THE HIDDEN PAPERS

Extra Material for issue 27's "Weaving the Web" article By Rev. Garrett Lepper

More Types of Society

Magical Secret Societies

of alchemists in Kislev and The Empire who secretly of Brass are brilliant researchers and their results have "I said it is Halflings!" The old man uttered it with attempt to transmute the common metals into gold. generated not only a number of answers but ethically great conviction and solemnity. This accomplishment has long been a desire of and metaphysically troubling questions about the nature Lutz sat there dumbfounded, an uncertain smile alchemists, and this group has over the decades of life that would transform philosophy and betraying his confusion. gathered together countless research from their understandings of life and death, if this information "Yes, Halflings, the enemy within! Yes, those clever predecessors, and cooperated closely in their exchanges were made public. It is far more likely however that a fiendish little people who outwitted the Emperor into of research data. Within this secret society there are a witch hunter will eventually discover this group's giving precious land in exchange for a duck in a garlic few alchemists who employ warpstone in their research and burn both researchers and their work in wine sauce! Who else, I ask you, has so cleverly experiments without the knowledge of their peers, and the same pyre. although this minority is extremely cautious in their experimentation, it is only a matter of time before the "And now I shall reveal to you, my patient comrade, every luminary in the Empire! Listening in on dinner inner circle is discovered or a mishap befalls the the real threat to the safety of the Empire." The old conversation! Halfling gardeners spying in as people researchers.

who are interested in more than just tampering with so long been hinting at. the composition of metals. Years ago one of its "The hidden menace, unnoticed for so many years but the smile of a Hhalfling is the leering grimace of a members discovered a number of ancient texts on is..." necromancy outlining research on artificial life. These "Yes...?" Lutz gently urged the old man. alchemists were more interested in the essence of life "...it is..." The old man dawdled on. decades trying to fabricate homunculi, small hybrid any longer. animals, and simulacra in their laboratories in their "It is..." the old man paused one last time for dramatic the streets, leaving the old man to his delusions.

experiments in creating new life. A few of the members effect, "The danger at the heart of the Empire have researched related tangents and are looking into is...Halflings..." distilling the essence of life and creating an elixir that "What? I'm sorry," Lutz sputtered, "... I must have Society of Brass - The Society of Brass is a small group halts the aging process. The members of the Council *misheard you...*"

dozen alchemists who are at the centre of the group tense, awaiting the revelation that the old man had for they do in their little homes in the ground? No, you

infiltrated every noble and genteel household? Think of it: a Halfling spy and poisoner in every kitchen of man's cloudy yet mesmerising eyes fixed Lutz to his speak in great confidence in studies overlooking gardens! There is not a word spoken that escapes their However, within this society is the Council of Brass, a Lutz leaned in closer to the old man, every inch of him greedy little ears! What dark and perverse things do would never suspect it from such a diminutive people, monster, I tell you..."

The old man's voice had become impassioned and loud, and he had stopped looking at Lutz as he ranted on. than the necromantic aspects, and they have spent "Yes, what is it?" Lutz asked anxiously, unable to wait With the old man's attention diverted, Lutz carefully put his hat on and quietly snuck out the door and into

Illuminati

are usually imagined as the ultimate secret society: those papers that they could not carry with them. groups that can exert incredible influence and control heads of state and religions as puppets, manipulating above smashing furniture. them to carry out the Illuminati's plans for domination an effort if ever undertaken.

with unimaginable power that sailed the stars as people *revolution*. now sail the seas, long ago visited or lived in this world. The cronies of the Duc would have to content They knew of a great disaster that would befall their themselves with the cinders and burning embers that people, and left behind items of power to carry on their the revolutionaries were leaving behind for them. legacy. These items would compel their owners to carry

Not a moment to lose!

important seconds needed to flee the haven. This cellar, now and seek to open up the gates to challenge the beneath a nondescript building, was a flurry of activity. gods while the cult is at the height of its powers. In seconds the trapdoor leading to the sewers below

had been thrown open and people hastily gathered Groups known collectively as the *Illuminati* exist in together papers and a few possessions. Thinking the imagination rather than in any reality. Illuminati quickly, Richard had already splashed lamp oil over

Above there was a crash as the Duc's soldiers society for their own secret machinations with none entered the building, and they could be heard trampling the wiser. These groups are claimed to control the through the house yelling as they ransacked the house

Henri looked at the printing press and the pamphlets of society. Although these accusations have been littered about. He regretted the loss of these important levelled at Chaos cults, no Chaos cult has ever come tools; however the press and the pamphlets could be close to claiming, much less exerting, such extensive replaced, but not the fervour and intelligence that power. The distances entailed, problems of formed the poetics of the revolution. The occupants of communication, and many other structural problems the room hurriedly disappeared through the trapdoor endemic to life in the Old World would undermine such leading to the sewer. Henri stopped to take one glance at the room, and then looked at Richard, who was standing there with a guttering torch awaiting the order. One group may exist that loosely fits this description. Henri simply nodded, and flames lit the room. He Only after decades of searching will one even begin to descended into the darkness below. Moments later find hints of the existence of such a group. Rumours Richard joined him and they splashed through the filth claim that a people older than even the Elves, ones to the home of a sympathiser of the upcoming

out duties for the ancient masters. What these duties Doomsday Cult - In the heart of The Empire, Altdorf could be, none know. It is stated that those who do itself, there is a secret doomsday cult that refers to itself carry out their charges can then use these artefacts simply as *The Divine*. Their leader is a fallen Sigmarite freely, and that they are endowed with great knowledge Priest who, inspired by Sigmar's ascendance, believes and power and discover a truth unknown to the rest of that he and his score of followers can become gods as the world. These illuminated individuals are said to well. At present they believe the Chaos Gates will one recognise each other on sight, and, when encountered, day open forth, heralding a day of doom. However, issues of the utmost significance are discussed and the they believe that Sigmar turned the stuff of Chaos into future of countries and continents hang in the balance. divine energy, and they seek through ritual to open up the gates of Chaos to render Chaos inert, transforming themselves into gods, thus creating a new dawn on The alarm had been sounded, allowing those few earth. They earnestly believe that they are prepared



Many profit from the power that the Emperor wields. Although the Emperor has many enemies constantly seeking to undermine his power, there are those who rely upon his patronage for their welfare. For these people the Emperor's interests are their interests as well. These Imperial clients are the functionaries that support the Emperor, his bureaucrats, ministers, officers, Reiksguard, and other government officials.

One group in particular has taken a keen interest in the Emperor's continued well being, a group known as the Gryphon's Umbra, or the Umbra for short. The Gryphon's Umbra has one primary goal: to protect the institution of the 'Emperor'. The Gryphon's Umbra constantly intervene in plots and conspiracies against the Emperor and have saved the lives of Emperors a number of times, yet none but the Gryphon's Umbra

Some observers have noted a shadowy group around influence. the Emperor, but this group is dismissed as merely cronies of the Emperor.

The Umbra should not be mistaken for being personally devoted to the reigning Emperor, but rather their loyalty is to the institution rather than the individual. Indeed if an Emperor should be deemed weak, than it is the Gryphon's Umbra's responsibility to remove an ineffective Emperor and make way for a candidate that they feel is more suitable according to their criteria. With this in mind, they have long developed various plots to dispose of such an Emperor while remaining beyond suspicion. The truth of the matter is that this group's minor success has lulled its members into a false sense of confidence and they see themselves as the final say in what is good for the Empire.

History

It was formed during the independence of the his position seriously. Wasteland when the Emperor's few able administrators should remain close to the Emperor to ensure that such events never again occur.

with its membership carefully monitoring assistants and have been compromised at times; one member was for their own political and noble machinations. peers for those that might prove worthy candidates. killed by an unknown group of suspected conspirators, The Gryphon's Umbra has continued to carefully watch another hidden away in an asylum by concerned **Means and Ends** they disagree.

Membership

The core membership of the Umbra is never more than unnoticed, for if their political enemies or even their persistent or powerful are observed until some sordid a dozen souls. Over the years the actual membership allies discovered them their lives would be forfeit. detail is noted that can be used to blackmail or reveal

Lector Kaslan of the Cult of Sigmar. The Gryphon's to be part of their formal and professional duties, Umbra has always had members of the Cult of Sigmar, providing them with ideal cover for their meetings. since they have a vested interest in keeping the institution of Emperor under their control. With the Influence exception of Arch Lector Kaslan's assistant (and co- The Gryphon's Umbra has a powerful but restricted Cult of Sigmar.

Umbra is the Captain of the Reiksguard, a man of noble power still eludes the group for much of the power in birth whose position is critical to the Umbra's influence. politics lies in the hands of the various Electors over Although his title is primarily a political one, he takes whom the Umbra has no direct power at all.

feared that Emperor Dieter's incompetence would One of the least powerful conspirators is the Emperor's within the Imperial Bureaucracy, but their power is result in the collapse of The Empire and the loss of Personal Physician, Doktor Hoeckmann. Although he miniscule compared to the influence wielded by their own political power; consequently they played a has relatively little influence in the Gryphon's Umbra powerful noble families, including the Electors who small but important role in the resulting change of and his influence on the Emperor is unremarkable, his will truly decide who the next Emperor should be. As Emperor. The conspirators then decided that a group position is strategic for the future plans of the Umbra. the Gryphon's Umbra is composed primarily of minor

Secrecy

Since then the Gryphon's Umbra has continued to exist, none have revealed their role. Some of its members organisation for fear they will use the Gryphon's Umbra group.

are aware of their efforts on the Emperor's behalf. has seen a slight decline in its individual members' Since they normally work closely together in their work and share similar social circles, they are an intimate group with strong bonds. When they do meet, none Today the acknowledged leader of the group is Arch suspect conspiracy, simply perceiving their interactions

conspirator) who is also a former Church Inquisitor, influence in the politics of the Empire. The Umbra no other members of the church are aware of the group. has significant influence over the Emperor and his Arch Lector Kaslan personal motivation is to ensure apparatus, but is careful to influence him in a discreet that the Emperor continues to work closely with the fashion. Their power over the Emperor is subtle and subdued, but should they wish to dispose of the Emperor, few others are so well placed. Although the The other highly esteemed member of the Gryphon's Emperor's life is in their hands, significant political

The Gryphon's Umbra can influence appointments nobles and other people of similar status, their influence within the noble dynasties is limited. They are however All Umbra members take a vow of secrecy and to date unwilling to allow powerful nobles into their

both the Emperor and his enemies, and have at times Gryphon's Umbra conspirators, and the most recent In their role to protect the Emperor the Gryphon's played roles in not only undermining Emperor's exposure was a member dismissed from the Imperial Umbra relies upon many of the institutions already in enemies, but those policies of the Emperor's with which court for corruption while siphoning funds for the place, the Reiksguard, Sigmarite and Imperial Inquisitors, and Witch Hunters. For political foes, the Gryphon's Umbra relies upon spreading of rumour, The Gryphon's Umbra has a strong incentive to remain hearsay, and the like to discredit foes. Those who are publicly through interested third parties. If there is no evidence of wrongdoing, evidence of such misdeeds may be planted.

Their own political power is important, and to maintain this the Gryphon's Umbra relies heavily upon favouring its own membership, giving each other and their allies recommendations, pay raises, and advancement to higher positions. They use patronage and favours to win influence over their peers and equals and allow the Gryphon's Umbra to exploit the resulting obligations owed by non-members.

Resources

Although the Gryphon's Umbra never number over twelve, they have considerable resources at their disposal. The membership is capable of mobilising military forces such as the Reiksguard if they ever felt such measures were necessary. Arch Lector Kaslan is capable of drawing upon not only the Sigmarite Priesthood, but also the associated groups.

The group also employs the Imperial bureaucratic machinery as cover for its activities and a means to control others. Enemies find themselves hindered by the need to fill out this or that form, acquire permission from distant authorities, attain affidavits to be signed by non-existent functionaries, pay outrageous fines or fees, and any number of other bureaucratic obstacles. Allies on the other hand will find that things can be accomplished for them effortlessly.

Furthermore the Gryphon's Umbra can rely upon its former members to come out of retirement to offer advice and assist in exerting influence. It should not be surprising to note that all the Umbra's members retire from their government positions extremely wealthy with large pensions. The current members themselves have amassed a small fortune between themselves, and the group has access to large sums that can be acquired quickly without raising suspicions.

Historical Conspiracies

The GM may want to introduce conspiracies that The Conspiracy that Continues changed the history of the world, some fictional, Possibly one of the longest conspiracies in existence

Conspiracies that Were

Some already exist, such as the secession of Adumson estate in southern Middenland. The Marienburg, the Pleasure Cults of Ulthuan, or the conspirator at the heart of this was, or still is a former machinations of the Skaven that created the crusades. advisor for a noble in the Reikland, Berhnardt The GM can create some of his own to give his Schlosssel. Imprisoned and persecuted by Sigmarites campaign world a unique feel. Perhaps the elevation he eventually fled his prison an embittered man and of Sigmar to god was not true but a conspiracy by retired to estates run by an Ulrican noble who ran a nobility to hold onto their power. Perhaps the small chapter house for the Wolves of Ulric, a small collapse of the warp gates resulted from a secret pact knightly order. A man broken by his torture, he was between Elves and Daemons, or the Dwarves had unable to participate in their military campaigns, but secret assistance from the Dark Elves during the he found a means of spreading his hate. Dwarf-Elf war. The repercussions of these sorts of

Conspiracies that Never Were

and weakened nobility.

than coincidence linked by suspicion or ignorance, divine presence. but can be just as powerful and dangerous as any true conspiracy.

some real, some no-one will ever know the truth of. is one conceived a thousand years ago, whose creator still carries out his conspiracy, known as the Order of Wolves' Teeth and is centred in the heart of the

actions should still resonate in the Old World today. Bernhardt discovered a secret passage way between the walls that ran behind the Chapel of Ulric. He carefully chiselled holes in the wall behind the chapel Some commonly accepted conspiracies may be decorations and during late night devotionals would completely false. Perhaps it is commonly believed whisper forth his charges that Sigmar was a heresy that the nobility supported and used the Emperor and an affront to Ulric. Those praying late at night Boris the Incompetent as a puppet and that the blame would often be struck by these revelations and the for that dark era lies upon the shoulders of the locale soon became a hotbed of anti-Sigmar nobility, when in truth the Emperor was just as sentiments. One night Bernhardt died in the secret responsible for what happened as the nobility, passageway, but so great was his will that the Nonetheless Imperial allies point to this as an remained there, whispering his secrets. He wanders example for the need of a powerful Imperial family the secret passageways listening in on conversations about the current politics of The Empire and continues to whisper his venomous proclamations People will constantly fabricate secret and shadowy about Sigmar. The Adumson estate has become an forces in the past as a rationale for much of the Ulrican Monastery and the pronouncements in the suffering in the world, and thus conspiracies abound. Chapel are taken as the word of Ulric, and the icy However, few of these conspiracies are little more cold ever present by the altar as proof of the Ulric's

Questions Regarding Secret Societies

A GM can use the following questions to help develop a cult or secret society.

History

Who founded the society?

When was it founded?

Why create this society?

What happened to the founders?

What myths surround the society?

Society Identity

What is the society's official name?

What is the society's common use name?

By what name do outsiders refer to the society?

What language do its members use?

What symbols do they use?

How do members recognise one another?

Leadership

Who is the society's leader(s) today?

How much power do the leaders have within the society?

How much power do the leaders have outside the society?

What schisms exist between the leaders?

What differences exist between leaders and the membership?

What secrets do the leaders know the members don't?

Agenda

What is the society's agenda today?

What measures does it take to fulfil its agenda?

What other related agendas does the society pursue?

Who would be opposed to their goal?

Membership

How and where does it acquire its membership?

How many members does it have?

How are they initiated?

What is expected of the membership?

What are the responsibilities of the members?

What are the benefits of membership?

What rituals do they perform?

Do they possess any artefacts or tomes, magical or non-magical?

Is there a hierarchy in the organisation?

How do members leave the society?

How are relations between former and current members?

How does the society fund itself?

What measures does the society take to conceal its identity?

What rules govern behaviour among members?

How is morale in the society?

Assets

Academic Influence/Power?

Criminal Influence/Power?

Flunkies/Lackies/Patsies

Hired help? (Mercenaries, thugs, wizards?)

Information?

Lackeys?

Legal Influence/Power?

Magical Artefacts?

Magical Influence/Power?

Military Influence/Power?

Money?

Political Power?

Popular Influence/Power?

Professional Influence/Power?

Religious Artefacts?

Religious Influence/Power?

Zealous Membership (Willing to die, or other acts)

Society Relations

What differences exist between members and leaders?

What differences exist between members?

What measures do members take to conceal their identities from each other?

What betrayals have occurred in the past?

What betrayals are brewing currently?

What happens to members betraying the society's trust?

Relations with Outsiders

Would society disapprove of this society?

Is this society persecuted?

Is this society used by another?

What enemies does this society have?

What measures does this society take to maintain secrecy?

Do any outsiders know of the society?

What happens to outsiders who learn of the society?

Is this society illegal?

Does this society know of other secret societies?

