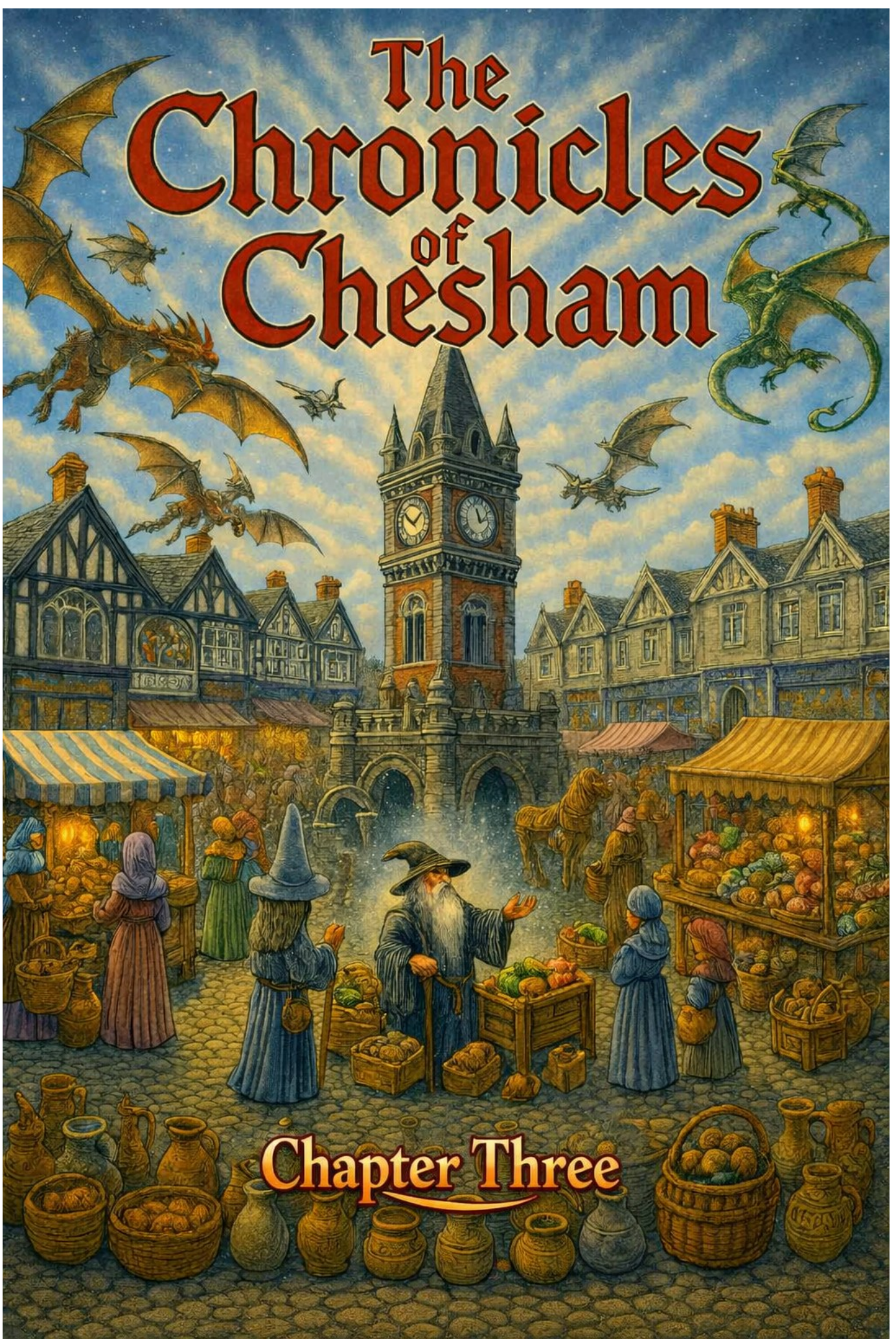


# The Chronicles of Chesham



## Chapter Three

## Chapter 3 – Getting on with the Story

And so, on this fine Shouty Wednesday, Frank was not in a good mood, he had spent the entire afternoon out in his chariot looking for people to splash, and had not had a single success – very disappointing.

All that talk of splashing had focused the minds of the group on the Queens Head wet shirt competition, that was extremely popular with the locals. Now this is an alternative universe, so let's allow for some explanation. Yes this was an exercise in drenching human beings (and other creatures) so that their attire became wet and clingy but there were two main differences.

Firstly, this was an activity that was strictly men only (sexist!), and secondly the liquid that was used was beer. This had created an interesting sub-competition, which is who could open their mouth the widest and catch the most beer whilst being drenched. Who looked the most fetching after becoming beer soaked had become something of secondary consideration.

It turns out that being loud also meant that you were quite good at keeping your mouth wide open, and Timmy the Orc and Bob between them had caught nearly a gallon in one fling of the bucket. Their technique had been studied and copied over the years, until nearly all of the locals were getting better at this vital life skill.

And then comes the unfortunate drawback, the competition had become so boozy that no one could really remember who had won, or cared.

And so, back to this Shouty Wednesday, the saloon bar was full of the crew and room was tight. The table that everyone liked to sit around consisted of a long wooden table, and a bench that would not look out of place at Lord Jaspers great debating chamber. Enough room for three, the others sat on their chairs around the table but the bench created a, sometimes, awkward dynamic. The person who sat in the middle of the three people on the bench had to be someone who was not, ahem, of a certain age and was not required to get up and down to go to the toilet every five minutes. Today, it was Russ who had been

entrusted with the middle seat, but unfortunately in a rush of enthusiasm, Russ had arrived at Shouty Wednesday rather early and now his, er, seal was well and truly broken.

“Oops, sorry,” said Russ as he tried to clamber over the others



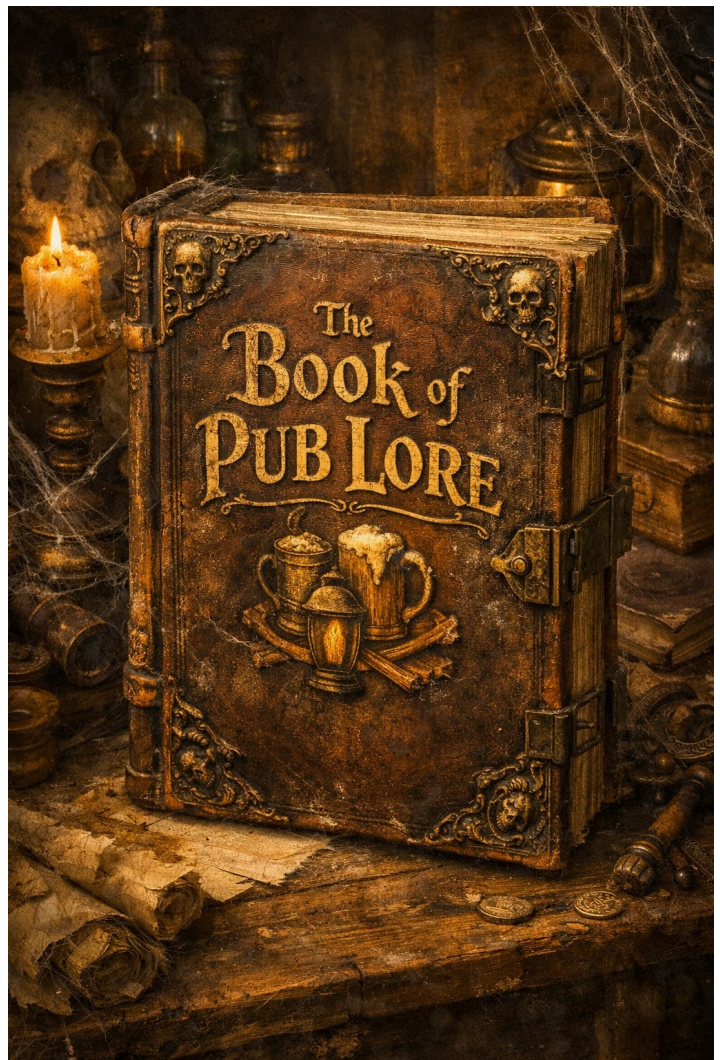
This was not going well, Russ had imbibed rather too many for this early stage and balance was becoming an issue until it happened, one of the worst crimes that can occur in a pub – he knocked over Micks pint with his backside.

“Nooooooooooooo,” everybody watched in horror as a full pint of ale flew from the table and spilled across the floor. There was only one correct course of action.

### Pub Lore Fact

Spilling another mans pint is an act of pure abomination and must be rectified immediately by first apologising profusely, and then immediately offering to restore the bereaved drinker with another drink. This is a three line whip, and anything else than doing this is completely and utterly unacceptable. It doesn't matter how much beer was left, you have wronged and must immediately put the universe back to being right. Anything else will lead to being exiled from the pub.

### End of Pub Lore Fact



Needless to say, Russ apologised profusely and immediately bought Mick a fresh pint. Balance had been restored.

After many, many ales Bob was questioning Jeff the Engineer about his attire.

“Are you sure you are not a wizard?” asked Bob.

“No, I am an engineer,” replied Jeff, rolling his eyes in annoyance.

“But you have got a wizardy hat!” remarked Bob.

“It’s just a typical pointy hat,” said Jeff.

“You’ve got wizardy robes!” said Bob, pulling slightly at Jeff’s sleeve.

“They are just in fashion, that is all,” replied Jeff, his annoyance beginning to grow.

“And you have got a wizardy wand!” Shouted Bob, and in doing so reached into Jeff’s robe and pulled out what indeed appeared to be a magic wand. Jeff was not happy and clutched at the wand looking object, Bob tugged back and Jeff pulled it towards him and in the toing and froing of two adult males with far too much ale on board a green streak of light flew from the object that definitely wasn’t a wand and shot across the room, striking poor D.O.B straight in the crackers. D.O.B yelped and dropped the logs that he was about to put on the fire, and he then became enveloped in a strange bright green glow. The Shouty Wednesday crew gasped and there was silence, as D.O.B began to levitate in front of them in his unholy glow.

“What’s going on?” asked D.O.B, sounding more than a little worried, until his eyes rolled back and a voice that was not that of D.O.B emerged from within him.

“BE WARNED, A GREAT EVIL IS COMING AND A BAND OF MEN MUST BE FORMED TO STOP THE DESTRUCTION OF CHESHAM. EIGHT MEN MUST COMPLETE A QUEST FOR EIGHT ITEMS, WHICH MUST BE TAKEN DEEP INSIDE HERBERTS HOLE ...”

This last part caused Russ to snigger very loudly, he was not aware that Herberts Hole was a place to the west of Chesham, within the great loop of Pednor – or as the locals called it “The Pednor Loop”.

“STOP LAUGHING!” Boomed the great voice from within D.O.B.

“ONE TASK EACH MUST BE PERFORMED –

YOU MUST GO FROM THIS PLACE AND FIND FUR OF GLIS GLIS,  
TOOTH OF WORM,

A LAGGARDS TOE NAIL, A DRAGON SPERM,

BARK OF SILVERTREE, A MAGIC LIGHT

A GOLDEN EYE, AND A NATTERFRIGHT

– YOU HAVE EIGHT DAYS....”

With this D.O.B dropped to the ground with a crash and the crew looked at each other in amazement – who’d have thought that a worm had teeth?

D.O.B shuffled off to get more logs for the fire, and Ben the Merchant then spoke.

“We need to get organised, we are going to have to work together to get these items or Chesham will fall to great evil.”

“Can we finish Shouty Wednesday first?” Asked Timmy. And they all agreed that they would, after all they would still have a couple of days to prevent the total destruction of the town.

In the morning, among a blizzard of hangovers, the gang met again at Brazils. Brazils was a special place, a small café that specialised in curing hangovers. A bacon sarnie or a more complex hangover cure, such as smashed avocado on sourdough with chimichurri (ooh fancy).

This was not, however, the secret sauce, the coffee of Brazils was renowned throughout Chesham as the cure for the morning after. And our trepid crusaders all drank from the coffee cup to bring them back to life.

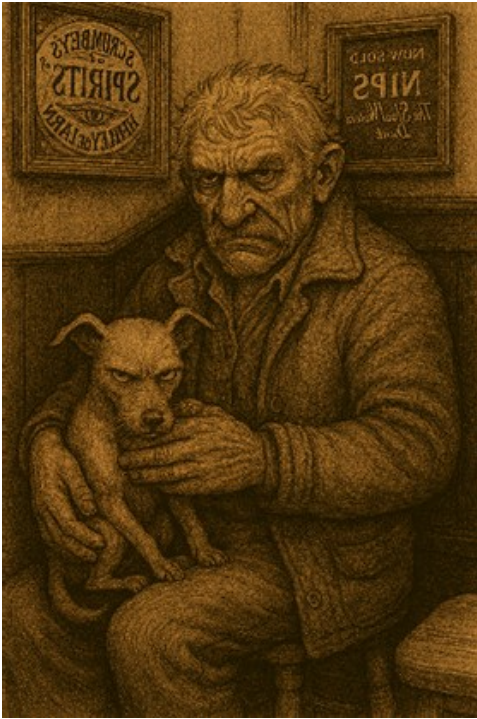
“Bugger it”, said Russ, “we are going to have to go and see Dave the Bastard.”

“Oh no,” said Richard/Ian, “we haven’t seen him in a while – is he still as bad as they say he is?”

“I think it will be necessary,” chipped in Frank, “he does know these lands.”

With a collective sigh, the group left Brazils, bacon sarnies in hand and coffee pulsating through their veins, to go back to the Queens Head – where Dave the Bastard led the early shift.





The doors of the Queens Head flung open, and there in his throne in the saloon bar sat Dave the Bastard. The chair itself was not special, but be warned, if you sit in Dave the Bastards chair when he enters the pub, then you must surely move or be subjected to such hellish antics that you will wish you never sat anywhere at all, ever!

This morning, Dave the Bastard sat elegantly in his chair, drinking super strength ale and awaiting his audience. The crew approached gently.

Ben the Merchant approached initially, “Dear Dave, we seek your wisdom and guidance”.

Dave looked unmoved.

“We have a serious mission to undertake and need your thoughts??”

Dave did not talk, he was a handsome man of north of eighty years, however sometimes dressed in the style of a man from several decades before. He wore open shirts, fine breeches and wellies that would take him over a river of lava. He had a craggy face, that had seen many a scene from his earlier years as a merchant sailor, and later a gamekeeper for the Jasper family.

Eventually he spoke, with an accent of almost pirate quality (which was exciting for Russ, who had firm ambitions on being a pirate one day).

“Listen here, you idiots,” he spat, as the group leaned in, and unbelievably Ben was listening but also buying a round of beers.

“You are going to need a plan, I have seen curses like this when at sea and they are not much fun. You will need to be selected for a task each, the task will choose you – you cannot choose the task. Then, and only then will the gods be on your side – if they even know you exist, here give me.” Dave the Bastard pointed his leather finger at some stirring sticks, “give them to me – and a writing device.”

Dave the Bastard was carefully handed a quill and ink from behind the bar, and having asked for the tasks, he scratched them onto the stirring stick one by one.

“Behold! Fate will choose your task for you, and then I will explain what you must do. And then I want you all to F&%^k off.”

Ben placed tankards of grog in front of everyone, as they queued up to select their fate. In doing so, Ben also bought Dave the Bastard another super strength ale, hoping it would somehow influence the outcome.

“Come forth, Richard/Ian and choose,” Dave the Bastard grinned.

Richard the half goblin was nervous, he extended his semi-clawed hand toward Dave the Bastard's fist, which clutched all eight sticks. He could not see which one was which.

He picked one and slowly drew it out of Dave the Bastards hand.

“Tooth of Worm, I’ve got Tooth of Worm!” Richard was elated, although he had to confess to being mildly bemused about where he might find such an object.

Frank stepped forward, confident, elegant, and still mildly hungover (although the hair of the dog was helping), he thrust forward a rather nicely manicured hand and drew a stick from Dave the Bastards hand.

“Its’s a magic light!” Declared Frank.

It went on, draw after draw.

“Fur of Glis Glis!” Shouted Ben.

“A Laggards Toe Nail,” said Timmy.

“A Golden Eye!” Exclaimed Mick.

“Bark of Silvertree,” announced Jeff.

There was now some nervousness, with only Bob and Russ left to draw.

Bob approached Dave the Bastard nervously, and then drew.

“Oh bugger ...” sighed Bob. He slowly turned the stick over to reveal the item that none of them wanted to see. “I’ve got dragon sperm.....”

Russ sniggered again for a minute with relief, before pondering “Hang on a minute, what the hell is a Natterfright?”

Russ was not from these parts, the others didn't say anything but quietly laughed into their ales.

Dave the Bastard gave each of them instructions on their items, and with a couple of more ales – the quest began.