

PLAGUE IN THE SETTLEMENTS

Evidence of a frightening new outbreak has made it to News and Views reporters. Although there are very few reported cases, this startling illness

has shown up in every major encampment in the local area.

Those infected with this yet-unnamed disease express seemingly random symptoms including: Draining of the will and of the Strength, fits of rebuke, blindness and in rare instances paralysis. These symptoms seem to come on at random, often during periods of exertion. There is no indication of how contagious this sickness is.

Although there is no information on the origin of these startling infirmity,

News and Views has been able to detect a pattern in the infected: the first cases in each settlement were recent visitors of the Brimstone Lodge. We have been unable to reach a representative of the Lodge as it has been closed, "to address matters of internal security."

At the date of this reporting we have determined that the Bloody Apron of The Peaceful Republic, The Sweetwater Clinic of Convergence and the Cult of the Kettle in the Prisoners Outpost are launching independent efforts to contain and examine this new sickness.

News and Views will be dispatching investigators to these organizations to gather information on any results they may garner.



Many people have reported a figure like the one above arriving soon after the plague, offering medical treatment to those affected.



Transfer of Power at the Peaceful Republic

By Allen Kellwright
Political Correspondent

After months of quiet politicking, a major shift in the authority structure at the largest encampment of Four Monarchies immigrants to the Fracture has occurred. Backed by large segments of the military and a collective of progress-minded business ventures, The Unity Party has formed a new government which will officially assume control of the encampment at the end of the week.

Although this change was fiercely opposed by Duke Bayder and much of

the remaining nobility an agreement was brokered shortly after the beginning of the new year which concluded in the Duke stepping down from authority without violent opposition.

Representatives of the Unity Party have pledged to make good on their promises to eliminate nationalistic elements and forge a united cultural force under their banner. Sources close to party leadership claim that the new government will continue the isolationist trends of previous months, shunning cooperation with forces such as the 'Green Sash' army, the Iron Circle and the Merchants Compact.

Are We Submerged in a Crime Wave?

By JJ Shedel
Staff Reporter

A lab in the Barrio de Liberté has been burgled, according to inside sources in the settlement. Witnesses report that this is the third in a string of robberies in the area, apparently targeting facilities with research purposes.

"It seems pretty strange, they didn't take any of the money or gemstones we had in storage," quoted one Y-2 who wished to remain anonymous. "Just some items we brought in for study after excavating them last year around this time. Nothing valuable, or

even functional. Papers, a few boxes of wires, and some depleted battery orbs."

Diego Doctor has yet to comment on this matter, though sources report that he has been seen infrequently over the past months, rumored to be courting a possible mate.

We'll have more on this rash of criminal activity as it develops.

MURDEROUS MOLLUSC MANGLES MEMORIES

By William "Bill" Barksman
Staff Writer

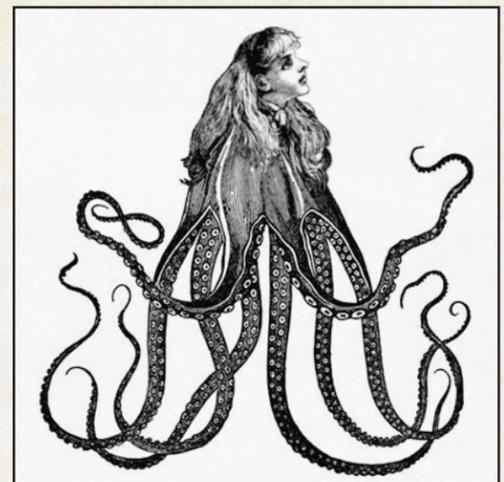
Locked doors and blade traps are no match for the latest predator out to destroy and devour. Dubbed the Nocturnal Octopus by those who have seen it, citizens of the Peaceful Republic are reporting late-night visits that end in terror.

This Noctopus, distinguished by the appearance of a woman's head on an octopus, arrives late into the night, slowly inching her tentacles around the brain of the sleeping victim. Survivors explain that the

sensation is like having their blood forcibly ripped from their heads through their pores, but with no lasting physical damage. Most survivors report small sucker-marks on their neck or head, and a distinct inability to remember much of the last few days, as well as recurring nightmares of drowning for up to a week.

Resident creature expert, Shintagi Myar, states that the creature is most likely using the memories as a type of food. Further, as no one has confronted or seen the Noctopus aside from brief glances, it's danger to those awake is unknown. For now,

Myar advises that simply letting the Noctopus take what it needs and move on may be the best course of action.



An artistic rendition of the Noctopus.

Green Sashes: Fashion Fad or Fanatical Following?

By Magenta Geel
Staff Writer

Travelers between settlements recently have been complaining about a lack of steady protection, and the increase of attacks from Sahagin and wild beasts. Indeed, the roads have grown more dangerous, and with no centralized military to replace the once-numerous Arcana, trade between camps has seen a steady decline.

One man, however, has a vision for the future of this world: unified co-operation.

General Callious, hailing from the Monarchies, may not strike an imposing shadow, but the warriors who follow him revere him as a modern-day titan. His forces dot the landscape, and while their total

number are kept secret, their purpose and goal is something each can state with perfect clarity. I had the exclusive opportunity to speak with the General recently, as he shared with me plans for a permanent base of operations against the dangers of this world.

“It isn't about subjugation or ruling. We don't want to replace any government that already exists,” explains Callious “But it's apparent that every force here is working towards individual gains, with no real focus.”

The answer, according to Callious, is simple: create a system to which resources could be focused on the necessary issues, determined by a council of leaders representing each settlement.

“For example, the Sahagin attacks. Researchers in Convergence may be looking into how to stop them at the same time as researchers at the Outpost, but neither is communicating. Now imagine a system where settlement leaders could organize all of their scholars on the most pressing issues. There would be a drastic increase in productivity.”

When asked about who would lead such a council, Callious is in opposition to what his followers urge.

“It shouldn't be me. I will gladly lead soldiers to battle before I engage in diplomatic proceedings. I simply want to create a safer place for everyone forced to be here.”

No message is meaningful without action, and Callious' followers (dubbed ‘The Green Sash Army by

some, though they take no official name intentionally) have begun to police the more common paths. They offer safe passage at no cost to any needing it, as well as supplies for the journey.

Rumor has it that Callious will attempt to summon the leaders of each settlement to his new base, as soon as construction is complete, though the General neglected to comment on this. For now, he says, the focus is on the work.

“Build a safe place to meet, organize protection for merchants, offer aid,” Callious states, “That's what we're doing now. We want to inspire everyone to make this world the best it can be.”

Too Many Stars?

By JJ Shedel
Staff Reporter

Looking into the night sky for answers is a tradition that spans most worlds and cultures. Stars have been used to predict everything from the gender of a child to a ship's course in the sea. Stargazers near Convergence, however, have noticed something different: a large, glowing star

just at the eastern part of the sky.

Experts claim that the star has not appeared before the last week, and further, seems to be getting slightly larger. However, these same experts claim a sense of hopelessness when gazing too deeply at the star, prompting them to quietly abandon any further study.

Moth Mice Attack!

By Willian “Bill” Barksman
Staff Reporter

Travelers between settlements are advised to keep their magical practices to a minimum due to the dramatic upswing in the appearance of moth mice. These mostly-harmless creatures feed off of magical energy, and have been known to playfully erupt harmful blasts of arcane energy at their playmates. While fun for them, these blasts are extremely dangerous to most travelers.

Though there have been no reported cases of Moth Mice attacking unprovoked, rumors are swirling that a new, more deadly variation

has begun to appear during heavy storms. These evolved Moth Mice have an intense dislike of any bright blue color, attacking it until it is removed from their vision.

Resident creature expert, Shintagi Myar, states that the only safe way to attack and kill a Moth Mouse is through ranged attacks and quick feet. However, he also states that anyone who kills a Moth Mouse will be almost certainly covered in a thin, nearly invisible dust, that will attract any other Moth Mice to them in a rage. Thus, his best advice is to simply stay inside, or give them a wide path.

A Hidden Paradise

By JJ Schedel
Staff Writer

Given the condition of this world, many of it's citizens long for a safe place to call home. Though the various settlements provide some degree of safety, nothing is absolute. However, a wild story from an explorer confirms that there may be something better out there.

According to the explorer, who wishes to remain anonymous, she was traveling near a river bed and noticed a thin wisp of smoke. She carefully crept up on the location, eventually uncovering a clearing in the woods, with several small tents

to one corner. Though they had no visible defenses, the grass was much greener in the clearing, and she could make out several sleeping pads left in the sun. She reports that the trail was extremely difficult to find and follow, and that she felt like one wrong step would result in a slide down an embankment into the river, or the massive thorns below.

Though she was not able to see anyone there, the explorer was forced to leave when several Elebears wandered by hunting for food. While she refuses to tell the exact location to News and Views, she stated that a return trip was in her near future, possibly with more armed friends.

Heard Around The World

Things we've heard that are not story worthy...yet!

This section does not follow the strict rules for accuracy exemplified in the rest of this publication.

“Diego's new lady is a lot weirder than I thought. Maybe he's into cats.”

“Red Coat Fat Man is just a myth. Anyone wearing that dumb coat is from a long line of con-men wizards.”

“I've seen gatorbats using tactics. Two of them flanked me.”

“The Plague Doctor is actually a really nice guy. He just always wears a mask because of his face scar.”

“I don't know where the cave goes or why I can hear crying in it, but I swear I saw a doll outside it one day.”

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HELP WANTED

Need: Scholars to research strange stones I found while walking. Not sure if magical, but one fell in a puddle and turned it to ice. Ask for Garret Leafcutter in the Barrio.