

Book Club Kit

Resources for Critters, book clubs,
and adventuring parties everywhere!



Dear Reader,

Tusk Love is a tale within a tale. The book exists in the Critical Role universe as Jester Lavorre's favorite bodice ripper, which she foists on everyone to varying degrees of success. It's a treasured running joke in the Mighty Nein campaign, and I still can't believe that the team reached out to me to write the actual novelization. It was 3 a.m. in the Philippines when I got that email, and my screams could have woken the dead . . .

This project was an amazing opportunity for me to combine my two loves: historical romance and the high-fantasy world of Exandria. To prep for it, I reread all-time classics from the greats—Lisa Kleypas, Judith McNaught, and Julie Garwood—and you will find those influences in these pages, informed by the diversity and inclusivity that Critical Role stands for. As a dungeon master myself, I also tried to capture the feel of a traditional campaign, particularly during the battle scenes. I had the time of my life writing Oskar and Guinevere's love story and I hope that you will enjoy reading it! Doo doo do do doo donuts!

With love from Manila,

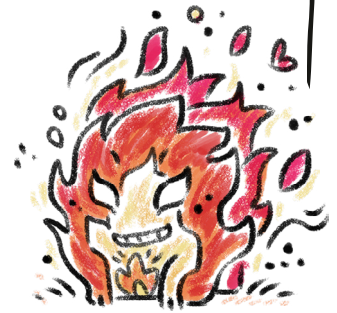
Thea Guanzon

Thea Guanzon



Discussion Questions

1. How much did you know about *Tusk Love* before you started reading it? Did it live up to your expectations?
2. *Tusk Love* was originally created during a moment of improv in the on-stream campaign of Critical Role, and the cast mentioned a few scenes they thought their characters would've read in the book. Did you recognize some of those scenes during the story? Did you enjoy how they were incorporated into the overall narrative?
3. How did you feel about the development of the relationship between Oskar and Guinevere?
4. Who was your favorite secondary character and why? Were there any characters you wished had played a bigger role?
5. Guinevere's relationship with her parents is—to put it mildly—strained, whereas Oskar is mourning the recent passing of his beloved mother. How did their differing family dynamics impact their characters and, in turn, their relationships with each other?
6. Teinidh turns out to be Guinevere's inner voice, as personified in a fire spirit. Why do you think the voice of Teinidh came into being in the first place for Guinevere?
7. There are several romance tropes present in *Tusk Love*, including a recurring gag of there being “only one bed” at several of the inns the couple visits. What is your favorite romance trope?
8. Guinevere and Oskar travel the Amber Road over the course of the story. Did you enjoy the “road trip” framing device? Do you feel their relationship would've developed in the same way if the story was set in a different place?
9. What was your favorite scene, and why?
10. If this book were a part of a series, would you read the next book?



Tusk Love

A Critical Role One-Shot

PLOT:

The Amber Road is the spine that cuts through Wildemount, connecting the Wuyun Gates in the mountainous south, the central rolling hills of the Marrow Valley, and the continent's largest city, Rextentrum, in the north. It is a path that can lead to adventure, danger, and—sometimes—love.

Clan Bonecrusher, a group of nomads who have plied their trade all along the Amber Road, often finds all three. Formed decades ago by an old human woman everyone calls Nan, the matriarch has made it her mission to collect every lost soul in need of a home along the way—including you! Species doesn't matter; Clan Bonecrusher is a family. A particularly well-armed one, more than capable of holding their own against the bandits that plague the wilderness.

Nan and her family are heading north on the road and have set up camp in the woods for the night. Though the scene seems idyllic, with many small goblin children running about, a bard strumming his lute and singing off-key, and a half-elf woman stirring a fragrant stew by the fire, the peace doesn't last for long . . .

SCENARIOS:

Each player should **roll a D6** to determine your relationship to Clan Bonecrusher, or to the other players. You may choose to share your roll and discuss the details, or keep it secret until combat:

- 1 – You're "eloping" with someone in the Party to explain why you're traveling together
- 2 – You were taken in by Nan long ago, and have traveled with Clan Bonecrusher ever since
- 3 – You are the bodyguard of someone in the Party
- 4 – You lost control of your horse and he brought you directly to Nan as they set up camp
- 5 – You have a rival in the Party
- 6 – You were camping nearby because the closest inn's last bed was taken by the person in front of you, and they didn't want to share since there was only one bed



SCENARIOS (CONT.):

GM, roll a D6 to determine the combat scenario, or let your players pick their favorite:

- 1 – An eccentric author by the name of “Matilda Merceria” is traveling with Clan Bonecrusher to do research for her next book—but did not realize that her notebook is, in fact, a mimic!
- 2 – A very out-of-place moorbounder has wandered into your camp, and it’s looking hungry . . . but before you can draw your weapon, a wild mage named Elaras pipes up. “It says it’s lost and needs help getting home!” What will you do?
- 3 – Evil tax collectors?! In this economy?! Oh wait, never mind, it’s just a few husk zombies. Whew! . . . wait, no—
- 4 – Some of the kids run screaming into camp! They thought it would be fun to dare each other to lick a toad’s back, but it turns out it was a devil toad. A nergaliid attacks!
- 5 – A gnarled, gruff Blood Hunter comes stomping out from the woods. Turns out Nan has a lifelong thing with this guy—sounds like a classic enemy-to-lover-back-to-enemy situation—and he’s definitely here to make sure they end on “enemy.” En guard!
- 6 – Two of the latest additions to Clan Bonecrusher, a couple named Guinevere and Oskar, are waylaid by four mercenaries who have been tracking them for days. Help out the newcomers (and maybe newlyweds? They were so weird about their status earlier!).

PLAY:

Feel free to supplement with the Critical Role guidebooks to bring your favorite characters into the game! Otherwise, utilize your favorite TTRPG mechanics for preferred stat blocks and rolling mechanics, so that you can bring your game to life however you desire.



GUINEVERE
AND OSKAR



Playlist

This playlist, curated by the author, Thea Guanzon, will set the mood for the most romantic story on Exandrian bookshelves.

Available on Spotify

click here
to listen!



or scan here



"Herne and the Red Kite"
by Hadley Fraser

"Worlds collide"
by The Mostar Driving club

"Sleepyhead"
by Passion Pit

"Mountain Sound"
by of Monsters and Men

"Faithfully (Glee cast version)"
by Glee cast

"Back to You"
by Twin Forks

"Fearless (Taylor's version)"
by Taylor Swift

"Lost in the Wild"
by WALK THE MOON

"Roman Holiday"
by Halsey

"On the way"
by Hollow coves

"Daydream"
by The Aces

"Wildflower and Barley
(feat. Allison Russell)"
by Hozier, Allison Russell



Black Moss Cupcakes

Makes 12 Cupcakes



from
**EXQUISITE
EXANDRIA**

The Official Cookbook of Critical Role

Prep Time: 30 minutes • Cook Time: 20 minutes

Dark Chocolate Cupcakes

1 cup / 140g all-purpose flour
¾ cup / 150g granulated sugar
½ cup / 25g unsweetened natural cocoa powder
¾ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon kosher salt
1 large egg
⅔ cup / 80ml whole milk
⅓ cup / 80g sour cream
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 or 3 drops black food coloring (optional)

Chocolate-Matcha Frosting

4 tablespoons / 55g unsalted butter, softened
2 ounces / 55g full-fat cream cheese, at room temperature
1½ cups / 160g confectioners' sugar
¼ cup / 20g unsweetened natural cocoa powder
½ teaspoon matcha powder
1 tablespoon whole milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Pinch of kosher salt
Dust of Deliciousness (optional)

Moss Cookie Crunchies

¾ cup / 40g vanilla wafer cookies such as Nilla Wafers
1½ teaspoons light brown sugar
1½ teaspoons matcha powder
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly

To make the dark chocolate cupcakes:

Set a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 325°F/ 165°C. Line the cups of a 12-cup standard muffin tin with paper cupcake liners.

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. In a second large mixing bowl, whisk together the egg, milk, sour cream, vegetable oil, vanilla extract, and black food coloring (if using) until no streaks of egg yolk remain. Add the dry ingredients to the wet and mix with a rubber spatula just until a smooth batter forms and no pockets of dry flour remain.

Fill each cupcake liner about two-thirds full. Bake, rotating the pan front to back halfway through baking, 16 to 19 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center of a cupcake comes out with just a few moist crumbs attached. Let cool slightly, then transfer the cupcakes onto a cooling rack and let cool completely.

To make the chocolate-matcha frosting:

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine the butter, cream cheese, confectioners' sugar, cocoa powder, matcha powder, milk, vanilla, and salt. (Alternatively, use a large mixing bowl and electric handheld mixer.) Mix on low speed just until the ingredients are combined, then increase the speed to medium-high and beat until the frosting is light and fluffy, 1½ to 2½ minutes. Transfer the frosting into a large piping bag fitted with a straight tip, or a zip-top bag with one corner snipped off.

To make the moss cookie crunchies:

Place the vanilla wafer cookies in the bowl of a food processor and process until they are the texture of fine sand, 15 to 25 seconds. (Alternatively, place the cookies in a large zip top bag and smash with a rolling pin or skillet.) Transfer the crushed cookies to a large mixing bowl and add the brown sugar and matcha powder. Toss until the cookie crumbs are evenly coated in the matcha powder. Add the melted butter and mix, using your hands, until the crumbs are evenly moistened.

Frost the cupcakes by piping an even, generous layer of frosting on top of each. Working with one cupcake at a time, invert the cupcake and gently press the frosted top into the bowl of cookie crunchies, rotating so the moss sticks to the sides of the frosting, until the top is evenly coated. Repeat this process with the remaining cupcakes. Sprinkle all with Dust of Deliciousness (if using).



Dust of Deliciousness

4 tablespoons _____
sugar, gathered from _____

4 sprigs _____,
crushed to powder

6 dried _____,
crushed to powder (for full
efficacy, ensure that the
_____ are fully ripe
before picking)

2 teaspoons _____,
or more to taste



TO MAKE THE DUST OF DELICIOUSNESS: Combine
the _____ and _____, taking care to never
_____ while _____.

Slowly add the _____, close your eyes, and
Next, flip the _____, peeking
_____.

Continue _____,
occasionally, until the mixture has turned _____.
You may now open your eyes fully. Turn away and take a deep
breath. Turn back to the mixture, _____.

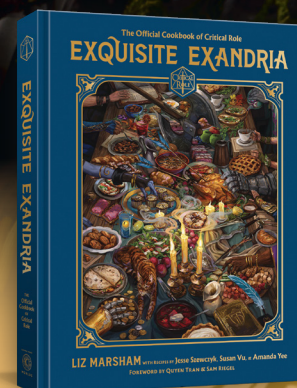
_____ carefully transfer to a small pouch, and seal. Exhale.
Wipe down all work surfaces and utensils immediately,
and launder all exposed clothing promptly. Let the pouch
sit undisturbed for 1 hour, then activate the Dust by

_____. *

*On second thought, just use food glitter.

Photography by © Kristin Teig

Recipe by Jesse Szewczyk,
Susan Vu, and Amanda Yee



Learn more about *Exquisite Exandria* at CriticalRoleBooks.com

Digital Wallpapers

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