

KNOWING +HE CAN+

By now, a poor sod might have gone barmy from all the cant he's tumbled into, and maybe he's wondering if he's just a leatherhead as he tries to read it. Well, there's a dark to it that any cutter can master, and pretty soon he'll be rattling his bone-box like a proper blood. Why, he'll be able to give the chant to a high-up man and tell a cross-trading knight to pike it.

Huh?

Readers who've made it this far have undoubtedly noticed the slang that's used throughout the PLANESCAPE material. It may be fun to read, but sometimes it sure can get confusing. What's given below is a glossary of all those odd expressions and terms that pop up throughout the text.

There's more to it than that, though. The "Voice" of the PLANESCAPE setting is unique, and it's part of what sets the tone for adventures. To get the most from the PLANESCAPE campaign setting, the DM should really use these expressions on his players. It'll make the world come alive for the players. After all, having the angry factol say, "There's this barking thief I want scragged or put in the dead-book," is a lot more colorful than just, "I want you to get this thief, dead or alive." To help DMs get used to using this color, the glossary also tries to show when and how to use these terms to best effect.

First, though, a note. Too much colorful slang in a single sentence is going to sound silly – like the first paragraph of this section. The DM doesn't have to use all these terms at every possible opportunity. He doesn't have to use any of them if he thinks they're stupid. Use what sounds natural, and don't force the rest. Feel free to add new terms and expand on old ones.

For those who want to expand the PLANESCAPE vocabulary, here's a tip to help keep the tone focused. A lot of the terms here came from the extremely colorful slang of thieves, swindlers, and beggars in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. 'Course, not every possible term was used. Most are just too cryptic to modern ears and modern times – words like jarkman, bridle-cull, figging law, and worse. Choose terms that sound slightly odd and antiquated but still have an edge to them. If it's a historical phrase, don't be afraid to twist the meaning or the way it's used.

ADDLE-COVE. A not-particularly friendly way to call someone an idiot, as in, "Did you hear what that addle-coved wizard wanted us to do?"

BAR THAT. An almost-polite way to say "shut up" or "don't talk about that." It's quick and to the

point, and it can be used as a warning: "Bar that, Jannos, there's Dustmen over there."

BARMIES. The insane folks, especially those in Sigil, who've been "touched" by the impossible bigness of the planes.

BASHER. A neutral reference to a person, usually a thug or fighter.

BERK. A fool, especially one who got himself into the mess when he should have known better.

BIRDCAGE. A cell or anything that compares to it.

BLEAKER. A faction, one of those despondent members of the Bleak Cabal.

BLINDS. The dead-ends of the Mazes, it also means anything impossible or hopeless, as in, "He'll hit the blinds if he tries lying to the factol."

BLOOD. Anyone who's an expert, sage, or a professional at his work. A champion gladiator can be a blood, just like a practiced sorcerer. Calling someone a blood is a mark of high respect.

BOB. The business of cheating someone, whether it's of their cash, honor, or trust. A good guide to Sigil will warn a cutter when someone's bobbing him. Thieves boast that they "bobbed some leatherhead on the street."

BONE-BOX. The mouth, named because of its teeth, fangs, or whatever. "Stop rattling your bone-box," is telling a berk to lay off the threats or bragging.

BUB. Booze, wine, or ale that's usually cheap and barely drinkable.

BUBBER. A drunk, especially if he, she, or it has fallen on hard times. Bubbers don't get any sympathy from most folks in Sigil.

BURG. Any town smaller than Sigil, either in size or spirit – at least that's how folks from Sigil see it. Other bodies don't always agree.

CAGE, THE. This is a common nickname for Sigil, used by locals. It comes from BIRDCAGE (see above), so it's a pretty harsh judgment on the place.

CASE. The house or place where a cutter lives.

CHAOSMEN. A nickname for the Xaositects. It does a pretty good job of describing their point of view.

CIPHER. A faction nickname of the Transcendent Order, because most folks don't know what they're talking about.

CLUELESS, THE. The folks who just don't get it, usually primes. Use this on a planar and it's likely there'll be a fight.

CHANT, THE. An expression that means news, local gossip, the facts, the moods, or anything else about what's happening. "What's the chant?" is a way of asking what's latest information a basher's heard.

CROSS-TRADE. The business of thieving, or anything else illegal or shady. "A cross-trading scum" is a thief who's probably angered the Mercykillers.

CUTTER. A term that refers to anybody, male or female, that a person wants. It does suggest a certain amount of resourcefulness or daring, and so it's a lot better than calling somebody a berk.

DARK. Anything that's secret is said to be a dark. "Here's the dark of it," is a way of saying "I've got a secret and I'll share it with you."

DUSTMEN. One of the factions of Sigil. They believe everybody's dead. See *A Player's Guide to the Planes* for more information.

FATED, THE. A faction of the planes which holds that if they've got something, it's because it belongs to them. This doesn't always sit well with others.

GARNISH. A bribe, as in "Give the irritating petty official a little garnish and he'll go away."

GIVE 'EM THE LAUGH. Escape or slip through the clutches of someone. Robbing a tanar'ri's house and not getting caught is giving him the laugh.

GIVE THE ROPE. What happens to condemned criminals who don't manage to give the law the laugh. Usually thieves are the only folks who use this term.

GODSMEN. A faction of the planes that believes everybody's got the chance to be a power.

GUVERN. A faction in Sigil that believes knowing physical laws will give a cutter power over everything. Not the kind of folks to argue logic with.

HARMONIUM. A faction of the planes. "Do it our way or no way," could be its slogan.

HIGH-UP MAN. This is what everybody – man, woman, and thing – in Sigil wants to be: somebody with money and influence. Factols are automatically considered high-up men. It's bad form to call one's self this; it's a phrase others bestow.

INDEPS. A faction of the planes whose members live their lives as they please, with no allegiance to others. Some folks figure that makes them untrustworthy right there, but they're pretty useful as mercenaries.

JINK. The goal of the poor: money or coins. "That's going to take a lot of jink!" for an expensive bit of garnishing.

KIP. Any place a cutter can put up his feet and sleep for a night, especially cheap flophouses in the Hive or elsewhere. Landlords of good inns get upset if a fellow calls their place a kip.

KNIGHT OF THE POST or **KNIGHT OF THE CROSS-TRADE.** A thief, cheat, and a liar – clearly not a compli-

ment unless, of course, that's what the basher wants to be.

LEAFLESS TREE. The gallows, which is where some berks wind up after they've been scragged.

LEATHERHEAD. A dolt, a dull or thick-witted fellow. Use it to call somebody an idiot.

LOST. Dead. "He got lost," means he ain't coming back without a *resurrection*.

LOST, THE. A faction in the planes, properly called the Athar. Its members hold that there are no true powers. The local priests would like to see them *get lost*, like the meaning above.

MAZES, THE. The nasty little traps the Lady of Pain creates for would-be dictators. It's also come to mean any particularly well-deserved punishment, as in, "It's the Mazes for him and I can't say I'm sorry."

MERCYKILLERS. A faction of the planes that believes there is an absolute justice.

MUSIC. A price a cutter usually doesn't want to pay, but has to anyway. "Pay the music or you'll never find your way out of here."

OUT-OF-TOUCH. Outside the Outer Planes. A body who's on the Elemental Plane of Water is "out-of-touch." This vernacular comes from Sigil, which is considered to be the center of the multiverse by those who adopted this phrase.

OUT-OF-TOWN. Like the phrase above, this one's used by Sigilians to describe a body who's on the Outlands.

PEEL. A swindle, con, or a trick is a peel. It's often used as a verb. Peeling a tanar'ri is usually a bad idea.

PEERY. Suspicious and on one's guard. What a basher should be if he thinks he's going to get peeled.

PIKE IT. A useful, all-purpose phrase, as in, "Take a short stick and pike it, bubber."

PUT IN THE DEAD-BOOK. Dead. Some people have others "put in the dead-book."

SCRAGGED. Arrested or caught.

SENSATES. Nickname for the Society of Sensation, a faction. Its members believe life's got to be experienced to be understood.

SIGNERS. A faction nickname for the Sign of One. Its members figure everybody is the center of their own universe.

SOD. An unfortunate or poor soul. Use it to show sympathy for an unlucky cutter or use it sarcastically for those who get themselves into their own mess.

TURN STAG. To betray somebody or use treachery. Saying "he's turned stag" is about the worst thing that can be said about a cutter.