

"I... I lost everything," said the man. Although the suit suggested he was wealthy, his despairing face and empty mug sold a different story. "I can't pay the mortgage. I'm getting divorced. Everything I've worked so hard for is ruined."

"It's not so bad," replied the strange musician whom appeared out of nowhere. He appeared to be an elf, although he must have been the grungiest elf the man had ever seen.

"Bah! Easy for you to say: I might as well be dead."

"Don't say that, man. Chill. Relax. Listen to a few tunes. You can't wish for death when you've never been alive."

The Order of Being is on a crusade. Not with swords or guns but with music and humor. Not many people take the Order of Being very seriously. That's suits the Order just fine, because they have a problem with people taking things seriously. Some call them terrorists for pumping hallucinatory gas in the Sigil subway which caused hundreds to be late for work, but they'd say they're just teaching people to loosen up.

They're street musicians, bums, pranksters, druggies and philosophers, all looking to spread the purpose of purposelessness.

Philosophy: Problems are only as bad as you perceive them to be. Problems are never as dangerous as overreacting to it. Serious is bad, and nothing is worse than taking yourself seriously.

Nicknames: Druggies, laughers, wastrels.

Headquarters: Anarchoburg, Beastlands

Major Races: Air Genasi, Gnomes, Human, Mephlings, Tieflings

Favored Classes: Dedicated Hero, Fast Hero

Faction Prestige Classes: "Bloody Annoyance", Hasher, Pseudo-Saint

Factol: Changes yearly.

Prominent Members: Fat Bill (Male Air Genasi NG Smart Hero 1/ Dedicated Hero 2), Sam (Female Tiefling CG, Fast Hero 5/Infiltrator 3/"Bloody Annoyance" 3/Hasher 3), Dorian the Talented (Male Human CG Fast Hero 5/Dedicated Hero 5/Hasher 5/Pseudo-Saint 5)

Alignment: Any non-lawful, non-evil

Symbol: A broken weapon, any weapon, usually a sword or shotgun, twined with flowers.

Philosophy

Have you been outside today cutter? Look at all those people rushing by, all those bored, scared, and stressed faces. It's like they keep the world on their shoulders. Oh, you're late for work too? Here, take some of this, it'll make you feel better. Now doesn't it all feel better? No, you're not going barmy, the bright colors will fade in a sec.

Now, some call us terrorists for making everyone go off the high end when we pumped some happy gas into the subway. The Guvners sure were making a fuss and all that, we disrupted precious golden schedules yadda yadda, ditto ditto, blah-



blah. What were the consequences of that? Valor Towers didn't crumble, the Lady didn't flog a bunch o' berks down in Her own ward, and no layer of Arcadia fell into Mechanus from the inordinate amounts o' chaos we caused.

I'll tell you what the Sodkillers did, though, when the Guvners declared open season on us lot. Suddenly, we were being strung up like murderers. Ironically, it's the Guvners that caused all o' the chaos round here, and for that, we're punished. You see, the Guvners lost perspective, they took things too seriously, and for that it cost many o' lives more than it should have.

If people took things a little less seriously, if they just laughed out their problems an' chilled just a bit it puts everything back in perspective. The Multiverse is a big place with plenty o' opportunity an' good folks, and by cursin' the place all you're doing is causin' things to be harder on yourself.

But it's not good enough that we know this truth; everyone must know, because if we didn't the minority of miserable of evil folks will spread their own misery like an infectious disease, and everyone gets piked. Our philosophy is equally infectious, 'cept we promote love and happiness, and most folks want a little more of that.

What's that? I sound like a Hardhead? Sorry-I do my best not to take myself seriously either. But that young lad on the corner there's been handing out Hardhead brochures since 5:00 am this morning. He's really into it all, too, so must've caught the vibe from him. Got some paper? I have some crayons and tape on me... hey thanks, man!

Anyway, that's why we pumped the gas in the subway. It wasn't an attack, it was an education. Once people see how little it mattered if they're late for work or not, people would learn to take life a little less seriously. Now that yer late for work, your world hasn't ended, has it? No, no don't get up. Take the day off, you probably need it.

What I'm going to do with the paper? Well, I figure the friend who supplies my stash o' Zennies can use some new jink. Figure if the young Hardhead got me soundin' like him, he won't mind if I use his back for advertising space.

Brief History

The story of the Order of Being's founding is clouded by the legends told in drug-stained dens where the Order of Being tends to hang out. Serious scholars have narrowed down which of these legends is closest to the actual history. The most authentic story seems to be that of a Dustman neonate who lived shortly after the end of the Pantheon War.

The story goes that a novice duster, Behen was sent to a back-water prime devastated by the War to perform euthanasia on some primes. Behen's master, Voris the Relieving, had invented powerful non-magical anesthesia which, if given in an appropriate quantity, could kill peacefully and quietly. The primes were not sick or dying, they were victims of a curse that caused life-long melancholy and depression. They did not want to live anymore. Behen himself was a depressed and apathetic young man. The rest of his family had been taken by common diseases and was convinced the plague would one day come for him.



Laughter myth says that Behen was stretching his back on his way to the hospice where the curse victims were being held when Behen spotted a four leaf clover. Pleased with himself, he continued until he found another one. Behen continued to discover four-leaf clovers until he had picked five. At this point, Behen uttered the immortal words, "By the Powers, this isn't a coincidence!" and his outlook changed forever.

Behen gave a clover to each of his four patients (one he kept for himself) and spent an entire year trying to remove the curse. Behen wasn't a magician, but he was fairly convinced that the correct attitude could cure it. Behen's change from model Dustman to faction-less deviant shocked the Dustman, and Behen was excommunicated and made into a pariah. During this year he worked on a treatise that life was taken far too seriously and that everyone should take a step back and "chill". The essay was called "You Should Feel Lucky You Aren't Dead".

Behen did travel back to Sigil once he cured his four patients and established the Order of Being. Its philosophy was seductive to reluctant Dustman, and many members switched over. Many consider it the upbeat reflection of duster philosophy. It was also a pretty revolutionary philosophy and drew a lot of interest from other Cagers. To state that problems weren't really problems at all but just products of an objective imagination was a very controversial, and the new faction was the talk of the town.

For a while, the Order had Factols, who were regularly incompetent. It wasn't until legendarily notorious leader Carrie Banderbolt that the Order decided to have a new system of election. Banderbolt was corrupt and was more of a celebrity than she was a Factol, famous for being newsrag-fodder than for being a leader or philosopher. Her actions made it clear she didn't take anything seriously except herself, which was the worst kind of seriousness by the Order's measure. Her fall came during an assassination attempt. To this day, no one knows for sure who ordered the assassination, or why (the most popular theory is that a high-up in Baator wasn't amused by the Laughter's most recent street-play: "A Stoner in Hell"). In the end, Carrie's reaction ensured that no one would even care about the assassins.

Hoping to scare the assassins away, Banderbolt fell to her knees and prayed to the Lady of Pain. It worked, and by Her Serenity's Whim, she wasn't flayed or mazed, but the stigma's so bad everyone from Tanar'ri to proxies avoids her as though Banderbolt herself is The Lady. Carrie ("Ol' C", as Jives call her) still walks the underground of the Industrial Ward, now a ragged old woman and, according to young Cagers, a witch. She's a terrifying reminder of those who even joke about worshipping the Lady of Pain.

Factols are now chosen by random lots annually, and is far more symbolic than anything else. Factols have grab-bag privileges like backrub entitlements and permission to "crash" at anyone's place. Laughters have commented that the faction is better run without a Factol, and most would like to keep it that way. A few would wonder if a true leader might have helped prevent the recent tragedy that befell the Order.

Recently, the Guvners had put a bounty on the Order for a stunt they pulled in the Sigil subway (they pumped hallucinatory gas through the ventilation system), and a



lot of prominent Wastrels were strung up by jink-thirsty Sodkillers. Because of the bad reaction from the public ("but I enjoyed the hallucinatory gas!" was one quote Sigil Broadcast News repeated frequently) the Guvner's fell from power, and the bounties expired. The only exception to this reprieve is the mastermind of the "terrorist" attack, a tiefling girl called "Sam" who is hiding like a fugitive somewhere in Sigil.

Goals

As a group of artists, rogues, and druggies, the Order of Being is mainly run by individual effort or in small groups. Without a real Factol, there is no unified effort, but Guvners do report that the Laughters do send communications to each other regularly, inscribed with their own private "code". Many Cagers though dismiss this notion as a desperate attempt to regain public support after their disastrous crack-down.

Out of all the Order's members, the most famous is Sam's Gang, the group of cutters responsible for the subway attacks. They have been active for quite a while, pulling pranks off like replacing a Revealing Light library with picture books and nailing an "Applicants Wanted" sign outside of a Anarchist safe house. Some less likely pranks were painting Demogorgon's nails or smuggling a rifle and some hunting magazines into Ehlonna's cathedral. They are still wanted by the Guvners, but have no intention of showing themselves or any signs of stopping.

Fat Bill, considered to be the Faction's philosophical leader and the unofficial Factol, is an oddly overweight and clumsy Air Genasi (considered to be an embarrassment by other air elementals). He spends much of his time in an Anarchoburg apartment smoking Black Cat, so the breeze that used to be fresh now is humid and some say, stale. Fat Bill is charismatic, however, and has convinced many of the truth of Order.

Dorian the Talented is the Order's representative in Sigil. He runs the Guild of Street Performers, which is more of a joke than anything else (his stewardship, not the Guild itself). Dorian is *very* talented; he's able to play instruments, act, deliver one-liners, juggle, perform acrobatics, and put on any other party tricks, either alone or all at once. He's fit for the stage but prefers to ply his trade on the city streets. He's become a rather enigmatic figure, offering odd advice when people most need help, appearing from nowhere balancing on a rubber ball juggling swords.

Dorian's Guild of Street Performers is viewed with suspicion from other Sigilians. The reason is that they speak their own version of Planar Cant, called Jiver, influenced by prime worlds and is less cynical yet more colorful than Cant. Most planars can't understand Jiver for beans and thus turn a jaundiced eye at it. Conspiracy theorists say that the Guild of Street Performers is far more powerful than they let on, and point to Jiver as evidence.

There's also a small but dangerous splinter group called "The Blasphemy", who felt utterly betrayed by the rest of the Planes for their attack on the Laughters. In their opinion, the rest of the planes are undeserving of love and life if they take it from the innocent. The Blasphemy may soon commit real acts of terrorism, but haven't tried anything yet. The Blasphemy has been ex-communicated from the rest of the faction.

Allies and Enemies



Due to its nature, the Laughers return friendship and not enmity. That being said, the Order has pissed a lot of people off. By definition, every faction has a problem with the Order because they all take something seriously; the Order says they should abandon these passions. Even so, few think the Laughers should die because of it.

In fact, the Order believes it has a responsibility to help its fellow factions. They might not take their 'responsibility' seriously, but it's theirs nonetheless. "Helping" usually involves making a mockery of what they believe in so that they take things less seriously. Number one on the list are the Fraternity of Order and Dustmen, these groups, in the Order's opinion, really need to loosen up.

The Fraternity of Order, for their part, feel very threatened by the Order of Being. Unlike the Xaositects, whom don't pose a focused threat, the Order of Being is organized enough to bring chaos where there was law. The Dustmen try their best to ignore the upstart "offshoot" of their own faction, but the fact is the Dustmen are losing members to their philosophical mirror. Sodkillers, however, are itching to ply their philosophy on the Order of Being a little bit more.

The Harmonium isn't quite so bad, surprisingly. They need to lighten up like the rest of them, perhaps even more so, but give them credit for not joining the Guvners and Sodkillers in the frenzy over the subway gassing. The Hardheads, in turn, just don't see the Order of Being as important enough to take their attention away from more serious threats to harmony.

The Laughers make unreliable allies to the Revolutionary League. The Anarchists think they are pulling the strings of the Laughers and observe them to be useful tools, but if this is true, then the Revolutionary League has not got a very tight leash. Laughers do undermine social order, but they also undermine the Revolutionary League itself, so they are marginal tools at best.

Laughers don't know what to make of Xaositects. On one hand, they take things even less seriously than most Laughers do, but others claim that Xaositects take chaos too seriously. They're impossible to influence, that much is true, so most Laughers don't even try.

The only faction that really frustrates Laughers is the Transcendent Order. Part of the reason is the conundrum that Cipher beliefs present to the Laugher's self-appointed mission. If Ciphers are not supposed to think, then can they truly be said to be taking 'action' too seriously? The major source of their frustration, though, is that Ciphers will simply ignore the Order of Being's jabs and pranks, assuming they don't avoid them completely. If there's one thing that bothers a joker, it's failing to get a response.



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