

SIGILS

Issue 19 Year 1

Price: 2 Stingers

Third Week of Tithing

Martial Law Declared

SIGIL (Hive Ward)—Chaos erupted violently throughout the Hive Ward this past week as tensions between Jangling Hiter refugees and Anthill natives (Xaositects in particular) boiled over into ward-wide riots. Clash and clatter could be found everywhere in the ward, from the banks of the Ditch to the heaps of the Slags. The worst fighting seemed centred in the jumble of the Hive itself, where dozens of groups of 'Hitters attempted to wrest living and working space from the Xaositects.

It is believed that this last attempt at aggressive squatting sparked the other riots throughout the ward. It remains unclear as to who attacked whom first, although few in the Cage seem to be siding with the reviled Jangling Hiter refugees. (see previous SIGILS articles in issues 12, 14). Xaositects, Dustmen, and Bleakers alike have all spoken out against 'Hiter rudeness and aggression, and little sympathy seems forthcoming from the factions based elsewhere in the Cage. Said Bleaker Twyla Slough, "Sodding cause-ridden 'Hitters! It's pointless to even try and list all the ways those Baator-dwelling berks cause trouble." Interviewed from the bursting birdcages within the Court's holding areas, one unnamed 'Hiter told his story in fractured cant: "How were we supposed to know there was any cut-ups living there? Them ratholes just looked like abandoned, stinking kippers! We was gonna build 'em up into nice, safe case-houses, right? Then these barney Chaos-er people just came jumpin' through the ceiling, callin' us 'berks' and 'clueless' and all sorts of foul insults. Well, what else could we do? A bloody-blood's gotta defend his boonies, right?" The berk was then summarily stitched by a Red Death guard.

In an emergency session, the Speaker's Hall declared martial law soon after Xaositects reported (via notes attached to live turkeys thrown into the Hall) their Faction headquarters under attack. Under Guvner prompting, forces of order were given permission to use all necessary tactics to scrag the rioters.

Lesser experienced Harmonium troops massed along the Slags and the Ditch, the most notable borders of the Hive, to prevent unauthorised entry and exit to the ward. They were aided by great numbers of loyal Guvner namers and several squads of Sensates looking to see what it felt like to be part of an army. Scuffles were reported along the Ditch as

scattered gangs of Doomguard attempted to cross the bridges into the Hive to escalate the looting and rioting.

Truly hardened Hardheads, Mercykillers, and hired mercenaries were joined by spontaneously appearing groups of Ciphers in case-to-case scouring of the ward. The newly inducted kyton Mercykiller troops made the largest impression on the rampaging 'Hitters, while the Ciphers concentrated on protecting what few innocents could be found on the ward's crooked streets.

The Hardheads, Mercykillers and kytons viciously attacked any and all concentrations of Hiver citizenry they came across. Reports streamed in of deadman's trees sprouting in the alleys, laced with writhing chains that strangled any who came near. Mercykillers, given free reign by the Speaker's dubious pronouncement of martial law, were bent on scragging or killing every suspected miscreant in the ward, which in their eyes seemed to be every sod in the place!

While the Hardheads concentrated on clearing the currymushy around the 'important' cases of the ward, like the faction headquarters and the Hive Ward Central Court, the kyton Mercykiller inductees slaughtered scores in the streets. Only the

intervention of the resident factions and the Ciphers prevented a true holocaust, and bad blood is expected to flow from this incident for some time to come. (see culler Rood's editorial comments later this issue—Ed.)

The Bleeders, an up-and-coming sect known either as the Society or Association of Pain, surprised many by contributing to the preservation of the Hive. Barbed namers formed bucket brigades in the Marble District to fight the many arson fires lit during the week and many suffered horrific burns or were nearly drowned in the effort.

A Martyr spokes-hobbit, Hartz Twellinger, said, "We're thinking about opening up a fire-house in Sigil, to try and raise folks' awareness of our beliefs. See, nothin's more painful than fire and icy cold water, and with a fire-house, common sods can see how necessary pain is in their lives."

The common sods of the Hive Ward have now had an excellent education in pain, taught mostly at the ends of Hardhead and Mercykiller swords. The damage done from the Jangling Hiter refugees was compounded twice over by the so-called forces of order, and many Cagers of conscience are now calling for an extended investigation into the whole affair.

—Gert Rood, *Hive Ward culler*
(Mr. N)

River Styx Dammed

BAATOR (Stygia)—Here in Stygia, the 5th layer of Baator, an audacious feat worthy of the Planes' most incredible engineering projects has been completed. The River Styx, often rumoured to originate in the vast frozen oceans of Stygia, has been dammed and diverted by a huge force of baatezu. The dam, named the Malevallum by its builders, sits at the edge of baatific influence on the layer. Here, in the ice canyons that channel the Styx off into other planes, the Styx gathers in its fastest rushing currents. The fog in this area forms from river spray, and is enough in itself to wipe an incautious berk's memories.

Normally, only the lowliest or most disfavoured baatezu are assigned to the guard posts in the many fortresses ringing the Styx's entry and exit from Baator on Stygia. But today, mighty armies toil there

in an effort that literally shakes the ground. The Malevallum stands over a mile in height, and while it is situated within one of the more narrow canyons, one still cannot see the far side while standing at an end of the dam. There are no locks and no valves in the massive black wall, and its thickness (easily thrice that of a mortal castle) indicates this is no temporary measure. This bulwark was built to completely obstruct the river, not harness it.

Apparently, baatezu high-ups have chosen to block this entry port into their realm. The project has been shrouded in almost total secrecy, and the resources put into it smack of Blood War tactics. The dark of its construction has gone unmentioned even to the best-lanned of whistles sages and only fortunate happenstance has brought the damming to

Copyright 1998 by Scott Kelley and Jon Winter; Artwork copyright 1998 by Scott Kelley; Submissions by Scott Kelley, Jon Winter, Brian Mooney, T-Man, Alex Roberts, Heinz Hofbauer, Tom Bubul and Mr. Niceguy

Disclaimer Note: All of the published Planescape characters, character names, symbols and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks owned by TSR, Inc. All other material here is original and copyright 1998 and 1999 by the given author where noted. Should there be given no author the article is copyrighted by the editors Jon Winter and Scott Kelley. None of it is endorsed by TSR, and none of it is in any way "official". This material is for personal use only and may not be published, altered, redistributed or posted on News Groups, Mailing Lists, Web Pages, FTP Sites or Bulletin Boards without the permission of the author.

The original SIGILS is in HTML format and is hosted at <http://www.mimir.net/> a site maintained by Jon Winter.

River Styx Dammed Clarion Derives "Free" Speech To Hall Of Speakers

light. However, newly appointed task force overseer Pollus Windscream, (formerly of Cornugon status and overseer of the now-defunct Jangling Hiter of Baator's 3rd layer, Minauros) was willing to spread some chant about his role in the great undertaking.

Windscream, a gelugon in charge of coating the land-locked sections of the Malevallum with an unclimbable layer of ice, indicated that, as usual with baatezu actions, the obvious answer was incorrect. "No," he clicked, "the Dam's just a side-effect of what we're after here. The tanar'ri never get this far in the [Blood] War, and the forts here defend Baator well."

"Besides," he complained, "do you think a new promotion like me'd be put in charge of something that critical to the war effort? Hah! Not sodding likely! Those filth-ridden pit fiends save all the high-up jobs for themselves!" (Ed. note: We are sure Mr. Windscream meant no offence by this remark.) Windscream declined to speak farther on the subject, or about the mysterious activities surrounding Jangling Hiter, his previous posting. (Ed. note—see SIGIS issue 16, "Ritual Sacrifices Mark Jangling Hiter Grave") He would say only, "Scan the work in the channel if you want to know the real dark of this; that's where all the pit fiends lay about."

The major new channel Windscream mentioned marches straight from the Malevallum to Ankhwugaht, the realm of the dreaded power, Set. None of the Styx's effluvium yet flows through this new canal, but it is clear that at some point in the near future, a veritable onslaught of Styx-water will pour into the Realm of the Midnight Desert. Nekrotheptis Skorpios, proxy of Set, graciously allowed entry into the Realm and spoke sparingly of the mighty canal which Baatezu are even now carving deeper and deeper into the desert of Ankhwugaht.

"Be assured, mortal," he said, "that nothing occurs under the shadow of the Black Pyramid that was not ordained by Great Set himself. If the Styx flows through the Domain of the Dead, it is only because Set wills it."

Skorpios refused to elucidate any reasons for allowing the channel's passage and seemed nervous when interrogated on the topic. He ended the tour when questions started to become uncomfortable. However, a glimpse of the work-in-progress was obtained before Skorpios' hospitality became strained. Pit fiends do indeed labour vigorously in the baking heat of Ankhwugaht, pushing lesser fiends to complete the canal. It thrusts deep into the hottest, driest parts of Set's realm. In the great salt flats, where nothing grows but the Blossom of Desert's Night, myriad baatezu dig and claw their way through the alkaline sands. While no participant in this project was willing to speak of the purpose behind it all, reasonable speculations can be made. If Windscream's chant is accurate, and the Malevallum is meant only to divert the flow of the Styx into Ankhwugaht, then one must wonder at the state of diplomatic affairs between the Prince Levistus, the ruler of Stygia, and Set.

Are the two popular evil forces at odds with one another? Do the Baatezu plan to unite dry, anomalous Ankhwugaht with the rest of the frozen, oceanic Stygia? Do the persistent rumours of the effects of the Blossom of Desert's Night have anything to do with the canal?

Further research will tell the tale.

—by *Malacyst Mord, Whistles Culler*
(Mr. N)

"MY LORDS, Ladies, Gentlemen, and others. As Factol Terrance has just so elegantly explained, the restriction of the press is one of the great injustices of modern Sigilian society. I have here a copy of a publication with which I think you are all familiar. <Holds up latest SIGIS. Ripple of comment runs around the chamber.> Before any of our worthy Harmonium officers attempt to arrest me for possessing this seemingly harmless piece of paper, I'd assure them that this is an expunged copy, presented to me by Jasmin Tealybuck, M3, as a visual aid. I have seen the complete issue, for one was anonymously delivered to me. I turned it over to the authorities. To whoever gave me that news sheet, my thanks.

But it is a poor situation when such a simple and valuable thing as knowledge becomes illegal to distribute. What do we learn from our copies of SIGIS, or, for that matter, of the Tempus, the Liber Fraternitatis, or any other publication in this city? Hopefully, only the truth. Certainly this article here could not be regarded as anything but. It's a review of Ralesil's Sophia. Can someone please explain to me what's so dangerous about a review of a new musical sensation that it requires the publishing journal to be banned? Can it be that the lyrics contain antisocial matter?

It would not matter if they did, but as it happens Sophia contains many an espousal of Harmonium values such as international, interplanar, interracial brotherhood. Perhaps it is insignificant. But how many of the factols and factors here have now not been to see the piece? Can it be, then that the venues are unacceptable? That the singers are somehow unwanted? Or that the tone of the piece is inflammatory? Why, then, may we not hear of it?

And then this article here describes how the Harmonium have detected infiltrators. It has not, of course, escaped my notice that this article gets high billing in my expunged version of SIGIS. For those of you of an analytical mind, I question how the law banning this paper may even be coherent if a moigno still writes for it. It's true! I can see incredulous faces in the public gallery, so I'll explain: a moigno has voluntarily published a statistical report in this

allegedly-illegal volume. But such quibbles are sophistry compared to the main point: the Harmonium, for all its professed good intentions, has overstepped the mark. In the original copy of this SIGIS was a letter from no less a personage than Zimmimar of the Dark Eight. Now I shall not be giving away any great secrets if I reveal that I have neither patience nor time for their excellencies the Eight. But I would still rather that I and others could hear their views and opinions than not. I rely on information every day. So do you all. The flow of facts, in fact, is the lifeblood of the city. That and opinions, which we are further denied. The whole letters column has been removed from this copy.

I have here a survey, which I took the liberty of conducting the moment I heard of the banning of SIGIS. It is signed by the following (please identify yourselves if you're here): Archbishop-elect, the Right Reverend Lady Julia Spesinfracta; Factol Terrance; Factol Darkwood; My Lady Montgomery; Ely Cromlich, who took time off from investigating the Modron March and rebutting the accusations of murder against his faction to sign this, so important did he feel it to be; Unity-of-Rings; Laurelli Tantarella; Sven Larsson, a representative of the city's svart-alfar community; and Checker/Modrian. I think this is a reasonable sample of the present movers and shakers in the city. You cannot fail to observe that I have been impartial: many of my political opponents have gladly signed it. Thank you, Cirily, I'm aware that you didn't. So I put it to the Hall, that we should immediately have a vote of no confidence in the Harmonium's handling of the SIGIS affair. If passed, this will give us a legal mandate to resist the Harmonium and to put into action the process of relegalisation. If it will be any help, I volunteer myself to act as censor of any especially sensitive information that any newspaper in this city obtains in future.

I believe I have rather overshot my appointed speaking time, so I'll now step down and allow Mover Three Jasmin Tealybuck to say a few words."

—*Transcribed by Daemon Chaas, political culler*
(ar)

Clueless Strike Tradegate

OUTLANDS (Tradegate)—In the continuing saga of the primes who made such a mess of Tradegate [see SIGIS issue 17], the two clueless troublemakers got themselves an tiefling advocate named Harlar Redeyes. This cutter is known widely to be a good advocate, with just one reservation: he looks closer to the jink offered than on the hand offering it.

The case will come up for trial in a few days under Black Ogustus.

Meanwhile, the prosecutor Var'l'zchu, a famous Baatorian advocate that was trained in Grenpolis, is confident that the case will not last long even under the eyes of Black Ogustus. "The case is as clear as it can just be. Not even this cross trading sod Redeyes can find a twist here. The primes will go their way to the Red Death to receive proper punishment for sure."

On the matter of the still missing knight of the post 'Mover' Nordstar, Svily stated: "The prime is clueless which should be fairly obvious to all. Even if he escapes the law, he will most probably get lost due to his misunderstanding of the planes. You just have to look into your own newsrag where you've written the story—can anyone be more inane? And should he avoid

being written to the deadbook, he is bound to turn up in Sigil sooner or later, and then we will scrag him."

"Right now it is of no use to start a plane-spanning search for this leatherhead. Our strength is needed in Sigil to prevent the Revolutionary League from turning stag onto the merchants of the great bazaar once again."

—*Ansas Ewald, culler* (hh)

Bounty Offered!

We offer a bounty for the **Anarchist Rie'd'lar Kutam** a.k.a. **Nordstar Svily**. This Knight of the crosstrade posed as a Harmonium namer, and caused organisational havoc through his doings as 'Mover'. We offer a **10 lodestone bits** bounty to anyone who brings back the cutter **dead**, or **15** if he is **alive**.
Mover Sag'na Rim, Harmonium
(hh)

Top Tempus Sigilian Culler Slain

SIGIL (Lady's Ward)—Late last night in the midst of a strange green mist floating through the streets of the Lady's Ward, a group of past-peak revellers were startled to discover the severed head of an Illithid piked atop a high-up's fence. Even more startling, however, was the dark that the head belonged to none other than the Tempus Sigilian's top culler and editor, Zchtolmolkov Atinar Xoll the Third.

"When Sim [one of the revellers] first spied the flapping tentacles, we thought it was just another Chaosman joke," said Telly Faire, a human resident of the ward. "After a hard night of riotous fun at the Wheel, we were in the mood to chuckle at anything! We laughed the Lady's laugh too, until Alisa recognised the head belonged to an illithid named Xoll she'd seen at another party that same evening. When she fainted dead away, we knew this was no peel. I ran to get the Hardheads as quickly as I could."

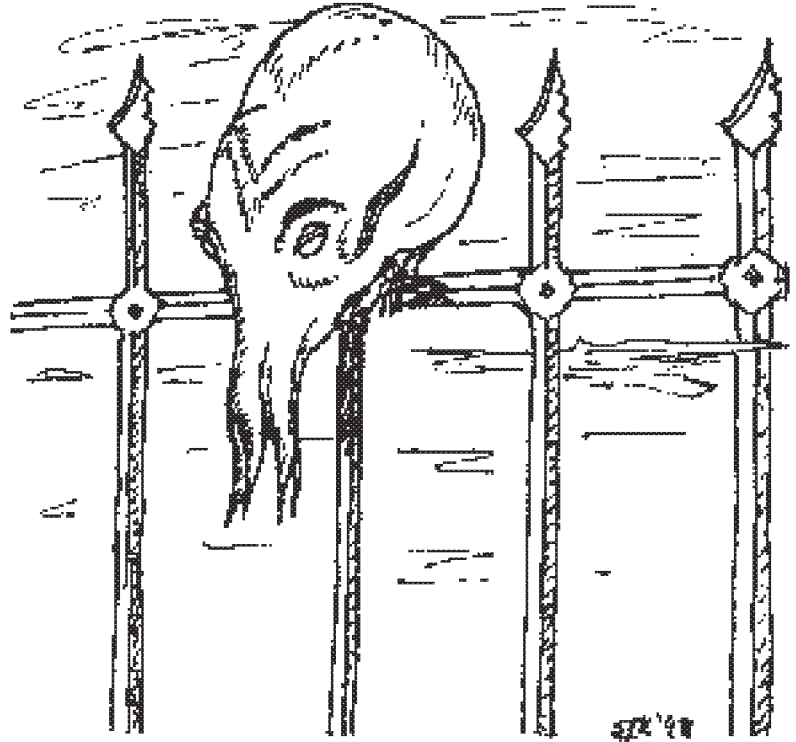
One nearby witness, a barghest ex-Merkant named Qualm, said he'd had a black cloaked trio of footpads disturb his peaceful slumber earlier that evening. "I'd been drinkin' bub me-self over there [pointing shakily to an alley near the fence] when one dem berk step on me," slurred Qualm. "Stupid sod woke me up and hurt me bad, and made me dump my bub too! I'd half a mind to run over and bite him, but he heard me grunt and stuck a poker in me face. Said I'd best keep me bone-box shut or he'd dead-book me. I did then, but I ain't gonna no more! He was some kinda githzerai basher—I hope they find him and feed him to the Wyrn!"

This, of course, suggested the trio was a band of rakkma (a githzerai illithid hunting party), though such organisations are banned in the Cage. A githzerai informant of mine told me she hadn't heard chant of any such band in the Cage recently, but she wouldn't be surprised if a rakkma made a special trip from

Limbo. "Given all the [mind] flayers walkin' the Cage these days, I wouldn't be surprised if word leaked back [to Limbo]," she said. "The odd about this, though, is that rakkma take 'flayer heads home

as trophies. But this head they left, apparently as a warning...but to whom?"

—Maija Intwood, culler (sk)



Hopetide Services in Sigil

St. Azrael's, Rue Morgue

Quiet Eve:

6 AP: Silent meditation.

11:30 AP: Midnight prayer; first blessing of Hopetide.

Esperance:

2:30 BP: Installation of new archbishop. Invitation only.

6 AP: Carol service.

St. Sariel's, Lady's Ward

Quiet Eve:

7 AP: Meditation and chanting.

11:30 AP: Midnight prayer and first blessing.

Esperance:

5 BP: Prayer and chanting.

1 BP: Blessing and carol service.

30m AP: Public Hopetide lunch in Xaos Kollege (next door to the church); meal 5sp, all profits to the Bleakers' soup kitchen fund.

The chapels at the Courts, the Inns of Law and the guildhalls will also be holding services: see individual posters for details.

(ar)

Sensates Give Way

SIGIL—This week, a change in perspective seemed imminent in the continuing row over the timing of religious festivals in the Cage. Last week we reported how the Archonites' decision to create a new cathedral in Sigil had highlighted the coincident dates of Hopetide and the Aphrodisia. Since then, Factols Montgomery and Darius have been in close negotiation with the Rt. Revd. Julia Spesinfracta, and it seems that a compromise has been reached. Central to the original conflict was the decision by the Sensates, and the Temple of Aphrodite/Venus, to hold a number of public orgies on Quiet Eve, now just three weeks away. But it now emerges that it has proved possible to celebrate less erotic aspects of Aphrodite's portfolio on the days in question, and to hold the orgies some four days after Esperance (the day following Quiet Eve). Although no statement has yet been made, sources close to Erin Montgomery said that Lady Erin had been inspired with fresh respect for the Archonite faith after attending a performance of Tuleman Ralesil's Sophia at the Xaos Kollege. As the Lady Darkflame is a known follower of the arts, this is entirely plausible. The Rt. Revd. Miss Infracta's personal chaplain, Gruoch nic Arta, said that "Matters are looking greatly improved with respect to the Hopetide season. I trust that an arrangement will be reached that does not encroach upon the proper celebration of any festival." The Archonites have gone ahead and printed details of Hopetide services in the city, so they clearly believe such an end can be reached.

There was, however some dissent from orthodox Aphrodisians. Speaking at a temple meeting earlier in the week, Lesomoneia, a devi who acts as spokeswoman for the Church of Aphrodite/Venus said that there were no plans for the church itself to change the timing of their holy season. "Let the Sensates do what they will," she said, "we are not going to move. We are holding the Aphrodisia in three weeks' time because the auguries say that it's right. The entrails say then, so we hold it then. We do not wish to discuss the Archonite feast of Hopetide. Sorry."

There has been as yet no remark from either the Sensates or the Archonites on this development.

—by Blondie Bluthheim, culler (ar)

Vermin to Exterminate!

Adventurers needed to go into the sewers of Sigil for an extermination of vermin. **Hazard pay** is high due to the size and variety of the vermin. **Experience preferred.**

See **Tensar's Employment Service** for details.

(t)

Mental Attack at the Kip Ooki Rith

Finishes In Record Time!

SIGIL—When I returned from a long night at the Gatehouse, I came to realise that my search for the brain-dead berk from the Hall of Records was a dead end (wrong use of words I know). I live in a small little hole on Tea Street in the Clerk's Ward, and never have any trouble with anyone. I guess my new involvement with SIGIS brings on all sorts of trouble. I entered through the front door like normal and walked into the living room. It was still a few hours until light and the room was dark.

"You wish to know the dark about that berk in the Hall of Records do ya?!" came a voice inside my head. The pain was intense, grating, and I fell to my knees holding my head. "I will show you first hand what that knight of the post went through!" I managed to turn my head enough to see an illithid walk through the wall, his purple robes were flowing his body was his mental energies created an invisible maelstrom about his body. His eyes flared an evil purple and I flew backward against the wall and crumpled into a heap. Blood flowed freely from my nose as the Illithid floated forward to stand above me. "You have gotten a little to close to get in the way now, the dark of what has happened will die with

you!" My head felt like it was going to explode. His eyes again began to glow purple again when a bright blinding green flash hit the illithid in the back, throwing him through the wall above me and into the street. I saw a huge dark robed figure walk up and look through the hole.

"Damn, he got away," muttered the figure. "He will return to tell others of his kind. I may have tipped my hand to quickly." This time I heard it with my ears instead of inside my head, which was amazing with all the throbbing haze in my head. The dark robed figure turned his attention to me.

"You have gotten close to something, too close. The flayer was here to put you into the dead book. Good thing I came when I did, or you would be another brain-dead berk for sure." The pain was too much and I was blacking out. Before I did, the figure said "I have sent for healing help and will arrive shortly; rest assured that I will return and enlist your help for the up and coming events that will be conspiring soon. I hope you still remember all of this. Good luck to you my friend." The figure then faded from view, and I faded into darkness.

—Tell Regard (T)

OUTLANDS (SYLVANIA)—Most of the folk awaiting the fastest cutter in Sylvania were quite flabbergasted that the winner turned up after just seven days. The Xaositects though greeted him with the words: "We expected you 9 days ago. Where have you been?" which, of course, makes little sense, but we're talking about the Xaos folks aren't we? The first prize (a planar steed) was solemnly given to the gnome Largo Lunamadafain who walked the entire distance from Bob to Sylvania in just 7 days. The Xaositects, spectators and Largo decided to throw a party which should last till the final member of the race arrives at the Gatetown to Arborea. As for the other racers, what Largo had to say when he was awarded the grand prize seemed to sum it all up: "Sorry to all the bashers who are still on their way..."

(hh)

Letter From Factol Terrance Of The Athar

My fellow Sigilians:

I feel that now is an appropriate time to speak on the events that have involved the Athar in the past month. As many of you are no doubt aware, my faction has sworn an alliance with those in the Bleak Cabal for a variety of ends. While our philosophies differ, we stood on the common moral ground against certain groups such as the misguided Will of the One. While this cooperative effort has shown much promise, it is my regret to inform you that our partnership with the Bleak Cabal has come to an end.

I know this change is not much of a shock to some of you; in fact, I'm sure it is a relief to those of you in the Sign of One. Do not be fooled into thinking that we will stop our efforts against those we oppose. This breaking is only a minor setback, and actually I believe it will serve to focus our cause even better. Events in the next few months should prove my beliefs to be true.

We harbour no ill-will towards the Bleak Cabal. This was not a violent resolution; in fact, it was much more what one would expect. The apathy that is so widespread amongst that faction crept into our affairs, and no progress was made in our goals. While we enjoyed the added numbers to the cause, the Athar found this situation unacceptable and needed to cease our immediate agenda with the Cabal. Once our major plans are underway, we may very well look to the Bleakers for support, but for now we will leave them out of our affairs.

On to other matters, I would like to address some of the negative sentiments that have been directed towards the Athar as

of late. It has come to my attention that our faction has been greatly maligned, painting a picture of us as the enemies of all the Multiverse. Please know that these are the words of the unenlightened, or those who seek to undermine our cause. Of course we do not subscribe to the ideas that the gods are all-powerful, but that does not set us against the planar who believes in those powers.

Nay, we work for the benefit of the populace. We strive to protect them against the corruption that has seeped through the cracks in modern religion. Most importantly, we work to uncover the secrets beyond the Great Veil, so that it may benefit us all. Those in the Will of the One would have you believe that we persecute them for their beliefs, but that is not the case. We disagree with their agenda, which defies the will of her Serenity, the Lady of Pain. Should they somehow succeed in their plans, it would bring only ruin to our wondrous city.

In closing, I would caution everyone not to be quick to judge the Athar on the shaky grounds of hearsay and rumour. These are the weapons of ignorance, and they bring harm to us all. If there are any questions of us, all one needs to do is ask. Anyone wishing to learn more about our dedicated faction should feel free to visit the Shattered Temple, where we can explain everything in greater detail. Until we Part the Veil...

Signed,

Terrance

S**2 Art Exhibition

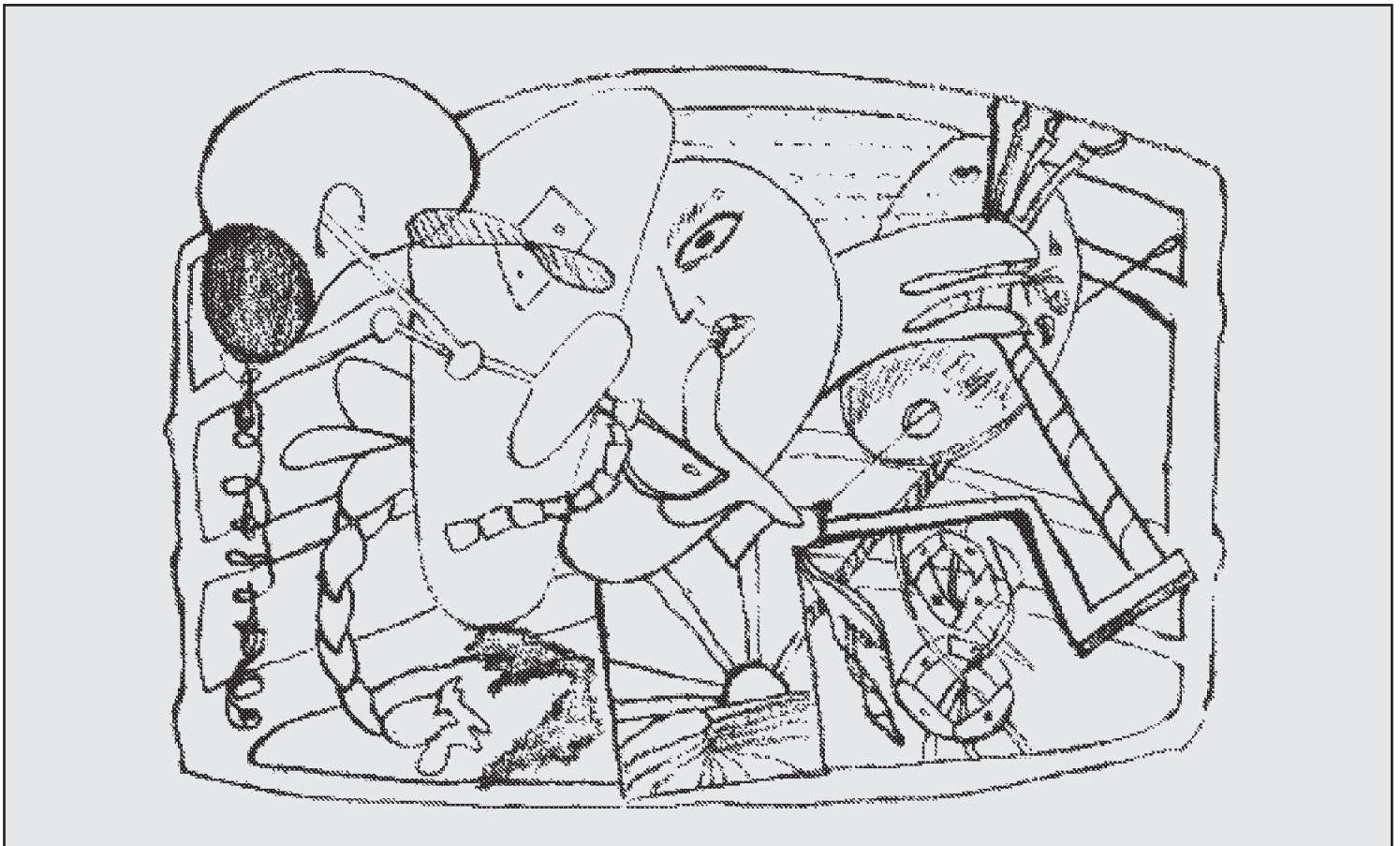
SENSATE FACTOL Erin "Darkflame" Montgomery invites all interested Cagers to an exhibit of her personal art collection at the Civic Festhall. Featured art includes portraits of numerous high-up Sensates (including several nudes) painted by the famed artist Kilhans. The exhibition also unveils Factol Montgomery's exquisite **Faction Collection** which comprises the very best painting and sculpture over the last century by renowned artists from all the factions.

Artists include the Bleaker painter from Hopeless, Carmen Dago, and her masterwork **Portrait of a Soul** [top right]:

The collection also features meticulously detailed replicas (by the Quadrone Kcg818) of works from the enigmatic Chaosman known only as "The Painter" [bottom right]

Entrance to this "once a cycle" exhibit only costs a cutter a jink—after viewing these master works, you'll feel you bobbed the Factol herself! Don't miss this grand opportunity to see some Cager bloods unclothed and experience the factions through their eyes of their artists.

(sk)



A Day in the Life of Jaimi Bimkz

JAIMI BIMKZ is a human seamstress, lives in the Lower Ward, and is a namer in the Free League. This is her story.

Prologue — An hour before antipeak

Well, out with the formalities first of all then. I'm Jaimi Bimkz, and I'm the best bleaking seamstress in Sigil. The 9 stingers I'm getting for my entry on this mimir is about how I live. That said, I'll be recording tomorrow... I'm off to sleep.

5 hours after antipeak

Woken by the sound of that flock of Astral Streakers that passes every morning about this time, I get up out of bed and wash my face with the water in my basin. I've been using the same water for 3 weeks... I use it more to wake myself up than to get clean. Well, while I'm on the subject, I suppose I'll tell you berks about my kip.

She's a little second floor flat in an apartment building that sits next to a bleaker housing project. The old girl has three sparse, dirty little rooms, including my bedroom and bathroom. I like to be at my shop more 'n home, it's nice there. Home is dirty. I haven't got much in my place 'cept for the basin, a mirror, my bed, a cabinet where I keep dishes (in case company comes... hah), a table with a stool in case I eat at home, and a wardrobe, with my 3 shirts and 2 pairs of pants. There's a crack in the wall, covered by the mirror, and I'm happy I'm only on the second floor lest the ceiling would drip on me. The building itself is a completely nondescript, grey, plaster building... like so many others around here.

Well, as I was saying, I've just woken up and I need to dress. I put on a burgundy patched up skirt that's down to my ankles, a grey shirt, and my long grey jacket. I pull my hair back and knot it there, so it doesn't get in the way of my work. I'll be going out for a bite to eat now... it's tough to work on an empty stomach. I probably won't be back home until much later tonight, as I work in the Market Ward.

5 and a half hours after antipeak

I'm at the Ubiquitous Wayfarer on the edge of the Lower and Clerks Ward, regardless of whatever berks say it's in the Lady's. It's a quant little place that serves primes and planars alike, especially folks that just tripped in from some portal... the kip's loaded with the sodding things. The place serves up a nice bowl of good, affordable porridge... and doubles as a good place to find new people.

Take that thief over there. She's wearing last month's fashion... the shoulder blades, dark cape, leather, crazy black-died hair. She needs something new, and she looks like she has some jink to drop...

"Yes ma'am, I'm talkin about you and your shoulder blades. You need to do something about that, where are you coming from, Baator?"

"What's this insolence? I'm on my way to the Hall of Speakers."

"Not dressed like that I hope. You need something more colorful, all that grey... people won't pay attention to you if you're dressed in only grey and black."

"I'm a Knight of Entropy, now sod off. This is my military uniform."

Ahh, well, you can't win 'em all. Enough of here for now then, time to keep walking. My morning routine revolves around my getting to the Market in time, and it takes 2 hours to walk... even in the morning's light traffic.

Walking to the Market Ward: Sigil in the early morning

Walking to the shop is a good way to get a look at Sigil... and I'm told that's what I'm getting paid for.

I'm walking along in this infernal fog now, the light boys are out in force putting out the lamps on the streets. That ragtag bunch don't say too much during the 'bright' hours, they do their jobs then run

off to their families to hand over the few greens they made during the night, and then catch an hour or two of sleep before they have to start another long night of wandering the Cage. They're a hungry lot, and poor for the most part. You can see it in the way their faces are so drawn, and how their eyes are sunken. A real bunch of bloods, the lightboys, there's no other bunch closer to Sigil except for the dabus.

Besides the fog and the boys, there's the heavy dust that's always hanging in the air and on everything... the dust of a million universes kicked up by the feet of several million folks. Combined with the fog, the dust makes the air up here tough to breathe for people who aren't natives. You can always tell a berk is new to the Cage when you see them taking big, deep breathes, or coughing a lot from the dust.

Now, look at this cutter here. He's a native. He has a long, black coat on, a cap on, and high, well worn boots... the kind of boots that you can walk through the Market without getting your feet stomped, or through the Hive without getting knee deep in mud. He's watching the ground. He's looking where he's going, minding his business. He doesn't care what's going on around him. He's going where he's going. He don't look funny at passing fiends or primes, he lets them go their ways too. Bar all that about Cagers being stuck up and arrogant. We aren't. Those are planars who moved into the Cage, got rich, and took the name. Cagers are the folks that you see and you recognise, but you don't know their names. The real movers and shakers of the city are the folks you don't see coming. That guy's a Cager.

Heh, well, I'm getting nostalgic now. We're almost there, so I'll quite rattling.

Nearly 7 hours after Antipeak

After an ordeal of a walk, I'm finally outside my shop, deep in the Market Ward. The City is just about fully awake now, and folks of all sorts are walking about the streets. Folks that have ripped clothes, old clothes, or not much clothing at all. From my shop (a tan brick building on Copperman Way with one glass panel in the front where I hang my wares, and a sign that says 'Jaimi Bimkz—Seamstress' in big red letters), I can see everyone that walks up and down the lane, and sometimes I holler at them to come in and have a look when I'm not busy enough.

Inside, there's my desk and workroom, where I keep my inventory and do my sewing. In front is a room with samples of my work-shirts and things mostly, beautiful stuff no one can afford, but I assure the commoner (don't get me wrong... I'm not trying to say I'm high up, I'm a commoner myself) I can reproduce the same thing with slightly different material. I slide the curtain off of the glass plate, sweep the ever present dust off of the doorstep, and now I'm open and ready for business.

7 and a half hours after Antipeak

A half elf male just walked in. The poor sod has a rip in the left knee of his pants, and the cuffs of his sleeves and pants are horribly tattered. His clothing is obviously too big for him. He has his hair tied back in a greasy ponytail and his face is shiny from vigorous washing. This is the face of a man who's afraid to admit he's a member of the working class... and he's obviously not a Cager from that Clueless grin he's got on.

"Can I help you?"

"Ello, I'm looking for Jaimi Bimkz... I hear she's quite a seamstress."

"She's me berk, what can I do for ya?"

"Right, I'm Ainland Olsen..." he'd broken an important rule there, it's not a good thing to give your full, real name to a stranger, "...and I'm looking for someone to make me some clothing."

"Obviously. You're here."

"Yes... right... well, can you make me a new pair of pants? These ones are getting awfully worn, and I only have two other pairs..."

"Right. Go back to your kip and get changed, and bring those pants you have on back here so I can make a model of them. I'll dispose of them for you."

"Sounds grand, saves me the trouble. I'll be back soon."

And with the same clueless grin, he turned around and left. He'd just broken another important rule... that nothing is a waste. Those pants of his could hold me off for a year with a bit of mending... and that's what I intend to do with them.

7 and a quarter hours after Antipeak

I'm working on some backordered shirts made from some Bytopian cotton now... there's a troop of gnomes stuck in Sigil that came in yesterday asking for shirts like they have home. I told the little berks I'd get them done for them before they went home, which means I probably have several weeks to finish this project, they're being stupid gnomes and all. It'll take the berks ages to figure out the dark of portals. Either way, they'll be in tonight asking if I'm done, so I'm working on it. They'll be paying heavily for this job... eight miniature shirts made of cotton aren't easy to sell if they bail out.

3 and a half hours before Peak

The poor sod with the big clothes that came in earlier just came back... looking rather flustered and sweaty.

"A bloody confusing place, this Sijil." he smelled like the Hive.

"Sigil, and yes, a wee bit more confusing than wherever you're from..." I sneered, "Waterdeep is it?"

"No, Greyhawk City, on..."

Not interested in the origins of this prime, I interrupted... "Never mind. Have you got your old pants?"

"Ahh, yes, right here."

"Hmm... ok. Come back in a few hours, and I'll have a nice pair of new pants for ya."

"How much will it be?"

"That all depends on how hard a time I have making the pants, what materials I use, lot's of things. I'll have a price for you later, now if you'll excuse me."

And with that, he left. Spinning new pants for him'll be a cinch. The fact that he wears them 6 sizes too big means he won't be picky about sizing. In the mean time, I need to run to the Shaven Ratasok deeper in the Market to pick up some materials.... I'm running a bit low. In this business, going for cloth is like going for groceries. It's an every other day thing.

2 and three quarter hours before Peak

The Market by this time of morning is a bustling place. Sigil is now fully awake, and the chaos that is our city is now in full swing. Looking about, one can see all manner of folks, Upper and Lower planars alike, as well as barmy factioneers running amok posting Sigil up with their propaganda, a slew of advertisements... from Astral Streakers dropping messages, to Black Marion singing her subtle, coded songs. The touts are all standing about, waiting for the Primes and out-of-towners to start tripping in from the portals that riddle our city... it's the perfect time of day for such a thing. The City is freshly 'clean' (or, as clean as she gets with this infernal dust) from the Dabus' nightly patrol, and according to statistics from the Hall of Records, Primes are most likely to come through Sigil at this time of day than any other. Don't ask what sod thought that fact up.

Anyhow, I'm just outside of the Shaven Ferret, a pretty small little fabric shop in the Market Ward specialising in Bytopian furs and silks that's hidden in an alley that turns off of Risvold Street. The building itself is falling down... the chipped plaster and

A Day in the Life of Jaimi Bimkz

smashed roof are just two of the building's redeeming traits. It's a pity really, the woman who owns the place (Sara DeAngelo, the second best seamstress in Sigil... heh) is the nicest you'll ever meet, but she's poorer than anything. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but she has four male kids to bring up, no husband, and she's too proud to send them to the Gatehouse for care. Anyhow, I'm entering the shop now....

"Jaimi, is that you?"

"Lady's grace Sara, how are you?"

"I'm ok," she sighs, "but I had to send the boys to work today, the poor dears. I need more money for the rent or the Takers are going to evict us." This is testimony to her kind heartiness... most folks these days don't care much for their kids, seeing them as nothing but a mouth to feed.

"Where are they working and for how much?"

"They're working for Estavan, that ogre chap in charge of the PTC. They get paid a stinger a week each, hardly much at all, and Estavan gets a special discount at the store on things he buys here. I'm probably getting robbed in the long run.... I hear that one is rather slippery."

"I wouldn't know... I buy all of my material here. Anyhow, four stingers a week is more four stingers more than you're taking in now, and the work'll do the lads good."

She sighed again, a habit of hers when her mind was full, "Maybe so, but I miss them."

"They'll be back soon enough, Sara. In the mean time, I need to place an order. I need a bit of cotton for shirts for a troop of gnomes, about a pound I'd say, some burlap (for a prime's pants) and a bit of Spire Butterfly silk, for a deva who said he'd be stopping in today. While I'm here, I need a new spool of ribbon too." I didn't really need any ribbon... but Sara always had more than she could sell, and wouldn't accept my charity if I gave her an extra green to support her family with.

Walking about behind her counter, she replied "A deva eh? He'll be paying a pretty bit I take it?"

"Not as much as I'd hope... those upper planars are cheap. They think because they're 'holy' we should work for them for free."

"How true, how true. Just give me a second to cut this cotton, and I'll let you go back to your business then, you can pick up on the side. Good to see you, Lady's grace."

"To you as well, Sara."

With that, Sara DeAngelo walked back into the recesses of her crumbling shop. One could see she was suffering from malnutrition, and has been under distress. Sara loves her littluns, it's sad to see her in this state. Anyhow, life goes on... her story is another, and I'm sure she'd be happy to tell it for eleven stingers just like me.

I walk around the side, to her cargo bay and pickup area. I pay the full fifteen stingers for all the material, no more no less... like I said, she don't take charity. One of her servant boys helps me carry it all back to the shop, silently. He was probably sold into service to her. Children in the city only have a few likely paths... they get sold as slaves, adopted by the Bleakers, or get lucky and have a mother like Sara. This one falls in between having a mother and being a slave... she probably treats him like one of her own. Ahh well, excuse me. I'm getting emotional again over all this.

1 and a quarter hour before Peak

I'm back at the shop now. The windows are starting to get that midday dust on them, the dust they always get when the city is all woken up. I dusted them off, headed back over to my tools, and resumed work on those gnomish shirts. I sat and sowed for a while, until

something caught my attention (and not much can grab my attention when I'm at work), a deva looking in the window. She's indescribably clean and beautiful... and seems to glow, even through the dusty, fogged pane of glass. Sure enough, she walks in. Her golden hair is tied back with a silken ribbon, and her lovely dress looks as though it were woven from the stuff of dreams, white as snow. Her milky skin complemented her bright red lips, which started to move...

"Are you Jaimi Bimkz?" she asked. Her words were hypnotising, I felt as though I were half asleep as she was talking to me, drowning in her voice.

"Ye... yes..." I cleared my throat, "Can I help you?" self consciously, I started to twist my skirt.

"Yes, you can. I need a new dress for a ball tonite, would you be able to make me one?" She obviously didn't know much about the trade... making a dress for a highup deva takes more than a day.

"Well, it'd be quite a task actually.... I highly doubt it, especially as I have these seven gnomish shirts to do...." before I could finish, she dropped a pouch full of jink on my table, and gold sparkled from inside.

"That's two hundred jinx, cutter," she gave a faint grin.

"Um..." I choked on my words and stuttered a bit, "Well, I suppose I may be able to arrange something. How would you like it?" Two hundred jinx is more'n I make in a three months.

"Like this, with gold fibre trimming, but dark red instead of white. Thanks much, I'll be back a bit later... the ball starts at Antipeak." With that, she smiled and took her jink, and walked off into the streets.

It was moments before I recovered, and realised the folly of my action... I had broken Imel Bruster's third rule, You Order It, You Own It. In this case, I just ordered up a dress for a deva, and if I don't follow through, I own the responsibility. Jink makes a body do some addle-coved things... now I have to come up with a dress by Anti. Bah, I'm off to lunch.

Peak

Well, I've got a deva to make a dress for in one night. One of the only thing that can drown out your own problems is watching someone else's, and in Sigil, we do that a lot... specially around here. The Hangman's Court isn't all that far away, a well-lanned cutter can get there and back in an hour and a half from my kip, and that's usually what I do for lunch... have a walk up there, watch some poor berk get himself hung, and walk back. It may be kind of gruesome, but watching a sod die gets you to thinking what life's really all about... it's good for your mind kinda, when you live like us.

Anyhow, I'm at the Court now... a cobblestone square beaten to smoothness by the countless feet of folks on their last marches, and the others who came to watch. It's a bare place, there's practically nothing here except for the lifeless tree, which has a little fence around it to keep folks from prodding it's fruit, if you catch what I mean. Anyway, there's no execution going today, which is a good thing I suppose... less crime maybe. The dirty cobblestone sea is almost empty, there's a few like myself having a bit of a snack, but otherwise, it's too grim a place to attract much attention.

From here a cutter can see most of the highups in the Lady's Ward strutting about with their fine rags on, showing off to all the other rich berks. They where their finely designed, poorly made outfits, and talk about helping the poor folks of the Cage, bringing in order, and feeding us. Those berks outta sod off, they don't know what it's like to live here. It's the 'highups' that give us a bad name as being arrogant

and only caring about ourselves. They aren't true members of the Cage's society, they belong to their own society, a society of clowns and puppets on strings... the poor berks, anytime now it'll come crashing right down on them, and the Lady'll exact her punishment. Oh well, there's a hope. Maybe that deva'll get struck down too, and I won't have to make her sodding dress. Luckily enough, I have quite a bit of some good, deep crimson satin, that gold fibre I need to track down though.

1 Hour after Peak

After a walk through the bleak Lady's Ward, which is a completely unique place all in itself from the rest of the City, I arrived at Queen Anne's Needlework, a shop that sells needles of all sizes, clothe of any cut, and thread of any material. The place is a building built of stone painted an awful lavender colour, with large purple curtains hanging in the huge glass window in front. Inside, there're aisles and aisles of carpeted floor, lined with many shelves of the most beautiful ingredients for nice clothing on the planes.

I picked out a spool of thread made of liquid gold, and brought it to the counter, where I had to pay out 2 jinx worth of greens and stingers. With a look of disdain, the berk at the counter handed me the thread, and watched me as I walked out. They're always out to get ya, the wealthy ones. They think everyone that doesn't wear the day's bizarre fashion and keeps their purse tight is a thief or a barmy. Ah well, the powers' mercy on the swine... I have a long walk and a long day ahead.

Walking back to the Market: Sigil at Midday

Like I said a bit earlier, the bleak Lady's Ward is unique of the rest of the City. Whereas the Market buzzes with business, the Clerk's Ward with pencil pushers running about with memos, the Hive with barmies, and so forth, the Lady's is silent. It's a cold and clinical place, where folks usually walk slow and look at the ground, not wanting to draw attention. It could be that way because the Law boys make their homes around here, but it's more likely that it's because folks get uncomfortable around highups. You heard me earlier, what with that deva, I couldn't keep my tongue steady. Folks around here are just plain cagey about the other folks... and the fact that the dabus and the Lady herself are occasionally seen floating about makes the place even more bizarre.

It's easy enough to tell when you're out of the theoretical boundaries of the Lady's and arrive in either the Guildhall or Market. As soon as you cross one street or another, it seems as though out of nowhere a wave of people sweep you into their sea. Oddly, much like the city of Dis on Baator, if you look back across the street, you'd think there's miles of people between you and the Lady's.

The dust hangs heavy in the air about this time of day, and the announcement that "rain and fog are on the way" from Erish's Weather Tower almost seem like a joke, like he's constantly pointing out the obvious to us all. A cutter swift enough can tell if rain's coming, just by how much the dust sticks to their clothes... on a rainy day, it sticks more. Either way, it usually is rather humid in the streets of the Market... what with everyone walking elbow to elbow, pushing and pulling. The smells of sweat and sometimes blood hang in the air around this time of day. It's not a rare site to see someone get trampled in the chaos that runs about the streets, or to see a pack of Hardheads descend on some poor berk just cause he looked at them crooked. Don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to spread anti-Harmonium propaganda, it's just that some of 'em are crooked. I've seen good Hardheads too.

Anyhow, this is the time of day that crime hits the market hardest. In the middle of the day, all the

A Day in the Life of Jaimi Bimkz

scum in the cage descends like a flock of vultures on the Market... cutting purse strings, stealing apples, bashing the poor sods that happen to cross that one dark alley. It's a pity really, and that's the reason that there's executions almost everyday... the sods get themselves caught in the act, and being as the Guvners have enough to do besides wasting their time on trials for folks caught red-handed, the Hardheads usually just throw them to the Red Death for judgement. That judgement is usually quite predictable: death. The Mercykillers, I've seen, believe that killing a criminal keeps them from wasting the Justice Wheel's time again by committing another crime. A bit harsh if ya ask me... but it's not my place to worry. It's my place to worry about this dress.

2 and a half Hours after Peak

Well, I'm back in the shop now. After wiping the omnipresent dust off of the window and my desk, I began hitting the needle and thread pretty hard to make that deva's dress... so far, I have the general form done. It was all going well enough, until that prime came back in... with a ripped shirt, bloody forehead, and reeking like The Speckled Rat.

"Are.. are... my pants completeded? I'm in bloody need of new pants I is, are they done?"

"No, I haven't gotten there yet actually." I'm busy, come back later." I grabbed for my sheers... forged on Bytopia, they could cut through metal I was told.

"I needs a new pair of pants, damned it! I needs new pants!" He began waving his arms about, and it became obvious that he wasn't in good shape. I could see he had a big bloody gash on his chest now, it looked like he was in a brawl.

"Listen berk, when I get them done, I get them done. Come back tomorrow. Take a bit of advice too: when you leave the shop, go right across the street. There's a good place to sleep there... an' you can come right back tomorrow morning for your pants."

"But I need 'em now!" he stumbled forward, and crashed onto the floor, unconscious.

I walked across the street to Mrs. Bailey's Boarding, where Ol' Mrs. Bailey sent a couple servant boys across the way to get rid of the prime. They probably stripped him clean of his jink too, but that's his own fault for getting himself all barny. At least that's a pair of pants I won't have to make, he won't remember to come back across the way if he wakes up... that was quite a bump he had on his head.

4 hours After Peak

After that little bit with that prime, the day finally passed for a few uneventful hours. A few people walked in and looked around, one left a message that he needed pants, but otherwise I got a few more good hours in on her dress. The body of it is pretty much done, except for a few little details and the gold fibre... which shouldn't take all that long.

Having gotten a lot done, I decided to take a bit of a break... it's been a rather slow day, what with just one trouble maker, one dress, and only a few shirts on backorder. At times like this I usually take a walk across to Mrs. Bailey's, she was like a mother to me when I moved in here so long ago, and we usually share a drink. I also have the reason of that sod that crashed in my shop earlier... he's not going to be able to pay Ol' Mrs. B., so I'll have to explain that.

Walking across Copperman from my shop, you come to a three story, blue plaster building with a large oaken sign hanging out front that reads, obviously enough, Mrs. Bailey's Boarding in big white letters. Mrs. Bailey herself is an old Aasimar who's been helping folks in the Cage out with their problems, giving them board, and just being nice for something like sixty years now. Her age is just starting to show, though one can only guess as to what that age

really is... she looks like a healthy 70 year old human. She has a bit of short black hair that falls about her ears, and is almost wrinkle free skin except for her strong laugh lines. Her almost pointed nose sits below her old brown eyes. She wears an apron most of the time, being as she cooks every meal that a body eats in her house, and her hands are literally fireproof from all the burns she's received over the years.

Upon walking in, one of her bellhops (who are rumoured are all her grandchildren) escorted me in to the back, to her living quarters, where she lay on her couch resting quietly. Mrs. B's quarters are actually quite nice, unlike my own. The one downstairs room is quite spacious, with a table and four chairs with a nice silk cloth on it, a long couch, and several chairs around the room... attesting to the fact that she has plenty of relatives. As well, there's a picture of her father and mother both hanging on the wall next to each other, above a fireplace. By my standards, Mrs. B. and her family are pretty well off.

"Hello Mrs. B., how are you?" Her mother, as I came to know, originally came from a Prime world where no one ever came out and said directly what was on their mind, a trait Mrs. Bailey had herself. Small talk was standard in a conversation with her before the point became clear.

"Ahh, hello Jaimi, I'm fine... and how are you today?" She looked up with a smile... she was always happy to talk to anyone but her relatives, which she had many of. Another trait from her home world was that a family showed it's love of one another by how much they were at each other's throats.

StopPress

Prime Flavours Slaad's Salad

SIGIL (Market Ward)—Two days ago, in a burned out building not a few blocks from the Great Bazaar, a green slaad made a prime's leg into a tasty little appetiser. According to witnesses, this "sorceress" was seen squashed flat under the Slaad's tremendous bulk in the doorway of the kip while the Slaad basher stated himself. Apparently, the poor prime sod lay their screaming for some time while the Slaad savoured his meal. Xaiu Lee, a Market Ward resident who witnessed the gruesome scene, said she'd spied the human shortly before the incident strolling down the alley in the direction of the kip. "I saw her, this fancy dressed beauty, lookin' all snobby-like walkin' down the street towards Tivuum's [Antiquities shop]. I knew she was prime 'cause of the way she dressed, and she was a spell-slinger sure as the slaad was ugly. But I paid her no mind, 'cept when I heard this hideous scream! I ran to scrag some Hardheads, and when I came back with the bashers she was still struggling to poke greenie with these long, I mean really long and sharp fingernails of hers. Magic sure as it comes. Last I saw, the 'Heads had made the slaad pike it and were carrying the woman away... minus her leg below the knee..."

Neither the Harmonium officers, nor Lee knew just how the prime came to such a fate, though all believe that the slaad was just toying with her for its sick pleasure. (Most of the locals I interviewed reckoned that the prime was just as "green" as the slaad, that she had probably ignored the "fiend" part of the name "frog-fiend".) A gangly, scarred prime basher I chatted with afterwards (possibly a friend of the injured party) said the prime's name was Azrai (or something close), but we were not able to verify this chant. Rewards for information on the Slaad's whereabouts have been posted all over the Bazaar.

—by Wentmo Elo, culler (sk)

"Well enough thanks, except for this dress I have to work on, it's sodding awful work."

"I know the feeling Jaimi, I know the feeling. Who's it for anyway?"

"Oh, some deva... but she's paying quite a bit of jink for it, so she says. That's why I came over actually, to tell you I'm finally going to pay that debt I owe your husband, now that I'm prolly going to have the coin for it." Her husband, an explorer, has been wayward for 3 years... and I don't owe him a debt. Thing is, she wouldn't accept money from me to care for that prime I sent over... so that was my way of slipping it in.

"You owe him a debt, eh? What sort?"

"Oh, he picked up a bit of cloth for me on Elysium a long time ago, and I promised I'd pay him. I can't renege on my word now, can I?"

"Well, of course not, a woman's word is her dignity... if there wasn't trust, there'd be nothing."

"How true, how true."

"Now then littlun," she calls me that on occasion... I've gathered that she's quite a bit older than I am, so I don't say anything "How about a spot of tea, or coffee? I have some lovely stuff a prime had Clarion give to me..."

"Sure, why not? I've got a bit of time, but not long... I have to finish that dress. I don't want to be the one to anger an angel now, do I?"

"No littlun, you don't. Angels can get pretty angry I hear." She chuckled a bit, and put on the coffee.

to be continued... (tb)

Modrons at Heart's Faith

MT. CELESTIA (Heart's Faith)—As we went to press, the Great Modron March was departing Excelsior, bound for Fortitude. We have only incomplete information at this time, but it seems that while Excelsior has been undamaged, many buildings in Heart's Faith were damaged or even destroyed by the relentless creatures. According to an eyewitness account, the archons recruited several groups of adventurers and others to assist them in the protection of the town. Although we have no solid data at this time, we have learnt that there were few if any deaths, although minor injuries were widespread.

The modrons' arrival at the town was doubly unexpected as they had cut through Arcadia faster than predicted, due to forgotten portal near to Cherry Blossom and Fujiyama. Archons were reluctant to come into contact with what they considered to be a corrupted and excessively chaotic March, and so got others to rush in where they feared to tread. This strategy proved successful, with an orphanage being evacuated in the nick of time before the modrons carelessly demolished it.

Directing the operation was acting Mayor Cauldronborn, who despite being named after a kind of undead is a native aasimar. He nearly bought the burg early on in the nine-hour ordeal when he was frustrated in his attempts to negotiate with the leading modron. He found himself cut off from escape by pounding monodrones, and was only saved from being ground to pulp when a plaid-wearing swordsman, thought to be Katain Maclellan [see March Begins article, SIGIS 17] who climbed over the tops of the modrons to extract the Mayor. The modrons eventually built a bridge out of jetties and abandoned boats and thereby entered the portal to Mt. Celestia. We'll have more next week, when we hope to have an interview with Mayor Cauldronborn and statements from both archons and citizens of Heart's Faith on how they're going to repair the damage.

—compiled by editors

(ar)