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The Lady's Sharper Eye

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



BATCH-6

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Raid on Outland Keep

by Magrum Rood, Freelance culler

Near Power's Maw, Outlands--The khaasta citadel known as Deso's Keep was hard hit late last night amongst a raucous rout of revelry. Fact is scarce and sketchy at best, but from what chant *Eye* cullers have been able to glean, it seems that the slaver-lizards were the first to feel the force of Ironhearth's new hard line policy against slavers that cater to Blood War customers.

The Outland-based khaasta tribe under the well-known chief Deso are known the 'Land over as one of the largest and most ruthless groups of slavers beneath the Spire's shadow. They are also well known as contributors to the fodder bins of the Blood War, especially the baatezu in and around Ribcage. If this was, in fact, Kalinor's first official strike against the Blood War, then it was both totally unexpected and brilliant.

Apparently, while the khaasta were entertained by a diversionary bard show complete with a song, dance, scantily-clad wenches, a magical light show and some form of drug-laced eggs, a smaller group of Ironhearthian warriors (more than likely the recently formed Company of Ironhearth) infiltrated the citadel through the sewer system. The spectacular light show above kept the vast majority of the khaasta entertained and focused while the team below breached the dungeon and freed and armed all of the captured slaves! Then, as if to add insult to injury, the Company somehow ignited a massive explosion in the sewers, nearly blasting the keep to the Cage!

Whilst shifting through rubble and looking for survivors, khaasta Whipmaster, L'ssk'tss'ta, had this to say, "It wassss not fair! They trickessss usssss! Poissson eggsssss and sssshinessss bright lightssss in our eyesssss! We cannot findssss our massster, Dessssso; we cannot findssss our sssslavessss! Kalinor sssshall payssss for thisss!" *Eye* cullers were also able to glean the chant that this would more likely than not set the khaasta's slaving efforts back several cycles, if not more.

When *Eye* cullers asked about an interview with the Lord of Ironhearth, we received the following simple, but to the point, statement. "You all know my mind. I will not waste precious time spouting words like the factols in Sigil. I go to break the shackles that bind the free peoples of the planes and break the backs of the enslavers!"

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Snail Expeditions to expand

by Daeh K. Carc, Sigil culler

Market Ward--Snail Trawet Sr., owner and operator of *Snail Expeditions*, has been flying high since announcing he would expand his guide- and-supplies business into a second burg. From a tavern in the Lady's Ward, Snail Sr. told cullers that associates, employees, and even some competitors have reacted positively to the plan to start a second store at the growing Outlands city of Ironhearth. "Everything has been going as sweet as Ysgardian honey," Snail said. "things look very promisin'."

While the more than 150 employees at the Sigil store will keep the name of *Snail Expeditions*, the additional store in Ironhearth could open under a different name. Originally, Snail had wanted to operate a guide service for the Cage and travelers to the Outlands. But, due to greater than expected demand, Snail began selling planar supplies to his customers as well as guiding them to their selected destinations. Snail then pursued and formed an agreement with *Ensin's Discount Elixirs* to allow Snail Expeditions to purchase magical potions as wholesale prices and thus make a profit in the supplies business.

"People have asked me about the choice of Ironhearth," Snail said. "Actually, it was a pretty natural decision as I started my career as a guide there, back when the burg was first setup by Lord Kalinor. People think the Outlands is all calm and peaceful, well lemme tell ya that's pure screed! It should be interesting but I don't know if we'll be able to takeoff as fast as the Sigil store did. The location we have here is just great. The Market Ward is known for commerce, but being so close to the Great Bazaar and also convenient to *S&J Transport* has been tremendous for business. Once I worked out a referral deal with *Nittmin's Aerial Tours*, we were top-shelf, blood!"

The second store is not expected to open for another two to four months, but Snail said employees were brainstorming to make Snail Expeditions better as a two-store outfit. "We are already working through the problems of establishing the other store," Snail said. "My people are as busy as a hive of formians and have stepped up with some great ideas for restructuring that will make us more efficient and responsive to customers. I'm workin' on locating all the portals and keys in and around Ironhearth so we can swap inventory back and forth quickly and easily."

While most employees of the Sigil store will remain in the City of Doors, some will have the opportunity to join the team that would setup in Ironhearth. In fact, Snail said a few workers have already voiced their decisions. "Some are

trying to figure which burg they'd rather live in. Ironhearth is fairly new, as far as the Planes go, but I think some will take a strong likin' to it. I've got good people, some just have ta make up their brain-boxes," he said.



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Hidden magic in the classroom

by Eiryk Lacedaemonian, Freelance culler

Lady's Ward--The Guvner-run Beginning School of Elementary Magic was rocked today when an honor student was caught with concealed magic of a potentially dangerous and offensive nature. The human lad (age and name are being withheld by the Harmonium pending the furthering investigation) was seen in Scroll Scripting class among a gathering of other students who were all laughing and giggling. The teacher, Guvner namer Uzekiah Slandril, in an attempt to maintain order promptly investigated.

He was shocked to his scroll tubes to see a slim ivory wand bearing an arrow and torch symbol upon it in the possession of the young lad. The wand was immediately (and carefully) confiscated and the student taken directly to the School's Headmaster. All students involved were searched with no further items found.

The wand in question was found to be (as it was suspected) a *Wand of Force* but it was further discovered to have the secondary power of *Time Stop* for all creatures caught in the created force bubbles. This clue then led to the simple explanation of the recent incidents wherein several teachers had mysteriously blacked out and missed entire classes. It appears the young delinquent had been striking teachers with the wand to avoid further assignments.

All students in the affected classrooms were banned from the School for a few weeks for not revealing this to the faculty. Parents have been contacted in all instances.

The boy keeping the wand has been expelled and has lost his scholarship to the highly sought after Guvner school. Chant has it that the wand bore the sigil of Felshara Droom, a noted mage of the Clerk's Ward. She is currently wanted by the Harmonium for questioning regarding how the boy came into possession of such magics.

Anyone with information regarding the whereabouts of Mage Droom is encouraged to contact the Guvners at their City Courts headquarters. A Guvner spokesman is quoted as, "Anyone with chant on this individual, please come forth. We assure you that your identity will be fully protected under Sigil bylaw 12, Instance 2-Q I this particular case. You will remain completely anonymous, but we need some sod to spill the darks on this. We cannot abide children running about with dangerous magics! It is for our safety, your safety and their safety as well!"

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The Golden Eye closes for the last time

by P. Fiendus Hooten, Guest culler

Lady's Ward -- "And so, with much disdain, I order that *The Golden Eye* magazine is now an illegal enterprise, never to be published again. Their offices are to be stripped, their possessions are to be sold, and all of their holdings, profits, and all other things of value are to be collected, sold, and the profits are to be distributed evenly amongst their investors. Rafond Boldrin and Henri' Fout - all of your personal belongings, indeed, everything in your possession except your skins and the organs contained within them are now forfeit and are likewise to be collected and sold with the profits going to the investors. Let this be a lesson to all who dally with dishonest enterprises - when you are brought against the Law, you will be punished severely for all of your infractions against the honest law-abiding citizens of Sigil!" Thus spoke Judge Ylvirron the Cloven at the final session of the hearings in the People and Beings of Sigil versus *The Golden Eye Art & Entertainment Rag* - a case that has sent a shock wave through many local business owners and has stunned a loyal readership.

The Golden Eye, which is in no way, shape, or form related to Sigil's up-and-coming magrag, *The Lady's Sharper Eye*, was a Lady's Ward News and Social Happenings magazine. Regarded by many as a highbrow enterprise, it was very well known as the 'The View of High Society,' to borrow it's subtitle.

The Golden Eye was first published sixty-five years ago and had remained a fairly steady enterprise, though it did shut down on two separate occasions for unspecified reasons. While it was often considered conceited in its articles about other Wards, it strove to present the ideal of what High Society was all about. Interviews of famous Cagers to descriptions of the classiest balls and parties, all things were done with a flare of style that highlighted the finer things of life. Base existence was ignored, or worse, ridiculed.

Judge Ylvirron's order comes as a complete surprise to many, for few knew that the magazine was under investigation. Details of the case have now been made public, and those details are certain to cause a few more surprises. According to Marle'Crucias, an Arcanoloth advocate representing the investors of the magazine, the Chief Editor, Rafond Boldrin, and the Sales and Marketing Manager, Henri' Fout, used *The Golden Eye* in an illicit manner for their own personal profit.

"The evidence is overwhelming - these two went to area businesses that were under investigation for nefarious acts and offered to write positive stories in return for a sum of money. This act, while perhaps unethical, is not a problem.

That they chose not to share their profits with the investors is a problem - a major one in fact. One that has cost them everything." Marle'Crucias declined to comment on the investors or why the investors wanted to close the magazine after such a long run. "I, my friend, am merely the advocate for my clients. It is not my place to question their motives or discuss them."

Rafond Boldrin and Henri' Fout said little during the hearing, but did say a couple things before being taken away by the Mercykillers for the execution of their harsh sentence. "This is a set-up! We've been framed!" they hollered as they were taken away.

"Sly" Nye, their representative, said "It is a pity that the judge ruled this way. I think there was something else involved here. At the hearing, I mean. A 'loth representing the investors? A Baatezu judging the case? You figure it out. The reason I mean." Another reporter asked the tiefling advocate if this was the first time he lost a case. "Lost? I'm never lost, why we are right here. What makes you think I'm lost? Excuse me." He was unavailable for comment for the rest of the day. Rafond Boldrin and Henri' Fout are being held in the Prison until all of their possessions have been auctioned away. It is uncertain what will happen to them after that.



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Oh Andronicus - only for the Moronicus

EDITOR'S NOTE: Always looking to provide more insight into the darks of the Cage, The Lady's Sharper Eye is pleased to open a new column - theatrical production reviews by none other than Skelterbet, the djinn theater reviewer formerly associated with The Golden Eye Art & Entertainment Rag.

Clerk's Ward--As the older *Eye* withers, the younger *Eye* gains strength. As a patron of the arts and as an artist in my own right, I am always distressed by the heavy-handedness that artistic venues are often dealt with by political authorities. Thus it has always been, and thus it seems it will always be. Perhaps this is why the subject of many arts, particularly theater arts, is often the political arena - and particularly of corruption in that arena. It is hoped that many artists will continue this tradition, for without the arts the masses would be nothing but automatons subject to the political leaders with no hope to live for (and one wonders how this could be considered living in harmony - this is death, they just wouldn't know it). The arts educate and open the minds of all, even if that means governing the masses is more difficult because they are smarter. Killing those ventures that open the eyes of the masses can hardly be considered merciful. I digress.

At the Civic Feshall the current production in the Northumber Amphitheatre is *Oh Andronicus*, a tale of - brace yourself - political corruption resulting in some serious killing. This is a play written by a Prime known only by the initials U.C. who has written some other very fine plays. This one, however, is not such a case. This U.C. is a poet - a little too flowery at times, but a superb poet nonetheless. I would put him (her, it?) against almost any poet that is active in the Cage today, with the exception Ning Brwn who in spite of her difficult name writes stellar poetry. Some readers may recall *The Walking Shadow* which was a play written by this same playwright and was performed at this same theater. It is my sad duty to report that while *The Walking Shadow* was one of the best plays I have ever seen performed, *Oh Andronicus* is so pitiful that you wonder how it can be attributed to the same author unless he was possibly operating under a severe curse.

We start the play being introduced to Andronicus, played by Tevyar Murkinbraugh, who is supposed to be a great general that has just conquered a barbarian horde that was menacing his city. The fact that he doesn't look great or like a general is beside the point. An interesting side note, most Prime plays are written for one race, to be performed by one race. They can't help it, they're Primes after all. This production, being for all races, aims to change that somewhat, though I imagine that U.C. had a different idea at the time it was written. In this production the barbarian horde is represented by some bariaur

actors. It works, but only barely. Andronicus is at the tomb of his family and is there to bury his son who was killed during the great victory over the horde. As a religious practice, his other sons sacrifice the eldest son of the barbarian queen, both part of a group of prisoners. She vows revenge on Andronicus and his family. The emperor (terrible acting - I don't even know the sod's name) is there to honor Andronicus for his victory - by taking Lavinia, Andronicus' daughter, as his bride. Yes, I wondered about that too. Andronicus is pleased and offers his prisoner's to the emperor to honor their marriage. The next thing I knew, the emperor has run off with the queen of the horde, the emperor's lackey snatches Lavinia away for marriage, and Andronicus kills one of his sons (and he has a plethora of them, for two more die later on) because they were helping her run away with the lackey. Then the rest of his sons come back and argue with him a little before the emperor comes in happily married to the barbarian queen. Andronicus makes up with his sons and they decide to go hunting to bring game for the banquet in honor of the emperor's wedding.

Most of the audience and I were breathless - not because of the performance but because something just didn't work with this whole bizarre sequence of events. There were a few Xaosist's in the audience that were loving it though. Maybe they can explain it, because I sure can't. The rest of the show went downhill from there. The queen begins to take her wrath out on the Andronicus family while manipulating the emperor into helping her. This turns into a bloodbath as they start to kill and mutilate Andronicus' family. I don't normally mind a few killings in a play - *The Walking Shadow* had a whole bunch of them, but this was pathetic. Andronicus, who is supposed to be a great general and all, does nothing but whine and cry throughout the play. We kept waiting for him to get mad and fight back...instead he decides to go mad and do nothing. At the end he finally takes some action, but by then we don't care and are rooting for the 'bad guys' to finish him off! What a terrible script.

The acting was for the most part average, with the actor playing Aarron (the 'leader' of the villains - and lover to the queen of the barbarian horde) being the only standout of the bunch. The setting was enchanted by Drass, an Illusionist that is supposed to be a visionary. His special effects were good, but the color choices either clashed wildly with what was going on or were too dark to effectively see the play (which was probably just as well). A fellow Sensate mentioned that Drass was inquiring about Hibiscus before the show. I think he must have found some.

Overall rating - I wouldn't give two greens for this one.



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