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The Lady's Sharper Eye

"Cutting through the darks, *The Eye* sees all."



BATCH-5

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Hardheads catch mysterious disease

by Daeh K. Carc, Sigil culler

Lady's Ward--According to an "unlisted" source very close to *Eye* cullers an unofficial investigation into the mysterious and deadly disease that has been spreading across the lower gatetowns has been launched (See *Eye* story in this BATCH entitled "**Mystery disease claims 13 lives, cause unknown**" for more chant). This is the first of any known faction-sponsored investigations into the barmy sickness that has killed several sods in multiple locations and threatens to put even more bodys into the dead-book before the end of this cycle.

Details regarding this investigation are sketchy at best, but it is known that a Harmonium investigator has been dispatched via portal to the gatetown of Torch within the past day. The investigator is not known, but it is believed that the individual can only be one of two cutters that have recently been ascending the Harmonium's ladder of progression like a deva on the Holy Mount. Both female, the investigators are well known for their thorough and piercing investigative style as well as their attention to detail and the ability to handle a rough crowd if needed.

The first, Narcovi, the dour dwarven investigator that gained no small measure of 'fame' while investigating the Sougad Lawshreader murders awhile back, (See **BATCH-1** of *The Eye*, "Brutal murders terrorize the Cage") is considered by her peers to be one of the best investigators in the field today. Since the Lawshreader case, she has worked on several other high profile murders throughout the planes including the Marogra 'the Mangler' murder case on Elysium and on the well known serial killer case in Curst known as the 'Fas, the collector of fingers' case. Narcovi was unavailable for comment today and her Lady's Ward office was apparently closed.

The second cutter is, compared to Narcovi, a newcomer to both the Sigilian and the planar scene. However, it is highly believed that Inspector Kadria, a human from the prime world of Oerth, comes highly recommended and formidably skilled. Little is known about her, other than she has been personally responsible for well over 1,250 career catches and maintains an 80% arrest rate. However, some would argue that catching a green bobber is quite a different ride from tracking down a planar knight-of-the-post, and correctly so. However, it should be noted here that Inspector Kadria was assigned to the Inter-Sphere Investigations Unit and worked tracking down sods that had bobbed the berks on Oerth and then slipped the blinds, giving the Hardheads the laugh on their home world. It is believed that due to her recent arrival in the Cage, that Inspector Kadria was brought for this particular assignment.

It is currently unknown as to what chant the investigator is looking for other than general chant regarding the chaotic and unpredictable sickness that has made its presence known in some of the lower gatetowns as well as a few other planes. It is unknown if the investigator is testing possible cures to the disease, but it is thought to be highly unlikely. *The Lady's Sharper Eye* will bring you any and all chant as it develops on this quickly unfolding and possibly far-reaching slip of chant.



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Elite group spells the end of the planes?

by Magrum Rood, freelance culler

Ironhearth--Ironhearth leader, Kalinor Grimjaw, announced today the formation of an elite team of warriors, known as *The Company of Ironhearth*, who would become "the flagship" for the Outlands citadel-city. When asked why the rapidly growing citadel was in need for such a warrior team, he replied, "Tyr has led me to believe that in order for my unique goal to be accomplished, I would need just such a group of warriors, sages, mages, rogues, healers, and philosophers. I, myself, with the wisdom of Tyr guiding me have hand picked these individuals and prepared them for this mission. I have no doubt that they will be successful in the sole mission of Ironhearth - the utter and final end of the Blood War."

As of late there has been quite a bit of opposition regarding Ironhearth and its strong and unwavering position regarding its mission to bring an end to the Blood War. Despite the obvious negative effects that the Blood War has upon the planes, many believe that it serves the purpose of, if nothing else, keeping the fiends at odds with one another. "What this Kalinor individual is doing is simply ludicrous", remarks Tallernen Evenhand, rilmani ambassador and well known faction advisor. "At least with the Blood War in its current state, the fiends are more interested in putting one another into the dead-book instead of us! What Kalinor is doing is threatening the entire balance of things. If he turns the heads of the fiends, then they may cease their inter-warring and rise up together against the Outlands, and possibly even the Upper Planes themselves! I daresay even all of the devas in the Heavens combined with the amassed might of my brethren could stand against such an arrayed force of evil!"

Many factions feel similarly towards Kalinor and his citadel of Ironhearth but until this recent announcement, they felt that there was little to worry about. Now however, many factions (including the Triad of Order) feel that this group of elite warriors, *The Company of Ironhearth*, given both time and training may become the match that strikes to create a firestorm that could possibly engulf the planes. "Kalinor now has both the motive and the opportunity to pick a fight that his insignificant citadel will not be able to weather", commented Harmonium factotum Var Hammert. "He has the tool with which to can start an all-out war with the fiends and we cannot allow that to happen! We cannot allow the fate of all free bodys of the planes to be trusted to some sod-headed prime that is addle-coved enough to actually believe that he can defeat the fiends!"

So far, there has been no edict of action to be taken against Kalinor nor his

Outlands citadel. It seems that the "sod-headed prime" has beaten the Guvners at their own game, at least for now. Currently, there exists no precedence for executing the Laws of Sigil outside of The Cage, and not enough inter-factional support exists to bring a large force to bear against Ironhearth. The Outlands citadel-city has already weathered several minor skirmishes with the fiends, the tso, and the khaasta, as well as struck several major blows against the Bloodshanks, a massive Outlands-based bandit organization, so the factions are wisely wary on the subject of bringing brute force to bear upon Ironhearth.

When queried on the opposition regarding both his stance on the Blood War and *The Company of Ironhearth*, Kalinor replied. "Some sods will stomach some injustices, as long as those injustices do not directly involve them. I spit these injustices from my lips. No injustice is more heinous than the Blood War that rages constantly about us and I will not stomach it! What these ignorant sods do not realize is that the Blood War effects them whether or not they ever see a fiend in their lifetimes - the Blood War, through slaving, illicit substances, the trading of weapons, and silent genocide has already attacked the planes en masse. While those that deem themselves 'philosophers' sit in their plush seats and congratulate themselves on avoiding the fiends for another day, I go, and *The Company of Ironhearth* goes, to stop them."



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Spell-slinging leads to criminal behavior

by Jerek Rejebo, Roaming Culler

Lady's Ward--Male children born to female mages who cast spells during pregnancy run a risk of violent and criminal behavior that lasts well into adulthood, says a new study published by the Fraternity of Order. Guvner sages said the finding was consistent with earlier studies that linked spell casting by females while carrying children not only to lawbreaking by their offspring, but to impulsive behavior and 'questionable' faction alignments. The study did not make a distinction between the various spheres of magic nor as to the frequency of spell slinging. However, a spokesman for the Fraternity said that the study was the first to show that the impact of spell casting lasted beyond adolescence into adulthood. The study, which was apparently based on the arrest records of several planar sods, all age 34 or younger who were scragged in the Lower Ward during the last cycle, has not yet been published, yet has already met with significant opposition.

The study, totaling 4,169 males (or believed to be), said the mechanism behind the effect might be damage to the essence of the fetus by spell casting near the vicinity of the womb. The effect uncovered in the study persists even after accounting for such factors as economic and factional status, parental psychiatric problems, age and the father's criminal history. "While it is not widespread, there is some pockets of poverty in Sigil," study administrator Patria Gorgeheader told *The Eye*. "But the misbehavior effect was found to be independent of how rich or poor the families in the study were," she said. In the study, women (or female species) were surveyed during the final stages of pregnancy about how many spells they cast daily. The arrest records of their sons (or male offspring) were then checked through reviews of Harmonium files 34 years after the women gave birth.

"Our results support the hypothesis that maternal spell casting during pregnancy is related to increased rates of crime in adult offspring," said the conclusion of the study, which is being published in the latest issue of a Guvner Research Collection known as *The Slide Rule*. It will be listed in the collection under the study's formal name: Correlational Relationships Betwixt Adult Behavior and Early Magical Exposure. "This general finding is consistent with the literature linking behavior problems, conduct disorder and adolescent offending to prenatal maternal spell casting," it added. "Our study extended these findings by showing that maternal spell casting is related to persistent offending rather than to adolescent-limited offending," said Gorgeheader.

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Expedition to find out who climbed farthest

by Jerek Rejebo, Roaming Culler

The Spire, Outlands-- Ten miles up the base of the Spire, a team of mountaineers hopes to find clues to one of the Spire's most enduring mysteries: Who climbed the farthest? The Spire itself is believed to be infinitely high, which makes it a prime target for planar and prime daredevils and record breakers alike. Since magic and psionics are ineffective around the Spire, the climb is thought to be a well-balanced challenge for all the participants. Past climbing teams have been organized by some racial groups, such as the Ragers from Ysgard, who deem it a "warrior's challenge" as well as several Chaosmen.

The expedition aims to retrace the most recent climb of tiefling climbers Majora Mannix and Drew Rivine. They were last detected using a specially Modron-designed eyescopes, seven miles up the Spire. This was two miles farther than the previous conquest and 90 cycles before elven climbers Rigza Oakwillow and Brutus Summerglenn made their record-breaking climb of twelve miles up the Spire before Oakwillow fell to her death. Could the tieflings have established the actual record? Dwarven climber Stonin Hardfist intends to find out. His latest expedition, made up of a team of seven dwarves, hopes to find out whether Mannix and Rivine made it to the twelve mile mark before they disappeared, according to an expedition statement received by *The Lady's Sharper Eye*.

The expedition also will be looking for the body of what appeared to be a human seen by a halfling climber several cycles ago. The climber said the body was suspended by silk ropes and was dressed in tattered clothes that literally fell into flakes and pieces when touched. That led to speculation that the body might be Mannix's or Rivine's. The halfling climber later died in a separate Spire climbing attempt, but researchers believe the body he found is, in fact, below the point where an ax belonging to Mannix was discovered a decade ago.

Next month, the dwarven climbers will make an attempt for the record using methods and equipment similar to those that Mannix and Rivine used. They hope to use a new device pioneered by gnome climbers, a sailing chute that will allow the dwarven climbers to safely jump from the Spire after they've broken the record. Hardfist was unable to estimate how long the climb would take, assuming that they are successful.



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Mystery disease claims 13 lives, cause unknown

by Magrum Rood, freelance culler

Ribcage--An as yet unidentified illness has taken a total of thirteen lives and may have spread from origins in Baator. The unidentified disease, first identified in children slaves within Ribcage, may have the potential to spread to other lower gatetowns and the Outlands.

The mystery disease is characterized by strange symptoms such as extremely high fever, violent muscle aches, severe weakness of all bodily systems, and massive headaches. The disease then sometimes takes a dramatic turn, with rapid filling of the lungs with fluid and blood, resulting in suffocation. In several cases, the unknown ailment has had a very rapid onset, which has resulted in death in otherwise healthy slaves. First thought to only affect slaves native to Ribcage, the deadly malady has also struck some githzerai children who were kept in the same quarters as some tiefling victims.

Bleaker officials reportedly remain stumped by the "mystery disease", which reportedly does not fit the normal patterns of any known food, water, or airborne disease. Specialists in the fields of healing, herbalism and alchemy say that they are having great difficulty in identifying a common method of transmission that could help to pinpoint the type of disease that is involved. Oddly, some of the dying victims are believed to have simply vanished or possibly even exploded as the disease progressed in them.

Cleric investigators have been pursuing the possibility that the disease is transmitted by direct contact or inhalation of an airborne virus that is carried in rodent dung and that could efficiently pass from one person to another. This theory is being discounted, though, because slaves who worked earlier in the day with the dead victims have not, so far, shown any symptoms of the disease. The thirteen slaves that perished were all children and were all housed within a filth-strewn cavern room deep below the surface of Ribcage. They worked daily in a factory that produces cloth for Parac's soldiers, the Blackguard. Nearly half the children were already dead before their condition was discovered.

Another developing theory holds that the cause of the deaths is a magical contaminant that could be common to alchemists that develop poisons in the city for use on Baatorian steel. However, representatives for Lord Quentill Paracs, the unofficial ruler of Ribcage, report that no Dustman post-mortem report results or other magical tests of victims have confirmed the presence of any known poisons or other toxic substances that could explain the sudden deaths. A sergeant in the Blackguard, Vespos, said, "We gonna check out that

bleckin' gambling hall, da *Game*, ta see if any of them damn Lotus addicts had anything ta do wid this."

Unverified and unconfirmed chant says that at least one cleric investigator is even considering the possibility that a "magically-altered life-force-demon" has "gotten loose" in the Outlands. Burg and baatezu officials, of course, deny the possibility of any such screed; but, slave owners say that they will not "leave any stone unturned" in their attempt to learn the true cause of death for their property. The slave owners have had their slaves working all day and all into the night looking for possible causes, which some say is only compounding the problem.

An unnamed member of the Fraternity of Order, who happened to be traveling through town, said that someone should survey the population of the lower gatetowns, in an attempt to discover any "commonality" between the deaths and anyone previously stricken by the mysterious disease. However, he said that the Fraternity was much too busy to involve itself in a matter so closely related to chaos. He went on to say, "Perhaps the Fated should conduct a tax evaluation of the area to collect any prevalent data, or perhaps the Harmonium should conduct an **investigation** into the matter."

In response to the passing Guvners comments, a cleric investigator later remarked, "Citizens of the lower gatetowns are not likely to fully cooperate in any survey, largely due to long held beliefs regarding death and not talking about the ascension of the deceased soul. As well, and on a more practice point, they would more than likely not flap their bone-boxes for anyone not sporting a hefty garnish, even if it were for their own good. And, even a green berk could tell ya that no resident of a lower gatetown would willingly cooperate with the Harmonium!"

Adding to the dilemma, Bleaker workers report that they have been unable, so far, to find any source of possible contamination that can be commonly attributed to all of the victims that have been taken ill. An examination of the cavern the children were found in revealed little other than the fact that they slept on hard dirt cots and soiled, rat-infested linens.



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