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THE GREYHAWK GRUMBLER

“Unblissing
the Ignorant
Masses”

HARSH WORDS DISRUPT OLIGARCHY MEETING

For dedicated readers of The Grumbler, it should come as no surprise that there's trouble a-brewing in the halls of the Directing Oligarchy. According to trusted sources that only required moderate bribing, the last session of the Oligarchy was marked with passionate arguments, raised voices and copious use of sarcasm. Eritai Kaan-Ipzirel, High Priestess of St. Cuthbert, serial divorcee and ambulatory barrel, has demanded that Greyhawk release some of the supplies being stockpiled for the army. She would have the city use these supplies to help the poor and the refugees displaced by the war with the Pomarj. Nerof Gasgal, the Lord Mayor of Greyhawk, who indulgently allows this broadside to continue printing and only had one of its editor's fingers broken when The Grumbler suggested continued ties to the Thieves' Guild, nobly refused this demand as misappropriation of resources in a time of war. The council fractured on known fault lines. The merchants and guildmasters aligned with the reasonable and charismatic Lord Mayor, and the churches and military sided with the pushy priestess. The meeting ended with Eritai storming out of the council meeting in disgust. In retaliation, the Lord Mayor enjoyed a fine steak dinner.

WILD COAST TURNS TAME!

The war with the Pomarj appears to be taking a break with no indication of restarting anytime soon. Sources from the Wild Coast inform The Grumbler that the war has settled down into sporadic raiding over the vague border. In addition, The Grumbler made a startling discovery while reviewing military correspondence while the courier was sleeping off one too many drinks that were bought for him. Greyhawk plans no major offenses this year! Will this lull hold? What does the future bode for the Wild Coast? What of all the refugees who lost their homes and are camped outside the walls of Greyhawk, inconveniencing editors who are trying to

deliver broadsides to the adoring public on time?

This respite follows two years of intense fighting in the northern Wild Coast. The latest round of hostilities between Greyhawk and the Pomarj began in 586 when the orcs burned Narwell to the ground. Later that year, Turin Deathstalker, military governor of Safeton, former head of the Greyhawk Assassins' Guild and victor of the “How Many Ways Can I Kill You With My Bare Hands?” bragging contest, led a counterattack, cutting off the orcs' retreat and shattering their army.

After building a giant mountain of orc skulls, Deathstalker turned south to face the great tactical advantage orcs have other than surprise – numbers. With an ability to reproduce that leaves rabbits whistling in admiration, the orcs had a second army at the border, ready to meet Greyhawk's advance. After a dozen inconclusive battles that remind The Grumbler of two dwarves trying to bullrush each other, the border remains approximately where it was two years ago.

STREET NEGLECT HURTS COMMERCE, ANKLES

Greyhawk may be the Gem of the Flanaess but the state of its streets is the Embarrassment of Oerth. After years of neglect, the cobbled streets of Greyhawk are suffering horribly. Stones are cracked or missing and some have even been replaced with stale bread. The sorry state of affairs has started to impact business on The Strip by the Cargo Gate, claims Curain Nyie of the Griffon's Nest. “The roads are horrible – truly horrible. I've got a pothole in front of my inn so deep that when a paladin fell in one yesterday, he had to summon his flying mount.”

The Grumbler posed the question of wide-spread economic impact of the poor roads to Cariel Mansharn, officer of the Merchants' and Traders' Union, member of the Directing Oligarchy and political crony of Nerof Gasgal, who replied “Shove off, you annoying gnat.” Other economic

experts go so far as to claim that the poor roads help the economy. “It's an example of trickle-down economics,” explained Stakaster Villaine, Patriarch of Zilchus, member of the Directing Oligarchy and geezer. “When a wagon hits a pothole, it knocks things loose which fall off the wagon and roll down the streets, trickling to the poor.” To prove his point, Villaine showed The Grumbler numerous pie charts, which unfortunately were not in fact pie.

MISSING HIERARCH FOUND

The remaining Hierarchs, once proud evil rulers of the Horned Society and now humiliated deposed despots on the run from Iuz, have scattered across the Flanaess. The Grumbler has learned that one of the Hierarchs is hiding in the town of Hardby! To escape the notice of Iuz's assassins, the Hierarch was forced to take the meanest of jobs and was being used as a footstool by the Gynarchy. “It was surprisingly bony,” complained Despotrix Aleeta Norbelos. “And it kept muttering ‘Someday you will all pay.’ A footstool should be seen and not heard.”

Through impeccable sources, The Grumbler has learned that the Hierarch's true identity was revealed when the Despotrix spilled her hot spiced wine, which unbeknownst to her had been spiked with an elixir of truth, on to the footstool. In the resulting tirade, not only was the Hierarch un-upholstered (the furniture term for being unmasked) but he revealed several nefarious plots to conquer the world, spoiling a dozen possible adventuring opportunities.

DISAPPEARANCES PLAGUE VELUNA, CAUSE PANIC

Strange things are afoot to the west of Greyhawk. Reports have reached The Grumbler that wide varieties of people, places and things are disappearing in Veluna and being replaced by something that takes up roughly the same space. Lamps are replaced with vases, dogs are replaced with aardvarks and worst of all taverns are replaced by consignment shops. The

Grumbler has even heard tell that entire neighborhoods are being replaced. These bizarre occurrences originated in the mountain towns west of Mitrik about a month ago and has been stretching east since. Sources available only to The Grumbler, who paid extra for the privilege, believe this is the work of the Church of Rao and that the clergy is hiding something again.

While The Grumbler urges disbelief and scoffery for such far-fetched tales, even our fair city was once ruled by Zagig Yragerne, who invented the Flying Flapjack and Doughpleganger. The unlikely is often true! With that in mind, The Grumbler has compiled a list of people that it would like to see disappear and replaced, starting with that mono-browed beggar who hangs out near the Black Gate and trips hard-working editors every morning. For a fun game, make your own list and compare with your friends and neighbors. Discuss and let the good times begin!

LOOK OUT! ST. CUTHBERT'S DAY APPROACHES

In preparation for St. Cuthbert's Day on Growfest 4th, the faithful of the Cudgel are gathering in town for their largest annual festival. For safety's sake, be sure to wear padded hats in their presence! The festivities begin at dawn with a singing and chanting parade through the city. The children run alongside with green switches and chastise the marchers in the Cleansing. The Grumbler cautions against others trying to join in the switching, as those caught are force-fed fifty of your own broadsides and then tossed face-first in the Millstream. A feast for the faithful follows at the Sacred Temple of St. Cuthbert from noon till dusk, which includes a ritual viewing of what might be the Mace of St. Cuthbert. Attempts by The Grumbler to verify whether or not this is the actual relic have been stymied by the ancient Cuthberran prayer "Release the hounds." That evening, the priests light a large bonfire which can remove curses from the penitent and add burns to the clumsy.

SHOE LEATHER MOST POPULAR FLAVOR

In the latest poll conducted by The Grumbler, shoe leather remains the most popular flavor in the Slum Quarter and in Shacktown, beating out wattle and daub by a nose. Why shoe leather? "They can pull the shoe back out and reuse it. Wattle and daub just dissolves into a soggy pile," says Father Nicholi Nortoli, a priest of St. Cuthbert who helps many of the poor in

Greyhawk. Others who were polled disagreed strongly with Father Nortoli. Almost Toothless Len said, "Daub's easier ta swallow. When ya've got one toof left, ya gots ta protect it."

The Grumbler, being a valued member of the community, urges those with plenty to assist those with less. Father Nortoli's chapel in Shacktown and the soup kitchens he runs in the Slum Quarter can use your assistance. Someday it may be you in the soup line when the Constabulary raids your offices and seizes your presses.

CLERKSBURG STUDENTS GATHER IN PROTEST

Last week, scores of students skipped class and gathered on the Commons before the Hall of the Dean of the Grey College in Clerksburg to protest poverty and social injustice in Greyhawk. Aisley Lockswell, granddaughter of the famed Lord Lockswell of Gnarlwood, student agitator and beauty, led the protest and harangued the crowd with details of the crushing poverty that many Greyhawkers face daily. Her words and zeal affected many in the crowd who cheered and whistled at her almost nonstop. Dobolas Huzzak, a third-year student at the Grey College was particularly moved. "She's a total babe; I'll support any cause she leads." Rundall Grast, a second year at the University of the Flanaess, agreed, "I always pretend to care about her causes. She loves that."

The Grumbler was lucky enough to score an interview with Lockswell, making him the instant envy of the male half of the crowd who hooted their encouragement. "I think the distribution of wealth in this city is disgraceful," Lockswell said. "People are eating shoe leather soup while the Lord Mayor is enjoying fine steak dinners. Something must be done or we're going to face severe social unrest. My face is up here, you know."

GROWFEST DELIGHTS SOME, BORES OTHERS

Is that spring around the corner? Are the fancies of young men turning to love on the Bridge of Entwined Hearts? With Growfest approaching, The Grumbler sees the signs of the passing of winter. This week-long holiday marks the arrival of spring when the first caravans head out and trade begins in earnest.

Our benign tyrants on the Directing Oligarchy have a full schedule during the festival. On Growfest 1st, they meet with foreign diplomats in the Second Seasonal Conference. Out of respect for our cherished rulers and a threatened jail term,

The Grumbler has agreed to stop calling this the Parade of Fools and is no longer encouraging the citizenry to camp outside of the Lord Mayor's Palace with rotted vegetables to improve upon the ambassadors' wardrobes. On Growfest 6th, the patience of the Oligarchy is tested by the quarterly meeting with the Public Council of Greyhawk. For ten long hours, the Oligarchy must endure this advisory body elected by the general public. It is with great fondness that The Grumbler remembers the talking goat that represented Clerksburg on the Public Council for eight years. No one said "nay" better.

Growfest ends with the spectacular Desportium of Magic at the Grand Citadel. This event should not be missed! Over the course of the evening, fifteen contestants compete to cast the most magnificent display of illusion magic or slide the judges the largest bribe under the table. The performance must use the long-established theme: an attack upon the Grand Citadel by a monstrous horde that is repelled by the stalwart defenders. The Grumbler cannot help but draw a parallel between this theme and the war with the Pomarj. Will this year see an orc horde? Will an illusionary Turrosh Mak make an appearance? The Grumbler is giddy with anticipation!

ADVENTURERS PETITION FOR LICENSE REMOVAL

The Mercenaries' Guild has filed a formal complaint with the Directing Oligarchy on behalf of adventurers, requesting that the license requirement and restrictions on weapons be lifted. "I can't walk down the street in this town without being jumped up to three times a day," said one adventurer who asked not to be identified as she has offended the Thieves' Guild one too many times. "You know you're going to be jumped; it's just a matter of when."

The City Constabulary would have none of it. Sir Gavin Ambus, City Constable, member of the Directing Oligarchy and wearer of highly-polished shoes that would never be used in soup, explained that the rules are in place to keep the mortality rate down when fights break out. "With the number of adventurers prowling our streets hoping for fortune in Castle Greyhawk, we have to put some limits on them. These are dangerous people," he explained. Sir Gavin refused to answer The Grumbler's pertinent and necessary question as to why the Constabulary never shows up until after a fight ends.