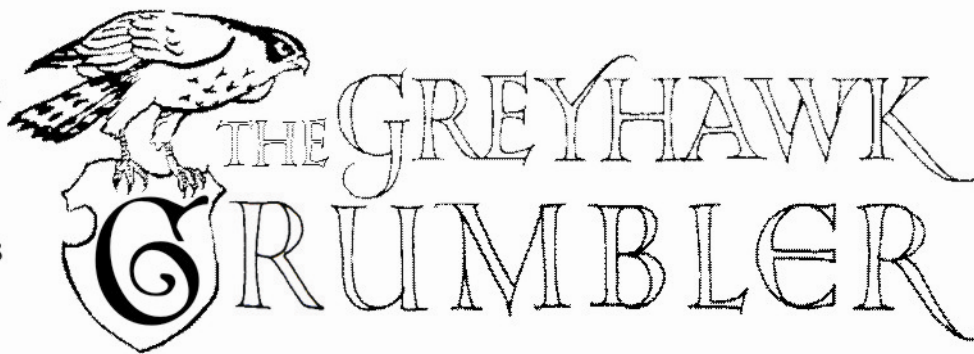


Goodmonth
CY 598

Salume Sewis
Editor



“It’s Only
Slander If
It Isn’t
True.”

DEATHS MAR CENTENNIAL

Greyhawk’s Centennial Celebrations were the setting for the most aggressive regime change in the Free City since the Unfortunate Pudding Incident of CY 365. Five Directing Oligarchs died in the course of this year’s celebration, including Lord Mayor Nerof Gasgal. Turin Deathstalker, former Oligarch, disgruntled former governor of Safeton, and firm believer in disproportionate retaliation, may have had a hand in all the murders, but was only seen killing the Lord Mayor. Torrentz Hebvard, Oligarch, president of the Society of Magi, and formerly frisky octogenarian, died of shock when Turin killed Nerof right in front of him. Renowned for his volatile temper, Cariel Mansharn exploded in the street near the River Gate. The City Watch said that this was bound to happen sooner or later and have not classified it as a murder. Servants discovered the bodies of Glodreddi Bakkanin and Stimtrin Cannasay and testified that the two dwarves mutually strangled each other and Turin was “Absolutely Not Involved” making sure to speak with capital letters.

Witnesses have widely differing opinions on the last words of Nerof Gasgal. Our late Lord Mayor was renowned for his rapier wit but this seemingly failed him. Rundall Grast, a student at the University of the Flanaess reported Nerof’s last words as “I’m struck!” Tobe Deritt, a corporal in the Greyhawk militia, disagreed, claiming Nerof’s last words were “Ack! Glurk!” Lisera Hakerb, a laundress from Shacktown watching the celebrations, said his last words were “Mmm, fudge.”

These are all incorrect, or so I am informed by an extremely large man from the mayor’s office. According to him, Nerof’s official last words were: “Here at the end with my life fading, I have no regrets. I have led this city through several crises and into an era of great prosperity. It is my earnest desire that Dernan Nathane assume leadership of the Directing Oligarchy. Greyhawk, my heart beats for you and you alone!” Only then did he die. I

am assured by this heavily muscled man who steadfastly refuses to give me his name that any similarities between Nerof’s last words and the death scene of King Belvoir III in the play “A Dread and Awful Presence” are purely coincidental and further inquiries will result in a thorough beating.

Aestrella Shanfarel, half-elf, recently retired diva of the Royal Opera, and talented beyond words, sang at Nerof’s funeral. The Grumbler was inadvertently left off the guest list, but Nerof’s coffin proved quite roomy and he made no objection to sharing it for a while. The Grumbler overheard Org Nenshen, Oligarch, very respectable businessman, and certainly not the leader of the Thieves Guild, declare in whispered conversation that he intended to avenge the death of his friend Nerof and hunt Turin down. Org has since left town, but there has been no news of whether he has managed to assassinate the assassin.

TEN OLIGARCHS NOT ENOUGH TO MAKE SOUP

Riddle me this: what’s got twenty hands and no head? The recently decapitated Directing Oligarchy of Greyhawk, of course! With Oligarchs dropping like flies and a Lord Mayor demonstrating that being repeatedly ventilated is not a survivable condition, the ruling body of Greyhawk is crippled and unable to make basic decisions, like picking new oligarchs, choosing a new mayor, or deciding whether to ban certain broadsides from the city. Since few Greyhawkers who aren’t chronically dull, cursed, or forced at knife-point have read oligarchic procedure, many citizens are wondering how this can be. It’s all due to something called quorum, which is surprisingly not a type of cheese. For the Oligarchy to act, it must have enough members present at a meeting to reach quorum, and the magic number for quorum on the Directing Oligarchy is eleven. Turin’s death march through the Oligarchy has left us with ten. Who made up such a absurd

rule? He wasn’t called the Mad Archmage for nothing.

Politics abhors a vacuum, as well as unspent tax revenue, and Dernan Nathane, Oligarch, guildmaster of the Merchants’ and Traders’ Union, and smooth as satin, has slid into the role of unofficial Lord Mayor to ensure that the city continues to function in some fashion. Exclusive sources close to Dernan, who are certainly not The Grumbler disguised as a large potted plant in the corner of the room, report that the merchant prince plans to use the sideshow that is the Public Council of Greyhawk to ratify his appointment of a new Oligarch to restore a quorum. Once the Oligarchy has an eleventh member, they can select a new Lord Mayor. The Grumbler gives you three guesses as to who the Oligarchy will pick, and the first two don’t count.

HOLLARDEL RESIGNS, FLEES, AND POSSIBLY DIES

Days after the terrible events at the Centennial Celebrations, scandal erupted amongst the wealthiest and most exclusive guild in town. Gerda Hollardel, Oligarch, guildmistress of the Jewelers’ and Gemcutters’ Guild, and player of both sides of the fence, was leaking crucial information about the locations of valuable jewelry and protections used by guild members to the Thieves’ Guild of Greyhawk in return for substantial kickbacks for more than a decade. A little birdie revealed Gerda’s secret double dipping in the time-honored manner of leaving packages in the middle of the night in the homes of prominent guildmembers. Loyal readers of The Grumbler will recall that Gerda had just announced her engagement to Dernan Nathane and many hardworking editors were looking forward to the complimentary buffet. That dream is ruined now along with Gerda’s career. The disgraced jeweler fled the city the next day just ahead of the horde of angry guilders. Many Greyhawkers witnessed the low-speed carriage chase down the Processional as none of the jewelers were willing to risk high speeds in

their expensive buggies on the pothole riddled streets of the Free City.

Gerda's good fortune was not to last. She was found dead in Rel Astra less than a month later with a bejeweled dagger plunged into her back. Or so we've been told. The Grumbler has many sources here in Greyhawk, but he was unable to confirm that the body in Rel Astra was the disgraced Gerda. Since guilds are contractually obligated to send an assassin after guildmasters who resign in disgrace (please see Section 11.4 of the Guildmaster Standard Litany), it is entirely possible that Gerda faked her own death. The truth may never be known, and when facts fail, there's only one solution – baseless opinions of the average Greyhawker given weight in a poll!

Grumbler Poll: What became of Gerda?

The rich and wicked never die	23%
She's as dead as a doornail	22%
Faking your own death is so cliché	18%
She's not dead; she's undead!	11%
There's no undead in Keoland	9%
I was promised pie	5%
This doesn't add up to 100%	3%

PUBLIC COUNCIL VOTE HAS MEANING FOR ONCE

The City of Greyhawk is holding elections for its Public Council at the end of the month of Harvester. A fob for the masses, this advisory body composed of a councilor from each of the city's eight quarters (don't ask how the city has eight quarters; it shows you're not from here) is the closest thing the city has to a representative government. It's worked well in the past and gave the population the illusion that they were having an impact on the city. This year promises to be different. With the Directing Oligarchy in disarray and the city on the edge of revolt, Dernan Nathane needs the Public Council to ratify an appointment of a new Oligach. Before, the council was a sideshow where candidates included doppelgangers, talking goats, and priests of Vecna. Now, it's a sideshow with the potential for power.

The combination has drawn political parties out of the woodwork. The parties favored to win the most seats are the People's Party for Golden Dreams and Five-Fingered Discount, backed by the merchants and thieves respectively. The Marvelous Talking Goat Party, which formed around the wildly popular Hector the Talking Goat, is back even though Hector has since passed on to the big hayfield in the sky. Other parties include A Chicken in Every Pot Party, advocating free food for the masses, Absolutely Not a Front for an Evil Cult, sponsored by the

fabulously wealthy Count Merleche, and Two Drink Minimum, sponsored by the Gnarleyhouse fraternity in Clerkberg. Campaigning is expected to be vigorous, vicious, and violent throughout Harvester. Political street theater will include such staples as rallies, free food, buttons, answers in the form of a circle, worthless promises, and funny hats. The Grumbler is happy to lease its presses to parties at economically advantageous (to The Grumbler) rates.

SILENT, SHORT BLUE THREAT PLAGUES CITY

In this era of dead Lord Mayors, fleeing guildmasters, and ineffectual Directing Oligarchies, a new threat to the City of Greyhawk has reared its ugly blue head. Contorted to fit into the smallest of boxes, a silent enemy is filtering into this historic and histrionic city. Who are these black-clad, white-faced agents of annoyance? Mimes, and not just any mimes – xvart mimes. Even a Heroes' Feast spell won't protect you from the horror, and they have replaced the mono-browed beggar by the Black Gate as The Grumbler's Direst Threat to Greyhawk.

Just when a cynical and jaded broadside editor thought he had seen it all, these disturbing grotesques, which cross the lowest rung of the comedic ladder with the lowest rung of the humanoid ladder, are lurking in the alleyways ready to mimic pulling a pretend rope. The Grumbler urges citizens not to tip these monsters for their performances no matter how much you believe they are trapped in a box as it will just encourage them. Instead, ignore the xvart mimes until they get real jobs like mugging, extortion, or gambling.

NEW GOBLIN NATION EMERGES ON WILD COAST

Details of the peace treaty that Nerof Gasgal was negotiating with Turrosh Mak, the orc warlord who controls the Pomarj, continue to leak. Oh yeah, Greyhawk is at war and has been for the past two years. Don't worry if you forgot about it; lots of people did. Nerof's surreptitious negotiation with the orcs to end the war was the catalyst for Turin to go off his nut and sharpen his dagger on the Lord Mayor's sternum. Loyal readers of The Grumbler may remember that the goblins of the Wild Coast have been up to something for a while. Now we know what. Somehow the goblins managed to sneak in a provision that grants them their own country, named the Jebli Free State, as part of a possible peace treaty between Greyhawk and the Pomarj.

How the goblins managed to build a nation, The Grumbler has no idea. Have

you ever seen the inner workings of a Goblin tribe? It's like stuffing 50 toddlers full of sugar, make them watch Xvart mimes for an hour, and then giving them all sharp objects. I'm amazed that the goblins can spell Jebli Free State, much less run one. The treaty would carve the goblin nation out of the southern Wild Coast as a buffer between the Greyhawk and the Pomarj. As you can imagine, this proposal has gone over with the Wild Coast refugees about as well as the ill-fated sponge barge that the priests of Olidamarra were attempting to sell to the Rhennee. Eritai Kaan-Ipzirel, matriarch of St. Cuthbert, former Oligarch, and approximate size of the sponge barge, has roundly condemned the treaty and urges the city to press the fight against the wicked humanoid hordes of the Pomarj.

CITY MOOD SOURS, LEAVES BITTER AFTERTASTE

Recent events have caused the mood on the street to take a sharp downturn. The typical low-level mutterings of the discontent has increased in volume in recent months as the infighting within the Directing Oligarchy degenerates. The dismissal of Eritai Kaan-Ipzirel from the Directing Oligarchy touched off numerous protests throughout the city. The City Watch had just gotten these under control when the assassination of Nerof Gasgal set off another round of riots. Sir Gavin Ambus, oligarch, city constable, and surprisingly still alive, has raised the city's Bitterness Level to Flat-Out Caustic – the second highest stage on the City Watch's bitterness scale.

Greyhawk Bitterness Level

Spitting Vitriol
Flat-Out Caustic
Full Blown Hissy Cow
Kinda Surly
Just Moody

Because of the heightened Bitterness Level, Sir Gavin has imposed a curfew, restricting travel on the streets within two hours of dusk, doubled the watch patrols, and generally been a wet blanket on the fires of fun. Greyhawkers have had mixed reactions. "They should make each Bitterneff Level a different color," said Nearly Toothless Len. "I like color-coded things like inns an' dragons." Aisley Lockswell, collegian, self-appointed advocate for the people, and surprisingly vindictive, had a much stronger opinion. "I'm still mad at you, idiot. You totally outted me to Talar. Ha, got your inkpen. Let's see you write with it in pieces." Fortunately, *The Grumbler* has an excellent memory and a near infinite supply of Quall's feather pens.