

HAYLEM HERALD

Solus mortuus est cum pisces ire fluxus.

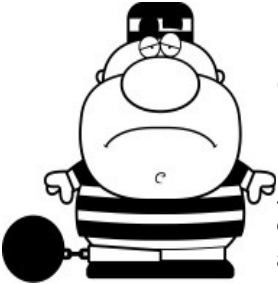
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Criminals Never Prosper

Several months ago we reported on a group of criminals that had been broken out of jail in Innis, and how the Watch and the adventurers of Thrush Peake worked together to ensure that the majority of them were either recaptured or met final death. Well, this past gathering it seems that the adventurers finished 'dealing' with these escaped villains (hopefully) once and for all.

During their last gathering the adventurers were approached by a member of the Watch who informed them that after scouting for the remaining criminals, they believe that they have found a cave where they have been hiding out. Anxious to finally put an end to this threat to the populace, the adventurers followed the Watch member's directions to a cave southwest of Eldamar.

Upon arriving at the cave, the adventurers noticed that it split into two separate paths not far inside the entrance. They would have to split up in order to ensure that none of the individuals inside had a chance to get away.

Down one path, they found a group of large feral cats and several biata who seemed to have trained them somehow. The biata seemed to be moving supplies around inside the cave while the cats stood guard.

Down the second path, the adventurers encountered some of the remaining criminals and many bugbears. They were able to determine that these bugbears were the ones who found the caves for the criminals.

Neither group gave the adventurers too much trouble, and they dispatched them with ease. Regrouping, the adventurers determined that the criminals had indeed been using this cave as a base of operations for some time.

Later that evening, the adventurers were informed that after they attacked the caves, a large skirmish was witnessed in the area. It turns out that most of the criminal's leaders were absent when the caves were attacked and upon returning to find their base in shambles turned on each other. Seeing this as a good time to strike at the remaining leadership, the adventurers headed into the woods near Eldamar to see how many of the remaining criminals they could find. After many pitched battles throughout the woods, the adventurers were able to dispatch many of the criminals' leaders, all of those that they managed to defeat meeting final death. The main exception to this being a human by the name of Mal Reynolds, who had been executed for his crimes by her Excellency, the Countess of Kyrinen, the previous time the adventurers encountered him. Having already been punished for his crimes, and having no proof that he had done anything illegal in the intervening time (he claimed to have been in the woods hunting rabbits), the adventurers (including the countess) had no real option but to let him go.

The following morning, Thrush Peake was attacked by several of the more minor criminals and many of their bugbear allies. They proved to be no problem for the staunch adventurers.

Following the attack, a large wolf came to town that many in the town recognized. It spoke with one of the Wild Elves in town by the name of

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Avryn and told her that the few remaining criminals had fled north, looking for a new hiding place since the adventurers had routed them from the caves near Eldamar. They had apparently found a new cave to hold up in not far from Foresthold. Unfortunately for one particular adventurer, the new cave that the criminals were now hiding in was already inhabited. The wolf told Avryn that the criminals now held a wild elf woman, two drae men, and two infants (one drae and one wild elf) hostage. Sources tell us that these individuals were the family of a drae adventurer by the name of Amaya.

Not being the type to allow one of their own to suffer, the adventurers jumped to action and followed the wolf's directions to a cave north-west of Foresthold. There they found the family as the wolf had described: the adults bound with swords to their throats, the children being held by two of the criminals. As the adventurers stood in the entrance to the cave, not certain how to proceed, the criminals holding the babies took off deeper into the cave and the criminals started to kill the family. The sight must have enraged the adventurers because they sprang into action, leaping forward and dispatching the villains who stood before them. It was not an easy fight, but the adventurers emerged victorious, having dispatched the criminals, rescued the children and saved Amaya's family.

Hopefully, for the safety of everyone in the county, the adventures managed to finally subdue or eliminate all of the escaped criminals and they won't plague these lands anymore.

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## The Haylem Herald

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## Celestial Solstice

### *Official notice from the Celestial Guild of Thrush Peake*

It is that time of year again when Celestial magic can be more unstable and unpredictable than usual. We ask that you proceed with caution in its use in the following cases:

1. Celestial Identification
2. Leyline interaction and Identification
3. Elemental Nodes (Lightening, Fire, Stone, Ice and Power)
4. As always the casting of Power is illegal at ANY time, unless the Towers have sanctioned it.
5. Casting celestial rituals is banned during this time. If you are planning on casting a ritual please advise Guild Master Vlad and Sage Violet of your intent to do so.

### **The Spine Breakers**

These people are a danger to themselves and to others, as they believe Celestial magic should be for all and ungoverned. This will be the time that their recklessness with magic will be even more of an issue. Please be sure to keep your eyes and ears open. If you would like more information on this group and the reasons they have been branded terrorists please speak with a Celestial Guild member.

We ask that if you see anything suspicious that you please bring it to the attention of a member of the Celestial Guild as soon as possible.

The solstice is a time to reflect on how powerful celestial magic can be. We ask that observation of this be done with the utmost care.

If you have any questions for concerns please speak with a local Celestial Guild member.

Thank you for your time!  
*Sage Violet Ostergaard*  
*Wizard of the Amethyst Scale*  
*Wizard in Service to the Celestial Guild of Thrush Peake*  
*Sage of Eruditio*



## Sparkling Foxes Bear Important Messages

If you hang around in Thrush Peake for long enough, you come to know that strange things happen there. The adventurers deal with a lot of

very strange things on a daily basis and they learn to shrug their shoulders at things that would cause most of the rest of us to scratch our heads in wonder. 'Shimmering foxes' is definitely one of those things . . . yet that is exactly what the adventurers got on the Friday night of the past gathering.

According to sources, that night a shimmering fox came into town trying to get help. Apparently, it was trying to lead Xue'lien Ruyin, the former Earthen guild master of Thrush Peake, back to town to help her brother, Yaochuan, who had been enslaved by the Sharin. These same sources tell us that Xue'lien left the kingdom last year in the company of the strange fox fey known as the Kitsune to pay a debt that was owed by the adventurers. The details of that debt, or why the adventurers came to incur it are not known by the Herald at this time . . . all we know is that no one has seen or heard from Xue'lien since that time.

Unfortunately, the fox couldn't get Xue'lien to follow it because of some kind of magical barrier along the border of the kingdom that was keeping her out. This barrier emanated from a strange purple crystal tower at the edge of the kingdom. In order to dispel the barrier and allow Xue'lien to cross, the adventurers had to cast a ritual to destroy it. Unfortunately, the Sharin had other plans for this barrier and attacked as they started the ritual. It was a tense time, as the rest of the adventurers protected the casters from large feral cats and biata rogues and alchemists, but in the end the ritual was successful and the barrier preventing Xue'lien from entering the kingdom was destroyed.

Once she was able to cross into the kingdom, Xue'lien wasted no time and led a small scouting party into Sharin territory, looking for information on the illusive and dangerous group of biata. The stealth mission came back with information that the Sharin planned on attacking Foresthold. Apparently they saw the small village as the closest settlement to the Northern Encampment and figured that if they were able to take it down they would isolate the encampment and severely hinder the kingdom's expansion plans. Thanks to this timely information, the adventurers were able to lay an ambush around Foresthold and stop the Sharin's plans before they could even get underway.

Following the stealth mission into Sharin territory, Xue'lien had to return to the Asambroda Forest with the Kitsune, but she left a magical lantern behind with which the adventurers could summon her brother and cleanse him of the enslavement the Sharin had him under. According to the instructions left by Xue'lien, the lantern had to be held by a 'true friend' of hers, who must walk around her sibling shining the light on them for 10 minutes. However, when the adventurers lit the lantern it called not only Xue'lien's brother, but her sister Meilin. Apparently both siblings had fallen prey to the Sharin . . . but the lantern could fix only one of them. The adventurers found themselves faced with a difficult decision: which sibling to help? In the end, they chose to help her brother. As they began the ritual, shadows from inside the lantern came to life and attacked them. Thankfully, they were able to fend off the shadows and successfully complete the ritual. Unfortunately, Meilin rifted away in the chaos, and the adventurers were unable to detain her.

In the end, the adventurers were able to do a great service not only to the kingdom, but to an old friend. Wherever she is, Xue'lien must know that they did their best to help her family . . . hopefully some day they can find Meilin again, and free her from the grasp of the Sharin.

## Celestial Caster Registry Update & Information Session

Anyone new or old in town who has the ability to cast Celestial magic who is planning on staying longer than one gather is asked to register with the guild Saturday during dinner time.

Members of the Celestial Guild of Thrush Peake will be at the picnic table across from the guild house during this time to register you and answer any questions you might have.

We would like to update our registry to ensure that all celestial mages are receiving any training that they require or would like to have.

This is also a great time for celestial wizards to ask any questions about how to hone their skills in battle, and lore on Celestial magic.

If you are not a Celestial caster you are welcome to join us. This is an open session for those who are looking to learn.

### *The Celestial Guild of Thrush Peake*

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Rumours

Once again dear readers I bring you the best and strangest of the rumours which circulate the county at this time. Some seem to have died down, due to a lack of interest, or perhaps the truth of them was discovered. Maybe even the parties responsible were found and brought to justice.

Anyways, some still linger on the tongues of Tavern patrons, and some new rumours have sprouted entirely. Read, enjoy and for all those brave spirited individuals, pursue these tales with caution, for who know what lies in the darkness.

“Mystic Wood Elves turn into Listani in the rain!”

“My crops grew 3 times their size over night! I have a feeling this is going to be a GREAT Celestial Solstice.”

Voice 1: “Did you hear all that howling last night?”

Voice 2: “Yea . . . it woke my wife, and she looked outside and swore that she saw a ghost dog running through the field! Swore she could see right through it!”

Voice 3: “Uh-huh . . . how much did she have to drink before she went to bed?”

A great sword has gone missing from a noble drae house. Rumour says it has the power to slay dragons.

Voice 1: “My sister's a midwife and she told me she delivered a baby the other day covered in golden scales.”

Voice 2: “Were the parents Xantusa?”

Voice 1: “No, they were dwarves!”

Note Should there be anything within this report which the Towers or the Nobility wishes I do not report on, please make it known to me and I will omit such rumours from the printed version of the Herald. As an aside however, if it appears in this column, the people are already talking about it, and suppressing my report will do little to the spread of such rumours. Also, any items above listed in quotations, were overheard by me, and are being included as direct quotes.

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