

# THE ASHBURY TIMES

MONTH OF FIRE ANT 614



## STORMS CLEAR OVER SYNIVIA

BY ANORA BRIGHTMEADOW

It was clear early on that the storm roiling over Synvia was no typical autumn squall. A few dozen adventurers responded to Baroness Silverthorn's call for help, and convened in South Point, just north of the island. While there, she explained that the sapling that then-Squire Kailani carried held the piece of the land-bond tied to the plane of life. Altohtaro of Imladar immediately volunteered to serve as guard, as did several others.

The life energy of the sapling cut through the nightmare-induced storm like a beacon, allowing the ship to safely make landfall on the island.

Once there, the assem-

bled fought their way through what was left of the village of Lero, encountering creatures known as Elosdi, which were later revealed to be native to the foreign continent of Barran. At last they reached the tavern, where a few Kin had barricaded themselves inside, along with an Amani ranger, and Ash Forest court members Captain Simon Neville and Cyno. It took the refugees time to believe that the Baroness and assembled adventurers were not more nightmares, but with a bit of patience and a few spells the travelers soon joined what was left of the town.

The elosdi, being fairly intelligent, were not only

spit poisons, but were known to engulf their prey, impregnating them with eggs. None of the few refugees in Lero had slept well for weeks, and for the next two days, neither did the adventurers. Between the physical attacks of monsters, and the mental attacks brought on by horrid dreams, visions, and ghosts, there was little rest to be had. Creatures and people from all across Fortannis appeared. Wayward Andreans from the continent of Moria rifted in, as did people from the Kingdom of Nine Towers. A mind flayer from the continent of Laerthan (commonly referred to as "the Dead Lands") (*continued on page 5*)

### WITHIN:

- *Duke Nevin Kendrick Missing*
- *Open Letter from Sir Amaranthus*
- *Groundbreaking Decision from the Amani Council*
- *A Request for the Forest*
- *Kailani Knighted*
- *A Mild Concern*
- *Armored Being Intrigues Fairedale*
- *Synvia Continued*
- *Order of the Caohmnoiri*
- *Ask Vox*

### SYNVIAN COUNCIL MEMBER AND FAMILY FOUND DEAD, DAUGHTER MISSING

Just a few days after the storm dissipated over the island of Synvia, newly elected Council member and former Guard Captain Kallisto and her family were found dead in their home. The Ashban Courts and adventurers had only just rescued the Councilwoman's daughter from an unknown creature just a few nights before.

With her daughter missing it is unknown if the creature returned to capture the daughter again, or if the current murders and disappearance are unrelated.

She had been originally captured by an unknown extraplanar creature native to the "Renlatha" continent but was rescued by adventurers after being alerted to the creature's

presence by two members of "The Veneficus Order". The Order purports to be a neutral third party in their homelands whose mission is the extermination of extra-planar influences, the extermination of necromancers to their permanent deaths, and providing a kind of daily oversight for the use of magic. Her present whereabouts are unknown.



## DUKE NEVIN KENDRICK: MISSING

Early in the Month of Gryphon, the island of Synvia, off the coast of the Ash Forest was mysteriously beset upon by a dark, violent storm which wreaked havoc on ships and dreams alike. During such time as the court of the Ash Forest saw to the dispelling of the storm and rescuing the beleaguered civilians, it was reported that His Grace, Sir Nevin Kendrick, Duke of Ashbury, failed to appear after utilizing a Geolithe.

In search of answers regarding what may have happened to His Grace, the Times sought out Baron Garathon Von Storm of Blythedale, who was rifting with the Duke when he disappeared. After having repelled an assassina-

tion attempt upon his court, Baron Garathon says that he and Duke Nevin utilized the Geolithe in the town of Greystone to reach the beleaguered people in Synvia.

Upon arriving in the fishing village of Lero, Baron Garathon found himself alone. "[There was] only a note implying the Duke was taken hostage," says the Baron of Blythedale, "It was vague and based on the signature, 'Z,' we assume it is Zaniyah, the Dark Elf construct-smith."

First sighted at the disastrous diplomatic summit in Fairdale back in the Month of Dragon while impersonating an ambassador of Tarzateranzan, the Dark Elf calling herself Zaniyah has

BY NYARIEN SILVERTREE

been a known associate of the Thesi as well as a noted Golemancer. Reports from Synvia, as well as from Baron Garathon himself place her on the island during the Month of Gryphon seeking to prevent the reassembly of the landbonds.

In response to the possible abduction of the Duke of Ashbury, the Ordo Aurum in Cil Cilurion has responded by declaring an official investigation led by their own Paladin Tyler Balloch. A summons has been given for all able-bodied adventurers and those present for the Duke's disappearance to assemble in the town of Fairdale on the tenth of the Month of Fire Ant to participate in the investigation.

*"IN THE END,  
WE MUST SAVE  
ALL PEOPLE,  
NOT JUST  
THOSE WE LOVE  
OR HAVE  
SWORN TO."*

## AN OPEN LETTER FROM SIR AMARANTHUS LANDCHARMER TO ASHBURY

Ashbans,

For over a year now we have fought to save this continent from being ripped apart at the seams. Elemental forces we barely understand are being assembled and we have powerful creatures from nearly every corner of Fortannis breathing down our necks, telling us what we should do. We are at a crossroads, one that I fear we are running to blindly. I am just as guilty of this. I worked on behalf of a powerful being who I believed shared our goal of saving this land from the coming destruction, only to now have reason to believe I was fooled and taken ad-

vantage of.

So I write these words for all to see; Do not rush this. Yes, we will inevitably need to make choices this coming gather. Those choices will have dire consequences not just for His Grace, not just for the adventuring community, and not even just for Ashbury or the remains of Icenia. What we choose to do this coming gather may very well decide the fate of the Tar'Navarian continent.

I beg the adventurers and my fellow Knights to remember this: There is much more to the world than our own lands. There are more im-

portant things than our lives. In the end, we must strive to protect ALL good people, not just those who fall within the lines we have drawn on a map. In the end, we must save all people, not just those we love or have sworn to.

"Thou shall be everywhere and always the champion of the good and the just against injustice and evil."

When the time comes, as it surely will; Make the right choice for all.

In Service,  
Sir Amaranthus Landcharmer  
Royal Knight of the Kingdom  
of Brittington



## GROUNDBREAKING DECISION FROM THE AMANI COUNCIL

For the first time, non-Amani will be permitted within the Wold.

Long guarded by the Amani, the mysterious realm of the Wold within the Ash Forest will no longer be restricted to only their own kind. Through visions that awoke long-repressed memories, Dame Kailani (who was still a squire during these discussions) discovered that the Children of Autumn were the forest's original guardians before the Sleep. Somewhat understandably, Lord Gwindor was skeptical, thinking perhaps those visions had been planted there by someone else. To assuage those fears, Dame Kailani allowed Sir Amaranthus to examine

her mind for tampering. After a thorough investigation, he found that her memories were indeed genuine.

In light of this new evidence, as well as the fact that the Forest Lord welcomed the Dame and one other Child of Autumn already, it has been decreed that the dryads will be given the same rights to the Wold that the Amani currently enjoy.

Furthermore, it has also been decided that the Kiergani will no longer be barred from the Wold. The Baroness shrewdly reminded the rest of the Council that the last group of Elves that decided they knew better than the Forest Lord was

BY ANORA BRIGHTMEADOW

summarily banned from the Wold. The council wisely decided not to have history repeat itself.

The council had been divided on this issue for some time, with Baroness Ezri and Lady Glenduria (a former baroness herself) pushing for inclusion, and Lords Elsinor and Gwindor digging in their heels to uphold the tradition. However as the discussion progressed, tides began to turn. Surprising even himself, Lord Gwindor had this to say to Baroness Ezri "I have to admit, I came here expecting to fight you. But everything you're saying makes sense. I'm an old man... perhaps it is time for a change."



*"I AM  
EXTENDING AN  
INVITATION  
FOR ANY WHO  
WISH TO SERVE  
THE FOREST TO  
DO SO."*

## A REQUEST FOR THE FOREST

As many now know, a new Spirit Tree has grown, and it has taken root in Synvia. The sapling will be known as Brí Sciath (pronounced Bree-Skee-Ah).

There are not words enough to convey what this sapling means, not just to the Amani but to all who would call the Forest their home. It is one of only two known Spirit Trees in all of Tar Navaria.

My people have a word for those who would guard the Spirit Trees, back in the Old Forest when the trees could

sing their songs in numbers unknown to the world today. That word is Caohmnoiri. (Pronounced Keev-nor-ee. The old tongue was not so efficiently written as the common language, it would seem.)

I seek to rebuild the Caohmnoiri. I have learned through my travels that the number of people who hold in their hearts a love of the forest is great, and as such, I am extending an invitation for any who wish to serve the Forest to do so.

This will be a ratified Order

of Fellowship. I will accept those of any race, any skillset, any philosophy, so long as they are willing to swear an oath to defend Brí Sciath and serve the Forest on its behalf.

Those who wish to serve can contact me through dream or missive. I am more than happy to provide or arrange teaching in martial, magical, or other related skills for those who have the desire to help but not the ability.

In Service,  
Dame Kailani  
First Knight of the Ash Forest





## KAILANI KNIGHTED

From the outset, Kailani was the source of whispers in the Ash Forest as the first Child of Autumn to be squired. Known by many for her kindness and compassion, she clearly embodied some of the tenets of the code early on: love of country, generosity toward others, and protection of the

weak. She went on to lead various missions in defense of Icenia, successfully returning with her entire squad each time. In these past few months she became the primary guardian of the new Spirit Tree, handling all of the responsibility that implies. With that, and the recent decision of the Ama-

BY ANORA BRIGHTMEADOW

ni Council, the time was right for the first Child of Autumn to take her place among the peerage.

Dame Kailani has been named First Knight of the Ash Forest and has been granted the estates of South Point and Nymphwood.

## A MILD CONCERN

I wanted to have a message posted in the newsletter for this coming gathering and not for those that call themselves, "Adventurers". Although I will warn my fellow adventurers with this letter in hopes they understand why I would leave such a message in a public form of communication. For those of a certain matter that myself and some other partners of mine got ourselves into last gather, there is a group that seems to be growing in the area that is guided by a rogue

elemental that shall be unnamed at this time. For those that know the name of this half-rate elemental, I ask you to let it remain nameless, as it does not deserve any other such name other than the dirt on my boot. Any association or knowledge of details involving this cult from the last gather would be greatly appreciated if brought to the attention of either Vox or myself.

For the rogue elemental that found its way into my neck of the woods last gath-

er, I know you're watching us, even reading this newsletter. You seek for people to know your name, and for the words of it to leave others lips. Well I hate to spoil this party you've been planning while you were cooking inside that jail cell of yours, your name will only be heard at the end of an adventurers sword. I know who you are elemental, you're lucky you're not dead yet since you know that they sent me for your head.

-Vincent Tarethial

*"THERE IS A  
GROUP...  
GUIDED BY A  
ROGUE  
ELEMENTAL."*

## ARMORED BEING

Reports have been coming in from the estate of Dara's Grace of a strange humanoid clad in an immense amount of armor. Accounts have been varied, with sightings as early as the spring conflicting with more recent reports, with differing verdicts on what kind of armor it wears, whether it has facial features, and whether it can even speak. Those who have gotten close enough to see it claim that it has mottled skin of blended red and light blue, with silver accents.

The being, who apparently

refers to itself as "The Duke of Cold and Hot Silver," has expressed a fascination with metals of all kinds, especially those worked into armor. It has expressed no such interest in weaponry, however. Not all sightings of the armored being have been friendly, but neither are they all conflicts.

Notably, the armored being had a rather positive experience with Dumin Silverhelm, a local armorsmith renowned for his skill crafting for the Ducal army. After lengthy negotiations, the smith was seen pay-

BY PROSERPINA GLAEDWINE

ing the being with a pouch full of coins, after which the two entered his forge. The armored being crafted a suit of armor that witnesses described as superior to anything they'd ever seen before. When it was done, the being took both the armor and the coin and departed. Silverhelm did not seem upset by this, stating "that was our plan all along. I just wanted to watch 'im work, but I could smith a thousand years and never make something like that." It is unknown where the being is now or what its goals may be.



STORMS CLEAR OVER SYNIVIA (*CONTINUED*)

also took a turn in menacing the populace, but one of the most terrifying, and also from Laerthan, was the dragon Anaxion.

It's unclear how he even knew about the Life Bond, but Anaxion appeared with a single purpose - to find and destroy it. In some odd twist of fate, a powerful life elemental also rifted in, along with a wyvern from the plane of life, equally determined to stop the dragon. It was not some unknown elemental however - this was Azdrubael, the same life elemental who had attacked the town some years earlier. The battle lasted quite some time as Anaxion and his minions ransacked the town in search of the landbond. Once it was discovered that Azdrubael was healed fully by life spells, several of the healers in town including Lady Darksun, Baroness Silverthorn and the Elf known as V attempted to keep him alive as he fought, but Anaxion still forced him to return to his home plane several times.

While the battle raged on, Anaxion's minions continued their search, which led to some very creative tactics on the part of the adventurers, moving Dame Kailani and the sapling around in one of the most deadly hide and seek games ever played. Very few of the warriors in town were able to affect the dragon at all, and the few that could paid the price, as Captain Simon Neville was obliterated in the fight. He did success-

fully resurrect.

As if all this were not enough, mixed among the nightmares was a creature with no face. It seemed immune to attacks, and for the most part was merely curious. Some referred to it as the embodiment of fear and nightmare, but as of this writing its true name is still unknown. Saturday evening, it attacked and rifted out about two dozen adventurers, sending them to the nightmare realm, where each was beset upon by their own worst fears.

To that end, Squire Qiu Jun-Wu, Lady Darksun, Dame Kailani and Baroness Silverthorn cast an empowered Blissful Rest ritual upon the tavern in Lero. The combined magics were so great that the effect settled permanently upon the structure. Since the creatures attacking the area were pure nightmare, the ritual also acted similarly to the way a Haven of the Living behaves with undead, effectively sealing them out. Runners went out to spread the word, and refugee Wylderkin who had been hiding across the countryside began to trickle in, seeking a safe night's rest. While this provided a measure of relief however, it was not a permanent solution.

That solution came when the Court of the Ash Forest decreed that the sapling that Dame Kailani had been carrying would be planted there in Synvia: the tree had already demonstrated its power to

keep nightmares at bay, and planting it would solidify that power. The Baroness selected a clearing in the woods where two paths crossed. She also anticipated that planting the tree was likely to draw nightmares to it, attempting to stop the process; she was right, but unfortunately moments after the tree was planted she and the entire court mysteriously rifted out, just as the attacks began.

Those defending the sapling were set upon on all four flanks by elosdi, but the brush effectively created four bottlenecks, allowing the adventurers a relatively safe basis of defense. The court, it seemed, was gone an awfully long time, and this took its toll on the adventurers. Suddenly the attacks stopped; the dark clouds that had encompassed Synvia for weeks broke apart and the court returned. Well, most of them. Some were bleeding, some were recovering from fear, but Cyno had been forced to resurrect. Mouse and the others explained that they had been rifted into another nightmare, and fought the faceless fear. At varying points the fear overwhelmed them, often leaving just one member of the court to fight it alone as the others sought refuge to recover. In the end, it was Erdenerva who landed the final shot, her arrow unerringly finding its mark.

With the nightmare threat abated for now, the search for Duke Nevin has begun.



*“WITH THE NIGHTMARE THREAT ABATED FOR NOW, THE SEARCH FOR DUKE NEVIN HAS BEGUN.”*





## ORDER OF THE CAOHMNOIRI

Established: Gryphon 614  
Matron of the Order: Dame Kailani

Base of Operations: Synvia  
Purpose: The Order of the Caohmnoiri was established by Dame Kailani to see to the

defense and nurturing of Brí Sciath, the Spirit Tree of Synvia.

Prerequisites: Those who wish to be Caohmnoiri must swear an oath to Brí Sciath, the Spirit Tree of Synvia.

Membership: Dame Kailani, Baroness Ezri Silverthorn, Erdenerva, Cyno, Emaria Maybriar, Chulainn Steelclaw, Rayna, Raven, Winterthorn

## ASK VOX

Vox

"Dear Vox,  
What is the difference between Web and Confine? They seem so similar."  
- Talmic LaHuge

Well, Talmic. You are correct. They are very similar. The only difference is that it requires more strength to rip from a confine.

"Dear Vox,  
Are Cause Damage alchemies necromantic?"  
- Resident, Flameheart Keep

That's a good question. Many believe that the Cause Damage alchemies are necromantic. They are, in fact, entirely un-magical in nature. They are a sort of acid that eats its way through most substances.

"Dear Vox,  
How many licks does it take to get to the center of your alchemical golem?"  
- Raven Nevermore

I've never heard of such a method of measurement, but

I did some thinking. It appears, that with a standard Elven or other humanoid tongue, it would take approximately 29,631 licks and 189 tongues (to account for them disintegrating in the acids and on the shards of glass). Were you to use a more sturdy tongue, like an Elosdi or a Howlbear, you could cut the number of licks to around 19,023 and the tongues to 47.

"Dear Vox,  
I think my dad might be a necromancer. He comes home early in the morning, he's looking thinner, he stopped working at the mill, and he no longer buys me nice toys. What should I do?"  
- Scared Daughter

That is a very serious accusation. I once suspected someone close to me of being a Necromancer. The best way to find out anything is to stay patient, gather as much information as you can, and find out for sure if you're right or wrong. If you're correct, in-

form your local constabulary. If you're wrong, try seeing what you can do to help him. It sounds like he might just be having a bad time.

"Dear Vox,  
Can I have your hat?"  
-Goblin

No.

*Send any questions you might want answered to Vox in the dream realm or by letter.*

*"HOW MANY LICKS DOES IT TAKE TO GET TO THE CENTER OF YOUR ALCHEMICAL GOLEM?"*



## ADVERTISEMENTS & PERSONALS

Dorgun looking for spies! High wages! Noble sanction! Must be able to pick locks, fit in small spaces. Disguises preferred but not required.

If you're well-spoken and seeking extra coin, the Ashbury Times has an opportunity for you! We're actively seeking contributors of news articles in exchange for good silver. For further information, speak with a local Times representative or send a missive to our headquarters in Ashbury City!

*Interested in advertising or posting a personal? Seek out your local Times representative or send a missive to our headquarters in Ashbury City!*

## TALK OF THE TAVERN

In our monthly installment of "Talk of the Tavern," we'll be sharing some of the most notable rumors and stories going around Ashbury's local taverns — to keep you, our readers, apprised of what the common folk are saying.

We've had many interesting tales from the island of Synvia, where apparently people and creatures from all over the mists found themselves drawn. One such creature with a face like a deck of playing cards was briefly seen wearing a squire's belt, apparently given to him by Count Ulthoc. Those in the know seemed to say something about a "Morgansander Clause" but the creature no longer had the belt on within a day. The paper wonders if this refers to Baron Morgansander, a former baron of

Nordenn who was a fey.

Speaking of the Count, after having someone refer to Ulthoc as her husband for the thousandth time, an exasperated Baroness Ezri turned to the Count and quipped "Y'know, everyone keeps assuming that's what you are, why don't we just do it already and clear up the confusion." The baroness was laughing, but the count simply gaped at her like a fish out of water. That might be the strangest proposal we've ever heard of. Wonder if he said yes?

While we're on the subject



of romance, it seems there may be something brewing between the human Vincent and Victoria Galloway. The two were scarcely seen apart all gathered, and seemed very openly affectionate. We can't wait to see what Nathan Westwind thinks of these developments.

While we're on the subject of flirting, Prince Valdorian of Imladar seemed to make many of the ladies of the adventuring populace swoon, and possibly some of the men. It would seem that much can be said for good old-fashioned Imladari charm.

On a change of pace, it seemed that the combined storm and nightmares were rough on those who came to Synvia's aid— instead of his usual serving of tea, Squire Qiu Jun-Wu was seen passing out crates of ale to the populace.

While many in the adventuring populace seemed cheered by the knighting of Dame Kailani, rumors have been flying that not all in the Ash Forest are overly fond of a non-Amani first knight. One can only wonder how notorious Amani supremacist group FOIL will respond.

That's all for this month's Talk of the Tavern! If you have a rumor you'd like to share, send your missive to our headquarters in Ashbury City.