

SIGIS

SIGIL'S INDEPENDENT GLOBAL INFORMATION SERVICE

ISSUE 22 YEAR 1

PRICE: 2 STINGERS

SECOND WEEK OF SAVORUS

NEWS BRIEFS

Ancient Tome Bobbed From Guvner's Case

SIGIL (CLERK'S WARD)—Two nights ago, shortly after anti-peak, a trio of assassins strangled their way into the Guvner's securest library and bobbed an ancient tome from within a magically sealed vault. Apparently, the cross-traders used the choking smog (generously donated by the Foundry) as a cover for their vicious assault. Before they could even draw a dagger, the Harmonium officers standing watch near the library were strangled with knotted cords wrapped around their necks.

The assassins proceeded to dead-book five other poor sods in the library before they reached their destination. These knights of the post then used powerful magic to dispel the wards in from of the main library vault where some of the greatest literary treasures in all the Multiverse are stored. According to our sources inside the Fraternity of Order, this is when the thieves should have been lost themselves. Not only was the Vault sealed with an extraordinarily strong wizard lock, backed by the securest arcano-lock made by the Hands of Time, but the door was also

protected by explosive runes and enough magic missiles to take out a battalion of Baatezu.

None of the Guvner representatives were willing to comment openly on the assault, but privately many suspected that this had been an inside job. A factioneer, who wished to remain anonymous, said that the place was just too heavily guarded for even the most capable bashers to overcome. "Maybe they could have dispelled a few magical defences, but there is not way they could have found the arcano-lock without prior knowledge. It had to be a mole, probably an anarchist, who tipped them off. That lock was just too well hidden, and I know it did not give off even a trace of an aura! It was set to rip all those pikers to bits!"

But other cutters, such as Ahmed of Siva [*Siva is the Indian Power of ultimate destruction - Ed.*] disagreed. Ahmed, a priest of Siva and a Doomguard factor, said the "thieves" had more help from Powers than stag-turners. "The Guvners are leatherheads to blame this on a fac-

tioner turning stag," said Ahmed. "They don't want to believe that these so-called knights of the post managed to give their expensive defences and wards the laugh. The law-makers haven't said what was bobbed, but it is as plain as the might of Siva: it was the very book you SIGIS berks opened your bone-box about last week! The 'Treasures of the Abyss'."

Ahmed went on to say that the artifacts we reported on last issue, the "Kali bones" had been missing for centuries, but suddenly in SIGIS we get a letter of someone claiming to be using them. And on top of that, SIGIS uncovered information about the bones in an ancient tome. "All thought these secrets were lost to the ages, but the Powers move in mysterious ways and suddenly the long lost secrets are again revealed. This can only mean great change is in store for the Multiverse! The Guvners and the greybeards tend to ignore the Vedics [*Indian pantheon -ed.*]. They call us reclusives and dismiss us. But their ignorance has cost them dearly, and the revelation of this tome to the Multiverse is a sign of great change and upheaval to come. Mark the prophecy of Siva: death and destruction are ever triumphant in the end!"

—by *Maija Intwood*, *culler* (sk)

NEWS BRIEFS

Set to Succeed

SIGIL—Today is Quiet Eve, the first day in the Archonite celebration of Hopetide. It seems that so far the unrest, which threatened to disrupt the holy festival, has been averted. Many Sensates have been invited to Archonite services and parties, and have agreed to conduct themselves appropriately. The only possible danger comes from the United Church of Aphrodite-Venus, who are offended that the Sensates have chosen to disregard the word of their soothsayers over the timing of the Aphrodisia, the traditional celebration of sexuality. Hopetide, being a far more sedate affair, was not thought likely to appeal to many Sensates, but Lady Erin Darkflame Montgomery, their factol, explained matters to me like this: 'We want to experience everything. A pure hedonist will not be a successful Sensate. We welcome the opportunity to participate in a festival that is new to us, and we welcome Bishop Julia's work to restore relations between the Society and the Archonites.'

The Aphrodisia will be celebrated after the main feast of Hopetide, which is Esperance, held tomorrow. The Archonites have tentatively expressed satisfaction with this arrangement. A special feature of this year's Hopetide will be the enthronement in St. Azrael's, Rue Morgue, of Bishop Julia Spesinfracta as Archbishop of Sigil. She is thought to be the first person to be appointed to so high a rank specifically associated with a temple in Sigil since the death of Aoskar. The Supreme Pontiff of the Archonites, Angelusmisit XIV, is thought already to be in Sigil for this ceremony, at which he will be assisted by the celestials Laurelli Tantarella and Unity-of-Rings. Security at the ceremony will be fairly high, with the Harmonium and the Order of the Planes-Militant each supplying a guard force. A number of factols and other city notables are expected to be present.

—by *Blondie Bluthheim*, *culler* (ar)



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Jangling Hiter Reborn In Monstrous Ceremony

[Editor's Note: The following story was transcribed from Culler Mord's *mimir*, taken from his body by the bounty-hunters who retrieved him. Missing for two weeks, *culler Mord* was found staring and unmoving on the outskirts of Jangling Hiter.]

Having culled no useful chant from Windscream [the *gelugon*, *Pollus Windscream*, former *baatezu* high-up of Jangling Hiter—ed.] I have returned to Jangling Hiter to further investigate the Kyton activity there. Since Hiter's sale and deconstruction months ago, its native inhabitants have been acting nigh-barmy and I am determined to discover the dark of it.

I have circled the immense oozing pit that gapes in the swamps of Minauros (*Baator's third layer - ed.*) where Jangling Hiter stood. Or hung, rather, for the City of Chains never really rested on the surface of the mire. Now I am close to understanding why. The altars upon which the kytons sacrificed so many of 'Hiter's non-fiend populace [see *SIGIS* issue 16, *Ritual Sacrifices* Mark Jangling Hiter Grave—ed.] now stand bloodstained and gory, but empty. Wet trenches lined with ink from the dead book trail through Minauros' slime from the altars to the edge of the gargantuan pit. A damp, fetid fog rises from the pit itself, like the breath of some great festering beast. It obscures what may lie within.

The kytons that had previously been sacrificing the poor sods within their power have arranged themselves about the circumference of the pit. Every fifty yards or so, a kyton crouches at its lip. That are unlike any kyton I have yet seen, however. Withered and emaciated, they are all almost bereft of their chains. I thought kytons looked unpleasant before! Now I know chains improve their manky visage. They howl and gibber as they crouch there, chanting and cursing in some obscene ritual. A rusty, blood-clotted chain stretches from each kyton's bread-box into the murky fog below. Occasionally, these go taut, as if something in the mire is tugging on them.

I must get a closer look into the pit! As I crept towards the hole, a great scream arose from the kytons. I thought I was scragged for sure,

but it was not me they screamed to. It was some THING in the pit! Some huge creature, rising from the bog in a cacophony of chains, is heaving itself through the murk up to the pit's edge. It is enormous, both in size and vileness. It must be as large as the Civic Feshall, perhaps larger. I cannot see its far side. Swamp muck drips from it and what the flesh I spy through the rising fog seems covered in coarse hairs and rusted metal. Is it wrapped in chains like the kytons? The chain-killers themselves have all been yanked into the pit by the beast's thrashing. Their chains must have somehow been linked to it. A hellish red light burns through holes in the fog now, illuminating the dank grounds where Jangling Hiter once hung. By the glow, I see I am the only witness to the monstrosity's actions.

[Ed. note - at this point on Culler Mord's *mimir* recording there was a loud, lengthy, metallic screech, worse than any din from the Great Foundry.]

The noise! It's hideous and bores into one's soul. The shriek is akin to sheets of rusty iron being torn through a sawmill. And as the grotesque in the chasm screams its awful cry, it is launching streamers of red and black into the sky. Even over its wail I can hear these ribbons jangle and rattle and clank. I had meant to use no magic, so as to avoid detection, but now I must. I must see what the beast is doing, and so I don my mod-ronic magnifiers. Alas! I almost wish I hadn't! While my curiosity has been settled, my bread-box has been sickened. The thing is spitting up gigantic chains, which rise but do not fall. Mayhap they anchor in Dis, the very layer above us. I cannot say. But festooned and entwined among them are miles and miles of viscera and intestines. Gibbets of flesh hang from cruel barbs, woven into heartless black chain like a festive thread. Moist unmentionable pieces of meat patter fitfully into the muck at my feet, while I watch a web of chains being spun into Minauros' cold, wet air.

Now hundreds, if not thousands, of Kytons have risen from the beast's bloated belly! They swarm up the great chains it has disgorged, trailing

links anew behind them. These too are wrapped in gore. Some of the lengths of chain stretch a groaning almost-corpse out longer than the most practised racksman could achieve. They are weaving these lesser chains amongst the great anchors set into the sky by the beast. It is apparent what they intend- to rebuild Jangling Hiter. The speed with which they are working is phenomenal. At this pace they could rebuild the city in mere weeks. But where are they getting the chains from? With my magnifiers I can see that the kytons appear youthful and vigorous, full of diabolic energy. I believe these must be NEW kytons, perhaps born of the gross creature in the pit, perhaps freshly transformed from some of the many corpses so recently sacrificed here.

My curiosity is truly piqued now. Where do the chains come from? Miles and miles of rusted iron. Newly hung, yet they appear as old and rusted as did Hiter's previous chains. Where do the new kytons come from? They clearly live in some fashion, yet naught but deaders were thrown into the misty chasm. I must investigate further. As I gain the very edge of the pit, I can glimpse more of the gigantic creature wallowing there in the mire and mist. Rusty bits of iron glint through the fog. Spider legs the size of bell-towers shift in the muck. Is that an eye? Another? Wait! The swamp is bubbling and frothing! Spumes of mist are flying about as the beast climbs up into its chain-linked web. It seems to be cradling something, a building perhaps. Is it a cathedral? a temple? It has that look. It's shadow is rising now, and I should have a better view of the thing and its charge in a moment. I...

[Ed. note - nothing more of Culler Mord's *mimir* recording was decipherable save his screams. Mord is recuperating in the care of his family. Close sources reveal he has not spoken, except to mutter: "The shadow... the iron shadow..." Another *culler* has been sent to Jangling Hiter to verify the Culler Mord's report.]

—by Malacyst Mord,
whistles *culler*
(Mr. N)

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 | BP: Blessing and carol service

30m AP: Public Hopetide lunch in Xaos Kollege (next door to the church); meal 5 sp, 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)

Cage Got You Confined?

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Gorel's Gryphons are **ready, willing and able** to bring bloods **all around the Cage** in style! Gorel's bloods are found at topside of **the Red Lion Inn in the Market Ward**.

(Prices vary depending on time of day, smog conditions and destination. Negotiation with Gryphon required.)

(sk)

Acheron Celestials Flap Bone-boxes Shrinking On Hal'ought's Behalf

SIGIL (THE GATEHOUSE)—The poor sods in line for aid at the Gatehouse were entertained this week by more scholarly screed than usual. Par Vectum Hexadecimal, a Mathematician of some prior rank within that sect, was recently committed to the Bleaker's care for claiming that the infinite plane of Acheron is shrinking. His fellows, who are even greater sticklers for regulation than the Guvners, carefully shepherded Vectum through the tiresome Bleak House entry line. For four days, while this crew of bespectacled scribblers sat in line with the sods and barmies, Vectum harangued all within earshot with his screed.

"It's not total screed," said Par Reducio Quivalent, a Mathematician who sat with Vectum. "He's just gotten a little too... involved. Our sect seeks to prove non-equivocally that the turnings of the gears of Mechanus control the creation and maintenance and destruction of all the other planes of reality. Vectum was heading one of our teams assigned to measure the velocity and direction of the iron cubes of Acheron, which is situated closest to Mechanus's influences. We would then compare his results with our calculations and theories to determine where we needed to focus our work. But apparently, counting cubes in Acheron's cold space was more than poor Vectum could handle. He's gone totally barmy!"

Vectum claims that his own personal calculations show that the size of Acheron is "directly related to the vector-mass ratio of all cubes with an interior density gradient greater than 24.9", whatever that means. The many sheets of vellum and scroll paper he handed out to illustrate his screed were mostly used by the Cagers who received them to wipe noses and bums. The gift of paper was more kindness than any of these poor barmies had received in a long time, though. The sods in line took the deranged greybeard in as one of their own, listening intently even if they didn't understand a word of his 'jommetry', as one bleak-bound barmy put it.

This culler, dragged to the scene by some of the number-cruncher's newly made friends, asked Par Hexadecimal how his screed showed that Acheron was shrinking, and what proof was there that this was so? After some derision by the barmies in line for being born with a sneer, and some hours of technical yark spewed by Vectum, an answer was received: Some of Acheron's iron cubes, it seems, have gone missing! Vectum declared that at least a dozen of the cubes he'd mapped and calculated had mysteriously vanished.

He swore like a sootbanger that these cubes were no longer in their 'trajectories' and that not even debris could be found in the 'vectors' where they should be. He became hotter than balor breath when asked if his figures could be wrong. He started yelling, "Missing Mass Equals Shrinking Space" at the top of his lungs. His new gang of math-happy barmies echoed the cry with him until Bleaker guardsmen came to escort Vectum to the front of the line. Reducio just

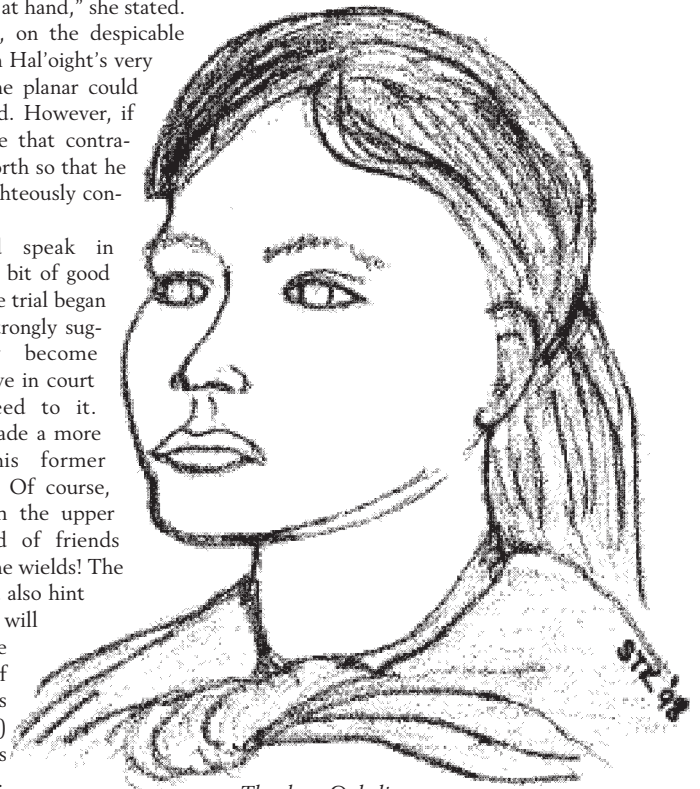
SIGIL (LADY'S WARD)—The trial of Spiral Hal'ought, a high-up aasimar merchant accused of murdering a noble class Baatezu, moved quite slowly this week as the observer judge, the "Eye of Justice", allowed Hal'ought time to find new counsel. Last week his defence attorney, 'Sly' Nye turned staged in a wildly chaotic display that just about put Hal'ought's case under. (Nye is currently serving a month long sentence for contempt, but chant has it he'll be out before week's end.)

Although events inside the courtroom this week were paltry, outside the courtroom all sorts of bashers were letting their feelings be known. One of the most significant, in terms of the trial, was a movanic deva named Ophelia who hailed from Mt. Celestia. Ophelia spoke on Hal'ought's behalf in front of a large crowd in a rented room at the Hall of Speakers. Flanked by two male aasimon (planetar) bodyguards, Ophelia told the assembled that the prosecution in the trial had put forth no evidence directly linking Hal'ought to the murder. "[Prosecutor] Ghar has continued to bring forth witness after witness to speak on matters unrelated to the business at hand," she stated. "Let us focus on the crime, on the despicable murder that happened within Hal'ought's very house, a murder that no sane planar could possibly think he perpetrated. However, if the prosecution has evidence that contradicts this, let them bring it forth so that he may be rightly judged and righteously condemned."

That a deva would speak in Hal'ought's behalf is the first bit of good news for the aasimar since the trial began weeks ago. This statement strongly suggests that Ophelia may become Hal'ought's next representative in court if she hasn't already agreed to it. (Hal'ought could not have made a more complete switch from his former Xaositect tiefling advocate!) Of course, this kind of treatment from the upper planes also belies the kind of friends Hal'ought has and the power he wields! The statements made by the deva also hint at the direction the defence will take to move the focus of the trial back on the murder itself (where little evidence has been uncovered last we heard) and away from Hal'ought's possible misdeeds in Elysium.

Meanwhile, the Baatezu began continued their own investigation into the murder, apparently unsatisfied with the Harmonium's ability, and that of their high-up investigator Christopher Verdue, to ferret out the killer. That brought this response from Harmonium representative Xrithran the Observer, 2nd mover of the faction: "You may question the abilities of the Harmonium, even question our ability to produce results. It should be noted that, in the past, there have been crimes that have happened under mysterious circumstances. Many have claimed that the Harmonium would be unable to uncover the complete facts of the case and present them to the Guvner's courts of law. However, in all cases, we have found all the evidence required to serve the cause of justice. Even if we are having difficulties now, we shall eventually come through. Mr. Verdue has proven his talents and I'm sure they won't fail us."

—by *Daemon Chaas*,
political culler



The deva Ophelia

shrugged, and said, "Infinity can do that to you sometimes. We see it a lot, actually." Now it will be up to the Bleak Cabal to say if Vectum's figures add up. If they don't, perhaps he can get a job calling custom at the popular Hive Ward tavern, Shrinker's!

—by *Gert Rood*, *Hive Culler*
(Mr. N)

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SIGIS!

NEWSBRIEFS

Cats Eyes Nine Lies

OUTLANDS (FAUNEL)—When we finally reached Faunel we were relieved that no more encounters with members from the Vile Hunt occurred. In the Gatetown we had time to relax, lick our wounds and question the two captives. However, they either didn't know or were not willing to give away any information. After a day of continuous questioning and taunting from their end, we lost patience and handed them over to Faunel officials (such as they are). a short trial later the sentence was announced: death by the lion. This death means the unarmed Vile Hunters should be track and killed by mountain lion petitioners—the hunters become the hunted and their mass returned to nature. Then whatever remains shall be left hanging for one week as a sign for all those who want to follow in their footsteps. The sentence was carried out under cheers of a big crowd mainly consisting of Tabaxi and Wylders who watched eagerly as the prey took off followed quickly by the predators.

Our suspicions concerning disguised supporters of the hunters in Faunel were confirmed by the vanishing of the death hunter bodies just two days after they were lost. We tried to find eyewitnesses of the act but found none. This may have been due to the bad eyes of locals or fear of the hunters, but no one was talking and the animal petitioners had better things to do.

Another quite interesting clue to comprehend was the sign found in the Tabaxi outpost [see last issue—ed.] came from a ranger called Jacob Swiftblade. He mentioned the possibility that the thickness of the lines may indicate that two signs

were combined into one. And Echeolas the found the thing part to be an elvish rune meaning 'three', though he also said that the thick part is not of elvish origin as far as he can tell.

Here is what some of the local bipedals from Faunel had to say about the situation with the Vile Hunt:

JACOB SWIFTBLADE (HUMAN RANGER): "The slaughter of the Tabaxi is a vile act, but such we know from the Vile Hunt. a more interesting question is "Why Tabaxi?". You have to know that the Vile Hunt has the goal to extinguish the intelligent animals from the Beastlands for they think them to be unnatural beings. The Tabaxi however have, up to now, not been the target of their attacks and they were not considered animals. When they start now to attack Tabaxi we have to ask why did they change the directions of their doings: is it temporary and how far will they go. Will they stop with the Tabaxi or will the also start to hunt bariours, or what? Question on question I know, sorry, but I have to point out a most dangerous development on the side of the Vile Hunt."

NETHEREYE (TABAXI SHAMAN): "The Vile Hunt—a thorn in our paw, well not only in ours, long since. But they do not stand unopposed. Or they stood not unopposed—the Wylders fought against them on the Beastlands ... but where are they now? Do they only want to defeat the beast-landian animals or were they defeated? Do the hunters now go without opponent I ask you? And if this is so I say it mustn't stay so! I call on to all who listen, and only bear disgust for the Huntsmen, to gather in Faunel, and a army shall arise that eradicates the most vicious danger to our lives. So I speak."

SYVO GOMEN (HALFLING PRIEST): "The Vile Hunt arises—quite another sign. Don't you see? Am I the only one who has the taste of upcoming danger on my tongue? You write about it in SIGIS and still do not understand. Law is rising say the one Chaos the other, but what is rising is evil, aggression and hatred. The Vile Hunt is just one more sign that the elemental forces of evil rise—Chaos as well as Law. I say a new climax in the Bloodwar is at hand, and this reflects to all the other planes, and even to Sigil. The hunters are dangerous, no question, but what's really dangerous is that the hunters will not stay alone long. Others will follow and perhaps bring even great evil. I shudder when I think about it."

—by Minako,
Outlands culler
(hh)

Mountain Lion
Circles on Huntsman



Dear sigis,

After reading your latest addition to your newsmag, I find you even more predictable than I thought possible. The so called "Faction Reaction" is nothing but a joke outside Sigil! Do you think those factions and their opinions have any meaning anywhere outside the Cage? (Good name for it.) So go out to where the real action is: in the Outer Planes where the Powers are and then you'll see how the Multiverse really works.

Interestingly, I noticed you put the Sects at the very bottom of the rag. How predictable! Your paper is so faction biased it makes me puke. At least the sects are out there where the action is. Sigil is nothing by a way-station where you can get some interesting bub. When are you leather-heads going to wake up to this fact?

So just bag the Reaction of the Faction, and get on to some real news. I bet you sods didn't even know that war is brewing between the Gillyanki and the Giltzerai, did you? Ha! Shows what you berks know.

Signed,
Bridgette Comer,
Scrollbearer of Ogluma

[In order to "please" this reader and other like-minded bashers, we have decided to put the sect responses to our question early on. And from now on, since we would like to remain as impartial as possible, the faction responses will be presented in the order in which they were received. As for Sigil just being a good place for some new bub...well, we think our readers can find their own responses to that. I would just say that there is a very good reason that Sigil is called the "Nexus of the Multiverse" and why the Powers can't set foot in the place.—Ed.] (sk)

Dear Readers,

I have the unfortunate duty as a member of my faction to respond to some untruths that have been spread around Sigil these past few weeks. Over and over again the Fated have had to respond to annoying cullers asking these same leatherheaded questions. So that we might get back to the important business of tax collection, I am forced to respond to these allegations in this public forum.

Firstly, we have been asked whether we have tried to use a tax-fraud charge to claim the kip abandoned by the Harmonium a few weeks back and keep the Guoners from it? The tax-fraud charge against the Harmonium is a matter of public record at this point. I don't understand why berks blame us when someone else leaves gaps in their books.

Secondly, many sods had the gall to insult our integrity even further by suggesting that we were using similar tactics to close up bub-bouses owned by the Sensates. The Sensates accounts are still under review, so I can't comment fully, except to say that everyone should keep their records in proper order and no one should have any trouble. Of course, I don't think I've ever heard of anyone showing interest in the 'feeling of a correctly prepared tax return.

(jb & sk)

Enter Fairheaven: Saga of Dark Avail

OUTLANDS (BURG OF FAIRHAVEN)—The darkness parts to find me in the town square of Fairhaven. The Teleportation spell I used is special, it allows me to enter the area within a cloud of darkness, cloaking me in the shadows. I move back into the shadows and my cloak flows around me to help me blend. My vision slips into the infravision spectrum, allowing me a glimpse of the ghost town. Nothing moves, no noise is heard. My senses tell me something is waiting for me, waiting for me to make the first move. I feel the static of the protection spells I wove before Teleporting here, still I always feel they are not enough.

Movement to my right reveals a large humanoid emerging from the shadows of a nearby building, his face cloaked in a hood, making it hard to tell its race. But his movements are sure, flowing, a veteran warrior. He is armed with a heavy crossbow. He is followed by another hooded warrior, this one armed with a Battle Axe, crude gothic carved armour is covered with old furs, the markings for a lower class of humanoid. They look back and forth, do they know I am here? My eyes glow as I try to enter the mind of the one with the crossbow. A barrier like a brick wall is there, very strong and knowing that something else put that there is not very comforting. This humanoid

throws back its hood, lifting its crossbow in my direction, did it sense my invasion? The face is that of a blood red skinned orc, where did such a creature come from.

The crossbow bolt flies against my protection field falling against the ground; stopped in mid flight, but I still move on reflex. The other lifts its Battle Axe and lets out a war cry, running toward me. I hear other war cries echo off the buildings, others are coming. I let Melf's Acid Arrow fly toward the Red Orc baring down on me. It hits it full in the chest and falls face first into the ground, a yell of pains erupts from its mouth. I hear movement all around, the others will be hear soon. I activate another prepare spell, and I Blink to the rooftop of a nearby building. I look over the edge to watch the show. More Orcs have come, two have rolled over the one I attack with the spell and started to pour water on his chest.

The others have broken into teams of two and started to fan out into search teams. These Orcs are organised, to organised for Orcs. a blast of energy hits my field from the rooftop nearby, slamming me against the ledge of the back of the building. My protection field takes the brunt of the damage, but I can not take another blast like

that. My guess is that the spell was "Lance of Disruptions". I hear chanting from the rooftop and quickly Blink to another rooftop. The Blink spell is also special as it leaves behind a shadowy image of me where I was a moment ago. The roof where I was explodes into fire from a Fireball spell. The light allows me to see the other rooftop. I blend into the shadows with my cloak and not that there are five Red Orcs and one human in red Harmonium robes. Ghost like lines cross the left side of his face, his eyes are pin points, and are worn and exhausted.

"Our master will be pleased," says one of the Orcs. "I have to return before I am missed." And with a flash the mage disappears. I also note that one of the Red Orcs has a Harmonium Mancatcher. What is going on? "Clean up this mess and find me the body, I want to be gone before light." Says a big Orc. The others move to carry out the orders. More questions have now come up, what is the Harmonium doing here? What was that ghost lines on that magi's face? What is the Red Orcs, and why did one have a Harmonium Mancatcher? I Teleport away.

Signed,
Dark Avail
(t)

EDITORIAL

Interview with Zimimar of the Dark Eight

SIGIL (BAATORIAN EMBASSY)—At the very last minute, the Baatorian ambassador to Sigil from the Dark Eight, Zimimar, agreed to comment on the Hal'ought trial and on the special investigator the Dark Eight had appointed to look into the murder of the noble class Pit Fiend. Here's what the esteemed Zimimar had to say on these matters:

DC: Your Eminence, If you have time to answer the following questions, the city of Sigil would be most interested in your responses.

Z: Forgive the slowness of my granting an interview on this matter, but as always, it seems more pressing business takes my presence from remaining in this chair for more than a yugoloth's pardon. I would be most pleased to answer any concerns Sigil's citizens have concerning my beloved Empire.

Did you personally authorise the investigation by the supposed Dark Eight investigator into the Hal'ought case?

You must be referring to Iron Lily, who is an officer of my Ministry here in Sigil. Any of my officer's doings are, of course, sanctioned by myself. Therefore it stands to reason that yes, I personally authorised her assistance in uncovering the dark of this terrible tragedy.

Can you comment on what do you hope to discover?

Of course I can. I hope to discover the truth.

Is there any reason you wouldn't trust the Harmonium investigators to get this dark for you?

They have been notoriously, ahem, (she coughs) *incomplete* in their methods of uncovering the truth in past investigations. My methods

are much more meticulous and I have a record of unbroken successes. I'll leave it at that.

Do you plan on working with the Harmonium directly as well as the Gwners or the Mercykillers, or do you plan on exacting your own justice?

I have complete faith justice will be served in the end, regardless of the means to it. [Drums her talons on the marble desktop, staring intently at the culler.]

Finally, it is true that the dead-booked fiend was, in fact, a member of the noble class who had fallen from favour?

I can personally assure you the unfortunate soul who fell victim to this hideous and cowardly murder was *not* one fallen from favour. Those of the noble houses, just as any other baatezu in Baator, only remain if they are in favour with the Lords whom they serve. I have no concern for the doings of those who are not.

[I, Chaas, laugh to myself at this ridiculous statement. Zimimar's main job in Sigil is overseeing the retrieval of traitors who *do* fall from favour, hence her unofficial nickname of the Grand Retriever back in Baator. I grin at the irony, annoying the fiend greatly and decide to take my leave.]

Thank you for taking some of your precious time to answer my questions.

The pleasure was mine, Daemon Chaas. Ask me anything. We at the Embassy wish all Sigilians be informed of our intentions and concern for their welfare while guests of their lovely city. I regretfully must leave again, duty as always, calls her children in too early while they play. Until next we meet again...

[She flashes me an "evil" violet stare, smiles politely, and shows me the door.]

—by Daemon Chaos, political culler
(as & sk)

Dear Readers!

With all the talk about upheaval in the Cage, and what happened last time to the Indeps, I felt it was my duty to write and tell Cagers the real chant. The Indeps didn't get "sacked" in the Great Upheaval. We got our start then. As I remember Sigil's history, the Lady had nothing against the Indeps; it was all the berks that tried to peel her by claiming Free League status that got her putting "Indeps" in the dead-book. Even if another Great Upheaval did happen, I wouldn't worry about it. Not unless I was a member of a banished Faction, trying to peel the Lady, that is.

And what about that supposed Indep-killin' sickness? Personally, I think it's all screed. Screed, an' Hardhead smoke an' mirrors, trying to cover up their efforts at writing up the Indeps. Yeah, you read me right. The Hardheads are tryin' to clean out us Indeps. I've caught them doin' it. There ain't no disease, unless it's called the Harmonium.

Janos Volkerina,
not a "Free League" spokesman
(rg)

Question of the Week: A New Upheaval?

SOME BERKS around the Cage have been whispering for a couple weeks now that Sigil is about due for another major upheaval. SIGIS has even heard chant that a faction or two might fall! Assuming this chant is more than just screeed, how would your faction respond to such a major event, and how would you keep from becoming one of the fallen?

Sects

TARAK DE LEYNON (MERKHANT): Interesting. If there were a confrontation of these proportions.... people would need weapons. I must invest along those lines. Let's see, I could dump that hostel in Bedlam and use the cash to mobilise... what? Oh, are you still here? Well, quickly then, as I have business to attend to. If one or more factions were to fall, I can see opportunities for the Merkhants. Many of us do business in Sigil as it is, so having an official presence in the Cage could only be beneficial to us. Our strong ties with some of the factions would mean that we also would be perhaps more acceptable than some of the other sects. Like all things, if such events should arise, I'm sure that we will find a way to turn a profit from it. The question is merely, how large?

DREGORI THARSAN (WYLDER): If you ask me, and you just did, Sigil's been in need of a good civil war for several centuries. Clean out some of the garbage. Obviously the Verdant Guild has no interest in Sigil itself, other than as place through which we must occasionally travel. Having said that, a certain amount of wholesale destruction in Sigil would allow for the construction of some parks, maybe a couple of areas left to grow wild. If there was more nature in Sigil, I'm sure that problems like the one you mention would never arise.

NAENAL (EXILE): Some of the factions might die? The Guvners? The Harmonium? The Mercykillers? Oh, please tell me the Mercykillers are in danger of losing out. Can I help it happen?

CHIEF ENGINEER XAN OF THE CHAOS ENGINEERS (XAOSOLOGISTS): Well, we here in Xaosologista are awaiting in anticipation to see if these rumours come true. Our Sigilian supporters are gearing up to launch a campaign to petition for our Sect to become a faction in case one happens to fall. Why, you may ask, should the Chaos Engineers be a faction? Well, that's easily answered. Just look at Sigil itself! It's chaos organised the way we would do it ourselves! We ourselves embrace chaos for it's inherent order hidden deep within. And from this organised chaos, art and beauty spring forth. It is the total culmination of what we are. Sigil represents us as it stands now. Why then shouldn't we be a Faction?

Fated

The Fated? Fall? Don't be barmy or I'll not answer your sodding question. (And no refunds—you aren't even paying me enough jinx to cover basic expenses!)

How would we respond to another faction's fall? Rejoice? After all, that's one less obstacle in our path. What do you mean that isn't tame enough for your rag? Fine. Actually, we would need to scramble! First, we need to cross-refer-

ence all of the faction members with our Book of Lending so we can begin collection and foreclosure actions immediately. Next, we need to seize the faction headquarters to ensure complete and full payment of taxes. Of course your faction owes taxes berk, EVERYONE owes taxes.

—*Blaize Shadiff-Digger*

Sign Of One

[Transcript of a mimir recording taken by a SIGIS Culler from Grannen, Representative of the Sign of One.]

Lady's grace cutter, I'm sorry I don't believe I'll have time to write a reply to the question you pose, but you can record it on your mimir while we walk...

I'm not going to waste time trying to sound mysterious like the faction usually does, I'm going to give you the chant like my faction sees it straight up. Some of the signers, myself included believe that the multiverse needs a change or at least a major upset, since it's starting to stagnate. Many sentients have a warped view of our faction, which in turn is propagated by some of our members. Our faction believes that ONE person can change YOUR multiverse and that's YOU.

If you believe that you and not some addle cove philosophy or lack thereof like the Indeps, control everything in your reality, then you are the centre of your multiverse. The Sign of One is just a group of like-minded people working towards common goals, providing support for members etcetera. As long as someone out there believes he controls everything with his belief then there will always be a Sign of One..... I've got to fly, but remember: you are all part of the One.

Anarchists

The Revolutionary League will never fall, and as far as I'm concerned it doesn't exist. There is no such faction and its simply a bunch of screeed the Hardhead spread to name all their enemies as one collective force. I work with a few people fighting towards the liberation of Sigil and pretty well everywhere else in the multiverse. We defend the oppressed, against fascists like the Hardheads and other misguided berks who wave around a flag claiming they are us or the Revolutionary League. Perhaps I will die fighting for my cause, but there will be many around to follow and take up my cause some day.

As far as I'm concerned which faction will fall, I say the Hardheads are going straight to the dead-book. They've become more obvious in their tactics in controlling the public and fill fall soon. I have devoted a lot of my time to destroying them, and so have many others. The fact is they are a faction that doesn't stand well with almost all of the others. You see the Doomguard, Bleakers, Free League and Xaositects do have a few things against them. And the Hardheads haven't been to friendly to the Dustmen, Fated, Athar and many others. The thing is they are hardly loved by any faction, and the way I see it, they will fall before I become a deader.

Another faction to fall will either be the Sensates or the Fated, pick one because they are

quickly becoming the two biggest rivals for the Cage and one of them is going to knock the other out of the way. While Erin Darkflame and Rowan Darkwood haven't come to blows yet its only a matter of time before their petty plotting against each other will bring both of them down. And I'd say if its anyone to start a war its that berk they call the Duke. I think in this case we'll just simply sit-back and watch them destroy each other, and then we'll move in and deal with whoever survives.

Fraternity of Order

Most assuredly the chant landed by SIGIS is screeed. Despite increased tensions between the Dustmen and Doomguard, the Fated and the Sensates, the Athar and Signers, these factions maintain important places in the functioning of Our Fair City, and as such no major event, as you call it, is anticipated to occur, not even by our most liberal of calculations. The Fair Citizens of our City are urged to put aside their anxieties, and trust in the Laws and Rules of our City, which we alone, The Fraternity of Order, have the duty to maintain. Rest assured that by the observing of the Laws of Sigil, and the Rules they dictate, it will insure the consistence of the status quo and the peace of our fair city Sigil. Because Sigil is the Centre of the Multiverse, the Laws of Sigil are the Laws of the Multiverse; therefore, if the Laws of Sigil dictate peace then so shall there be peace in the Multiverse as a whole. By following our Order's example, and the example of our most honoured Factol, each factioneer and Faction may avoid any 'screeed' of becoming 'one of the fallen.'

Addendum: Technically neither the morally abhorrent Revolutionary League, nor the obstinate Independent League have attained Faction status, and thus are excluded from your question; it is, however, our calculation that there is strong possibility that the Independent League will attain official Faction status, much to the surprise of its own members. Our esteemed Order will lend all assistance in helping the League create and maintain internal consistency of the newly-formed faction's bureaucratic structure. We will be glad to assist its arrival into full compliance of our Fair City's Rules.

Know the Law, and you shall have power to avoid error.

—*Your humble servant, Hartin Meideggar,
B4 Bureau Chief of Sigilian Public Information,
prior B3 Judge, Bureau of Courts (retired.)*

Godsmen

Upheaval? Factions falling? Sure it's possible, but then again anything is possible 'round here. If there is some kind of upheaval or war in the cage you can bet your jink that the Godsmen will survive. That's what we're all about anyway, isn't it berk? Survival and advancement. Become a better blood, that's what we're aiming for.

Any conflict that arises can only make us stronger. And during the whole thing we'll protect who we can, as I'm sure some factions would be picked upon more then others. Don't want any potential candidates for advancement getting the

Question of the Week: A New Upheaval?

rope. So what would an upheaval mean to this cutter? Nothing berk, just another day in Sigil. that's all it would be.

—*Strom the Gatemaker Goldwand, Factor of the Godsmen*

Dustmen

Upheaval, eh? It could be a good thing. Excellent opportunity for people to move toward the next stage of their existence. What? Oh, yes, you call it death. No, I'm not being cruel. I'm just saying that this event could restore the natural flow of death. There's too many Sigilians, hanging on to their supposed 'lives', that shouldn't be here anymore. Die and let die, as we always say.

And no, we're not worried about it. You see, death itself cannot die. And as our factol wisely said, 'I will not soon advance to true death, for my sense of duty keeps me at this level'. The Dustmen will still be around when the commotion ends. We still have a lot to do here. 'Die' with that.

—*Christian DeSaville, Dustman cleric*

Doomguard

I think it's about time the Cage went through an upheaval. Some useless parts of society are beginning to get on our nerves, and believe me when I tell you berks that the Doomguard will be there helping to bring to an end this useless status quo that the Harmonium and Guvners seek to maintain. But after that, we part ways with the Anarchists. They will want to rebuild the way the cage is, but we won't IGGet them: it will be time for us to end this foolish centre of the multiverse business, and without the City of Doors to serve as hub, the rest of the multiverse will soon follow!

- *From Weftson Foralos, a more excitable Sinker under the tutelage of Sir Twist*

Mercykillers

So some berks have been 'whispering' about a great change in the political structure of the Cage, eh? Well, I'm not surprised they whisper, since the very thing they speak of is Anarchy. Revolution. Things that the Mercykillers stand firmly against. The cells of our mighty Prison are lined with those who were once would-be revolutionaries and upstarts. Bashers with an agenda, but no concern for the safety or well-being of their fellow Cager. They are the not the first, nor will they be the last to fail in their poorly orchestrated attempts at anarchy.

But returning to the question at hand, if this is more than just screed, the Mercykillers would have no problem retaining their position amongst the factions of law and order. There was a time in the past when our faction made necessary changes and joined with another during the breaking to ensure the presence of justice amongst those in Sigil. If this upheaval occurs, the Mercykillers will once again take steps to maintain the status quo. We will work hand in hand with the Harmonium to scrag those causing any insurrections. I have even heard rumours that Factol Nilesia will deputise more Justicars amongst our Faction for the express purpose of dispensing justice in the streets. It is times like this when our faction

shines, doing things others may hesitate to do for the good of our city. I would be more concerned for the fates of the other 'lawless factions'.

—*Roderick Thorn, spokesperson for the Mercykillers*

Free League

So. Yer askin' how the Free League would survive a second Great Upheaval, an' how we'd respond? Simple. We wouldn't do anythin', even really worry about it. We're not a Faction, despite what the rest o' the Cage seems to think. We're a bunch o' people who don't want anyone tellin' 'em how think. Our response to any major upheaval would depend on who the we in question is. Some o' us would hire out as mercenaries. Others would try an' help out, try an' restore the peace. More would go about our lives an' not worry about it, unless it was forced on us.

See, I'd love to be more specific. I really would. But I can't. We ain't a Faction. There's no hierarchy; no Factol, no Factotums, no Factors, no nothin'. All there is are a bunch o' people with the guts to stand up on their own, live without some berk tellin' 'em what's what, an' callin' themselves the Free League. There's no way we could have an official response, or an official way to avoid fallin', because there's no officials.

So, the easy answer to yer question? The Free League isn't going to worry about it, an' we don't need to do anything to avoid falling. We don't need to, because there is no way we can. There isn't anything to fall.

—*Janos Volkrima, Indep*

Xaositects

Xaos! Axos! Soax! Law is falling. Xaos is rising. Xaos will not fall, it is everywhere and everywhere cannot fall unless you're a knight of entropy but that I am not I am Xaos! As are you! All is Xaos, and all can't fall... but I said that already.

How does Xaos keep from being one of the fallen? Xaos simply can't fall. Xaos is intangible and everywhere. I am Xaos, you are Xaos... but I said that already. Besides, it is Xaos that makes things fall, not falling that makes things Xaos. Some lawful barmies might bite the dust, but not Xaos, which is everywhere! We will live on!

Now then sir, I hope that answers your question all proper like. I'm off for a spot of tea, my throat is tired and my shoes are on fire. You know how it is.

—*Random, Xaositect Poet*

Harmonium

Ah, sir interviewer, what is the matter? Oh, no I am not he. Oh, I see where the confusion could come in. Yes, he was our previous interviewer, but he has disappeared. Why am I reluctant to say his name? Simple, he obviously offended the Lady and our Lady therefore mazed him. I shall not try her patience by mentioning his name. Suffice to say, the views held by some of our more radical members are not held by the Harmonium itself. Please do not take his words to be those of myself or Sarin. Allow me to introduce myself, I am Xrithran, observer beholder. I shall be the new

representative for the Harmonium. In response to your question, of course the Harmonium is not worried. The chances of such an upheaval are thin. As you mentioned last time, there seems to be a great flow of Law in the multiverse. An upheaval in the factions would be very Chaotic. Therefore, such things are in the words of you humans barmy screed. And let us consider that this will happen. The Harmonium will not fall. We are the most powerful faction on the planes. We have moved whole layers of planes. Who else can claim to have accomplished such a feat, even if it was on mistake? No, the Harmonium will not fall. Our glorious Harmony will reign supreme in the Multiverse, whether anyone else likes it or not.

—*Xrithran Observer, Mover Three*

Ciphers

The Transcendent Order will respond to the fall of another faction in the most appropriate way, should such a thing happen. Exactly what form that action or inaction takes will be abundantly clear when the time comes—or at least, it will be to those who are in harmony with their inner selves.

Of course, we Ciphers will not act before it is time, nor shall we be caught off-guard. And that is why the Transcendent order shall not be among the fallen.

Athar

I wouldn't worry too much about the Athar. While we may not have a great number of allies in other factions, we have few enemies as well. If anyone was to fall, I'd wager on the Signers with their insane ideas about resurrecting powers within Sigil. Some berks just never learn from history. The Shattered Temple should remind them of their folly. At any rate, the rest of you bloods better hope that the Athar don't fall. Due to our own selfless efforts, we are often the only thing keeping phoney 'gods' from coming into Sigil. If a power ever did come into Sigil and challenge the Lady, you can be sure that plenty of damage will be done in the fight. Sigil itself could be destroyed. You berks don't realise just how lucky you are to have us around sometimes.

—*Leir the Explorer*

Society of Sensation

The Society of Sensation welcomes change. Change is the lifeblood of the experience of the multiverse. While some languish in the status quo, and clench their fists tighter around those that wish freedom, the Sensates embrace diversity and the uncertainty of the evolving situation in Sigil. While others think business continues as usual and continue to scrape their profits, the Sensates have been preparing for change in very fundamental ways. I welcome any that wish to join us in this great time of upheaval to contact me at the Civic Festhall.

Change is coming, bloods, be sure you're ready!

—*Lariana du'Reavewinder*

(by various vullers)

Curry Bombast's "The Planar Gourmet"

GREETINGS MOST ESTEEMED READER! I, Curry Bombast, your intrepid gnome explorer of all-things culinary and head-chef at Chirper's, shall be your guide into the wide, and often wondrous worlds of the Planar Gourmet. Pleasing to Guvner and Sensate alike, I will lan you chant and uncover the darks of recipes and eateries all about the Great Ring. From Arboreal Apples to the secrets of Baatorian Barb-Arque, I shall spare no expense to bring you something new! All this and more, Bombast promises you!

Sigil's Lucky Catch

Ozo Tanabi's 'Lucky Catch' in the Clerks Ward is an excellent place to dine on the most delicious of planar pisces. This is mostly due to the portal to Mt. Celestia's Silver Sea located in the fishpond in the centre of the great pagoda, which comprises Tanabi's temple-turned-restaurant. Once a mostly forgotten shrine to Ebisu, god of luck through hard work, the ancient pagoda was refurbished into an open-aired eatery through a loan from the generous Noyama family of Blossom Town.

When asked about his turn of fortune, the wise priest of oriental luck smiles knowingly. "Gnome-infested Bytopia is not the only reward for hard work" he laughs. My belaboured brethren would do well to heed Tanabi's admonishment to enjoy the fruits of one's labour. Especially if the reward is the flowers of the Silver Sea blooming forth from the waters of the active planar portal!

The portal key to the fishpond portal is a well kept dark. It's all for the better, for what a pleasant surprise to see the surge of heavenly the better, for what a pleasant surprise to see the surge of heavenly waters flood the pool with the playful splashes of hundreds of Silver Prawns. Tanabi's servants rush to catch their blessed harvest of Celestial shellfish: each net-full a bountiful gift from Tanabi's chosen patron. Often even visitors are encouraged to fish, so great are the gifts of Ebisu.

It is unfortunate that the members of the Planes-Militant are practically camped outside in protest to what they call "a blatant disregard of

the proper use and protection of a portal to the utmost sacred plane." Chant is a peery group of planewalkers, disguised as dinner guests, literally leapt at their chance to pass through the portal to Mt. Celestia's shores. Though the outcome of their journey is dark, they certainly tumbled to the attention of Mt. Celestia's Crusaders. Tanabi tells me that the pool portal's guardian spirit, or kami, is strong enough to repel any unwanted intruders, and the priest's unbreakable calm was enough to assure this body.

Because of its proximity to the Hall of Speakers, a body is able to find members of almost any Faction mingling here. Only the Athar and the Dustmen seem to dislike the Catch's constant atmosphere of holy celebration. Regardless, a body is sure to find the most interesting things talked about amongst the pillow-seated patrons leaning into their sake' cups crowding the Arboreal hardwood tables. Current chant is , Lunia, is looking for good-willed cutters to help an emotionally-scarred paladin petitioner return his to the Beastlands.

While the Lucky Catch has its fair share of visiting planewalkers, the protesting Crusaders of the Planes-Militant have been taking pains to persuade all but the most hungry from visiting Sister Almera's table, fearing continual abuse of the portal to their most beloved plane.

Like his chosen-power, Tanabi believes in rewarding his patron's hard work, and insures only the freshest ingredients combine with the penultimate crafting of his head chef, the Cypher Master of the Heart, Izubu Murikami. Murikami's hands are a blur as he slices and dices your menu choice into a suitable meal in a matter of minutes. His work is beyond compare in all of Sigil! It is said only rock gardener , the old Iaido master near Izubu's Faction Headquarters, wields a blade with greater skill and poise in all of Sigil.

In celebration of his craft, I myself have attempted to duplicate his skilled recipe while at Chirper's. Though I may not be a Master of the Heart, I'm not too shabby with a knife—and even you can give this recipe a try (if a body finds itself

too far from Chirper's or the Catch to enjoy the real thing!)

Ebisu's Blessing

- ◆ 1 pound of Silver Sea Prawns, in shells (or substitute large prime shrimp)
- ◆ 2 tablespoons of Tanabi's secret marinade, a mixture learned from the Proxy of Liu, the Celestial Bureaucracy's Lord of Gourmets: a Power even an Athar may praise! (My own mixture is of one tablespoon soy sauce, a like amount of extra-dry Karkelli Firewine from Torch, and a half teaspoon of grated ginger from the fields of Sheela Peryroyl herself!)
- ◆ 2 tablespoons of Baku-bean oil (or substitute Bariaur-grown organic peanut oil)
- ◆ 2 cloves of Arboreal Stinking Rose, for passion! (substitute: Ysgardian giant garlic), chopped
- ◆ 3 Outlands green onions, chopped
- ◆ 1 drop of salt mephit sweat (or substitute 1 teaspoon of prime pillar salt)
- ◆ 1 tablespoon of Sublimity from the veritable Land of the Immortals (or substitute a like amount of sesame oil from the generous reserves of the Noyama family's prime imports.)

Marinate the prawns in the shells for 15 minutes in the sauce mixture (substitute firewine with elven sherry, if your guests are of a fine palette.) Drain. Stir-fry in a hot pan (try Baatorian briquettes!) with palette. Add the Baku-bean oil and garlic, until the colour changes not unlike the very skies of Avernus, a deep orange-red. Add the green onions. Add the drop of mephit sweat and Sublimity. Toss until the onions wilt. Serve with the shells on, as most tieflings enjoy the added texture (but removing them is easy.)

Tip of the Day: Always add Outland ingredients to any planar dish. Though seemingly mundane they add balance and buoyancy to any heavy "philosophically" competing flavours.

Enjoy! And see you at Chirper's!

—Curry Bombast,
Planar Gourmet Extraordinaire
(nl)

STOP PRESS

Death by the Wyrn!

THE TRIAL of the two clueless under the eyes of the Black Ogustus was ended in record time, just as the Baatorian advocate Var'l'zchu has announced before the case actually started. There were too many eyewitnesses and too many facts to leave even the slightest doubt. In spite of this Harlar tried his best to obscure the case, though he met without success. Ogustus the Black, after just two days, announced the sentence: Death by the Wyrn.

The sentence is to be carried out at the first day of the next week, the preparations already run. We suppose this is to be a free day throughout Sigil, as many Cagers will follow Var'l'zchu invitation: "We would like to see you all at the Great Bazaar to watch justice enforced! "

—by *Ansas Ewald*,
Outlands culler
(hh)

Modrons Reach Tradegate

The Great Modron March has reached Tradegate, the Gate-Town to Bytopia, with little trouble, according to reports this week. Authorities in Tradegate and in Excelsior were keen to play down rumours that several hired adventurers had been killed defending the march against some outside force. We have not been able to gain confirmation of these rumours, but if they are true, we salute these heroes and request the local high-ups to be more open with us. The modrons are now presumably making their way through Bytopia.

—by *Droni Forssen*, culler (ar)

Yugoloth Fund Untouched!

SIGIL (LOWER WARD)—The Fated's Tax Investigation Squad (Lower Planes Division) were shocked and stunned to discover no evidence of embezzlement, falsification or tampering in the

records of one Vorganoth, the Nycaloth Managing Director of Amalgamated Damnations and Stag-turnings. The organisation, which funds the arming of both the Blood War and the infrequent holy wars in the Upper Planes, was given a clean bill of health by the Takers, who were seen to be shivering upon their exit from the building. This correspondent, when granted a brief audience with the chief of the Lower Planes Division (known to local cutters as the Bloody Scared Squad) learned that the independent taxation body is 'deeply distressed' by the news. It is believed that the Fated are commissioning a further series of independent investigations into the affair—Factol Darkwood is reported to have offered the following comment: "Well, we're suspicious, obviously. Those scheming sods think they can outsmart us... we'll show 'em we're not to be trifled with."

—by *Parado*, Trades culler (ps)