



27. Third Week of The Pivot

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exclusive

INTERVIEW WITH NEW *INTEROGATRIX DIABOLUS*

by *Daemon Chaas, culler*

Sigil (Lady's Ward) -- Once again SIGIS has managed to give you another top shelf exclusive interview with one of the Cage's movers and shakers. I finally managed to track down the new head of the Harmonium's Diabolus Division, Mover Four Catrina de la Coeur. The Diabolus Division is one of the most important and challenging wings of the Harmonium: they are in charge of investigating and counteracting fiendish activity around the Multiverse. Because of their work, many in the Division, including their last high-up Wermak Durkayle, have succumbed to fiend machinations, which is probably why the Harmonium have hired an outsider this time.

You might recall from the Harmonium Faction Extraction last issue that I tried, unsuccessfully, to obtain an interview with the Mover at her "Tower of the Claw". Instead I arrived to find her apparently on her way out of town. After what happened to her predecessor, I assumed that she might have also been fleeing the Cage, but I appear to have misunderstood the situation. After a short while I was finally able to track her down, and this is what she had to say.



SIGIS: Apparently, I was wrong about you abandoning your post in the Cage. I apologise for jumping to such a hasty conclusion based on so little evidence. Of course, after what happened to your predecessor, it is natural that I might jump to such a conclusion. Would you be willing to tell the readers where you did leave off to and why you went unaccompanied by the typical retinue of Harmonium?

Catrina de la Coeur: Yes, you were definitely mistaken. I was simply on a shopping trip to the market ward for some fresh ingredients. The Bronze Fisherman has a stock of the finest sepia ink that Arborea can offer. And as for my companion, he provides more than adequate personal protection.

S: Could you tell us how you, a Prime, became such an important figure in the Harmonium? Apparently you did so by moving directly into the position and not by ascending through the ranks, correct?

CC: Well...as I recall, I first made Toni's [Mover Five Tonat Shar's] acquaintance prior to the Ascension of Fortitude a few cycles back. My colleague, Keeli of the Clan Ironstar* and I were instrumental in untangling some difficulties that arose during the Ascension. And to answer the second question, yes you are correct - I have never held any official position in the Harmonium.

S: Where did you get your, presumably, vast knowledge of fiend lore that allowed you to qualify for the position of Chief Interogatrix Diabolus [Chief Investigator of fiendish activities] for the Harmonium?

CC: I have spent many years travelling the outer planes and making many interesting acquaintances. Why, I still remember, with appreciation, the hospitality shown to me by Plague Mort's Arch Lector Byrri Yarmoril. I also have access to many sources on fiend lore and politics provided by Tenemus Al Karak, the Head Librarian of the Fraternity of Order's private collection. And, speaking of libraries, I have also gained valuable new insights into fiendish society while visiting the Archduke Dispater's extensive library. My tours of some infamous Blood War battlefields, such as the Field of Nettles [on the Grey Waste] didn't hurt either.

S: Lots of Cagers have been heard muttering that a Prime shouldn't have been put in such a position of power in the Harmonium. How would you respond to these critics? Are you worried that the typical bias against primes in the Cage will be an impediment to your job?

CC: Not at all. I don't believe being born a Prime will hinder my job performance. I would remind these critics that Factol Rowan Darkwood and my current Factol Sarin are also Primes.

S: Can you tell us about the "toast" you made with Sigil's Ambassador for the Baatezu? It was reported that you made a toast to the health of the Ambassador over at the Rule of Fours [Ed. Note: see issue 25, the Harmonium section of the Faction Extraction]?

CC: Indeed I did! I wished her Excellency a 'long and prosperous existence'. There is a Prime saying that the enemy you know is better than the enemy you don't. See? You can learn something from us Primes after all...

S: Can you tell us any information about what exactly happened to your predecessor, Wermak Durkayle? Why did he betray the faction and for whom? Is he indeed in the dead-book?

CC: Former Mover Four Wermak Durkayle had been subverted long ago to the Baatezu cause. One of my esteemed Mercykiller colleagues, a Justiciar in fact, exacted final justice on the sod down near Ribcage.

S: Are you at all worried that the corruptive influence that affected Durkayle will affect you as well?

CC: No. Let me state clearly that my loyalty to the Harmonium is unwavering. My superiors do not have to fear any betrayal on my part, and I believe that was why they were so quick to bring me on board as a replacement. My actions have always spoken louder than mere words.

S: From talking to you, I sense that there is something personal in this new job of yours. Am I right about this hunch? Have you been directly affected by the activities of fiends in some way that you would care to talk about?

CC: Coming from a Prime world, I have been distinctly aware of the meddling of fiends into mortal affairs for a long time now. I believe that this interference needs to be dealt with much like a gardener might deal with pests that inhibit the development of a beautiful rose.

S: In what direction would you like to see the Harmonium move in the future, and the Diabolus Division in particular?

CC: Order and harmony provides a necessary bulwark against the insidious plague of the lower planes. As the Chief of the Diabolus Division, I am committed to providing the intelligence the Harmonium needs to combat this pestilence.

*Clan Ironstar is a Dwarven Clan on the Prime sphere of Toril.

[Author: [Scott Kelley](#)]



newsbriefs

MURDER AT ATHAR TRIAL

by Vido Togarini, Political Culler

Sigil (Lower Ward) -- This morning, after a week-long suspension, the Athar held the second sitting of the trial of Factor Flogisto. Flogisto is a high-up factioneer that has been charged with treason. After the tumult raised last week, this time the main terrace of the Temple was practically deserted. Only the highest ranked factioneers were present, along with eyewitnesses and a group of cullers. The session began with Factor Terrance restating the charge of treason and the evidence against Flogisto. The elf was repeatedly seen at the Godslayers' fortress in the Astral, an act of high treason for an Athar. The Godslayers are a radical splinter group of the Athar who take an active approach to reducing the powers. They think the powers should be destroyed, and this militant attitude got them kicked out of the Athar long ago.

To begin the session, Factor Terrance asked Factor Flogisto whether he wished to defend himself from the prosecutor's accusations, or if he admitted guilt. The elf stood up and silently smiled, looking confident and very self-assured. "As many of you realise by now, I am what Cagers call a mindnick -- a psionicist", said Flogisto. "I can touch your feelings, I can read your thoughts, and I can play with your brains like a child plays with a mudball." At this point an indignant murmur arose; was Flogisto threatening the assembly?. " Therefore, it is clear that I might solve this trial without any difficulty, just by convincing your subconscious minds that I'm not guilty. Which is true. But I will not do this because there is simply no need for it. Despite the evidence put forth by the prosecution, this trial doesn't question my fealty to the Athar cause. Factor Gadlik Tress and his allies are simply frightened by my remarkably quick ascension in the Faction's hierarchy. I see this trial only as an occasion for the faction to put my intentions to the test and realise my importance to the future of the...." Suddenly, Flogisto's speech was interrupted by Caylean, a popular guide in the Shattered Temple who ran into the Terrace

pale and covered with sweat.

"Factor Tobias Gnoas' assistant has been killed, my Factol!" He declared nervously. "Just a few hours ago, in the Astral Citadel, Garla Fistian was murdered." Factol Terrance darkened. "Do we have any clue about the killer?" he asked. "More than that, my Factol. We seized him while he tried to escape. He's Meb'Zkias, a bladeling thief, one of Factor Flogisto's subordinates."

At this point, Factor Tress jumped up and shout angrily, "He has sent his hound to kill one of our factioneers. What other proof do we need to declare him a traitor?" Factol Terrance was evidently confused. "Factor Flogisto, what do you have to say in your defence?" asked the Factol.

"My Factol, I can assure you that I didn't even suspected that Meb'Zkias was about to accomplish such a horrible act", replied Flogisto. "After all, at the beginning of this trial I was suspended from all my tasks; therefore I haven't seen any of my fellow factioneers since then. How could I speak to the bladeling? And why would I have wanted Garla Fistian's death? I didn't even know her!"

"Don't trust him, my Factol!", shouted Factor Tress. "He is lying! He has already admitted that he's a mindnick, and they can send thoughts wherever they wish!"

"No, my Factol, I do not lie", countered Flogisto. "Unfortunately I may know who is the real instigator. I fear that it is my personal assistant, Syra Taknach. During my suspension, she has been in charge of my affairs. Meb'Zkias is currently working for her", explained Factor Flogisto calmly.

"He may be telling the truth", said Factor Deiana, one of Terrance's most devoted friends and head of the clergy of the Great Unknown. "I spied Syra speaking with Fraz Madlain, just a few days before we discovered he was a Godslayer spy. At that time I didn't suspected Syra of anything, but after the latest events I may wonder if Factor Flogisto isn't correct."

Factol Terrance remained silent and thoughtful for a long while trying to absorb the news. Then he told his subordinates, "Call the Harmonium. We'll hand Syra and Meb'Zkias over to them. We may prosecute Flogisto for internal security reasons, but murder is a crime and it's their concern".

Although Syra Taknach was quickly arrested and brought to the Barracks for questioning, Flogisto has not been discharged, and the charges of treason still stand. He is still suspected of treason, and during the next sitting, Factor Gadlik Tress will try to establish Flogisto's forbidden relationship with the Godslayers.

[Author: [David Fontana](#)]



SERIAL MURDERS SHOCK POPULACE OF AMORIA

by Garth T'artan, aasimar Indep



Elysium (Amoria) -- For the past several weeks, Amoria, the first layer of Elysium, has been plagued by a series of horrible murders. The victims, nine so far, were all residents of the Plane of Perfect Rest. Public reaction to these crimes has been one of fear and disbelief. "It's horrible," stated one resident, who wished to remain anonymous. "I moved to Elysium to escape this kind of thing. I haven't been afraid while living here until now. I am afraid for my wife and my children. Who could do such a thing?"

This sentiment is echoed by the Guardians who have organised



a team to investigate the murders. The investigators' spokesman, Ayala Swifteye (see sketch), had this to say: "Elysium is the essence of peace, kindness, tranquility. The culprit has not only taken loved ones from our brothers and sisters, but these ideals as well. He will be found, and he will be brought to justice."

When pressed for details about the crimes, however, the bariaur spellslinger remained tight-lipped. "I would prefer not to discuss such matters at this time for two reasons: first, out of a basic respect for the feelings of the victims' families and friends. Second, for fear that if the intimate details of the

crimes are revealed to the public this might hinder our investigation."

When asked about the nature of the murderer, Ayala responded passionately. "It would take an incredibly depraved person, in my opinion, to do something so heinous. Also, considering the unique travel conditions of the plane, the perpetrator must be an incredibly convincing actor to pull off enough good deeds to get from victim to victim and to avoid notice for nearly a month."

Ayala concluded the interview with this statement:

"I want the people of Amoria to know they are not alone. We are doing everything we can to prevent any more deaths. We will soon be joined in our search by Krodescus, an ursinal scholar, whose insight we believe will be a tremendous aid in the investigation. However, we do not want to become a band of vigilantes or a band of jackbooted law enforcers, nor do we encourage such behaviour among the populace. Have faith in the power of Goodness, and all will be made right."

S.I.G.I.S. will keep readers posted on new events in this case when they arise.

[Author: [Matt "King Snarf" Maybray](#)]



DEADLY PLAGUE STRIKES HOPELESS, FEAR OF SPREADING

by Laxuli Phae, Outlands Culler

Hopeless (Outlands) -- The miserable burg of Hopeless, gate-town to the Gray Waste, suffered another blight this week when news spread of a deadly plague sweeping the city. According to reports coming out of the place, up to three dozen victims have been claimed already, and more are falling ill by the day. The disease is all the more worrying because, according to rumour, it is incurable by even priestly magic.

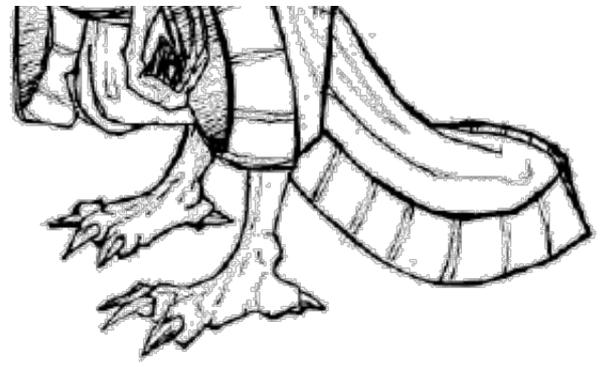
Typically, the ruling council of Hopeless (if they can be given such a title) are doing little or nothing about the problem. I interviewed Grynn, an outcast abishai merchant who I met on the outskirts of Hopeless as he fled the burg...

"The burg's divided", the fiend told me. "On the one claw there's the residents of Hopeless, who seem resigned to the plague and aren't doing anything about it. On the other claw there's visitors like myself, and we're leaving that godsforsaken place as fast as our wings can carry us! I mean, it's not to say



I'm a coward, but by the Abyss, they're dropping like flies in there."

Apparently, it seems the visitors to the burg have been hardest hit by the plague. Reports show that many travelling merchants and planewalkers have fled the burg this week. Most of them died before escaping the barren wastes around Hopeless, but residents of Torch and Curst fear an influx of diseased refugees. At the same time, however, few Hopeless locals seem to have been afflicted. Presumably they are used to such illnesses and less easily affected.



Not wishing to enter the burg myself, I instead travelled to Torch to get the local reaction. It appeared no refugees had actually made it as far as the gate-town to Gehenna, though it was not hard to guess why. "If any plague-bearers come near our burg," wheezed Sherrif Triskn of Torch, "we'll crossbow the bleeders in the marshes before they get anywhere near us. Sodding disease-ridden scum. Should know better than come looking for charity in Torch".

There were no officers of the law available for comment in Curst. To be honest, I don't think they *have* any that would have made sense anyway...

[Author: [Jon Winter](#)]



FACTOL ERIN "SNUBBED" BY NEW STATUE

by [Kilhans](#), Arts Culler

Sigil (Clerks Ward) -- Controversy was courted yesterday when a new statue commissioned by the Society of Sensation was unveiled, commemorating the Factols who had contributed most to understanding of the senses and the faction's well-being. That was the press release before the unveiling, anyway. At the official ceremony, however, jaws dropped when the piece was revealed for the first time, because the current Factol, Erin Montgomery, was absent from the piece (pictured below). A few muffled "boo"s were heard from an otherwise aghast crowd of Sensates, who were quickly ushered back to their business by red-faced Society factors.

I spoke to my good friends [Troika](#), all three of whom were present at the unveiling. "I don't understand!" they exclaimed. "I ordered the piece from Turgar myself, and specifically requested a statue of the most spectacular factols of the Sensates. I can't believe Erin wasn't included".

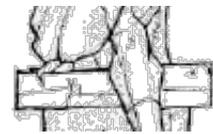
"Did you not specify which factols you wanted engraved?" I asked.

"No! Turgar is as good a Sensate as any of us, and he's seen 'em all," replied Troika.

The dwarf Turgar, master artisan of the [Sculptors Guild](#) and not known for giving interviews, is in fact another close friend of mine, and I spoke a few rare words to him later about the mix-up. "Why was Erin not included in the piece?" I asked.



"Hrumph! Because she's not special!" muttered the dwarf.
"Listen Kil, my cutter, when you've been here as long as I have..." [Editor: *Turgar is reportedly 490 years old*]



"...then a pretty girl in tight leather leotard don't impress you much. Troika asked for a statue of the most memorable Factols, and in my time I've seen a damn sight more inspiring than her. Now shoo, I'm busy."

Ex-factols who were included in the piece were the stone giant Shrug, who discovered the lode of diamonds under the civic festhall that has led in part to the faction's great wealth today; the great illusionist-wizard Lydar, who was the first planar to learn the spell *weird* from its gnomish inventors, triggering the faction's obsession with illusion around 300 years ago; and the writer Ethili, the first elven factol, who brought the beauty of Arborean poetry to the faction's attention.

Turgar, who was reportedly paid one hundred thousand jinx for the statue, is unrepentant. The current gossip in the faction ranks is Turgar dislikes Erin after she turned down a proposition from the dwarf only a few months ago. Factol Erin herself was unavailable for comment.

[Author: [Jon Winter](#)]



feature

SAGA OF THE DRAGON-EYED SWORD (Part 1)

[Featured on the cover]

by *Daemon Chaas, culler*

Sigil (Clerk's Ward) -- According to Norse legend, at the root of the plane-spanning Yggdrasil tree lies a tremendous Wyrn, a dragon of immense proportions called Nidhogg. This infamous Nidhogg is a beast that dwarfs the mighty Tiamat like a Frost Giant dwarfs a cranium rat. And how should such a mighty beast spend its time? Why, by chewing endlessly and eternally at the root of the great Yggdrasil tree of course! How else could it have gotten so large? (And we aren't even going to talk about the dung.)

Although the Norse claim that the Wyrn has been chewing Yggdrasil forever, and followers of Thor will gladly bash your brain-box for suggesting otherwise, many sages have doubted this particular claim. Some, such as Mimi Fletcher (see sketch), a tiefling treasure-hunting archaeologist and member of the Fated, say that Nidhogg wasn't always a five hundred ton waste-producer. "Long before Nidhogg settled herself down on the Waste to exercise her jaws, she was a powerful force for dragonkind in the Multiverse," said Fletcher.

"She wasn't nearly as large as she is now, but she was a fierce leader of her kind as they attempted to stake their claim to the Outer Planes. Nidhogg led many successful forays into different planes and ancient [written] sources suggest that it was Nidhogg's actions that established Tiamat, Bahamut and



Chronopsis on the planes."

Like most legends of the powers and "mythical beasts", much of this tale is certain to be exaggerated or even false. However, Fletcher and other 'greybeards' say there are many little gems of truth to be found in the tales of Nidhogg, truths which reveal the dark of her existence today. One such gem is found in the *Scrolls of Merratet*, a set of ancient manuscripts that chronicle a very alternative history of Ysgard. (These scrolls are named after the Ysgardian realm of Bast, the Egyptian cat goddess, where they were discovered.)

According to the Merratet scrolls, Nidhogg did not roam the Multiverse alone. Rather, she was accompanied by her only offspring, the dragon known as Tornn. In the legends, Nidhogg and Tornn made the Greek's Hydra look like a garter snake with a multiple-personality disorder. They were so incredibly destructive that they threatened to permanently alter the shape of the entire Multiverse as the power of fear crept over the planes. Of course, this drew the immediate attention of the powers, particularly those of the Norse variety, who sent their most powerful proxies to neutralise the threat. Some texts suggest that the Norse were embarrassed that a creature from their own land, Ysgard, could escape their control and be such a nuisance. Nidhogg was too ancient and powerful to kill, but her young offspring made an obvious target. According to ancient texts, the proxy of Odin, Geirskogul (now a Valkyrie) managed to defeat the great Wyrn by landing a longbow shot with a blessed arrow through the Wyrn's eye.

Nidhogg was devastated by the death of her offspring and she abandoned her conquest as she mourned her loss. In her depression and bitterness, she fled off into the Gray Waste to live out her angst for all eternity. According to the ancient writers of this tale, Nidhogg is claiming her slow revenge on the Norse by killing off their magnificent tree inch by inch.

This is the part where we get to the sword. As a trophy, Geirskogul took out the eye of the Wyrn and escaped back to Ysgard to present it to Odin. As a token of his gratitude, Odin had the eye set in the hilt of a fabulous two-handed sword which was presented as a gift to Geirskogul. Interestingly, following the suggestion of Loki, the hilt of the sword was made from the forearm of another proxy who died in the conflict. This proxy was a follower of a Vanir Power (Odin is the father of the Aesir Powers) and they were very offended that the remains of their hero were given away by Odin instead of properly buried. Thus began the terrible feud between the Aesir and the Vanir, which continues to this day.

Because they were so appalled at this act by Odin, and because they couldn't go after Odin directly, they plotted to have Gierskogel murdered so that they might reclaim the arm of their proxy. And assassinate her they did in a most dishonourable manner, according to the Aesir that is. The result of this event, which led to a Ysgard-shaking war between the Aesir and the Vanir, was that the sword was lost, likely stolen in the chaos of the battle. (Loki was said to have a hand in both the assassination and the theft.) And until this week, the dragon-eyed sword was little more than a forgotten legend in the story of Nidhogg.

Now, many millennia after its disappearance, Mimi Fletcher and her intrepid band of treasure hunters have found the dragon-eyed sword and brought this legend back to life!

Next issue: The story of the discovery and its significance today.

[Author: [Scott Kelley](#)]



editorial

TALES OF THE STALKER

XAOSITECTS

by Thomas Stalker

It all started with an addlecock in the Market Ward. You know the type: one of those plump housewives who thinks everything's precious. Normally, I ignore her type. I always feel like a small piece of my intelligence is lost if I listen to their bleating with any seriousness. But this time, I couldn't ignore it. "I think the Chaosmen are perfectly charming," she brayed. I stood, motionless with shock as she continued bleating. "I think they're perfectly clever, and their unpredictability makes them so cute. They're so much nicer to have around than the those overzealous Harmonium officers or those stuffy Guvners." Then I grabbed her by the collar to punctuate my points. "The Xaositects are not cute! They are not clever! They are dangerous lunatics, and the only reason they haven't been scragged and written into the dead-book is because they've managed to have just enough organisation to claim Faction status!"

Her husband moved to intervene, and I kned him in the stomach. "They are not your friends! They are not clowns! They are madmen, and they advocate that insanity be the order of the day!" I pointed at the now-terrified housewife. "If you think they're so wonderful, why don't you spend a few seconds using your bone-box for something more than a hatrack, and find out about them!" And so, my Editor Whose Name Is Not Decent Enough To Print, this explains several things. Including, obviously enough, why this article is about the Xaositects. Rearrange this piece and I'll rearrange your face.

THE ONE-EYED STAARE

I'm writing this from a hovel across from the Xaositect "faction headquarters", a ramshackle slum with holes knocked in it for the convenience of the namers. The only thing that distinguishes it from the other slums in the area are the sheer number of complete lunatics. Dangerous, unpredictable lunatics. Men and women and less identifiable things that will kill you for any reason at all, or perhaps for no reason except for the "winds of Chaos in their brains". Sure, they're not all dangerous; but any Chaosman at all is just as likely to kill you as they are to ignore you or be pleasant. This particular hovel is home to a young woman who used to be quite attractive and pleasant to talk to. Her name is Staare, and she's 23. For a resident of the Hive, she's well educated and well informed. Once she had dreams of becoming a minstrel and escaping the Hive. Now her only dreams end with her waking up screaming. See, when she was 15, the Xaositects across the street had the "winds of chaos" blow a different direction in their brains. A baker's dozen of them came over and grabbed her and 8 year old brother to serve as entertainment for a night. In a sick sort of way, you can make a case for her having been the lucky one: she was "only" passed around as a toy, and she still has one eye, and both legs. Her brother? When she can manage to talk about it at all, she can barely mention what happened before. She gets what the Lady's Ward doctors would call an "attack of the nerves". All I know is that she heard him scream all night...

CHARITY GAMES

This burnt-out shell (and I'd show you a picture, if my green-clenching waste of an Editor would spring for an artist and engraver for me) was once a charity house for the Ring-Giver sect. A number of the Sectarians had decided to try and improve conditions in the Hive. They claimed this building as a base of operations. Free classes were given to the residents, so they could learn the basics of a trade and try to better themselves. There was also a surgeon and an herbalist on call who would treat the illnesses and injuries that afflict the locals. Conditions in the neighbourhood had almost improved to the point that it resembled the worse sections of the Lower Ward. Then a bored Xaositect Boss started tossing rocks at the building. Because he was a Boss, other Xaositects showed up and started throwing rocks as well. When one of the Ring-Givers came out and asked them to stop, they started throwing rocks at him. Of course, the Ring-Givers couldn't count on the Harmonium for help - they never come this deep

in the Hive. So they tried to help themselves. One of the staff was a spellslinger of sorts, and he tried to put the mob to sleep. Sure enough, some of them drifted off. But the Boss didn't, and he charged the building. The rest followed, and they killed everyone in the building (I hope) before burning it down. Then they roamed around and killed and maimed some of the people in the neighbourhood, just because they could. What happened to the Boss? Well, he gained status in the eyes of the Faction. If you've spent some time in the Hive, you might even know him. Ask Mordrigarz Anthill about it sometime. He still jokes about playing "ring-toss".

THE GREAT SURPRISE

This spot isn't even in the Hive. I've chosen it because it's more familiar to the great masses of unwashed clueless berks who infest the Cage. It's a desolate square near the Great Foundry, and it was the scene of some "excitement" at the beginning of this year. Remember the Xaositect's "Great Surprise" reported in the first few issues of SIGIS? The unstable mass of girders that the Chaosmen put up in an effort to build a "spoke across Sigil"? People laughed and joked about it, and called the Madmen "amusing" and "cute". Over 40 people were killed by the unstable structure, mostly by falling chunks of steel. Over a hundred more were injured. If a cell of the Revolutionary League had built this, the Hardheads and the Red Death would still be hunting them for mass murder and assorted acts of terrorism. But because the Xaositects did it, a group widely considered to be "cute and harmless barmies", the architects of those deaths are still free on the streets of Sigil.

No doubt, a lot of you stupid berks out there are reading this now and thinking that your Correspondant is an evil, chaos-hating bastard. You're probably already preparing your defences of the Xaositects, in which you'll claim that not all Chaosmen are like that. You'll say that some have redeeming features, that they randomly do kind things and make people laugh and smile. That's true, but it's also true that a Slaad may just play chess with you instead of carving your heart out and eating it as a snack. The Madmen are dangerous. Until you recognise this, and insist that something be done to make them abide by the same laws the rest of us have to follow, you are just as guilty as they are. I hate you all.

[Author: [Richard Gant](#)]



Letters

MATTADOS RANTS

[Note from the editor: Mattados, creator of the rather bizarre "[House Of Mattados](#)" mentioned in Brix's Guide to the Cage was threatening me with a Wand of Many Things when I agreed to publish this letter. It was stained and written on a paper napkin, but I think I managed to get most of it. He is a strange man indeed!]

Yes it is I MATTADOS! And Indeed I am alive, despite what that Infernal Brix's Guide to the Cage would Have you Believe! I wrote this to rectify several things about me, First I appreciate the thought but I DON'T LIKE having flowers sent to my family saying that they are sorry about my demise! I am ALIVE! It was hard enough to convince my family I wasn't a Lich before all this but now every time I try to visit my dear Mom I get Holy water thrown at me and that priest stars Bopping me with a Hammer! If Only I hadn't Created that Infernal House! Its Not as if I can only find it every other day and the mercenaries keep stealing my Furniture! So Just to Clarify I AM NOT DEAD! Also... Stop looking around in my house for treasure... If I catch you I will be very Angry! In Addition..

[Note from the editor: Well.. That was all I could make out... From what I could read of the remaining parts the man is going to go and look for the mephit Brix next and he began talking a lot about cheese danishes towards the end. He also asked me for a position on the newspaper, and, as he still had that wand pointed at my head, I didn't see how I could say no... In any case look forward to many more articles by Mattados in the future! I really must go now... He is waiting in the next room for the first copy of the paper and he still has that wand...]

[Author: [Mattados](#)]

HALL OF RECORDS, HALL OF DEATH **(The continuing saga of Dark Avail)**

My name is the Merry Mimir, and I am the magical familiar to the mage known as the Dark Avail. The Dark Avail has been fighting an on going war with the Illithid, or Mind Flayers as the Clueless call them. This war is reaching a turning point, as the Illithid are now being exposed to the public by my master. He hopes this will force the Illithid's hand, and that they will make a mistake. Recently, an informant of my master's contacted him and requested him to meet him at the Hall of Records. Through the special link Dark Avail and I share, I will relate what occurs.

The night was foggy, more than most in Sigil. The fog left a wetness on everything that it touched, and combined with the red haze from the Lower Ward everything looked covered in blood. Dark Avail emerged from a shadowed alcove near the Hall of Records. The place was silent, even for Sigil. There were guards, but they ignored my master. Dark Avail walked into another shadow and came out on the roof of the Hall, and looked into a skylight. For some reason his divination spell couldn't penetrate the Hall; something or someone was protecting it from far-sight.

My master's informant, with whom he had prearranged a meeting, stood in the middle of the hall stiff as a statue. Something was wrong, and my master smelled a trap. Dark Avail took a second to make sure all of his protection spells were in place, and proceeded to move through a shadow to stand a little ways from his informant. The informant, a tiefling named Tragot, had a hood up, which was unusual for the little thief, as Tragot liked everyone to know who he was.

"Tragot, what information do you have for me?", Dark Avail asked his informant. Dark Avail waited, but there was no answer. "Tragot, I haven't got time for this! What information do you have for me? Payment will be delayed for how ever long you take to answer." Even this didn't get a stir out of the tiefling.

Dark Avail moved toward the tiefling and poked him in the back. The body fell forward on its face. Spells flashed from ever direction, hitting Dark Avail's shields and almost overwhelming them. Avail moved with practised ease and cast a new spell called Shockwave, sending out a wave of force in every direction. He was rewarded with a number of cries of pain, but the spells kept on. Avail heard the drawing of steel, and the yells of a charge coming toward him.

A wise mage once told Avail, a standing mage is a dead mage. Using an *Improved Blink* spell, Avail began to move around to get a better glimpse of what he faced. With a blink to a high corner, Avail saw that there were at least 4 mages throwing spells at him. Avail wanted to find someone in particular, the mind behind them all. Blinking again to the back corner, Avail continued looking for the Mastermind. Upon landing, he felt his blink spell disappear and saw one of the mages smiling ear to ear. Looking past the mage, Avail finally saw the mind behind it all: a hooded creature with tentacles spilling out from the darkness under the hood.

Avail cast another new spell, called *Ride the Light to Darkness*. The area was blanketed in an intense light, and when the light faded so did the Hall of Flayers...

Signed, Merry Mimir for the Dark Avail

[Author: T]

THANKS BUT NO THANKS

SIGIS ran an advertisement recently (issue 25) "**Bored with your Mundane Life?**" concerning the Civic Feshall's Sensoria. The Society of Sensation would like to make it clear this advertisement was not sponsored by the Society itself. It is not Society policy to promote the Sensoria in such a frivolous manner, and at present, an investigation is underway to determine who paid for this advertisement to appear in SIGIS. The Society would like to make it clear the Sensoria are not a freakshow, nor a bona-fide opportunity to commit crimes. Portraying them as such in this advertisement has attracted some very unwelcome customers recently, and because of this, for the next month access to the Sensoria is strictly for Faction members only. We will review this policy in one month.

Signed on behalf of *Factol Erin*

[Author: [Jon Winter](#)]



streetchant

PAGES FROM THE MAZES

by Anonymous

[Note from the Editor: Hello Favourite Readers! With the help of our favourite modron here at SIGIS, a barmy rogue named Ylem, we were able to access some hidden parts of that Mimir we found last issue. The recording of this Mimir, found abandoned in an alley, appears to relate a bashers experience inside one of the Lady's Mazes. We thought the recording had ended, but thankfully we were wrong! Ylem opened a whole new part of the skull, and there may be more to come, especially if a certain culler (not to be named) would stop dropping the sodding thing on the floor. Enjoy!]

Pheew! That was close! For a second I thought I opened a sodding nexus to the Negative Plane. I probably have used up all of my luck this time ... usually, sticking a portable hole on a demiplane is Nature's way of saying "Get lost, you clueless". Or the Lady's way, most likely.

Let me see, where am I now? That is the most annoying part of being tossed in a Maze: you never know where you are. Not in the Center of All, anyway. That's for sure. That's the second Axiom of the Multiverse I've broken. Factol Hashkar [of the Guvners] wouldn't be happy.

I had never found Red Tavralani's joke about Mazes being the suburbs of the Planes very funny -- well, I must remember to tell him that his definition is good, after all. If I manage to get out of this sodding prison, of course. I've been here for more than a week now. If I hadn't access to my spells I'd be close to starving dead, as sure as Stygia. Nothing grows here; no animals hide in the alleyways. All I see is a model of the Cage, a dark and low-populated corner of Sigil. Very lowly populated, actually. I still haven't met anyone.

- That may be because you haven't looked very hard, berk. Many people call the Mazes "kip". You'd better get used to it too.

- Don't be silly. I won't stay here much longer. I'll soon find a way out. Who are you? Your appearance marks you as a tiefling, a spellslinger possibly. But I don't recognise the glyph you wear on your robes.

- Of course you don't, foolish prime. How could you? This symbol [glyph] was banned from the Cage long before you stepped into your first portal. It dates from before the Great Upheaval. Before our Tower was cast out of the City of Gates when the Lady realised she was scared of our power.

- Blood of giants! You're an incantifer!

- Correct, clueless. There are many of us in the Mazes. Our Tower lies here along with our knowledge. The Lady hasn't eliminated us. We're still a threat to her. Even more than in the past; we're just out of her reach -- for the moment.

- Fascinating ...

- Isn't it?

- And have you managed to find a way to leave the Mazes? I mean: if your magic is as powerful as you claim, getting out of here'd be nothing short of a joke for you.

- Don't tease me, prime. I can kill you with but one word if I wanted. You'd better understand this.

- Of course I do.

- And by the way, your ironies are completely meaningless.

- Are you trying to say that you already have managed to leave the Mazes?

- Yes. Our Factol has.

- Your Sectol, you mean. "Factol" is a title that only the leaders of the thirteen true factions may claim.

- That is a stupid statement, leatherhead. What do you know about Factols? Sacha Kryntz has been our Grand Master for the last three centuries. He holds more power, wisdom and authority than all of your Factols put together. "Sectol" is an inadequate word to describe his position as leader of the Incanterium. He definitely deserves to be called "Factol".

- Very interesting. Why are you telling me such a dark? Don't you fear that I may use this knowledge against you?

- What are you hinting at? Do you really believe I'm afraid of you, a weathered old man? You may be stout and strong, but your weapons are mere sticks against my magic.

- Yeah, right. Oh, by the way, thank you for the information. I think I'll go have a chat with your Factol Kryntz. I'd like him to lann me the secret of getting out of here.

[sounds of battle, pain cries and magic blasts]

- Stupid wizard. Your overconfidence has killed you. If only you had wondered why an "old man" like me was tossed into the Mazes, you might live yet. If I am here there must be a good reason. I am as threatening to Her Serenity as your Sect is. This is why we should have helped each other. Now all I have to do is to find the Tower of Incanterium.

[end of recording]

[Author: [David Fontana](#)]



PRIME-TIME IN THE CITY OF DOORS?

by Famir Falfacetious



Sigil (Market Ward) -- Three days ago, a group of prime screed-mongers commandeered the stage at the Seawind Theatre in Chirper's under the pretence of revealing some important dark about their prime world and began spewing forth barmy nonsense at a pace on par with a Chaosman changing his mind. Now it's not a surprise that primers would be able to promote their lies at Chirper's knowing the kip's history as a gathering place for prime leatherheads, but this screed would've make Loki proud.

The spokesman of the group, a one Sanjust Wipright of Toril (see sketch), told the listeners how Sigil's very existence is dependent upon the commerce and patronage of visiting primes, especially the primers from his world of Toril. As is the case with all greenies, Sanjust put his foot in his mouth when he made an outrageous claim that the Planar Trade Consortium actually had its beginnings on his homeworld, and that Estevan (high-up of the PTC) was in violation of a trade agreement with the prime's insignificant king. Unfortunately for the primes, Oryon, one of the PTC's bashers-extraordinaire happened to be in Chirper's and

didn't take kindly to those words. Well, the ogre warrior proceeded to take Sanjust and his companions outside for a little tête-à-tête.

Of course, immediately the chant began flowing, and after a Hardhead break-up of this meeting of the minds between Oryon and Whipwright's bunch, many good folk of the Cage began discussing the significance of this primer's claim. Harys Hatchis, also in the crowd and never one to let an opportunity pass by, suggested a poll be taken amongst all the major store owners in the market ward to decide the significance of prime influence in our fair city. He would happily perform this service, with the results being doled out for a small fee, of course.

Was this nothing more than the ranting of another barmy primer? Does the dark of it really matter if these Torillians can just pop into our city and cause such a ruckus with such outrageous claims? Is their business worth the trouble? This culler thinks not! Just look around and watch these primer. Are they not always the cause of long lines at Fari's Fine Foods and Ferrets, or constantly asking you sodding barmy questions, such as "Where can I find the Lady?", or perhaps just falling into the dead book right at your feet? The list of prime-tainted problems is as long as Demogorgon's arms! Are they more in the way rather than paving the way (as the Torillian suggested) to greatness for our fair Sigil? It seems no dark to me that the problem lies in the primes themselves and not Sigil as many of "them" would have you believe. However, far be it from me to make-up your sodding mind for you cutter. But until you do, keep your eyes on the portals for anything green!

[Author: [Randy Nichols](#)]



the faction extraction

FACTION NEWS FROM THE CAGE AND BEYOND



DUSTMEN

by *Jasmine Azagtoth*

From the culler's mimir: "Hello, my friend! Stay awhile, and listen... I've heard something about the Dustmen's search for a necromancy book buried in the debris of the Gatehouse. Actually, it seems that the book isn't necromantic at all, although the dusties certainly want everyone to think it is. The chant is that the book has something to do with yugoloths, not necromancy. The dead who told me wouldn't spill anything else, except that a barmy gehreleth named Hideous-or-something is somehow involved. The Dustmen are also busy advertising the release of a book written by one of their spokesmen, Christian DeSaville, the one that likes to call himself 'spokesdead', and seems more like a statue than a person. Creepy cutter, that one. Anyway, the book is called 'The Nature of Pleasure and Pain', and from what I've heard, claims that pleasure and pain are a sickness that needs to be purged from the soul of those who want to evolve. Standard dustie stuff, but he also states that pleasure and pain are one and the same. They're both simultaneous, sides of the same coin. Well, ask the Sensates, I say. After all, they're the ones who -- What are you staring at? Oh, my dagger. Do you like it? Here, you can have it..."

[Author: [Tee](#)]



FATED

by *Ear to the Gear*

There is a new force in the Lower Ward that seems to have ties to the Fated. A gang going by the name of the "BoneSmashers" has moved into the ward. Their motto is "Might makes Right", which is a Fated slogan if I ever heard one. Most of them are large humanoids, such as ogres and

REVOLUTIONARY LEAGUE

by *Ear to the Gear*

Now they've really done it. You thought the Anarchists were evil when they bombed the market ward (see SIGIS Issue 17), but, according to Hive Ward sources, you haven't seen nothin' yet. Apparently, the sods have brought a disease to the Cage that threatens to bring the burg to its knees: the Torch Flu. By now you must have heard about this devastating flu which has dead-booked a significant number of the humanoid residents of the Hive. Well, sources say that Anarchists went to the swamps around Torch and bottled fire-frog saliva. This saliva contained the disease, and the Anarchist cell that grabbed it have released the disease into the Cage (after making themselves immune to it first, of course). The plan is to destabilise the Cage by killing of a good portion of the population. Then they can bring in the "new age". So if you feel yourself coming down with a very, and I mean very, high fever, you know who to blame!

[Author: [Scott Kelley](#)]



WYLDERS

by *Sheran Dolenth*

It has been a good couple of months in the Verdant Guild. In accordance with the instructions of our leader, Karleona, we have been hunting down the members of that detestable group, the Vile Hunt. We are happy to report that no fewer than three members of that organisation have been located and.... neutralised. What's more, we have information on their leader, D'kess, that looks very promising. At this rate, we will have wiped them from the Planes within the next three or four years, at worst. We'll teach them that though we revere and protect nature in all its forms, we're

half-giants, and they carry around really large clubs that look like elephant thighbones. Many of the local merchants have been threatened by these thugs who are extorting "insurance". You should see the number of broken noses on the streets! Everyone I talked to in the ward was afraid of the BoneSmashers even more than the fiends in the Hellgate neighbourhood. And who is going to take care of these poor neighbourhood sods? Not the Harmonium, that's for sure!

[Author: [Scott Kelley](#)]



MERKANTS

by Tarak de Leynon

As it appears that this information is already going to be appearing in the pages of your publication, I suppose I am not breaking any rules in confirming it; a leadership challenge has begun within the Merkhant sect. We will discover the outcome shortly. I am interested, however, in knowing where your culler gets his information. These details should never have been leaked to non-sect members. Where is he anyway, he doesn't appear to be in the City of Doors at the moment?

[Author: [Galzion](#)]

pretty fair hunters ourselves, when the need arises.

Meanwhile, to answer those who claim that there is division in the Verdant Guild, such baseless accusations can only be meant to diminish the accomplishments of the Guild, and we will not stand for it. There is no division; we are united in our beliefs and goals, as we ever were. The Guild goes from strength to strength, of late, and long may it continue.

[Author: [Galzion](#)]



XAOSITECTS

by Mattados

Personally Offended deeply am I. About the article... Or is it an article? Stateing that the factions have lost their purpose... The Purpose of changing the Multiverse through Belief and Jellyfish sandwiches. Besides the fact that we dislike sandwiches of any kind... I would Like to say Personally That The faction That I belong... Or perhaps do not belong? To Has always believed that The Multiverse is Chaos Has been Chaos and will always be Chaos... And the That Fact that Tuna wear purple shoes and that it Seems That Maybe the universe isent chaos sometimes is also just an effect of the chaos! You see what I mean? In any case I will try to... Withhold My... urmmm... babble for a second so that those less smart out there can get my point... My faction never lost its purpose because it never had one! We feel no need to cause the universe to lapse into chaos because IT ALREADY IS IN CHAOS! See what I mean? IN any case I must be going now and remember Yellow is the yummiest snow!

[Author: [Mattados](#)]



stop press

DEMONWING SPOTTED

by Sconion, lower-planes culler

STALKER CAUGHT IN HIVE

WARD

Gray Waste (Oinos) -- This is Sconion, Alu-fiend and reporter for the Sigil based newsrag SIGIS, who is on the Blood War reporting team of the Cambion, Koshtrim'yamal. I have been on the trail of the fiend ship Demonwing, which was last spotted in Baator. The ship is said to contain an entire layer of the Abyss, which was transferred into a ship capable of travelling any sizeable waterway in the Multiverse. The ship has been spotted in the Gray Waste, on the first layer Oinos, on the Blood War battlefield known as the Field of Nettles. At the banks of the Styx River, near the battlefield, the ship was observed letting off a large number of Tanar'ri into the fray/

There was no evident owner of the ship, but rumours from some of the Tanar'ri troops spoke of a barmy human dressed in rags. Chant also had it that the human told the Balor leading the Tanar'ri army that the only payment for the transport was that of a bird's head (talk about addle-coved). With that the Balor, Trithbor by name, turned and ripped the head off of a Vrock and handed it over to the human. The human was said to have the head mounted on a pike near a throne in the middle of the ship. I plan to follow up these rumours to the source, and I will keep SIGIS informed of any new developments.

[Author: [T](#)]



STILL NO LEADS IN CIPHER MURDERS

Sigil -- The Harmonium came under fire from high-ups in the Transcendent Order today over what is seen as severe inaction concerning the recent spate of murders of Cipher members. In the last two weeks, a further fifteen assaults against faction members have been reported, eight of them fatal. One death proved to be a hoax, however, and another was perpetrated by a copycat killer, further throwing confusion into the investigation. The Harmonium are reportedly no closer to catching the killer or killers, and pressure is mounting on Factol Sarin to install the faction's star detective Christopher Verdue to solve the case. Sarin is understood to be reluctant to do this because he believes the faction should not come to rely on one man to solve all their problems. Perhaps, this culler suggests, he is

Sigil (Lady's Ward) -- Last issue we reported on a stalker who had been trailing innocent bloods in the Hive Ward and following them back to their apartment, where they were later found brutally murdered. Early this morning, Harmonium officials apprehended their prime suspect in the slayings, a stalker named Orb.

At the time of the arrest, Orb was carrying a bag of holding, identified by Johandi Elarius, a Sensate wizard of the cloth. Inside the bag, an entity was extracted using an Nth dimension teleport spell, crafted by Johandi. The creature appeared to be some sort of Undead, though where it got its power was unclear since it was not of the negative material plane. Orb said, under gentle Harmonium questioning, that he had gotten it from the Hinterlands, and claimed not to remember a thing since he picked it up. He didn't even appear to know where he was when he was being questioned.

To test the reactions of the undead creature, and the veracity of Orb's proclamation of his innocence, the Hardheads experimented with the undead by putting a gazelle into the room with it. Upon releasing a gazelle into the room, the creature seemed to study it for a moment, then devoured it, ripping it to shreds in the process. Xaositect scholar Max LAlaLAro called the creature a Xlhemix. After having named it, he theorised that the beast was from another set of planes beyond the hinterlands, and its feeding gave birth to new life there. This theory is still under investigation. The only form of life it didn't seem hostile to was razorvine, which it merely ignored. While plans were underway to relocate the beast in a prison somewhere on Arborea, the Xlhemix gave the Harmonium the laugh, and carved a trail of blood on its way out. Witnesses saw the creature entering a portal nearby, but their descriptions of where the portal was and what the key was varied greatly. Plans have been made by the Mercykillers to send Orb to the leafless tree. More information as it comes to us.

[Author: [elfsable](#)]

afraid the detective's success might come to threaten his own leadership of the Harmonium...?

[Author: [Jon Winter](#)]



***Cullers wanted for SIGIS
Must be literate and on the case***

[Applicants should contact the Editor](#)

