
The Lady's Sharper Eye

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



BATCH-21

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Tales from the Blood War

by Sofellor, Blood War culler

Massacre, Part I

Related by Sofellor

The sands flayed the skin from my minion's bones. If I still retained eyes they would surely have been blinded. I led a small detachment of the Bone Legion alongside a group of baatezu. The fiends were indifferently commanded by a marilith called Antenne'.

Some hundred or so barbazu accompanied my twenty skeletal knights.

Scouts had discovered a potential fortress for our use, the ancient city of Maasador. It once graced the Outlands but a skirmish of the Blood War saw all its citizens slaughtered. Soon after it disappeared, apparently slipping into Carceri. Why an empty city would slip is beyond me. A regiment of yugoloth mercenaries had been assigned to guard it, while we mustered enough force to actually hold its walls in the event of an attack. We were wary, as they had not been heard from in days.

The barbazu marched in ruthless perfection with Antenne' slithering along in the lead. My unofficial mission was to advise her, but as yet my advice went unheeded. My knights were outriders to ensure no unpleasant surprises arose. The crumbling walls suddenly appeared through the clouds of sand billowing across our vision. Low towers loomed at intervals down the wall, shattered battlements bearing mute testimony to times ravages. The main gate was flung wide, one door hanging as if shattered. No sign of the yugoloths we had posted here. Two knights quickly cantered inside. One had just entered when the hanging door fell upon the other. The warrior rolled free, but his steed was not so lucky. They pushed the door aside to free the creature. It stood on three legs, the fourth broken into three pieces beneath the weight of the stout wooden and ironbound gate. A mending spell from a scroll quickly restored the shattered limb. The steed took its rider again, though it walked with a limp. Our company moved inside the walls.

The city had once been beautiful. A fountain graced the plaza we entered into, though sand filled it now. The structure behind it had crumbled. A partially burned sign could still be made out. The "Traveler's Sanctuary" had seen few customers in the past millennia. The road directly ahead was blocked by rubble, but the massive paving stones could still be seen. Maasador had been rich in its day.

Antenne' directed her troops to man the walls. My advice to quarter the city in search of the assigned guards was dismissed with a withering glance. I told the knight's commander, Gwerin Blacksun, to have his troops walk the roads to find avenues of advance should we need to travel quickly. He was one of my best subordinates. His empty sockets followed me for just a moment after I finished speaking, then he sprang into action. I continued to look around myself.

After climbing over the rubble blocking the road, I beheld what once must have been the market district. The battle that raged over this town must have been great. The sturdy stone structures were shattered. Tremendous fires must have raged and huge score marks indicated electricity had been used. Melted sections showed where acid had struck. The whole town was thus, save the great temple at city center. I climbed atop the rubble and from my vantage could watch several of my knights mapping the passable roads.

I noticed a skeletal steed unattended next to a building. I found that very unusual and began to walk towards it. A huge crash came from where the horse stood. Reaching the area I saw an old house had collapsed, crushing both the knight and his mount. In my anger I ground my gauntlets together causing sparks. A summoning horn blew from across the town's center.

Two barbazu watched me from the wall, leaning on their glaives. One waved when they noticed my attention. As his hand rose both he and his partner disappeared from sight. A polearm clattered to the ground in front of the wall. After a moment's silence the entire section of wall collapsed in on the hole the two fiends had discovered. Tons of rock came to rest, forming a cairn for the two blood warriors.

With barely a glance, I saw movement out of the corner of my eye. I turned, expecting to see one of my troops, but instead a nycaloth stood silently watching me. We met eyes for just a moment, and then he stepped back into a doorway. Clouds of sand blocked him from my sight. I suspected we were being toyed with. My ancient rage began to awake. Sword drawn, I walked into the area the loth had just stepped inside. Empty, the space held nothing. My boots were the first to disturb the sand in ages. Illusion perhaps? The door slammed shut behind me.

My back burned at a caustic touch. The foolish loth was attacking me! He held no weapon, just swiped with some type of acidic effect on his hands. He was difficult to see as he had made himself pitch black. He reached for my eyes and I removed his hand. He smiled at me and charged. I stepped to the side and allowed him to impale himself on my blade. He slid upon it until his chest touched the hilt, still unstopped. I tried to cuff him off of my blade, but he burst into some type of smoke and withdrew into the cracks in the wall.

My captain of knights, Gwerin sounded the horn again as I came into sight. "Milord," he said bowing, "We have discovered the quarters the loths had set up." His cape wrapped him 'round, impeding his straightening up. At least the wind inside the walls was not so severe. I stepped into the chamber he indicated with my sword still drawn. It had once been a stronghouse of the city guard; thick walls made it secure. The little light available slipped in through arrowslits. A small altar at the back of the room had been fouled long ago. The God of Guardians would no longer call this sacred. A thick black ichor pooled in the offering bowl and the relic in the shape of a helm had long since been scored by acid.

A scene of bedlam covered the rest of the room. Packs lay torn apart with weapons scattered about. The ancient bunks had been piled up against the door. Gwerin told me it took seven knights to pry it open. A metal plate covered the near arrow slit; the other two had such plates on the floor below them. These were fragments of shields, bearing the device of the yugoloth regiment. Each was deeply scored exactly like the altar to Helm. The scene was curious, so very unlike the loths. They never leave any of their goods behind. I hefted an idle sword that held so much enchantment that it made my dead arm tingle.

Something was wrong here. It was as if they were trying to keep something out. I related my earlier fight with the nycaloth. They replied that three of my knights fought a loth that acted much the same way. It had slain one of our ancient campaigners. Gwerin pointed out some deep scratches in the wall. When I drew close I could make out the words, "Ware the mist that slays." What rubbish was this? If the foolish mercenaries were playing pranks, they'd find me a poor sport. I ordered Gwerin to complete the

mapping and rejoin me at the main square. Perhaps the baatezu commander could shed some light on this strangeness.



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Riot at Chirper's

by Daeh K. Carc, Sigil culler

Market Ward-- You've probably already heard about the hell of a riot that's been raging at Chirper's a few days back. A whole staff of Hardhead investigators has been busy finding out who was responsible for this massive act of destruction. However, it's your old friend Will the Red-Eyed whose lanned this dark, as I am the first who found out.

You see Chirper's is always on the lookout for interesting creatures from the planes. They display 'em in their exhibition spheres. Hende bloods can make some nice jink capturing and selling such critters to Chirper's. Just about a week ago one such hunter, Sank Ranjitt, came to Sigil with a special delivery for the famous tavern. He didn't mention to anyone what he brought, though such bloods don't normally wander around rattling their bone-boxes too often. Nevertheless, I garnished a quipper who said he saw Ranjitt coming out of portal from Limbo. All becomes a bit clearer when you connect this with the appearance of the new creature at Chirper's. 'Twas a Rainbow Slaad, that's sure as Sigil! Very rare specimen, I'd bet most berks didn't even know there is such a thing.

No matter how much the owner had to pay Ranjitt, he still made a hell of a profit. Whole throngs were coming in to see the slaad. I even went there myself. I've never seen Chirper's so full before. I had a hard time getting inside, let alone catch a skeg at the creature. But, I saw it eventually and it made me sigh. It was such an unforgettable sight, beautiful, colorful patterns, changing and swirling like sparks, or blossoming flowers. It made a shocking contrast with the ugliness of the slaad itself. No wonder everyone wanted to see it. I saw a shiere sitting next to a pair of arcanoloths, all gazing at the slaad in silence.

Everything would have gone just fine, if it wasn't for the chaotic nature of the slaad. Ya know it got bored after few days. Some berks forgot it was not just a critter, but a free-willed being and with a lot of worms as it turned out later. Without any provocation it started to splash its excrements on the walls of the sphere and displayed offensive signs on its skin at whoever looked at it. It was so suggestive with these signs that some bubbled leatherhead decided to teach the slaad proper manners (as if he himself had manners). Suddenly, he produced a mace and smashed the slaad's sphere with it. That was just what the slaad was waiting for.

It leaped forward with a lightning quick move and bit off an addle-cove's head. Some berks jumped to their feet and drew their chivs, but the majority just sat and stared at the slaad blank-faced. The slaad started to cast wild surges all over

the tavern. What a mayhem it caused! Flowers sprouted from one's head, a fiend turned pink, some Sinkers went berserk and the curtains caught fire. All of this ended with a masterfully placed chaos spell in the middle of the crowd. Chirper's visitors then started to fight among themselves. Even the bouncers, who were paid Mercykillers, were helpless as they got in the middle of the brawl themselves. The slaad polymorphed into a human woman and fled from the building.

Meanwhile inside a full-fledged battle raged on. When the spell's effects finally wore off, all the combatants were so torqued off by the fight that they continued brawling, demolishing large parts of Chirper's. Broken furniture and beams along with a demolished bar were nothing really serious - it happens all the time at Chirper's. The real danger came from the burning curtains. A large part of the ceiling had burnt, threatening the whole building to collapse. By the time the Hardheads intervened, it was already too late. Two humans and a halfling customer were killed by an angry mezzoloth, while the mezzoloth's partner was slain by the slaad before it escaped. Many more were seriously injured by the ensuing fight and fire. As a result, Chirper's was in need of immediate repair and had to be closed down, much to the dismay of the entire ward. Repairs are expected to take about a week.

All that happened inside was relayed to me by one of the survivors, a basher called Beta Daen. Thanks to Beta's first-hand account, I have compiled all the pieces of chant to give you the whole story (a slaad story actually) before your peery eyes. The Hardheads haven't managed to release their official version of the events yet, so you bashers are lucky you've got the *Eye* to lann you most recent and insightful chant. No one knows what happened to the slaad, but according to my quipper informants, it made its way to the Hive and some passing Xaositects helped it find its way back to Limbo. I wouldn't bet a single green on it being that simple though!



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Dwarves Hold Fast

by Godemirc Kreb, Outlands culler

Dwarven Mountain, Outlands-- After weeks of savage fighting it appears the dwarves have reclaimed their sacred mines. Hundreds of families mourn the dead and many more tend to the wounded. The mighty Dwarven Mountain wears black this day.

Production was officially restarted yesterday in the Soulforgers Dig. Cheers from the local population greeted the first cart of mithril ore. These residents were in desperate need for some type of good news. The hammers are again ringing in the smith's shop and smoke from the forge again burns the throats of those nearby.

The Dwarven Guard hired a human mage to place Dragonfire on the major seams of ore, which seemed to destroy the Metril. The Metril warriors were melted into slag, all without screaming. They attacked until the last was destroyed as though it was they who were defending hearth and home. The savage fighting lasted for several days. The dull boom of exploding rock shot from jettisons and clashed with the sound of dwarven screams and the sound of clubs striking home.

The sounds of combat are silent now and a sense of normalcy has returned to this ancient site. The ring of pick on rock is again background to the beauty of torchlight on metal. The picks screech is discordant to me now, as though children were screaming in pain. Maybe it's the sound the parents could never make.

The Metril may be gone from this area, but I believe they will return. Maybe not here, maybe not today, but they will. Were I a parent, I could do nothing less. I shudder as I leave the nursery the dwarves call Soulforger Dig. Most here scoff at my story, calling it propaganda put forth to discredit them. But I remember well what I saw, the Metril speaker. I believe it to be the truth. You may judge for yourself.



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Anthill XY7 destroyed

by Godemirc Kreb, Outlands culler

Near the River Ma'at, Outlands-- In a shocking follow-up to last BATCH's story, "Ethereal explosion stirs Anthill", *Eye* cullers again visited the formian settlement near the ancient realm of Thoth. Passers-by gasped and gaped at the utter destruction and ruin. There was not a formian, nor any sign that a formian had ever existed nearby, to be found.

Well-known Outlands guide, Yeowler Mistpaw, son of R'aor Mistpaw, was the first on the scene and told a grisly and chilling tale. "Aye, 'twas I that found 'em and by Dukat's mighty claw it was a sight. I had come seekin' the solvent that th' formians use in their homes, ya see, I've a blood o' mine back in Cog that needs it badly, and well, I knew that th' formians had it. But when I arrived - all that was here was a smokin' hole in the ground half as big as the Root o' the Spire! I know not what could'a caused it."

Eye cullers, sensing that a top-shelf cutter was needed on the lann, contracted with the Snail Outfitters store in Ironhearth for the services of veteran tracker, ice genasi Joash Snowblossom. Snowblossom was able to pick up a trail, after a good bit of time. The following was lanned from the experienced guide, "Yes, seems many ba'atezu were here. Great measures they have taken to hide tracks. Also many large insect tracks, not formian. Seems ba'atezu fought with large insects against formians. Many foul spells wrought!"

Subsequent interviews with nearby cases of Outlands herders, fishermen, and farmers seem to somewhat support this rough theory. "Ya, 'ere was sum racket and goins ons over the hill th' odder night," commented Ma'at fisherman, Pearly Whiskerbottum, an aasimar with obvious cat-lord blood in his veins. "I was bring'n'da nets and heared all o' this whoopin' 'n' hollerin' and boomin' - by th' Spire, it was a fearsum racket! I thought to meself - 'them powers-damned rilmani and havin' 'nuther party, shorin', but I guess I was wrong."

There was little evidence left at the scene where the once regal Anthill XY7 once stood, but several investigators from nearby Thoth's Realm were dispatched to begin probing the darks in this matter. Also, chant was such that a team, specially appointed by Lord Kalinor himself, was leaving Ironhearth to investigate the entire incident from start to finish.

The Ironhearth crew consists of several top-shelf spell-slingers, many of which are Doomguard with specialties in massively destructive magicks. Along with the Sinkers is a triad of Dustman priests, whose purpose is still dark. The group is believed to be headed by Oset, paladin of the minotaur power Balram and

member of the legendary Company of Ironhearth. Oddly, however, there has not been a formal statement from Ironhearth nor from the formian capital of *Ur'dur'Ragg'A*, also known as 'Stone Home', of which the destroyed formian settlement was a part.

As a side note, bloods might remember that both Ironhearth and 'Stone Home' formed an alliance several cycles ago. In light of this destructive event, one would have to speculate at to who might be "holding the reins of the wagon", so to speak. This culler, while not sure of his own speculations, will be sure and remain peery while bringing all of the remaining darks to light for the *Eye* and its faithful followers.



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No sign of Blue-Heeled Jack

by P. Fiendus Hooten, Guest culler

Outlands, near the Palace of Judgement-- It appeared, wreaked havoc and then disappeared into the night. The creature that is now officially being referred to as "Blue-Heeled Jack" has seemingly vanished, leaving only a trail of glowing blue horseshoe-shaped footprints and a lot of questions.

For those not familiar with the story, the small burg of Hex located outside of Curst in the Outlands, was at the scene of a mysterious appearance by a strange creature that jumped over the walls of the burg, "spit blue flames" and murdered a woman in a tavern. For the full story, check out the previous issue of the *Eye*.

The Harmonium investigated the Hex area and were able to backtrack the trail of footprints to a band of Rilmani that were found murdered on the Great Road. The tracks originated from an ancient statue near Curst, the inscription identified the statue as being that of the "Blue-Heeled Jack," which is where the name now assigned to this being came from.

The Harmonium has since finished its investigation. Faction high-ups refuse to release the findings of the investigation at this time, though it is assumed that their investigation turned up little, aside from the already known facts. Following the tracks as they led away from Hex has shown that Blue-Heeled Jack is taking a sporadic route that initially led towards Tir fo Thuinn and then turned towards the Palace of Judgement.

At times the trail was surprisingly difficult to follow in spite of the obvious footprints, mainly due to the apparent dexterity this creature has, any obstacle it came across was jumped over. Thus far there have been spans as much as eighteen paces over which this creature had jumped. It is difficult to estimate the height that it is able to attain, but it is known to have jumped from the ground to a third-story roof.

The morning after the sighting in Hex, a group of bounty hunters headed out to closely follow the trail. Later inquiries identified this to be a group called the "Screed Scraggers," a rough and tumble outfit based out of Sigil. They apparently had stopped in Hex on their way towards one of the gate-towns, but details are sketchy. The Harmonium pursued the bounty hunters' and Blue-Heeled Jack's tracks for a couple of days and then gave up. Being extremely interested in this creature, my loyal assistants and I continued on the trail.

Three days after the Harmonium patrol moved on, we came across a herd of

bariaur that said that they knew nothing of this creature, but did recall seeing a streaking whitish-blue light moving rapidly across a pasture that was a couple of leagues distance across a lake. They were quite interested in what we had to report and were particularly interested in the tracks. The bariaur flock joined our group in trailing Blue-Heeled Jack. They have asked that we do not publish their names and we will respectfully honor that request.

The day following the bariaurs joining our group, we came across the bodies of the "Screed Scraggers." Evidently, they had fallen victim to what was believed to be a Tso attack. It was unknown if this was a chance meeting between the two groups or if the Tso are somehow involved with this mysterious creature. We opted not to pursue the Tso and find out.

After pursuing the tracks for several more days we opted to return to Sigil and report what we had found. The bariaur herd decided to continue to follow the tracks. We passed back through Hex and were perplexed upon learning that the hoofprints left by Blue-Heeled Jack were now gone. According to Gnert, the constable of Hex, the tracks faded away about five days after the attack.

I have asked several sages in Sigil to research their libraries for any reference to this bewildering creature. So far this has not proved fruitful. No one who has been a previous resident of Carceri will talk to me, whether that is due to some incident they had with Blue-Heeled Jack or just due to their nature after having spent time in the Red Prison is unknown. At this point we are waiting for more information to come in regarding Blue-Heeled Jack's whereabouts. I strongly suspect that we have not heard the last of this unusual being.



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Strange affliction affects Staircase

by Magrum Rood, Freelance culler

Infinite Staircase-- Planewalker reports from all over the Great Ring are causing quite a stir regarding the well known, rarely found, but much sought-after Infinite Staircase. One cutter said in his report, "There is somethin' barmy goin' on, I tell ya. Well, barmier than that powers-damned Staircase normally is, anyways. Even the lillend are actin' strange." The dwarven planewalker Dernan, who sources say had been previously lost, went on to say that he wandered all over the Staircase for several days, but couldn't find anything specifically that was astray.

Several *Eye* cullers investigated these "barmy happenings" further and did in fact find that something amiss seemed to be occurring. Several locations on the Infinite Staircase appear to be missing. In connection, or perhaps not, sods speak of a "strange affliction" that "strikes at men's passions" in several locales that interconnect with the Infinite Staircase. Unfortunately, a body with afflicted passion could not be found.

"It all seems to have begun with tales of a group of bashers that came through here sometime back", explained Poseure Spieda, planewalker and member of the famous Planewalker's Guild, which for those not in the know is located on the Infinite Staircase. When asked if she had any proof to back up this screed, she replied, "I have checked the membership logs and these sods seemingly joined the Guild as well, but that happened after they had infected the Staircase. I think that it all started with a large battle farther up the Staircase from where the Guild was holed up at the time. There was a big, barmy bash with an old grumpy glabrezu that had made one of the landings his kip. He'd taken up with an utterly barmy sorceress named Shavanistra; I have no idea what they saw in each other. I think that's what started it all, if ya ask me."

Following this chant, *Eye* cullers finally found the new case of the Planewalker's Guild, and asked minotaur leader, Hav'run Thain, about the "group of bashers". "I don't know what leatherheads you're talkin' about. I do know, however, that at about that same time, a valued member of our Guild, the wizard Oriam Trascalía, went a missin'. He was an expert in magicks dealing wit' chaos and law. In my opinion, the problems with the Staircase can more likely be traced to one of his leatherheaded experiments than any green primes skirmishin' on a landing! That darn near happens daily and has for cycles, why should just one particular fight make any soddin' difference?" Master Thain would entertain no further questions at that point and began to make himself more familiar with a flagon of Icestream Ale.

While many theories concerning the beginnings of this strange affliction are present, there are in fact, very few examples of the affliction itself. Vague notions of lethargic attitudes by bodys that have kips near connections to the Infinite Staircase, coupled with tales of "disappearing doorways" are all that exist. While these "symptoms" are easily explainable by other reasons, the *Eye* will be strive to bring all the darks to light.



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Lady Sighted, Fools Found Flayed

by Daeh K. Carc, Sigil culler

Market Ward-- Reports have surfaced that the Lady appeared before a crowd amongst the shops and tents of the Great Bazaar. Details of the sighting are sketchy at best, as most cutters have flat out refused to speak of it, presumably in fear of retribution from the Lady.

What we do know is that the apparent appearance occurred outside of "Grinderlark's Darks" main entrance around peak several days ago. The few witnesses that were willing to talk with us said that She appeared suddenly and moved through the rapidly dispersing crowd. She seemed to be heading directly towards a human figure that stood facing her. The being was very similar to a human, possibly a Rilmani, although two reports conflict this. Reports vary on what happened next, primarily because witnesses were mostly running away from the clearing. It is said that this human held his hand up towards the Lady, who then stopped and turned away. She reportedly left the scene rapidly and then disappeared.

This human was described as being dressed in strange clothing, having messy blonde hair, and standing about six feet tall. After the appearance he was visibly distraught and ran in the direction the Lady had left in. A short while later several cutters started speculating that the human somehow was able to "turn" the Lady away. This caused all sorts of rumors to be spread and soon there were several bounties calling for the human's capture, including one by Crowelian'Crucius, an arcanoloth and sometimes actor, who offered a bounty of 10,000 Mechanus platinum.

The initial news spread quickly and almost as quickly was met with intense skepticism. "Yeah - sure the Lady appeared. Sure, some berk 'turned' her - yeah, right. I do that all the time," said Pruvian Ginghost, a brewer from Gehenna, much to the amusement to the patrons of his beer-tent in the great bazaar. He went on to say, "That's a good one! Hey, maybe I'll even bring the Lady with me to the upcoming beerfest!"

Others were more pragmatic in their reasoning. "I've lived in Sigil for seventy two cycles and I've never seen Her," said Llewelyn Orgranger, an elf residing in the Clerk's Ward. "I stopped wondering about such stories, they seem to be the children of a fantastical mind and it has been my experience that one should stay focused on reality and not play fantasy games such as this." Gleep Wurf, an illusionist, postulated this theory, "It may have looked like the Lady and all, but it was most likely a complex illusion cast by one of considerable ability. The thing I would question now is who was this illusionist? Who was working with

him and whom are they trying to bob? They're trying to bob somebody, suren!"

Measure Two Brusellus Marks of the Harmonium officially pronounced that they were looking for this human and that any information that was available as to his whereabouts would be appreciated. "This man is wanted for questioning. No, I can not confirm or deny the rumors surrounding this individual. He is wanted for questioning. Any that are suspected in aiding or abetting his escape from Sigil will be taken into custody as well!"

While completing this report, I received a report that Pruvian Gingham and all of the occupants of his beer-tent were found flayed. It is unknown what this means or who was involved, but one thing is for certain - the Lady will not be mocked. As for the human that was reported in the event, there is at this time no trace of him and the Harmonium appear to have been given the laugh.



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Bird migration linked to Chaos Plague

by Godemirc Krieb, Outlands culler

Outlands-- Water birds and other fowl along the River Ma'at are spreading their wings and extending their range spireward in an attempt to avoid the spread of the Chaos Plague, according to a animal research group of the Fraternity of Order. During the past 3 cycles, many birds have pushed their territorial boundaries by an average of 12 leagues, but their airborne limits have remained the same, sages conducting research for the Fortress of Enlightenment say.

"This general spireward shift is taking place during a period of rapid change in chaotic activity, which we propose might be casually involved," Cris Tomas and Jak Lenno said in a letter released to interested cullers last week. The researchers used breeding catalogs to map the migration of 101 bird species. Less than a third of the 101 are believed to be native to the Outlands.

"If similar changes take place in response to the increase in chaotic activity that is expected for the coming cycle, we can expect to see many more serious shifts in species distribution," Tomas added. In a separate report sent to the City Courts in Sigil, sages on a similar expedition to the Ironhook Mountains, predicted that birds of the Outlands with a breeding range of less than 38,610 square leagues would become more vulnerable to extinction.

Since the beginning of last cycle, 108 animal species have become extinct across the Outlands and lower gatetowns. Additionally, 452 species are considered to be threatened, said Fated scribe Lia Mane, leader of a factional investigation involving the reduction in the number of animals being available for trade across the planes.

"Historically, it has been the case that most extinctions occur due to an increase in predators or climate changes, but that has not been the case with animals on the Outlands and that is the most striking part of our findings. History leads us to believe one thing, but what we're really finding is something different, the Plague is quite possibly killing animals at an alarming rate," said Mane.



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Guvners involved in Abyssal Slave Trade

by Jelly Hoarfrost, Freelance culler

Lady's Ward/Outlands-- Dear readers, what I have to tell you shocks my lawful soul to the core, but I feel the need to reveal the truth to the public. Having work at the City Courts for some time, I have stumbled upon some top-shelf secret documents that I believe prove the involvement of the Fraternity of Order in Abyssal slave trade.

I was able to copy the following quote from these documents, "I thus suggest to you, Hashkar, that immediate action should be taken against this unlawful and utterly evil business. Four entire bariaur tribes have been forced into slavery by now, and my sources (which I will reveal to you when we meet in private) have proof the slaves were sent to Zelatar in Graz'zt's Abyssal realm."

Later in this same text, the bariaur tribes are specified by name and place of origin. Research on these facts provided me with the information that all of the mentioned bariaur tribes seem to have simply disappeared from the Outlands. None of the nearby residents could tell me anything about the fate of these proud warriors. Only a relatively young bariaur shaman told me something that might be of any value.

As an answer to my question if she knew anything about what had happened to these tribes, she politely said, "The chains of power seek to bind us again. The Scramasax will return, but it will not be in the hands of our tribes. The bravest warrior will frighten what is frightening itself, while the servants of law strengthen the chaos. Blood will be spilled and minds will be broken. Pray to the gods that the strength of will overcomes the evil forces of raw power."

Although I do not rely on such prophecies, the words of this shaman are astonishingly supported by the secret documents found within the Fraternity of Order.

"From what my investigations have unearthed up to now, it seems that an Abyssal prince or lord seeks to bind the complete race of the bariaur into slavery. Unfortunately, the only source that has provided me with direct information on the missing bariaur is somewhat unreliable. If the sod tells the truth, though, it seems the kidnappers of the bariaur have found a way to break the will of these noble warriors. I have received a description of how the once-proud beings were led into some stables, not even being bound with chains, while none of them even made the slightest attempt of escaping."

The documents end with the following paragraph:

"I am afraid these events could result in major damage to the reputation of our beloved Fraternity of Order. As yet there are no clues about who is allied with the Abyssal denizens, but I am sure it is someone (or maybe even a group of beings) who resides in a very high position within our faction. We must work subtly in uncovering the dark behind these events; otherwise attention will be shown on us for sure. However, we also must uncover the traitors fast, and if possible, stop the bariaur kidnappings. I fear these events could provide a great threat not only to our faction, but also in the long run to the establishment and continued presence of Law and Order in general across the known planes. We should try to decapitate this serpent before its slow poison can affect the vital parts of the multiverse."

As I have to admit I have lost my trust in the Fraternity of Order, I can no longer wait for the faction's officials to act. Thus, I will travel to the Abyss myself, dear readers, so to provide you with more of this shocking information. I am happy to have the support and resources of *The Lady's Sharper Eye*, allowing me to act suddenly and swiftly. Hopefully, I can uncover these criminals soon. Keep your wits about you and your senses sharp as more of the darks behind this terrifying slave trade are revealed.



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Factions issue warning after Hall bombing

by Daeh K. Carc, Sigil culler

Lady's Ward-- Several factions of Law posted a warning to all residents of the Cage following an explosion at the Hall of Speakers that injured two last week. A pair of female clerks, known primarily as hatcheck girls, were sent to healing clinics after a small bomb, hidden in a coat, exploded in the main lobby of the Hall. The factional warning indicated that anyone, including factols, entering the Hall of Speakers would be searched and possibly detained.

Officials for the Harmonium are now determining whether there's a link between the coat explosion and several "package" bombs sent to Fraternity of Order Factol Hashkar and Transcendental Order Factol Rhys earlier this month. Both explosives were delivered in plain brown sackcloth and authorities were unable to track down how the "packages" had been delivered.

"We have no idea if it's the work of the same individual or individuals. At this point it would be speculative to say the two incidents are related," Hardhead inspector Ald Redfor told *The Eye*. "But there's no question in my mind that whoever did this is capable of both bombings and we will make every effort to see if there's any connection at all."

Hardheads have been hot on the trail of the blood who sent the bombs to Factol Hashkar. Fortunately, the explosive device didn't have a chance to detonate after an eagle-eyed staff member at the City Courts became suspicious and notified a local Harmonium substation. Luckily, the substation had an experienced mage on hand that was able to disarm the device. A similar package was delivered to Harmonium Factol Sarin two days later, but that was determined to be a hoax.

In last week's blast, the two Hall clerks were struck by flying shrapnel with one of them sustaining temporary hearing loss. Lewci Garney, a half-elf Cipher, and Stacke Brotzey, an elven Sensate, were also treated for minor cuts and bruises before being released from a Sensate healing clinic. "I just picked up the coat and then there was a loud bang. The next thing I knew I was on the floor. I thought Stacke had played another one of her practical jokes with an exploding balloon bra, but I saw her laying next to me so I knew it wasn't that," Garney recalled.

The explosive device, containing a magically enhanced vial of Phegistol set inside a metallic brick, was hidden within the pocket of an overcoat that had evidently been placed in the main lobby before the Hall had opened that morning. When the unsuspecting clerk picked up the coat the device detonated.

Phegistol is a widely used explosive found within the caverns of Carceri. It has been outlawed in the Cage for several cycles and has only recently made a comeback on the black market.

Chant has it that the device did not fully explode. Officials would not say what caused the disruption, but they did say that it could have been extremely deadly if it had cleanly exploded. "In our estimation whatever it was inside that coat was sufficient to cause serious injury to the expected meeting of the factols. I'd guess that it could have even caused structural damage to the Hall itself if it had exploded completely," Redfor said.

The Harmonium has warned all of the factions to inspect all packages before opening. It is unknown if a crackdown on exploding coats will be ordered and all requests for an official interview with any of the involved factols were flatly refused. In a related note, the Planar Trade Consortium has indicated that they will discontinue the delivery of individual packages within the City of Doors and will only make deliveries to Cagers if the order is of a sufficient bulk quantity.



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