
The Lady's Sharper Eye

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



BATCH-9

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Tragedy in Ysgard

by Jerek Rejebo, Roaming culler

Ysgard-- A Sensate touring group's trip to the realm of Asgard turned tragic when a raging battle broke out among the Sensates and local residents of a small Ysgardian burg. A Sensate intentionally insulted a local resident, known locality to have a very hot temper. This insult then erupted into a battle between the burgspeople and the touring group.

The Sensates gleefully waded into combat with shovels, pocketknives and anything they could use against the somewhat startled local populace, which is nearly completely made up of giant kin. Normally, bloods of the Upper Planes are well-armed and armored against attack, but the residents seemed to have been caught a bit off guard.

Adding to the haze of the unexpected conflict was the fact that evidently several of the Sensates were under the misperception that if they were killed in the melee they would be resurrected the next morning. Of course, this is only true about Asgard, a realm within the first layer of Ysgard. The dead on the other sections and layers of Ysgard stay quite dead and the Sensate group had entered Ysgard by way Muspelheim, the second layer fo Ysgard and the location of the small burg.

One of the subdued Sensates spoke later of how they all looked forward to experiencing death and resurrection alongside the powers of Asgard. "I mean, really, how were we supposed to know how these things work? We didn't know where exactly we were. I didn't know they were giants. I just thought they were tall cutters," he later reported back to his factor. Twenty-seven Sensates were slain along with thirteen residents. There were no reports of Valkyries present after the battle.



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Special Report: Guvners investigate mystery disease

by Sydney Silamander, Managing Editor

Lady's Ward-- Reliable sources within the City Courts have confirmed that an official inquiry will be launched into the mystery disease that has put sods in the dead-book in several lower gatetowns. A public announcement is expected within the next few days. Chant has it that there were some unofficial examinations, but this announcement would be the first official investigation by a faction and comes after a cycle of numerous berks being killed by the barmy sickness in multiple locations.

The official inquiry comes after two Harmonium inspectors were dispatched to Torch at the beginning of last cycle. The inspectors, both female, are Narcovi and Kadria. Both are well known for their thoroughness and formal investigative training. Their findings have not been released, but have evidently been sufficient to cause the Fraternity of Order to begin a more formal investigation into the mystery disease, which is slowly spreading across the lower gatetowns and possibly the entire Lower Planes.

In addition to the inspectors' findings was a request for help from Lord Quentill Paracs of Ribcage. Associates of the *Eye* were able to "interview" a drunken member of the Blackguard as he "relaxed" in a Lower Ward brothel. The soldier was quoted as saying that Lord Paracs had sent a letter last month to Factol Sarin asking for help. Paracs was evidently desperate for help, as his resources could not determine if a new disease had indeed been found or not.

As you will remember, last cycle Ribcage was struck by several mysterious deaths. Although the dead were slaves, the ruling families of the burg took the discovery seriously and had several top-shelf sages look into the matter. Evidently, these sages have hit the blinds. They could not determine the cause of death for any of the dead slaves. Furthermore, their attempt at revealing the possible spread of the disease resulted in one of the sages exploding into a noxious cloud.

A theory had been developed by the team of sages that the deaths might have been caused by a poisonous magical contaminant found on some types of Baatorian steel. Unfortunately, this theory could never be proven and was later discarded completely. Another theory, even more far fetched, was that a "soul demon" had escaped Baator and was roaming the gatetown. While the Baatorian embassy would not comment on the matter, residents said it was probably not a demon since only thirteen were killed and all of those were in one location.

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A Deal's a Deal - and what a Deal it is.

by Skelterbet, Culler of the Stage

Market Ward-- I, as a loyal patron of the arts and all things artistic, sometimes run across situations that are very difficult to cope with artistically. No, I don't mean running across junk that some saucy knave presents and calls 'art'. I am talking about things that truly and fully deserve to be recognized as art, but are still very difficult to cope with because they strike a chord in your own being that is not altogether pleasant because they are immediately recognizable as being a part of yourself.

Such artistic accomplishment is, in my opinion, the pinnacle of art. You see it presents truth and beauty together and the viewer, who is left with both a sense of wonderment and a sense of guilt, can recognize both elements. Oh what a treat and yet what a terrible feeling at the same time. Perhaps the saddest thing of all is that the playwright's name is unknown. It is a pity that such an artist can not be given credit where it is due.

A Deal's a Deal is such a piece of art. This is a play that is currently showing at the "Thumb in yer Eye!" tavern and playhouse located in the Market Ward. For those gentle readers that have never heard of this theater, I must say that it is a crude place in a rough area where a lot of Lower Planar trading goes on. All things considered, it is a decent place with a unique stage. It has a large circle located in the center of the place that slowly spins, so all audience members get an equal view of the show. The locale and atmosphere fit the play like a glove. The play is very satirical and it presents a slightly comical tone in both the circumstances and the storyline; however, the stark reality of the points made stand out behind the facade.

The play is the story of a human paladin named Rock Jabez, a planewalker that has been around the points a few times. He is played by a human named Robert Glantron. The character, though a paladin, is quite arrogant and seemingly is completely convinced that he is always right. (As if we have never seen a paladin that is like that - his performance was so good some theatergoers actually asked him if he was a paladin.) On one trip out he misjudged a situation and wound up caught in a trap set by a lowly Spinagon named Drab who is bent on promotion. Drab was not strong enough to kill Rock Jabez, and Rock Jabez was not canny enough to get out of Drab's trap.

The Spinagon did not want to get a stronger baatezu to come and kill Rock, for that would discredit Drab and hamper his chances of getting ahead. After much arguing and discussion they agree to make a deal - Rock would agree to let Drab take his soul when he died if Drab would let Rock go free. Drab, excited

by the deal and convinced that he would finally move ahead, made the colossal mistake of not writing the deal out and forcing Rock to sign it before he let Rock go free. Rock, of course, got out of the trap and immediately killed Drab. Rock's reasoning, given in monologue, is that a deal with a fiend is not binding unless signed and that a dead fiend is the best deal of all.

The time frame shifts to Rock's demise, where his soul is taken to Mt. Celestia where he is made a petitioner. The baatezu come knocking, claiming that his soul belongs to them and a great argument is made about this. The paladin's power, Aorna (not a real power, in case you were wondering) agrees to settle the argument by calling a trial. She then calls a jury of twelve Devas to sit on the case while she will act as the judge. Rock is placed in the defendant's box and aasimar Harqeya Parlen (who theatergoers will remember from her award-winning performance in *The Walking Shadow* at the Civic Feshall) plays the defending attorney. Harqeya has such a presence that she glows on stage and one feels that the defendant is in good hands. The baatezu decide that they will call the best lawyer in the Lower Planes to argue their case - an Arcanloth named Westbrusius, played by real-life Arcanloth AND advocate, Marle'Crucias. Now, I have some personal differences with Marle'Crucias but I must admit that as an actor, he gives a performance par excellence.

The trial sequence covers the rest of the play. Watching Marle'Crucias and Harqya Parlen verbally spar was perhaps one of the most intense things I have ever seen on stage. They seem to hate each other vehemently and the conviction with which each carries their arguments was simply amazing to watch. This doesn't even give credit to the writing. The dialog and arguments are so well written and were so well argued by the actors that many of the audience members found themselves agreeing with both sides - and that is the dilemma and the reason why *A Deal's a Deal* is at the pinnacle of theatrical art.



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Boycott continues at Combat museum

by Daeh K. Carc, Sigil culler

Clerk's Ward-- A boycott by members of the Transcendental Order closed down the newly opened History of Planar Combat museum for the third day after talks on staffing policies failed to make progress, a spokesperson for the Ciphers said. Other museums next to the closed museum, such as the Sensate Museum of Planar Experience and the Fated Museum of Collected Tax Receipts, were open and not effected by the boycott.

Talks between the faction and the Museum owners centered on the lack of Cipher employees. It seems the museum, which was started by a group of high-ups in the Red Death, does not have any employees that are affiliated with the Transcendental Order and does not display any combat techniques or weapons used by Ciphers. Other exhibits within the Museum show the weapons of famous Harmonium warriors and the battle maps of several Fraternity of Order generals.

Cipher representatives have said that the workforce of the Museum must be balanced and represent both sides of combat, physical and mental. The boycott was announced when the Mercykillers initially refused to discuss the hiring procedures with official from the Great Gymnasium. A meeting will be held later this week that will determine if the boycott will be extended to other museums connected to or supported by the Red Death.



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Ironhearth Alliance with 'Stone-Home'

by Godemirc Kreb, Outlands culler

Ironhearth, Outlands-- "Today is a proud day for all free folk on the planes," began Ironhearth founder and leader, Kalinor Grimjaw, in his speech which commenced the daylong festival at the well-known Outlands citadel-city. The festival was called in honor of the auspicious alliance that joined Ironhearth and the formian city *Ur'dur'Ragg'A*, which lay deep beneath the bowels of Ironhearth long before the first brick was lain in its construction.

Apparently, the Company of Ironhearth, the elite warrior unit of the burg, discovered the massive formian Hive-city some time ago. Negotiations were then immediately started and have been in progress ever since the discovery. Chant has it that upon the unexpected discovery; Kalinor began peace talks in an effort to gain an alliance with the formians. This would increase his number of allies and strengthen his forays in the Blood War. What the formians received in return, is any sod's guess.

"Not only will today be known hereafter as Alliance Day, but today will also be known as a day when two cities, filled with races as different as any, have come together for the single reason of continuing peace. While some blood, humanoid and formian alike will be spilt before our goal is within reach, it will be attained!" Kalinor's speech meet with thunderous applause and shouting, and with much fanfare and revelry. The canny leader of the Outlands citadel declared the day an official holiday within the city's walls, and further declared that it would continue to be in cycles to come.

Human, tiefling, elf, githzerai, and formian alike all partook of the merriment, toasting both to Lord Kalinor's and to Queen Zuu'VA"nv'Rrritik's (or Queen Zuva for those not of the formian race) health and prosperity. Both of the "noble" leaders were on hand for the occasion and at Kalinor's request, sat and dined with what some would consider the "common folk". When asked about this behavior, Kalinor replied, "What common folk? I see nobles to both my right and left and pretty darn near as far as the eye can see! These men and women, formians, wemics, dwarves, and halflings all are nobles in my site! Their lives and their blood are no less rich than any Golden Lord in the Cage! We all fight and die as one, so shall we live and make merry as one!"

When asked for her opinion on the new alliance, Queen Zuva replied, "We are pleased wiz zis tunnel zat we have dug zo very carefully to zis new hive. It will make both zee Hivez ztronger in zee winter to come. We will grow ztrong and will live long now zat our Hive enjoyz protection from above." Sources say that the cheering could be heard as far away as the *Temple of Mended Bough*, some

twelve leagues away.



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