



THE GREYHAWK GRUMBLER

“The Truth
Is in the Eye
of the
Penholder.”

PALADIN RELEASED TO APPEASE ANGRY MASSES

Last week, the City Watch dropped all charges against Talasek Thraydin, paladin of St. Cuthbert, famous adventurer, and nice guy to the point of disbelief, releasing him to appease the restless masses of the Free City. The Watch had arrested Talasek, who is famous for his role in foiling a plot to dominate our city by an evil naga called The Falcon twenty years ago, on charges of “conspiracy to misappropriate civic property.” The City Watch never identified the civic property nor explained how Talasek misappropriated it. While technically holding him in custody, the watchmen left the door to Talasek’s cell unlocked, and so many supporters stopped by to leave comforts for him that the cell was posher than the Oligarchical Suite at the Gold Dragon Inn. The Grumbler has even heard that mothers were bringing their babies by for the jailed paladin to bless.

Good looks and charm were not the sole reasons for Talasek’s release. His arrest, coupled with Eritai’s resignation, touched off protests throughout the city. Aisley Lockswell, granddaughter of Lord Lockswell, social reformer, and heavenly student body at the Grey College, led many of the protests, which stopped just short of becoming full-blown riots. She demanded that the Watch release the paladin and dismiss the “trumped-up charges.” Lockswell declared, “Talasek is one of the few good things about this city, and I warned you all about the consequences of letting the unfair distribution of wealth of this city fester. I don’t want to say ‘I told you so.’ Actually, I do. I really do. I *totally* told you so.” Lockswell dismissed suggestions that she had a personal interest in the dashing Talasek. “No way. He’s, like, old enough to be my father. His son Talamar on the other hand . . . Stop changing the subject! Don’t write that down. We’re talking about social injustice. You wrote it down! Give me that notepad. Come back here. You can’t outrun me!” The Grumbler would beg to differ.

TURIN DEATHSTALKER DISAPPEARS!!!

Turin Deathstalker, retired Oligarch, infamous assassin, and exceptionally scary person, has vanished from Safeton. Turin commonly shrouds himself from divinations, and no one knows where he is. Oligarchs, guildmasters, and ambassadors alike are trembling in their boots, and tailors throughout the city report a run on brown pants. Through an extensive network of contacts that may or may not rely upon “speak with dead” prayers, The Grumbler has learned that prior to his disappearance the Deathstalker was furious about political events in Greyhawk and vowed to “take matters into his own hands.”

Where will the former head of the Greyhawk Assassin’s Guild make his appearance? Which will show up first – Turin or corpses? (The Wheel of Gold Gambling House says the smart money is on corpses.) The Grumbler has made a list of likely victims, but cannot print it here due to space constraints. On a completely unrelated note, The Grumbler would like to express how really, really, really sorry he is, and how he did not mean anything by the fourteen-part series “The Skeletons in Turin’s Closet.” And with the smell they probably would have been discovered anyway.

SHAKEUP ON OLIGARCHY

The Directing Oligarchy of Greyhawk took a sharp swing toward the light at the council meeting following Growfest. Eritai Kaan-Ipzirel, High Priestess of St. Cuthbert, massive champion of the masses, and pounder of square pegs into round holes, resigned from the Oligarchy, claiming that she no longer had a role to play on our august executive council. Vague accusations of corruption laced her speech, which is unusual in the Free City, where corruption is overt, expected, and budgeted. Eritai has vowed to continue to annoy our distinguished Lord Mayor Nerof Gasgal from the pulpit and to act as the voice of the common man whether he likes it or not.

The Oligarchy gave Eritai’s still-warm chair, along with a booster seat, to Silas Steamgem, Guildmaster of the Moneylenders and Pawnbrokers, gnome, and blatant Nerof flunky. Silas was overjoyed at the prospect of joining the Oligarchy, saying, “I have a nose for this line of work.” Other Oligarchs were less thrilled with their new half-sized colleague. Tigran Gellner, Captain-General of the City Watch, Pholtan, and collector of little toy soldiers he calls “figurines,” was particularly disappointed. After the vote to add the moneylender, he said, “Silas will be a real light-weight on the council. There is no way he can fill Eritai’s shoes. Especially not those glittery slippers; although we saw him trying them on when he thought no one was looking.”

CITY WATCH LETS OTHERS DO THE HEAVY LIFTING

Loyal readers of The Grumbler will recall from our last issue that Sir Gavin Ambus, Oligarch, Chief Constable, and grandfather to a screaming horde, ducked questions as to why to the City Watch never arrives until after a fight ends. The Grumbler leaves no stone unturned in pursuit of truth and advertising revenue and is proud to present this investigative report, revealing that the Watch purposefully waits until fights are over.

Through judicious use of persuasion, appeals to the public interest, and six pitchers of ale, The Grumbler embedded himself into a City Watch patrol and walked the mean and muddy streets of the Free City. When the Watchmen heard sounds of a nearby fight, they first scouted the situation by peeking around the corner. Seeing adventurers involved in the fray, Greyhawk’s finest remained hidden. Junior Sergeant Wainscoting explained, “You think I’m going to stick my neck out? Let the adventurers do the work. They’re perfectly happy to do it for free.” Watchman Dunsprat added, “It makes our life a breeze. All we have to do is arrest whoever is unconscious.”

When asked about all the gear the adventurers strip from the bodies of those they defeat, Wainscoting was unconcerned. "Yeah, we thought that was dodgy, but the Oligarchy codified it. So it's all up and up now." Since upstanding readers of The Grumbler may be unfamiliar with the non-criminal parts of the Greyhawk civic code, the Oligarchy passed a law in 592 that required merchants to buy swag from adventurers at half their "book" value. "Bloody brilliant that was," Dunsprat said. "The merchants get a constant stream of magical knickknacks at half price which they turn around and resell at full. Easy money for almost no work." Never content to let an opportunity for profit slip away, the Oligarchy prints the book that fixes the value of magic items for all merchants. Carmen Halmaster, Oligarch, representative of the Union of Merchants and Traders, and paranoid git who will only speak to The Grumbler through a hole drilled in the door, explained that eliminating competition is best for the customer. "When all merchants are offering the same deal, you are assured to get the best price available."

GREYHAWK CELEBRATES CENTENNIAL IN STYLE

This summer, the City of Greyhawk will celebrate its 100th anniversary of independence from the Great Kingdom of Aerdy – whose foreign insanity had to be cleared out to make room for the homegrown insanity that became Zagig's administration. The City is going all out as the Directing Oligarchy shows off the wealth and prosperity of the Gem of the Flanaess. The festivities will include a parade down the Promenade, numerous balls, plays, eel-eating contests, and – unfortunately – mimes. Rumor has it that The Underground Entertainer is planning on making a memorable appearance at the celebrations in spite of the bounty placed on his capture by the Guild of Performing Artistes, which remains at a song and a handstand.

The Performing Artistes Guild is expecting a record turnout and to charge record fees to entertain the crowds on this important anniversary of our fair, yet odorous, city. The highlight of the week is the Rededication Ceremony at the Lord Mayor's Palace where the Oligarchs rededicate themselves to just rule of the city. When asked about the planned festivities, Otto, archmage, patron of the Guild, and dandified fop, said, "The mimes are intrinsic to the celebration. Moreover, they hold a multi-annual contract. Zounds! What is with you – always with the mimes?" Otto

forestalled further inquiries by The Grumbler by placing him in an invisible box from which he could not escape for hours.

CASTLE GREYHAWK RUINS EXPECTS BANNER YEAR

The Mercenaries' Guild predicts that this year the ruins of Castle Greyhawk will attract hundreds of adventurers to explore the storied halls in search of fame and fortune while avoiding death and dismemberment. Ever since the zany former Lord Mayor of Greyhawk built the structure, Xagig's ruined castle draws adventurers like a heap of garbage draws otyuughs. The Mercenaries' Guild credits this year's surge to the strange lights seen around the ruins, the rise of banditry in the near Domain, and a rash of sinister cults lurking in the city.

Enterprising locals have developed countless ingenious ways to separate adventurers from their money. Vendors line the path to the ruins, selling maps (ranging from obviously fake to riddled with well-intentioned errors), 10-foot poles for finding traps, iron spikes for holding open doors, and silver mirrors for looking around corners. The most notorious vendor in recent years was Gleen the Grifter, whose fake manual on how to speak Abyssal turned out to be a book in Baklunish about belly dancing with drawings of goat heads glued onto all the illustrations.

GOBLINS UP TO NO GOOD; NO ONE SURPRISED

Sources close to the warfront with the Pomarj say that the goblins there are acting strangely. While we are all used to goblins sneaking around, lying to authority, and generally acting like surly adolescents, now they are skulking with purpose. Scouting reports reveal that the goblins are avoiding Greyhawk patrols, have stopped their random acts of vandalism, and have all but ceased cooperating with the orcs. Tobe Deritt, recently promoted corporal, villager from Mardin's Field, and country bumpkin, said, "We've been tryin' to catch a few to question, but those little fellers move fast for havin' such short legs. Lately, they've taken to coatin' themselves in lard. Have you tried holdin' onto a lubed-up goblin?"

While the average Greyhawker views goblin scheming as a non-issue, the goblin menace provoked a passionate reaction from a niche segment of humanoid society. Baxitort, megalomaniac, offal collector, and leader of a band of xvarts hiding near the City of Greyhawk, was livid. "Goblins! They get all the press these days. Eight years ago, you couldn't take five steps without kicking

a xvart in Greyhawk. Lately, it's been squat. What happened? We're evil as the next humanoid. We've got diabolical schemes. We've got treasure ripe for the looting. We've got pet rats. Who doesn't like rats? They've got disease. Mmmm. Filth fever."

FAT LADY SINGS FOR DIVA

In a stunning turn of events, Aestrella Shanfarel, half elf, grand diva, and object of a thousand crushes, has announced her retirement from Royal Opera House. For years, she was the only factor other than a strategically placed doorstep keeping the doors to the Royal Opera House open, but after decades of performances, the talented and beautiful Aestrella declared that her last performance would be this summer at Greyhawk's Centennial Celebration.

A word of caution for would-be gallants armed with poetry, roses, and chocolate from Hepmonaland: even if you can avoid her bodyguards, get past the double locks on her window, and counter the magical wards on her dressing room, she is surprisingly strong, wears exceedingly sharp heels, and is perfectly willing to shove you down a flight of stairs. If you insist on taking such actions, The Grumbler advises that you purchase a bouquet without a vase, which commonly shatters when dropped on your head.

DERNAN, GERDA TIE KNOT

Confirming a thousand whispers, Gerda Holladrel, Guild Master of the Jewelers and Gemcutters, and DERNAN Nathane, Guildmaster of the Union of Merchants and Traders, announced their engagement. The Grumbler had ranked their relationship as "Worst Kept Secret" in Greyhawk for five of the past eight years, and their trysts were fodder for countless broadside articles. While many in the press feel the tragic loss of such a beloved story as a torrid affair between Oligarchs, our hopes are rising with the prospect of an over-the-top celebrity wedding with a free buffet.

Greyhawkers felt mixed emotions at the announcement. "I shink young love ish sho romantic," said Almost Toothless Len, a beggar in the Slum Quarter, who promptly passed out in the ditch. "It won't last a year," said Lisera Hakerb, a laundress from Shacktown. "They're just too rich to be happy. Rich people can afford drama so they got lots of it."

One thing is certain: Gerda's connections in the Jewelers' Guild paid off. "I don't wear the actual engagement ring," Gerda said. "It's too big so I keep it in the guild vault. For daily use, I have this traveling ring."