



Steamy Ink Press™

Maplewood's Whispers, from Ear to Ink

June 1604

Emeric Pays us to
Publish Olmez is a
Kazvar

Cordon's Cat is
Begging for Food
Again

Goth Baddies
"Are Eternal"

A Spotlight for
Maplewood's
Most Talked-
About
Personalities

TWO DOWN, TWO TO GO: The Sparrow Gauntlets Continue

Steamy Ink Press™ is a division of Steamy Ink Publishing®. Now, with the proud sponsorship of the esteemed Breaking Bulletin Consortium, and in support of its vital work across the Freelands, our commitment to chronicling the captivating lives of the People of Interest who pass through our bustling town is stronger than ever as we enter our third year in publication.

We are dedicated to delivering unparalleled, in-depth revelations to the people of Maplewood about those people. What are their dealings? Their true motives? Their romantic entanglements? It remains our mission to provide the perfect conversation starter for lively conversation over tea with friends.

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A pair of scholars arrived in Maplewood in April with unusual interests and excellent appetites. The two members of the Soaring Sparrow Society, a scholarly organization dedicated to the study of ancient artifacts and lost civilizations, have been asking questions around town about a gauntlet, prompting a range of responses from residents.

"Aren't the diggerologists supposed to be checking the soil? Why are they looking for gauntlets?"

"I think the diggerologists are just yebs in disguise."

"What is a gauntlet

A gauntlet? A gauntlet that goes on top of your gauntlet? Why would you need that?"

An employee of SIP found the scholars themselves



over breakfast, where they provided more information between mouthfuls of sausage and coffee.

The Soaring Sparrow Society, they explained, is a multi-regional

organization specializing in ancient artifacts and lost civilizations. Last year, one of their members discovered a remnant believed to be part of a Nalbendelian temple. The remnant was activated and a trial began, but the fragment was too far from a magical power source, and the magic faded before the trial could be completed.

The Sparrows have been studying the temple since. What they have established: the temple was a shrine to the sept that housed a magical item. To awaken this item, four trials must be run and successfully completed. Whether these trials are

I have been saying for years that adventurers are not what they appear to be. I have been saying for years that something in this town is wrong. I have been saying for years that Morton is a reliable source and that salt does not lie.

I am now saying: Olmez is a Super Kazvak. Not a Kazvak. Not a Fatvak. A SUPER Kazvak.

The evidence is RIGHT THERE. The sparks are being sent to Olmez instead of the well. What do Kazvaks eat? That's right, SPARKS. How many sparks has Olmez eaten? I don't know. Nobody will tell me. Why won't anyone tell me? BECAUSE THEY KNOW I'M RIGHT.

Speaking of eating, someone has been moving my table at the

Jenny and I know it isn't Olmez and I know it isn't Morton and that means someone in this town is doing it on PURPOSE, and when I find out who it is I will be filing a report with the Constables, who I am sure will be very available and responsive.

ANYWAY, different kinds of spark-eating undead have been seen working together. This is PACK BEHAVIOR. They all wear THE SAME SIGIL. What animals run in packs and have AN ENTIRE LANGUAGE? That's right, KAZVAKS. A Super Kazvak can command the undead, obviously. This makes complete sense if you just THINK about it, which I have. Multiple times.

Sparrow Society, con't

pre-planned or generated by the temple itself remains unknown. What the item is, and what it does, also remains unknown.

What the Sparrows do have is a new research grant that was given to them, which they used to locate another gauntlet in May. This gauntlet involved ringing labeled bells in a specific order, a task that required more thought than the more physical gauntlet that took place the month before. Town residents have been speculating on what the third could be.

"I asked one of them what the next trial would be

I am not supposed to say this. I've been asked by several people NOT to say this. I'm saying it anyway: Obviously Olmez is from Gersh. The Gershans are disappearing, from where they breed kazvaks, at the same time a NEW SUPER KAZVAK is on the rise. I AM NOT saying that the things are connected. I'm just saying that I consulted Morton, the salt maker. They are very reliable and do not lie, just like salt. Morton's assessment was that the fact this is happening was "concerning".

What REALLY makes Olmez a Super Kazvak? A Kazvak gets fat when it has multiple sparks. Olmez has been eating sparks since AT LEAST April. Studies conducted by myself and Morton indicate that sixty-three percent of Maplewood incidents have a Kazvak at the root cause. This has not been peer reviewed because my peers are cowards. Do the math, sheeple!

Of course, if you want your spark protected from Kazvaks, you should buy Barnes Apothecary Organic Spark Shield Salve. Rub on your chest nightly and keep sparks where they belong, which is in YOUR body and NOT in a Super Kazvak. Twelve applications per jar. Does not interact with Resilience, probably.

- Emeric Barnes, who still pays us. Sorry.

and they said they didn't know. I don't think they're allowed to say."

"I've been practicing my interpretive dance just in case. You can never be too prepared."

"First an obstacle course, then bells. At this rate, the fourth trial is going to be a bake-off. I'm not complaining."

Two trials have now been completed. What the remaining two will look like, and what waits at the end of all four, the Sparrows cannot say with certainty. What can be said is that whatever comes next, Maplewood will have a front row seat.

Cordon Sharptounge, 1386ish - May 1604

Cordon Sharptounge, blacksmith and Chainbreaker, has not been seen in town for an extended length of time and is presumed to have completed his tenure to the Craftsman. His exact birthday is unknown to this paper but he was, by a conservative estimate, two hundred and eighteen years old.

He worked in a forge for the better part of a century, and then spent another century and a half fighting slavers wherever he found them. He eventually came to Maplewood and was always available to lend a listening ear, a service he provided with characteristic reluctance.



He is best remembered by readers of this paper for his pit beef, the recipe for which was published in these pages in March, and for his role in the dispersal of an undead assault on Maplewood last winter, during which he directed a contingent of wraiths and skeletons in a line dance prior to their disposal.

He is survived by Makhno Brownfox, who must now intimidate people without assistance, and his cat Sven, who has been seen in town looking offended at the lack of table scraps. Makhno, when reached for comment, states that Sven has been eating well and there is no cause for concern.

Memorial arrangements are pending. Contributions in his memory may be directed to the Chainbreakers.

Letter to the Editor: Goth Baddies Are Eternal

Recently this newspaper ran an article written by a supposed "expert" fashion reporter claiming that Goth was over... This could not be further from the truth.

This article went on to say that the foolish actions of one terran man could influence a fashion movement that has existed for decades (if not centuries). I assure you dear readers, that no man, terran or otherwise, could ever sway the hordes of independent women, men, and others in the Goth Baddie community.

Now you may be asking yourself, what is a Goth Baddie? If you have not experienced one yourself, I must offer you my sincerest apologies. A Goth Baddie represents everything that is right and beautiful about this world. It's a celebration of the weird and frightening. It's taking the parts of life most people turn away from and instead looking it straight in the eyes and asking if it wants to go home with you tonight. Goth Baddies can come in all forms, and each one is beautiful and precious. Some view themselves as a representation of the Stranger, others dedicate themselves to Darkness, and there are Goth Baddies that choose their look

purely to reflect the shadows and gloom within themselves.

Goth Baddies contribute much to society. Some of the best poetry and music has been created by these depressed hotties. People even say that the renowned playwright Billy Waggledagger went through a Goth Baddie phase while writing his famous play MacDeath. Many great works of art have been created by Goth Baddies, the likes of which can be appreciated in various museums and temples throughout Illumina. Not to mention, Goth Baddies themselves are works of art, brightening our days with their darkness.

Goth Baddies truly are eternal. Their existence will never go away, as they play a vital part in the social ecosystem. Illumina would be a wasteland without these gorgeous emo freaks. I suggest to all that you pray to the Sept (or your preferred god) to send you a Goth Baddie to help you through these dark times.

(Any Goth Baddies reading this - feel free to message me via courier. PLEASE.)

- Dina Stoneliv

Dearest Reader, Spring has arrived in full bringing warmer evenings, more adventurers making questionable decisions in the daylight, and the persistent feeling that Maplewood is having the most eventful year of anyone's living memory. This writer certainly has not had a lack of material to talk about.

Let us begin with the most pressing news: Maplewood now has a bee lawyer. Lucky, whose contributions to local democracy continue to defy belief, encountered a depressed Buzzer whose honey had been making people unwell. Rather than pursue more traditional remedies, Lucky suggested the Buzzer consider a career in law. The Buzzer, apparently taking the suggestion seriously, has since made three laws. We cannot confirm whether the Buzzer has passed the bar, but can confirm that Lucky remains the only person in Maplewood who would think to do this and pull it off.

Týnairn found themselves in combat last month with their legs rendered entirely unusable. This did not stop them at all; we have been told they continued to fight from the ground and blocked an arrow in the process. We are not surprised but are deeply impressed, and suggest that anyone who finds themselves dismissing Týnairn as a threat reconsider their position—and perhaps their own legs, while they still have use of them.

We would like to acknowledge Illivandros, who last month paid the entire inn's tab and made a substantial contribution to the tip jar. Whatever brings a man to do something like that unprompted is his own business, but it is recommended that if anyone wants drinks they should go to the inn when Illivandros is present.

Kythaëla Brownfox, normally seen with a look on her face that can only be described as 'exasperated mother,' partook in some elven bread last month and it really seemed to help lighten her stress level. She was seen basking in the sun (leading several observers to theorize that elves may be solar powered, a hypothesis this writer is now actively investigating), kissing her husband, and spinning in place to watch her skirts fan out. Later that day, she was overheard saying 'Wait, I walked all the way up here to heal someone and nobody got hurt? This was a waste of time.' We are glad she got some rest, but are not sure she is.

Word has reached us that Micah spent some time in Mercy House following an intimately close encounter with a Veilwalker. We are told he had protection, but the Veilwalker had a larger stick. We are choosing not to think further on any of this, but we wish his friends a full recovery and a more cautious approach to their next encounter.

In other news, the Maplewood community has discovered a shared interest in textile arts. An event involving magical sheep fiber resulted in Dramatis Personae attempting to spin yarn: two successfully, one with no success at all, and one with great enthusiasm and mixed results. We will not say who did not succeed in their mission, but will say that if anyone is in need of having yarn spun they should not approach Titus unless that yarn spinning involves Civen law somehow.

This writer would be remiss not to note that our own editor-in-chief, Penelope Marianus, was observed last month in spirited conversation with her husband, her sister, Evilynn, and Jace Flynn. The subject of the conversation has not been confirmed, though what can be confirmed is that Lynn whispered something in her sister's ear and shortly thereafter, Poppy stepped into the leylines and has not been seen in Maplewood since. What was said, and where our editor has gone, remains unknown. This writer wishes her well and notes that the paper continues to publish in her absence, which she would want.

And now, the matter that has occupied our thoughts at length: the adventurers ate a werewolf. The entire thing. Deliberately. The werewolf had been deceased for some time. We have several questions, but are electing not to ask any of them. Everyone survived, which seems like the best possible outcome given the circumstances, and this writer instead chooses to focus on that.

Maplewood continues to be exactly what it has always been: a small town where remarkable things happen to people who mostly seem to deserve them. This writer will continue to watch closely.

*Yours truly,
Madam Mapleleaf*