

## GODS, DEMONS & RACES

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- ❖ RANKS OF ASCENDANCY
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- ❖ THE VERDANT MELODY OF WISDOM AND TRANQUILITY: A TRIBUTE TO MYAR

- ❖ PAGE FROM THE DEEPS
- ❖ THE ARGENT POTUS
- ❖ ON MOON ELVES
- ❖ DREAM JOURNAL OF SIR RANDOLPH CARTER PART 3
- ❖ KIED HAVERFORTH, ASCENDANT OF MYAR - ACCOUNTS OF THE GREAT WAR
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- ❖ MANUSCRIPT GUARDED BY GOBLINS
- ❖ MAGICALLY PROTECTED JOURNAL PART 4
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- ❖ THE CONCEPTION OF SUN ELVES & MOON ELVES
- ❖ RESENTFULLY WRITTEN NOTE

#### THE SEVEN ARCANE GUIDELINES

1, 3, 4, 6, 7

#### NOTES AND SCRAPS FOUND ON THE ISLAND

*We found this book by some Nomad trader by the port. Says it was special, practically gave it to me for free. I'm sure the crew would love this, maybe even some of the passengers, if they could read. Just don't get saltwater on it you bilge rats. – Captain Red Beard*

# GODS, DEMONS, & RACES

## GODS OF VEHLDATHIN

**Vykost**, God of Seas, Tempest, Exploration, The Unknown

The typical God of Sea Elves and Raiders, and often Nomads and Savage Orcs, Vykost believes in might makes right, the strong can bend the waves to their will and explore barbarous coasts, taking what they need as prizes. Worshipers of Vykost tend to adorn their places of worship with the bones of worthy kills, seashells, and driftwood. Vykost's Holy Symbol is that of a ship sailing through a dark turbulent ocean against a red sky.

**Roya**, God of Magic, Dreams, The Subconscious Mind

The Mejieri and The Bask favor Roya overall, choosing to adapt to the winds of magic and the cryptic knowledge of dreams. It is said that the subconscious mind is our well into the arcane forces of the world and Roya dedicates to the mastery of that potential. Worshipers of Roya tend to adorn their places of worship with crystals and charts that map out the stars. Roya's Holy Symbol is that of a skull with swirling arcane energies inside of it, surrounded by floating runes.

**Ozymahd**, God of Sun, Moon, Cycle, Time

Ozymahd is one of the eldest gods being worshiped by both Sun Elves, and Moon Elves, the endless cycle of time and its seasons, the ebb and flow of history and generations are all under his domain. Sometimes viewed as cold and calculating Ozymahd knows that time heals all wounds and conquers all kingdoms. Worshipers of Ozymahd tend to adorn their places of worship with sand timers, sundials, and obelisks denoting the seasonal patterns. Ozymahd's Holy Symbol is that of a resplendent sand timer, flanked by the sun and moon.

**Alara**, God of Fate, Luck, Commerce

Alara can be seen as a trickster god, a cunning god, a silver-tongued god, who's worshippers can be found in any race that believes in good trade makes for stronger families. Fate and Luck are but two sides of the same coin to Alara, either knowing when the hand you are dealt is one that you must play wisely, or one that you must sneak a few extra cards into. Worshipers of Alara tend to adorn their places of worship with coins of various nations, and ornate vases. Alara's Holy Symbol is that of coins floating in front of a constellation.

**Myar**, God of Knowledge, Peace, Songs, Nature

Myar is a common god to be worshiped, one to be praised during every holiday, and most celebrations. Their worshippers can usually be found with musical instruments and a headdress of antlers, or a mask of the same sort. Many times, that Aiko would be praised, Myar's name is not far off. Harmony with the world, tranquility and mending bridges that were burned many years ago are the pastimes of those who avidly worship Myar. Worshipers of Myar tend to adorn their places of worship with musical instruments, potted plants, and songbooks. Myar's Holy Symbol is that of an instrument, typically a lute, resting against a small table with a songbook.

**Callen**, God of Conflict, Agriculture, Tools

Callen is the champion of the common man, a hero of the people, those who would defend the homes they have built for their families worship Callen avidly. Their worshippers venerate hammers as being the most efficient tool for both construction and defense. Many Civilized Orcs and Hill Dwarves name Callen as the most important god, with many formal military groups thinking the same. Where Vykost raids the lands, Callen defends them. Worshipers of Callen tend to adorn their places of worship with wreaths of wheat, maps of the world, and weapons of war. Callen's Holy Symbol is that of crossed Warhammers, flanked by fields of wheat.

**Aiko**, God of Hearth, Home, Love, Society

Mother of Dwarven kind, and first lover to Callen, Aiko is the patron god of all that is good in society, the warm homes, the harvest festivals, the joyous weddings. Hand in hand with Myar she gives many a reason to keep hoping, believing that the sun will rise another day and take away their pains. Kindness and nurturing are second nature to those that worship Aiko. Worshipers of Aiko tend to adorn their places of worship with bowls of fruit to share, pleasant candles and honey treats, and an open seat for whoever may be stopping by. Aiko's Holy Symbol is that of a stone hearth, old and weathered, but burning bright to welcome those who seek shelter.

**Qiron**, God of Medicine, Poison, Healers

Qiron is a god that is not always welcomed to see, a symbol on a clinic may mean your life is in good hands, or that a swift end will end your suffering. Those who worship Qiron acknowledge the frailty of life, how close we all are to the end of our stories, and how the only difference between poison and medicine is the dosage. Qiron is the most recent god to have an Ascension occur in 1401. Worshipers of Qiron tend to adorn their places of worship with medical scrolls, vials of potions and poisons, and the odd plant. Qiron's Holy Symbol is that of a butterfly, half vibrant and beautiful, half pustulent and rotten.



**Hastur**, God of all Light, Truth, Justice

King of Kings, Lord of Lords, he who shelters from darkness and protects the meek. The Kingdom of Quinelle is devoted to Hastur absolutely, with many following one of two philosophies. For good to survive evil must be wiped out, and evil will have no place to take root if good people are made to thrive. Hastur is a demanding god, with little acceptance of failure off the path of the righteous man, good is an active choice in every moment, it does not come easily. Worshippers of Hastur tend to adorn their places of worship with small golden spires, boxes where goods can be donated to the needy, and humble yellow cloth. Hastur's Holy Symbol is that of a White and Gold Spire rising out of a forest, against a blue sky.

**Ahriman, The Many Faced God**, God of Murder, Deception, Cruelty

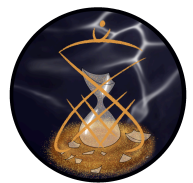
Not much is known of The Many Faced God, but to speak their name is to draw their eye, and where their eye goes, darkness soon follows. Rumors run rampant about those who would mock The Many Faced God openly and be struck down where they stood but a moment later. Evil has many faces and those that worship learn to hide their true motives until the time is right, after all the honey tastes sweeter when you anger the bees. Worshippers of The Many Faced God tend to adorn their places of worship with those they sacrifice to their god, man or animal. Ahriman's Holy Symbol is that of a pallid mask with many eyes creeping out from behind it.



## KNOWN DEMON LORDS



Balistaad, Rejected by Ozymahd, Lord of Dust  
Oleandus, Rejected by Aiko, Lord of Envy  
Clameldon, Rejected by Roya, Lord of Sloth  
Renard, Rejected by Alara, Lord of Deception  
Charybdis, Rejected by Vykost, Lord of The Whirlwind



*Well, I' ll be damned, this wasn' t here this morning. Looks like that Nomad truly gave us an exciting trinket on our long voyage. I should show this to Canaan or Grimdall. If any of you happen to see them, tell them about this book. Sailed around the whole Vehl for 40 years, and just now do I get a magical book. - Captain Red Beard*

# RACES OF VEHL DATHIN

**Humans**, these are adaptable creatures coming in all different shapes, colors, and creeds. Their morality bends to suit their needs, where some worship The Many Faced God, and others Hastur. They manage to survive even the harshest of climates and conditions, some would say like roaches. They can be generalized into the four most common tropes amongst their kind...

**Nomads**, the Nomads are castaways, travelers, and caravanners. They live a life untied to any physical domain. They are known for their ability to move in and out of areas almost unseen, setting up their tents or wagon trains outside of cities without the locals ever expecting it. Their oral histories and traditions go back further than most history books, but where is the line between fact and fiction? Did Bolo the Bold have his teeth stolen by a sphinx? Or did he simply lose them to the tabby in the alley? Some cast out Battlemasters do their best to retain their humble honor as sell swords, some wayward Arcanist may seek a life of solitude to perfect their arts, and some Ascendants may decide that isolation brings one closer to God.

**Raiders**, these brutal Humans ply their trade by the width of an ax swing. Many can easily think that highwaymen or simple bandits would qualify as Raiders, but no, these men are different. Strict moral codes and tradition bind them, while rumors of blood rituals and flaming sacrifice swirl around survivors of their battles. These could merely be stories that villagers tell to keep their children in their beds. In truth these Raiders find strength to be a deciding factor in many arguments, preferring to be cunningly brutal, then brutally cunning. They have many tattoos to show off their deeds, and their hair is braided in a way to tell their stories, with their lives and families woven into their hair. A bald Raider is a being that has given up all semblance of hope, declaring one final suicidal quest before he may return to his tribe. They commonly fight with Sea Elves and Savage Orcs for the best raiding grounds.

**Prinlanders**, Citizens of this bustling city have a different outlook than most others in The Vehl, they have forsaken tradition and heritage in exchange for the glittering shine of coin. Low ranking nobles and desperate commoners seeking a better life flock to this bustling trade city, coming from all walks of life and many different towns and cities, upon entering the city those old ties are shed off for the new constraints of contracts and merchant guilds. It is not unheard of for grizzled veterans warning newcomers to avoid the 20 year guard contracts, no matter how the sign on bonus looks. No matter what is said, or what they witness, there is always another looking to make coin. Their attire can be considered garish and eccentric, but it is a clear way to show off their wealth.

**Xianren**, these mysterious peoples live secluded in their desert city, protected by the southern mountains and the south sea pass between Canatha and Yarim. They serve their Emerald Queen and ply their trades with hyper precision, becoming masters of their craft. Those who leave their sacred cities to seek the outside world are often banned from ever returning, save for the border towns to drop off supplies for their families. They are honor bound to the laws of their land, always humbly obeying their caste system. The few Xianren that choose to become adventurers strive to become the greatest of their fighting style with silent pride.

**Mejieri**, the Mejieri tribe left the Kingdom of Quinelle when Radament the Wise ascended, knowing that her home in the desert would be her new holy land, the goddess of magic would choose them as her favored. Their devotion paid off, living in the harshest of deserts the winds of magic swept through favorably for the Mejieri tribe. Now, after hundreds of years they have become something of a capital destination, many Arcanists coming to seek their libraries or their crystal gardens, the art of enchanting weapons was nearly perfected by them before the Great War.

**Quinellites**, the Humans of the Kingdom of Quinelle are proud supporters of their royal family, they pay their taxes, and they go to their churches every day to give a short prayer. Ever since Priest King Ferdinand drove the Blight from their lands and ascended to the Halls of Hastur, they have been at the forefront of Human development. Divine magic is perfected here, men and women train to be priests and paladins to become questing knights like their fabled King of old, but as all wise men know, legacies never remain so pure. Greed, opulence, and a large class divide make living in the kingdom difficult, the small folk say the church unifies them through faith, or was it obedience?

**Dwarves**, these stout folks are said to be the first children of Callen and Aiko. They generally retain their proud family traditions, working with their hands and creating far easier than they destroy, much to the envy of some of the other races. It is rumored that the Hill Dwarves taught the Humans of Quinelle how to shape castles from stone, swords from iron. Some Dwarves have sought out peaceful lives, living in the cities of the other races and adapting well, plying their crafts to help the locals, while others, angered from what they see as neglect from their parents drove into the darkness below the earth, angry and out of sight from the judgment of the surface world.

**Gnomes**, these small Dwarves are sometimes called Halflings or Tinkerers, they gave up the earth of their ancestors for the homes of the other races. Their eyes have adapted to the bright sunlight, and the small tools they use. Expert craftsmen, they are stereotyped as watchmakers, but they have been known to create steam powered mechanisms, metals that return to shape, and even drills to clear out land. When a family of Gnomes moves into a city, the rulers know they are going to be at the edge of a golden age.

**Hill Dwarves**, these are the most common of the Dwarven folk, their rune magic infusing their structures to last through any earthquake or storm. A favored target for the more brutal of the races, they are known for their vast riches of gold and iron hoarded away in their great keeps. They are the most practical of their kin, not worrying about right or wrong, but what will help the family most. To keep the families from constantly warring over this fact, they have adopted a strict set of honor bound codes and traditions, some even ridiculous. Any Dwarf known to break these traditions is almost immediately exiled to wander the world nameless. Some rumors even persist that they throw the worst offenders into the deepest parts of the earth.

**Mountain Dwarves** do not let their name fool you, these wrathful beings share little with their above ground cousins. When others ascended to their parent's divinity, they grew angry, spiteful that they lost their favor. They retreated far into the earth, honeycombing the mountains that dot the land, using the molten earth to fuel their hateful machines. Their weapons are said to strike fear into even the worst of the Deep's denizens, their armor thick and heavy like their cavern walls, these Dwarves practice fire magic above all else, burning their victims alive. Rumors of a great ritual, where they burn their captives in a golden bull until the steam leaks out of the cracks of the mountain, haunt many dreams of those who have seen the magma vents from the mountain passes.

**Ice Dwarves**, now these Dwarves are an enigma, some say they are descendants of Rorek the Strong's northern expedition, lost to the shifting ice. Their pale white skin and scraggly beards accentuate their stern, cold faces. These Dwarves are not known for their humor, or their love, they seem to show no emotions, even remaining cool to the touch in the hottest of environments. They are not known to back down once their mind is made up, even if it means risking their lives. There are no records of anyone seeing more than two of these beings in any one place at any one time. Rumors are that Rorek's expedition found more than they were looking for, and it cursed them by stealing their emotions. To the caravanners that have helped transport them, there is no better sight than watching an Ice Dwarf cleave a Raider in two in a single blow.

**Orcs**, these wretched creatures are known around the world for their brutality, almost every Orc seen has a love for battle, for feats of strength. Breaking bones and breaking walls seem to be their favored past times, anger has found a home in their bloodline. How they exact their savagery is varied to the locations the tribe settled.

**Goblins**, easily the worst of the Orcs, at the end of The Great War the Orcs closest to The Many Faced God withdrew into the dark caverns of the earth. Drove of hungry, bloodthirsty Orcs pushed past the Kobolds. Past the Mountain Dwarves, before finally being stopped by the Moon Elves. Constantly skulking around their underground homes, they have developed particularly virulent toxins to apply to their weapons, stealing whatever they can from their victims and eating the rest, scraps of metal and bits of leather are bolted directly to their skin to offer crude protection and camouflage in the depths below. Some villages even tell stories of Goblin raids in the middle of the night, carrying off victims to terrible fates.

**Savage Orcs**, from the hot jungles to the frozen fir trees of the north, Savage Orcs plague the land ensuring every caravan needs guards, every Nomad needs a map, and every traveler needs a prayer to keep them safe. These large brutes wear the furs and skins of their defeated foes, eating the flesh and taking grim trophies. Some tell tales that this gives them strength, taking the life force of those they beat in battle. The Savage Orcs are very close to their tribes, knowing that only the strongest lead them to the greatest of battles, and every Savage Orc waits for the day that they are the strongest. Arguments are settled in bloody combat, where truly might makes right, however it wins the fight.

**Wyrd Ones**, these are rare creatures indeed, found gibbering and dancing their way, usually alone, but sometimes followed by a pack of eager Orcs dressed in the most outlandish of clothing. Buckets and feathers and colorful paints decorate their gray skin as the Wyrd One dances and chants their futures, often telling tales of greatness and glory, often ending in very unexpected ways for their followers. Their followers say they can see the future, the strings of fate untangled by the Winds of Magic, the Wyrd One itself could hardly explain it themselves. Their penchant for channeling the flowing Winds of Magic is renowned even to the most experienced Sun Elf, few mock their power openly, lest a crackling bolt of energy splatter them across existence.

**Civilized Orcs**, now I am sure you are asking yourself who civilized an Orc, but they came willingly. Seeking to prove their strength above all races by joining their armies, by out smithing their artisans, by beating their strongmen in competitions, they have found reward, and even fame for what less Civilized Orcs would see as a challenge. They believe in the rule of law, the rule of order, and the rule of a strong sword. Some, tempted by wine and soft pillows, even become fat and lazy, bragging about their glory days that are now long behind them.

**Elves**, born from the very arcane winds that flow through the world, Elves were once seen as the pinnacle of civilization. Their rise to power came due to their natural mastery over the arcane. This innate mastery came at a price. Their long lives led them to be proud and vain, causing brutal disagreements in their culture from the use of magic to the proper worship of their gods. Devastating civil wars caused the Elven race to scatter to the different corners of the world, losing their glorious civilization to the sands of time.

**Wood Elves**, Wood Elves live in the deepest part of the forest or jungle and often use their innate magics to hide their home further. They were reclusive and nearly impossible to find unless they wanted you to know where they were. Hiding from the world's threats does not always make you safe from them, isolation often means no one will come to your aid. With more and more Wood Elves being sighted one can only wonder what happened to their treetop homes.

**Sea Elves**, Sea Elves are those who live on the coast. Many are seen as savages and those who use magic are often referred to as sea-witches. They have a tendency to raid others to take what they want and among other Elves are seen as outcasts for their often violent ways. With their homes being more out on the open sea than on land many sailors have made stories about how they live at the bottom of the ocean and grow tails when they need to swim. An old story once said, "beware the Sea Elves for their witches will turn your children into seals and eat them for supper."

**Sun Elves**, Sun Elves are known for their pride. Revering the god Ozymahd and believing their power to read the stars and foresee the future come from his blessings. They have built their temple cities over hundreds of years and are the last great beacon of ancient Elven culture. They are one of the most active factions of Elves, often working with the other races to ensure balance in all things since the Great War, their pride keeps them from forming truly impactful alliances.

**Moon Elves**, Moon Elves are one of the true terrors of the deep. They were the first of the races to dive deep underground, believing the beams of moonlight that sneak down into the depths of the mountain are the purest of Ozymahd's light. They have punished most life in the catacombs of the world, stealing runes from the Mountain Dwarves, forcing the Goblins into slavery and skinning Kobolds for their hide. The life of a Moon Elf, while not inflicting pain unto others, is one filled with violence and uncertainty and most tend to have lost some sanity due to the madness of the depths below. Rumors rise through the depths like vapors about a hidden world, a new moon down below our waking world, where the Moon Elves conduct their foulest rituals.

**Stone Elves**, an enigmatic faction of Elf, Stone Elves live in the cold peaks of the north. They have resounded themselves to the harsh conditions and have been some of the sturdiest Elves in The Vehl. They follow tribal family lines, where their Czarkons inherit their leadership through blood. While many travel nomadically through the mountain passes, some live in great stone caverns, often being the first line of defense against the hostile races of the deeps. While they welcome outsiders into the edges of their territories, they keep sealed their cold lips about what happens behind their closed walls. Many lost Nomads have been rescued by a Stone Elf caravan traveling the mountain passes.

**Lizard Folk**, Lizard Folk is a loose term for those who resemble in some way the common lizards and even Dragons of ancient myth. Scales, horns, and cold blood have made the other races use this blanket term, while some of them claim to have actual lineage to those old, storied beasts. With each tribe having its own form of ritual and customs, it is rare to see these races unite under one cause. The southern continent of Yarim is host to many of these races, even if others venture out into the world. It is worth noting that the world has not seen a true Dragon for hundreds of years.

**Kobolds**, Kobolds are the very definition of hubris. They have a natural affinity toward magic and will not fail to remind you of that innate talent. They are also deceptively cunning and will trick you into working for them or fighting their battles for them. They are the largest faction of the Lizard Folk, as they breed quickly and use that to their advantage living in the depths of the world. Each Kobold clan has their own specialty with magic and more often than not different clans get absorbed into each other, fight other clans, get wiped out, and repeat the process all over again. They do tend to be cruel to Goblins as one of their favorite pastimes is throwing lightning to make the poor Goblins "dance".

**Dragonborn**, Dragonborn are said to be the direct descendants of the ancient Dragons. Strong, proud, and with a desire to "save the damsel in distress" they see themselves as heroes. They also believe themselves to be better than most other races but will not disrespect other Lizard Folk. However, their hero complex has led to the death of more than one Dragonborn, by folly or disrespect. Those that can handle the mantle of hero can find themselves in positions of great military power, especially in the lands of Xian Zhe, where they have secured a strong relationship with the peoples.

**The Bask**, **The Bask** are often mistaken to be related to dragons, but truth be told no one remembers the progenitors of **The Bask**. Large humanoid frogs, they are a slow and methodical people, moving with precision and poise, fully thinking out their actions before they perform them. It can take hundreds of years for a member of **The Bask** to be considered an adult. With special potions and brews they can enter a deep trance to see the fates of others, further than what any **Wyrd One** or **Sun Elf** can see. The creation of music is one of their favorite acts, often croaking so loudly that it can be heard in the echoes of the jungles they call home.

**The Nightcrawlers**, another race that is mistaken to have dragon blood, the **Nightcrawlers** resemble giant snakes and are the cruelest of the known races, save for **Moon Elves**. They stalk their prey diligently, and often sacrifice them to **The Many Faced God**. In ancient ziggurats they were the first race to form a pact with **The Many Faced God**, worshiping longer than any can remember, a common enemy for those in uncharted lands, some have secret agendas not even their kin know about.

**The Adrongo**, these large lizards resemble common crocodiles, iguanas, and skinks. Sometimes mistaken for magical experiments gone awry, the elders of their people are older than many colleges of magic. They settle in simple villages in the southern swamps and eastern jungles of **Yarim**. Many **Adrongo** tend to revere **The Bask** or **The Nightcrawlers** and serve them as higher beings that commune with powers beyond their comprehension. **The Adrongo** are not the smartest of the races in the world, but their strength and survivability make them welcomed guides and compatriots, if you can get past their odd sense of humor.

**The Unformed**, **The Unformed** are a general term for a race that only recently came about in the world. They come in all different shapes and sizes but resemble various animals. The temperament of **The Unformed** also varies based on the animal they resemble however the curiosity of this young race runs deep in their blood. They can seem almost fearless in exploration and use their sharp senses to navigate even the deadliest of areas with an apparent ease. They may be new to the world, but they have much to offer and will gladly become your guide.

## PLACES OF NOTE

***Arclight***, A region in southeastern Canatha known primarily for Castle Arclight, built around the Arclight College of Magic. Founded by Constantin Arclight in the year 502. Once known as a location dedicated to prestigious and experimental learning, it is now locked in perpetual winter. Victim to its own ambition it still functions as a college for those desperate enough, or unfortunate enough to not be accepted into other academies.

***Bluepit***, A mining operation found just northwest of the Arclight Forest, has been abandoned and restarted several times in its long history. First started by dwarves, plenty of different races have had their hand digging deeper into the earth dredging up new hauls of glowing ore. The ore glows an otherworldly hue of blue and has not been found in any other location in the Vehl. Several times reports of unsafe working conditions, slave labor, or discovery of giant bones have crept out to local taverns, but ownership changes frequently enough that no one can keep their story straight.

***Callen's Fence***, Northern Mountain range, seemingly trapped in winter, cold and harsh, many cave systems.

***Desert of Souls***, located in the Western Desert of Yarim, it is said to be a cursed place by the locals who live just at its edge. They tell of a long-forgotten story in which a woman was unjustly accused of murdering their husband and sentenced to be tied to a pole in the middle of the desert. The husband returned the next day only to hear of his wife's fate. Losing all sense of himself he set out in the desert to rescue the one he loved. Neither were seen again, but on the coolest nights it is said that you can hear the calling of the husband to the wife and the echoed screams of her demise. Since that day, the desert has taken many men and women who brave its sands. Their voices seem to join with that of the husband's weeks after. At least that is what the locals say they hear.

***Draknil Mountains***, Southern Mountain range, rich in natural resources but defended greatly by Xian Zhe and those that live within the mountains.

***Epplessa***, A kingdom found on the southern edge of central Canatha, best known for their high quality craftsmen and skilled fencers. Many chefs in noble courts claim to hail from Epplessa for their ability to use tomatoes despite the poisonous attributes. A renown center for the study of non-magical healing is also based here under the name 'Centro Medico per L'avanzamento delle Conoscenze nella Guarigione e nel Recupero'.

***Fremgas***, A Hill Dwarf academy for architecture and smithing, located near Varenka.

**Gates of Torr,** Located at the edge of Callen's Fence, this fortress was built in the Tundra of Torr during the Great War as a means to watch for any incursions from the north, whether from Raiders or worse. Underfunded now it is a brutal station for those in military service as it means facing worn equipment, starvation, and whatever raiding forces erupt from the mountain caverns.

**Gul-Thrash Fort,** This fortress was built on the northern edge of the Yarim jungles, meant to protect the small port nearby and as a staging ground for expeditions into the jungle. Most commonly manned by Civilized Orcs who are eager to prove themselves against the hostility of Yarim's exotic threats.

**Haywood,** A kingdom based on the eastern coast of Canatha, it is one of the most ancient places found on the continent. Founded by the first elves that walked upon Vehldathin, its construction melds seamlessly with the natural world around it. A shadow of its former glory since the Great War, it is still considered one of the most powerful kingdoms in Vehldathin.

**Iflares,** A southern city of Quinelle known for their mastery of horse breeding and mounted warfare.

**Inemery,** An outpost of the Mejieri at the edge of the Yarim Swamps.

**Isonhull,** the city of Isonhull was built atop the rugged walls of a fjord and is truly a fully modernized curiosity. Its charm is matched by the backdrop of grand forests which have helped shape the city to what it is today. The riches these forests brought were of great importance, but they were also influential when it came to architectural designs as the vast majority of buildings have been built alongside the trees and often incorporate many different forest elements. The skyline is sprinkled with towering skyscrapers and a new one seems to pop up every other week. Daily life isn't too stressful in Isonhull, and it has attracted a lot of attention.

**Kelmhart,** A small town just north of the Adnen River and Cobblecrack lake. The Akatorr Canyon lay just north of the town itself as well. The town contains a sacred temple to Aiko that houses the oldest known perpetual stew, which has its origin tracing back to the third century.

**Mebus,** established on the dark side of a grotto, the metropolis of Mebus is home to gnomes led by Mrs. Bonlebick.

This metropolis was not built by a grotto by accident, as it has escape routes, which is of great importance to the people of Mebus and its success. The metropolis itself looks impressive, with its slate tile rooftops, redwood walls and calming ocean front, Mebus has an inviting atmosphere. The main attraction is the lumber mill, which was built 21 years ago and designed by Gnomes. Mebus has a prospering economy, which is mainly supported by medicine, trade, and cooking, but their biggest strengths are complex crafting and rare animal training. Despite its strengths and weaknesses, Mebus is most likely headed towards a booming future under the leadership of Mrs. Bonlebick. But this remains to be seen.

**Mejikhhan,** A kingdom located between the Draknil Mountains and the Catullus Lake, founded by ascendants of Roya in the 6th century. Once the pinnacle of magical study, they have lost much since the Great War.

**Migdahl Grund,** A massive mountain fortress within the eastern Draknil Mountains. A staging ground for many Mountain Dwarf excursions to the surface of Vehldathin, where they raid and attack many of the surrounding inhabitants.

**Mouth of the Earth,** Large Volcano found in eastern Yarim.

**Olisarni,** The seat of Sea Elf authority located just off of The Moss Coast. While part of the Kingdom of Haywood, they are self-sufficient and tend to focus on their lives on the ocean rather than what occurs on the mainland.

**Prinreik,** This bustling metropolis started as a simple trading post on the King's Road where the Furca River empties into Lake Bodenzanz. This city state is ruled by a council of merchants beholden only to the power that commerce affords.

**Pyramid of Fangs,** A wicked place known to be the home of the Many Faced God's high ascendant, Lord Zog the Father of Serpents. They say the ground around the temple is littered with the bones of those sacrifices at its peak.

**Qago,** A borough of the Kingdom of Quinelle, not so much its own established town but the county of Qago is very well known. Many would tell new travelers to not go here as being such a green adventurer usually does not come home.

**Quinelle,** The gleaming kingdom of Hastur, populated mostly by Humans. While differences between the nobility and the peasantry have caused issues in the past the kingdom remains one of Vehldathin's strongest.

**Ronek's Expedition**, Largely unknown to most of the Vehl, hidden deep within Callen's Fence, this was the last recorded location on the expedition that would lead to the creation of the Ice Dwarves.

**Shanseyut**, A kingdom located between the Desert of Souls and the Yarim swamps. Ruled by the Radiant Emperor, this kingdom is the only civilization found on Yarim. Composed almost entirely of Dragonborn.

**Skagastrund**, A kingdom located on The Chain, a series of islands off the western coast of Canatha. Jarls serve the Konungr as Counts serve their King, though the raiders of The Chain are much fiercer.

**Sronk**, an arid space in the center of Canatha where many Wyrd Ones congregate for mysterious reasons.

**Suytin**, A small trade outpost at the edge of Xian Zhe. On rare occasions it is open to travelers to trade.

**Temple of Estrial**, A large pyramid in eastern Yarim. Home to many venerable Bask, it is rumored to house a magical orrery at its peak.

**The Moss Coast**, The central portion of the eastern coast of Canatha. It is littered with bogs, mangrove trees, and small islands. Only the expert sailors amongst Sea Elves know how to safely navigate the waters here.

**Tredence**, The meeting grounds for many Nomad clans. A vast valley that has the imprint of what feels like a lost town. No established buildings can be seen, but you can feel the presence of the gathering that takes place here. The Nomads use this site to commune and trade and celebrate, after all they survived another stretch of traveling so why shouldn't they thank their Gods and families. Very few people outside the Nomad clans know the date for such a meeting as they always seem to change up the dates to fend off any foreigners from ambushing them with their trades.

**Uzrane**, A city in the northern mountains that serves as a guard post for the Stone elves to prevent outsiders from going further into their lands

**Varenka**, This city state is a central location for many Hill Dwarves. Many followers of Callen make a pilgrimage to the city to learn the proper ways of their faith.

**Wikhutton Sea**, the body of water separating Canatha and Yarim.

**Xian Zhe**, The southernmost kingdom in Canatha, isolated by the Wikhutton Sea and the Draknil Mountains. The Kingdom of Xian Zhe is fiercely isolationist, only allowing others in with the blessing of the enigmatic Crystal Writ. Even the Xianren that are banished from the kingdom keep the secrets of their homeland well guarded.







# JOURNALS, LETTERS, & BOOK EXCERPTS

## CURRENCY ON THE ISLAND, 1420

Trade Bars are more common than coin, due to the ease in which it can be to trade valuable resources like Iron and Copper without the more sophisticated exchange of coin.

The most common Trade Bars on the Island are as follows.

Iron Trade Bars, the standard single unit of Iron, this is the most common one to be found, often used as a baseline for the other's value.

Copper Trade Bars, these are more useful in certain applications, especially to Artificers and Alchemists. A bit rarer, Copper Trade Bars are usually worth 5 Iron Trade Bars.

Silver Trade Bars, the purest of the metals, Silver is often valued for their ability to make weapons that are more effective against certain creatures. Silver Trade Bars are usually worth 15 Iron Trade Bars.

Gold Trade Bars, these are some of the most valued Trade Bars to exist, simply because of its value in The Vehl. Many who do not want to give up their old customs inflate the value of these Trade Bars. Gold Trade Bars are commonly worth 50 Iron Trade Bars.

Other Trade Bars exist, their prices a bit more fluctuating. As they are used for more niche purposes. Some examples are Lead, Cobalt, and Tin.

## THE ROYAL HIERARCHY OF QUINELLE AND THE CHURCH OF HASTUR

High Ascendant of Hastur, Lord of the Kingdom of Quinelle given by the Glory of the Church of Hastur. Once accepting the title, the King will give up all lands and accept the stewardship of the City of Quinelle. Head of State and Church. Is the direct conduit to Hastur. Is technically a theocracy.

The Lord Ascendants of Tower, Seal, Staff, and Sword, The Four ruling "Dukes" of Quinelle. They hold ultimate power other than being under the King and in concert with the Church of Hastur. They uphold justice and law in the Kingdom. Mostly keeping the Peerage to noble and Honorable pursuits. They are key in the ruling of the realm. They hold large swaths of land and have Counts or Earls that serve them in maintaining these lands. They keep their ancestral Counties as personal land. Technically first among equals. Count, these are the true nobility. They own regions of land that the dukes rule over. They are the lowest of nobles that pass land down from generation to generation. They follow Ducal law, promising a portion of wealth and martial strength to those in power above them. It is a delicate balance.

Viscount, Lords whose job it is to inspect the rulership of Barons and their lands. Known to the common folk as Sheriffs. They are above barons in fiscal and secular power. But own only but a parcel of land, by the grace of the count above them.

Baron, Lords that are given title and rulership over Townships. They focus on the local governing of a city and its surrounding villages and lands. These are the lowest of the Greater Nobility. Their family is given inheritance power by the Count, although if they displease him, he may take it away at a moment's notice.

## THE SOUTHLANDS OF XIAN ZHE

Few are permitted to travel to through the southlands of Xian Zhe, trade routes are closely guarded so only those with the Crystal Writ can go through without being set upon by the stone construct warriors and their ruby lions. Rumors exist of gem mines that go through miles of mountain, unbothered by their denizens, and with ample veins of precious material, some say that the workers there are not living beings. Xian Zhe is ruled by the Emerald Queen, an enigmatic and powerful ruler that rarely invites visitors into her lands. Tales of a Dwarven expedition led by Lothar Mynhall that went to set up a mine of their own, met their untimely end to stone creatures crushing them or throwing them into the skies to fall to their dooms. Some spots on the borders still have those bones littering the fields as a warning to those who would dare trespass. The city of Shanseyt is the only known place that maintains a working and thriving trade relationship with the Kingdom of Xian Zhe. Many Dragonborn act as mercenaries and bodyguards for Xian Zhe dignitaries and merchants.

## THE CITY STATE OF PRINREIK

The City State of Prinreik exists in the central part of the continent, guarding several trade routes and mountain passes they are based in trade more than anything else. Ruled over by a council of merchant lords that argue between themselves more than they actually rule the city, the politics of the city are sharpened on the back of the unwary. While almost all trade comes through Prinreik's cities at one point or another they are also well known for their powerful mercenary companies, like Ulmaric's Iron Forged, or The Branderkamp Company. Several skirmishes have happened between Prinreik and other kingdoms of the world, due to their dominion on trade and their tolerance of darker religions and cults. Quinelle has battled it out with them, as well as the Kingdom of Haywood. Many commonfolk travel to Prinreik to start a new life, knowing that they are not held in the caste system of nobility, enter a new world where they are held in the caste system of poverty.

## THE BATTLE OF BRIAR BRIDGE

In the early autumn of 1383, it was reported that an Ogre of great power, had started to assemble his kin into a formal clan. With Ogres normally being solitary creatures, many early reports viewed this as a just hearsay, or perhaps a larger than normal orc tribe gathering. However, in the northern forests it was dreadful no myth, Savage Orc tribes were being eliminated without survivors, only carnage and ruin. The tribes and clans of the northern forests are particularly ornery and proud, rarely will they come seeking help or offer it, despite the mutually beneficial relationship they have with the Town of Kelmhart. The Crack Tooth Clan and The Mud Hound Clan were the first to unite against this growing threat, putting aside their territorial disputes to tackle the fight head on. Thanks to the few survivors that retreated from this massacre we learned that the Ogre Warlord was named Ghalbrukk, and he sought to clear the north of any who would oppose him. The Blue Arm Clan were the ones to approach the town first, officially seeking a parlay with the wary council lord, Lord Montrose. The town assumed this was some trick, that these orcs were seeking to finally invade the town, but the Church of Aiko intervened on their behalf. Ascendant Markus preached that the orc clans of the north have kept most threats away from the farmers lands in the northern forests, seeking only tithes and supplies in return. However aggressive or "uncivilized" they may have been, their lives still mattered in the eyes of Aiko, their presence still needed in the balance of the world.

Lord Montrose gave in to Markus' words, and Chief Trosk sat with them, and consumed the eyes of an Iron Tusk Boar with them, as a peace offering. With The Blue Arms returning to the northern canyon along with a regiment of soldiers and Ascendants of Aiko, they met with The Scuttle Tusk Clan and The Ebon Claw Clan to face this threat at Briar Bridge, a great mass of root and thorns crossing the northern canyon. Hours of brutal battle took place, many being crushed or falling to their deaths in the canyon, the orc's savagery mixed with the healing words of Aiko turned to be the recipe for defeating Ghalbrukk. Chief Krugg of the Scuttle Tusk Clan ripped open Ghalbrukks' belly, ending his reign of terror. After the battle had ended, and the fires had died down, the chiefs gathered to thank Markus for his contribution and give him a totem of safe passage through the forests, back to Kelmhart.

This story is told through the Churches of Aiko now, as a lesson that despite cultural differences, uniting can conquer any odds. However true that may be, or however often people take that advice, it is my duty to share this in writing now, for posterity.

I hope these lessons find you well, may Aiko bless you, and keep your home safe.

-Ascendant Feivel

## GNOMISH LIFESTYLE

Tinkerers by nature, Gnomes are known across the land for their craftsmanship. While Gnomes can be found crafting just about everything, creating jewelry and magical items are what they are known for. Simply examining an item tells most people if it was made by a Gnome due to the quality of their work. Few can compete with a Gnome craftsman and Gnomes make sure to let all other races know it.

Gnomes are known to decorate their cities and towns with their work, practically using their society as their own personal advertisement. Seasoned travelers often return home with tales that boggle the minds of a typical townsfolk. Gnome districts often have more advanced technology than other cities due to the city builders incorporating magical items into the city structures

## THE FESTIVAL OF NEW BEGINNINGS

I started my tour of the festivals of the world by visiting the Sun Elves in Haywood at the Goldleaf district. Every solstice the Sun Elves have a festival for their god Ozymahd and truly it is a right good time. They decorate the city in bright red and gold banners that truly brings the Goldleaf district to life! They wear ornate clothing that puts their normal clothes to shame. Long beautiful dresses, robes adorned with fine jewelry, great and might hats that dazzle! Even their musicians play instruments crafted by Gnomes that normal bards would kill just to see. You can hear a symphony of flutes and violins that create a brilliant and relaxing sound. The music gracefully dances in the wind, and it is heard through the city. Prayers are offered throughout the day but the two biggest come before the feast and as the sun sets. They call in the chief ascendant of their beautiful temple to perform each prayer, he even blesses the food, it is right inspiring. They bring produce grown through the summer and bring in one of the newest born livestock. This little bugger gets treated like a king. Fed until it is full and pampered throughout the day as a thanks to Ozymahd. Then after this little miracle gets its fill the prayer before the feast begins, and we get to chow down. They make special dishes from the produce that is only made now, and it is brilliant! Chefs from all over the continent come to prepare this feast and it shows. Such colorful and immaculate dishes would make anyone's mouth water! After food comes, Song and dance, and deserts. it is a party fit for nobles if I have ever seen it. Oh, it is a lovely time and as the sun begins to set a final prayer of thanks is given, and a quiet but peaceful night is had. I cannot wait to go back and do it again!

-Jack Jackson 1401

## FESTIVAL OF SIGHT

Once during the year, the Bask gather from all over to participate in the Festival of Sight! This lovely festival only occurs when the moon is closest to Vehldathin. From what I can gather during the days leading to this event all sorts o' concoctions are brewed up by these lovely creatures. A sniff of one of these potions will leave your sense of smell gone for days. A lesson I learned the right hard way! Apparently, they do this so that someone they call "The Star Seer" can use his power to cast a great fortune during the festival! The day of the festival is spent in almost a silence. They consider it a part of the ritual to fast and meditate on the events of the past year! However, once the night comes, a dramatic shift in tone occurs. If you have never heard the songs of the Bask you are truly missing out on something special. A chorus of Bask begin the ritual singing for what I can say was easily several hours! Once their concert, I guess you would call it ends, the rest of the ritual truly begins! All the Concoctions gathered are added a little at a time to a giant kettle! The mixture is brought to a boil while the arch-arcanists of the Bask chant something I could not even hope to pronounce! Once they are finished The Star Seer comes from a special tent, they have been in for two weeks. The Star Seer completes the ritual with a special chant known only to them. Then they drink the mixture from the cauldron and enter some type of trance. The Bask all bow out of respect to The Star Seer as the wisdom is disbursed. Once the initial wisdom is disbursed, elders from the Bask approach and ask more generalized questions. The Star Seer gives out answers which seem to be slightly vague but appease the elders. It is a marvel to me that they just accept it as fact! Each answer seems to drain the Seer more and more until eventually they collapse. An ear shattering croak in unison from all the bask sounds out and the ritual ends! Once the Star Seer is revived, the Bask feast and give thanks to the stars for the guidance gifted to them. This is one of the weirder festivals I have been to, but you have not lived until you hear the Bask sing!

-Jack Jackson 1401

## CELEBRATION OF TRAVELS

The Humans who call themselves Nomads are quite the interesting bunch! Such a shame many often look down on their lifestyle! The truth of the matter is they care very deeply for the land they travel in, and one could even say they make it better! There is nothing that shows this more than their Celebration of Travels! For this particular group I have stumbled on they are quite the loud bunch! This weeklong celebration shows homage to Aiko, Callen, and Myar. They give thanks through prayers, song and replant the seeds of all the various foods eaten through their stay at whatever location they are currently at. The final night they have a large feast and once again gather every seed they can. Half the seeds are replanted that night while the Ascendant that leads them give a long prayer thanking each god for the harvest, their temporary home, and for the ability to play wonderful songs. The other half of the seeds are taken and planted along the path on their way to their next "home". Traveling with these folks truly reminds me how lucky we are that the gods bless this world with wonderful gifts.

-Jack Jackson 1402

## DRAGON FESTIVAL

Another festival which occurs around the summer solstice is the magnificent Dragon Festival! This is one of the only times you will really see the Dragonborn, and Kobolds work collectively, and it is a marvelous sight I will tell you! At least the Kobolds and Dragonborn consider the new year to start! Each year represents a certain color of dragon and those who bear the closest resemblance to their ancestors put on a massive festival. Their city is decorated with carvings of how they believe the ancient dragons looked, stalls of food and games are set up, and of course the biggest event, The Parade of Ancestors, is held. The cycle of colors is as follows, Red, Yellow, Brass, Orange, Teal, Blue, Gold, Green, Black, White, Purple, and Silver. Each color of dragon represents different aspects of Dragonborn and Kobold. Red represents passion. Yellow represents cunning. Brass represents serenity. Orange represents strength. Teal represents elegance. Blue represents knowledge. Gold represents purity. Green represents renewal. Black represents power. White represents devotion. Purple represents pride. Silver represents control. This year is that of the silver dragons. As such the city is adorned with beautiful silver banners and the statues are enchanted to stand tall and bow without breaking. It is such a marvelous sight! The parade begins about an hour before the sun sets. Large floats are made that resembles the ancient dragons and are guided through the city using air magic. After they conclude their tour a large show of magic and something made from the black powder of the Mountain Dwarves cause large and beautiful explosions in the sky. They make various shapes and sounds with the final one of these contraptions somehow making an extraordinary dragon in the sky and thank goodness those things are not real! If they were, I think I would be too frightened to return, but thankfully I could come back to this festival every year!

-Jack Jackson 1402

## THE DAY OF LOSS

In my travels I have seen a most peculiar sight. An entire civilization silent and a night sky filled with millions of lanterns. I have been told that all Elves observe the Day of Loss. For the Sun Elves it takes place during the summer solstice, as a society so close to the winds of magic they take a full 24 hours of silence and lights lanterns for the Elves killed during the great war. No rituals to be done. No schools to be attended. Most don't even come out of their homes. Imagine a city where you can hear a pin drop and that pin drop would echo for a full 24 hours uninterrupted by even the stir of a crowd.

Then as night falls from windows lanterns glow and fly into the sky. No intricate designs indicating station or family heraldry. All white and simplistic. No one wants to be different for they say that the many they lost were all equally important. The truly remarkable thing about this is that each year the number of lanterns stays the same. Since each represents someone lost to The Many Faced God the number should never increase or decrease. Knowing the fanatical precision of the Sun Elves would tell me that this is all planned weeks in advance, but they will tell you no.

Regardless, it is a solemn event, but it is one that you certainly should not miss.

-Jack Jackson 1403

## FEAST OF WARRIORS

Oy if you think those Sun Elves throw a splendid time, the Feast of Warriors thrown by the Orcs is something to behold! Savage Orcs, Wyrd Ones, and even some Civilized Orcs gather from all over. Every year during the fall a massive hunt is formed by these fierce warriors. The strongest from all different tribes form up to claim the biggest beast they can. The tribe that brings home the rarest or toughest to kill creature is rewarded by sitting at the head of the feast and they get claim to pick what meat they want first. The heads of all the worthy creatures that are hunted are stuffed and put on display for the entire year. A huge ceremony is held to burn the heads of those caught in the previous year and the winners of last year's hunt regale us with the story of how they killed their mighty foe. Although I'm more than certain a bit of embellishment is in each of their stories it certainly elevates the mood! After we feast the new stuffed heads are mounted and a small fighting tournament is held! Each clan submits their strongest warrior, and a battle royale style fight begins! Watching their graceful but violent fighting styles is truly remarkable. Once two fighters remain the battle stops, and both are regaled as heroes. However, the tournament is not yet done! The last two fighters then tell a story of their greatest accomplishment during the year. All ears are trained on these two as they spin quite a wondrous if slightly unbelievable tale. The warrior who receives the loudest reaction is crowned this year's champion. He is given rights to own land if he doesn't have any as well as a magical sword passed down year to year from each champion. After this is done more food is brought out, congratulations is had for the champion. Truly a night unlike any others that I was delighted to see!

-Jack Jackson 1403

## FESTIVAL OF THE HOMESTEAD

Each year around the fall, Hill Dwarves perform a ceremony in honor of Aiko and Callen. They truly believe that the two gods show the destiny of family all that it encompasses. Each year they gather their best craftsman to tear down a house built last year in their honor and construct a new house to show their renewal of faith. Outside of the house is a special farm area in which tall stalks of wheat are grown and harvested. They also have statues and shrines which are newly constructed each year near the homes as a show of faith. Once the building is completed a festival full of fruits, wines, and pastries are consumed to show thanks for the blessings of the earth given by Aiko and Callen. In addition, a newlywed couple chosen by the clan is picked to live in that house and maintain the small farm, and hopefully have a child from what I've been told. It's a lovely time filled with prayers and family, and a time of hope for a new family.

-Jack Jackson 1403

## EXCERPT FROM "THE TRUE PRICE OF THE GREAT WAR", 1352

The oldest stories we have touch upon the beginnings of Sun Elves. Unfortunately, now that's all we have for most things. Stories. Elves are timeless, they do not die from old age. As Ozymahd says in his teachings, we live outside the cycle and therefore must be its stewards. When an entire race has near perfect memory and lives for an indeterminate time, writing down histories only becomes important when it is vital to remember, or the knowledge is so rare that a reminder and a signature is all that is needed to get the information. With the great culling of The Many Faced God and the death of all our elders, it destroyed the cultural and historical memory of our people. Our entire culture has now become obsessed with academic achievement and the pursuit of knowledge lost and knowledge not yet discovered. Knowing that the other elves of this world will not do the same. The Wood Elves live like we were in the beginning. One with nature and with the wood being both parent and child. The Stone Elves would rather wander the mountains and practice their petty politics. The Sea Elves are feral and attune themselves with the winds both magic and corporeal. Traveling the waters and drifting where the tide takes them. The Moon Elves are worst of all. They have thrown away everything that makes them Elves. Living deep underground and forsaking the surface. We Sun Elves are the future of our race, to make sure we do not join the cycle and end like all the rest of the races of Vehldathin. For we are eternal and should stay that way.

Xinthar Acrostus, Teacher of Philosophy and History

## GOLEMS

Humboldt the Scholar, 1415

A creature whose origin is often debated, Arcane insight into the matter theorizes they are forged through some unrecorded means, or ritual by arcane hands shaping the earth to life. All firsthand records with the creatures dictate otherwise, that they are creatures of powerful emotional bonds between nature and spirit, a Geist of the earth itself set in motion by some goal or turmoil faced in life. Whether it is the vague research carried out by scholars or the folklore surrounding them, it is known that not all of them bear malice. In some firsthand accounts it is not even an oblivious or aggressive nature but a benevolent one, aiding travelers or impeding the force of natural disaster. If provoked and should one find themselves opposing these powerful creatures, no simple blade can harm what binds them, a blade of the purest metal is required.

## NOTE FOUND BY PORT

I hate how the merchants in town sell all their ingredients at such an outrageous price. And people buy it! I mean of course, sure, it's there and you don't have to do the work to forage for it on your own. But if you just educate yourself a little bit you can find most what you need outside the town lines. Just this past week I spent some time to learn how to identify Ginseng and Ashwagandha plants so I can make a potion that will keep me awake to feel energized enough to go for longer hikes to find even rarer plants. Ashwagandha plants have slightly fuzzy leaves with white flowers growing up the stock, the flowers then turn into a bright red berry. Ginseng grows close to the ground with a thin stem that has a cluster of small red berries at the top but be sure to get the whole root with the plant! That's the part you need.

Then I'll go home and brew as a tea to get all the constituents out. Praise Aiko there are at least some comforts here, I will miss them on the long voyage.

Canaan,

Ascendant of Aiko,

August 1st, 1420

## JOURNAL OF PALADIN GRIMDALL

Lord Damon Nomoux and the council of lords convened today. They have agreed that the most loyal and most stalwart defender of the faith should go and lead this effort in colonization. They have dubbed me a Questing knight of Hastur, a most honorable achievement. I am to lead the faith in this endeavor and to protect them from anything that gets in the way of spreading the Word. As honored as I am, I am wary. The Nomoux family has ever been the enemy of mine. I wait for the blade....

July 8th, 1418

Grandmaster Jaxson Grimdall

High Paladin of Hastur

Order of the Crane

The blade has struck, and I feel the cold of the steel in my heart. The council of lords has named Titus Nomoux as High Paladin of Hastur. They have decreed that in this time of famine and strife that an absent High Paladin would be cause for fear and is too dangerous to leave the crown unprotected. The king also made a pronouncement today. That my Order is to come with me to the Island. Lord Nomoux made sure to pull me aside, blessing my path and saying that he was very glad to see my order joining me. To be able to have my brethren to turn to in these harsh times, it was what he and our Lord Ascendant had wished, my safety. He was so glad that the King had taken his humble advice on the subject. I blessed him in the name of Hastur and bade Qiron watch over him closely. To keep him in good health... of course.

Grandmaster Jaxson Grimdall

Former High Paladin of Hastur

Order of the Crane

July 15th, 1418

## THADDEUS DRAYNE, DEEP CAVE DELVER, AN EXCERPT FROM A BOOK ENTITLED "WHERE THE MOON LIGHT IS PUREST", 1389

It was intriguing to me to say the least that this small system of tunnels led to a variable metropolis. The great architecture of the Mountain Dwarves was torn asunder by arcane forces. The twisting of bronze and gold into shapes I could only describe as ghastly specters of once glorious expansion. Yet strangely to me not a body among the ruins. Blood seems to have been cleansed and the stalactites give way to a faint blue glow. It reflects around the chamber hugging the curves of twisted metal and bouncing off reflective walls. Following the light from my vantage was impossible and so I chose to go down among the ravaged cityscape.

Once I had hit the bedrock, I could see it begin to take shape. A fine powdered sand aided the light in traveling. Walking along the path of moonlight was almost surreal. It seemed to pull my feet effortlessly from place to place. The way it gleamed off Dwarven shield, and axe told a story. It told of the attack that must have happened a few weeks ago. Mountain Dwarves living peacefully in their homes and on their streets. Set upon by arcane force and flurried strike. It took my breath away. It was as if Ozymahd had a lesson for me. Time will come for us all. My trance broke and I looked back at my steps in the sands and saw for but an instant, Ozymahd's favorite increment, a sand timer. As the timer faded so too did, I remember that all things shall fade.

## THE LAST RAID, 1345

Trolls: Large, green, ferocious, and nearly invincible these monsters are known for their ferocity. It was my job to defeat one of these beasts in fear our village would be wiped out. I donned my best Dwarven made armor and took the two best Arcanists in town with me. We traversed its jungle for several days until eventually we came upon its lair. A gruesome den of blood, corpses, and the smell of decay welcomed us. We approached as quietly as we could, but it was ready for us. A devastating blow destroyed my armor and nearly knocked me out. The mages threw their spells at him. We heard tales that they were weak to fire but that held no truth. I picked myself up and started stabbing at the beast. Sadly, my sword merely bounced off the beast. This time he hit me with a mighty blow and stunned me. The troll turned upon one of the poor arcanists and felled him in one hit. The other arcanist in a panic threw her strongest lightning spell which successfully stunned the troll. I then shook off his blow and hit him as hard as I could. With my wild strength some of the hits went through. However, I noticed the troll started to recover as the fight went on. Our remaining arcanist ran out of magic to cast all too quickly and with her final spell launched a single lightning bolt which once again damaged the troll. We used that as our chance to flee as we clearly were no match for the beast. It caught up quickly and with no choice I abandoned the mage and left it to the troll.....The town was destroyed several days later. The screaming haunts me...the image of that creature is burned into my mind I fear the madness will soon consume me.

## JOURNAL ENTRY 54: D'LHAUN DEVOTEE TO QIRON. 4/03/1170

The other day The Ascendant came to my clinic. I never thought I would meet him. He doesn't hold any unnatural glow to him, nor does he have a halo or wings. Yet I know it is him. It's a strange feeling being so close to the divine. I feel he can read my very thoughts. I begin to contemplate a solution to this strange virus that seems to be infecting my people and yet before I utter a word, he has a full component list and is sending my people out for ingredients. It is infuriating but awe inspiring. He sent me for some ogre blood in the hills west of Varenka, but I have a test for this divine.

## NOTE FOUND IN THE WOODS, 1419

Jasper was right, sneakin over to the island bests starvin the the old world. Plenty of easy targets out here, they don't know if it was a ghost or a goblin sneakin up on them!

We've been makin a killin out here Darna, we'll be the new kings of the world out here, no more gutters for ole Ivan.

Rest your ole bones, I'll write to you again soon.

Ivan, 7/22/1419

Ate some strange berries, taste like meat. Don't think I should do it again. Stole a gold cup though, real shiny.

Ivan, 7/30/1419

Damn dwarf got a lucky shot on Jasper, split his skull wide open. Those big bugs are gunna strip his bones in a day bet my golden rings on it. I hid in the mud so he wouldn't find me, got this weird itch because of it. But I'll find that bastard dwarf.

Ivan, 8/15/1419

Skin won't stop weepin, itchin it all off. Damned flies everywhere. Smells like piss. Gunna get that beard.

Ivan 8/16/1419

Darna I'm sorry I aint set it right

I'm seein ya soon

Ivan

## THE ARCLIGHT INCIDENT: BY JEAN ARCHON, 1382

The Arclight Incident, or “Arclight Massacre” as it’s so eloquently called; was a testament to my ingenuity and a halt to progress...for now. We were tasked by the Arclight college of magic elders to study golems and the effects of magic upon them. The project itself was up to my discretion. So, I created a project worthy of my name. The goal of my project was simple: manufacture and infuse golems with the power of the elements. The uses of these creations should be obvious to any intelligent enough to peruse these documents. However, should you be a bit on the slower side let me explain. With these golems we could avoid needlessly sending people to die in war. They are strong enough to deal with even the most battle-hardened troops and with the resistance of their element even experienced arcanists would find it difficult. Not to mention lesser versions of these creatures are quite useful as pets. So, as you can see creating them was of the utmost importance.

Creating regular golems is mere child’s play and I will not bore you with the details of those as I’m sure you already know. However, the problem came with how to introduce elemental energy. Well, the short version of it is, quite frankly none of your damn business. The result is what I will discuss today. We created 4 different golems in our test batch. One of Fire, Earth, Water, and Air were created. They were magnificent. The problem came when we realized we didn’t properly install any devices to control them.

They went mad with rage. All our assistants were killed mercilessly. They erupted with pillars of pure elemental energy. It was...magnificent. Those lucky enough to feel their magic power were dispatched quickly. Those with even more luck felt their physical strength firsthand. The crunch of bone and the horror on their faces was more than I could have dreamed for. Honestly it was quite impressive how quickly they were dispatched. If anything, it proves that my theory was correct. These Golems were what I intended and so much more. Regardless, I and 3 of the other top arcanists behind this project tried to stop them. Once again, my theories were correct, and they proved even too much for us. I cast nearly every spell in my repertoire. The low-level spells were all but shrugged off as if they were swatting gnats. Oh, such glorious forms they held. These creations were a force beyond comprehension. In fact, much to my surprise not only were some spells blocked but they absorbed spells of their element. Even I didn’t know that would be possible! I couldn’t find a single weakness. To think for the first models, they were already this monstrous and beautiful. How can I possibly out do this? Don’t worry I’ve gained several ideas on the future of this project. Alas death loomed over me as I found myself the last standing in front of my beautiful babies. That was when true disaster struck. A band of nosy and “valiant heroes” stepped forward. Their luck truly knew no bounds as they were somehow able to stop my precious creations. The fools didn’t realize the progress they stopped. However, this was a great learning tool as I step forward. 23 dead.... truly a work of both art and magic. I claim this experiment a success.

## CAPTAIN OSYLVY, DAY OF DEPARTURE, 1396

The journey will soon commence. Myself and 50 of our bravest sea elf sailors will depart today. We have learned of a distant island yet untouched by man. A true paradise that may help us for generations to come. Truly a blessed voyage.

The priestess who was to come bless our ship had been ill for nary a week. Her trainee came to bless us instead. As if to welcome us all clouds in the sky disappeared and a ray of sunlight seemed to envelop our ship. Vykost clearly shines on our journey.

As we depart, I notice my compass seems to act strangely. I have had this for years. Perhaps I should delay? No this is too important. When we stop to resupply, I’ll simply purchase another. Yes, today true glory awaits.

## THE TALE OF ERIGOR THE VALIANT

His blue scales shimmered in the sunlight and reflected his simply glowing demeanor. Today was the day that Erigor would prove himself to the rest of his clan. A clan of foul hill dwarves had relocated themselves to a nearby village.

According to Erigor’s sources they had brought plague and destruction to the poor orc villagers that welcomed them with open arms. He approached the village and saw no less than 5 separate smokes fumes rising from the village. He thought quickly and came up with a solution. He ran back to his clan and gathered all the water mages he could! They set up a ritual and caused a massive torrent of rain to fall upon the village! What bravery and intelligence truly!

He ran into the village and gathered all the poor orc villagers he could. But the hill dwarves, oh those monstrous demons! They slaughtered them in righteous vengeance! How dare they truly to burn the village.

He returned home as a hero and a great banquet was held for him! All hail Erigor the Valiant!

## STAR SEER

It is said that once per generation a Bask with a gift shall appear. A blessing will be placed upon them so that they may discern the future through the stars. They must endure near endless rituals and trials in order to maintain and nurture this gift. As a result, the Seer is often frailer than a normal Bask. This gift is one that should be celebrated though! They can see the color and change within the stars however their path is not easy. For each time they use their ability, a great calamity will appear. Will this calamity occur during their lifetime? Will it occur in the future? Perhaps it’s something that has already occurred. None will know the truth. However, one thing is certain, the futures read by them should be accepted as truth. Their predictions have always come to pass and should you be blessed with a reading, heed the words of the Star Seer, or be taken as a fool. Even the Wyrd orcs accept the knowledge gifted by the Seer as the last who denied this knowledge lost his most treasured clam. BE WARNED, THOSE WHO DENY A READING OFFERED SUFFER MORE THAN THOSE WHO IGNORE IT.

## TOME FOUND ON A SKELETON IN AN OLD MINESHAFT, 1400

They rushed us at night, half our camp was sleeping. Those bastard Goblins herded us up and carted us away. We must have been traveling hours by now. How long until we get to their poisoned fortress, what manner of evil deeds do they intend us for?

Oh, I pray to Gleaming Hastur to guide us to safety, I pray to Glorious Ozymahd that this book is found by someone, that these notes I write can prove of some worth in expunging the world of these beasts.

We have begun to enter the caves, it is difficult to write, everything is dark around us, but I hear the noises, chattering, clanking, terrible noises.

They've brought us to a temple bathed in purple light. I have not seen the likes of this ever before, what magics surrounds this place? What God is watching us? There are 5 wagons of us, stiffly packed I can hardly write, but I must. We are outside of the steps, there are hundreds of Goblins here, I have never seen so many before. They're moving the carts into the temple now, a bonfire is lit in the depth of this place, a black cauldron before it. What dark ritual is this?

There is a statue here, of... a goblin? There is a pointed crown on his head, gold. Hole in chest, a void of blackness swallowing light. What have we done to deserve this?

It has been 2 days of waiting, starving, thirsting. The goblins toil around us, fortifying the temple, guarding the temple. A priestess in red, lurches out to us, hunched and mumbling, she begins a ritual at the cauldron.

A cart is unloaded, throats are slit, blood collected. What cruelty.

A smog pours out of the cauldron. It swirls around the chamber, the cages, the statue. Hard to see hard to write.

the horrid visions surround me, pulsing from that cursed cauldron. I see the Orcs, gathering in the deep frozen north, the Tundra of Torr. They crown a Goblin King, The Black Raider Bolverkr joins the growing cursed host. The Many Faced God laughs out in the squalls. I see them move down through the canyon, cutting through leeches and gremlins alike. their chanting screams echo in the deeps, I can hardly tell what is real and what is this horrid ritual. the miasma is thick, sticking to my skin, I see the vision in the mist, the valley of Prin, the wretched army moves on the city. The Battle is unending across the valley, the merchant armies of Prinreik cling to life by a thread, until the gleaming dawn of Quinelle marches from the west, Hastur opposes the grey, brutal tide. The fog swirls, only a few of us remain in our cages. the golden crown upon the statue gleams as the fog enters the void within the statue's chest. the stone rumbles, creaks and moans, as if awakening from an ancient slumber. Could they truly bring this beast back from the Black Beyond? The goblins begin chanting now, they call for their king, leader of the Warghoul Clan, The Durgin Clan, The River Foot Clan, The Scream Plow Clan. Warlord of the Ish Kraal Clan, The White Bone Clan, The Mourn Crash Clan, The Gleam Rip Clan. Breaker of Towers, Stealer of Crowns, Ripper of Roots, Troll Widower, Brain Splitter, Black Tongued King. The Priestess commits the ritual, they are nearly complete. are my notes to be the last warning of this new doom? is my journal the last testament to the world we were stolen from?

Silence now. the statue weeps a black ooze from every crack. the goblins around us stare affixed, the priestess motionless. a coughing from the tunnels is the only noise while we await the hatching of their dark prophet. a blessing.

a quake shook our cages loose. Coughing beasts attacked from every direction. they were unlike any other beast I've ever seen, what dark god could've allowed those things to be birthed. I write now, with pained breaths. Those hacking creatures ripped into goblin and man alike. they bit into my belly and shook me about, the irony of being saved by goblins, the very captor that brought me to this place. for every beast they killed, 10 goblins were torn apart. perhaps the ritual drew them in?

I don't know what happened, I ran, I heard voices, fighting, magic, then silence.

I cannot fathom what outcome I would prefer, those beasts roaming the tunnels, or the Goblin King returning to us. I will rest at this pass, I can smell sulfur, feel heat of the mountain. My life has been dedicated to my journals, I'm sure when I leave these caves I will be rewarded. The king must know.



## JOURNAL ENTRY OF MAYNARR BOLVESSON, 1340

It has been generations since the ash sails plowed our shores, even our oldest elders struggle to remember stories told to them. Our tribes do not write the histories like the southerners. Paint them on walls, braid them in hair, songs that teach us. Not parchment. If the elders knew I would be scalped for dishonoring tradition. The lessons of the old war, the great war, cannot be lost. The Black Tongue God came to these islands, bearing sick fruit, a challenge to the greatest of our leaders. His champions bearing steel and obsidian, necklaces of tongues like trophies. When he spoke the tongues moved, like a chorus of silent screams speaking from the shadows. This fear is well taught to us. The Deceiver. The Tempter. He promised power, he promised strength. No more working the sea, relying on the tide. We would drink the fountain of suffering, a water flowing by the heft of our axes.

Their brothers begged them to see sense, see that ruling ruins is no way to live, but the pacts have been made in the hearts of the strongest among us. Their brothers pleading fell upon uncaring ears. Greed, Hatred, Glory, sung to them like Sea Elves. They desired the gilded crowns of Quinelle, the harvest of Haywood. No more would they toil under the salt rocks and the gulls. The Tormentor God turned their hearts to rage, and those who did not agree and pledge their blades, the rage turned on them. The first blood of our war left to bloat on the shore. The Black Tongue God is elusive, why do brothers kill brothers, mothers drown young. What lurks in us, in the shadows to make us... Huono.

Those who evaded the dark champions met on the interiors of the islands, some thought of fleeing. In our songs they speak of Hrafki the Bold, pulling the Sea Elves from their depths to carry his people to safety, or of Grulgni the Seer preparing great sailing vessels, to escape this war and move on to unknown lands. There are no other songs of Grulgni, or what he found. No wrecks have been discovered, no bones. But Hrafki, sailed with the Sea Elves against the dark champions, against his brothers. Our peoples have made their lives on the ebb and flow of the tide. The sea pays us, feeds us, and in the end, she will claim us. She will always give us strong currents, eager winds. Our betrayer kin turned their back on her, chose the Betrayer God, women do not forget betrayal, their fury is slow and powerful, as the tempest. Hrafki and the remaining of our tribes sailed with the Sea Elves, their watery beasts, to match the Black Fleet in battle. The old stories tell of how he constantly harassed and beguiled, seeming to come in with the fog and leave just as silently. Raiding their ships and their camps with bold cunning. Ruthless, but bloodlust, revenge, can blind you. Hrafki was captured during his raids, strung up on the Swordfish's masts, flags made from his hide. He did not live to see our survival, but it is said through his dying curses, the sea heard him, and eased his pain. Storms like none have seen. The winds of magic in their true anger roiled at Hrafki's death. The western coast is still dangerous to sail, sharp rocks and whirlpools, lighting and razor winds. The sea still mourns. Our elders must remember this history, so none may ever repeat it. They do not listen to me, they cling to tradition, never changing despite the winds blowing against them. They have nearly forgotten the chief who first drank deep the lies of the Deceiver God. That cursed man who drove us to the brink of damnation, but I have studied the old runes. The paintings on the walls. I will ensure that none fall into the path of Bolverkr the Betrayer. History unknown is doomed to cycle against us.

## BATTLE LOGS OF CAPTAIN BRAKKUS MENK

We sailed to the southern jungles from Haywood. Stopped in Port at Mirk's Landing, and at Liebenstrieg. The Sail feels longer every time, but all of our troops were received and eager. There were only small, natural threats on our way from shore to our Basecamp. This campaign will test the fortitude of my troops, the jungle is our first and greatest enemy. Stinging gnats, creeping vines, vipers, mud, and sweat. Tomorrow, we begin planning our advances.

-February 25th, 1321

Days of scouting and no signs of our targets. The morale is still high, but my lieutenants have told me of some murmurs. It is to be expected, pink skins and knife ears, knee capers and geckos. These words found offensive. Hog mouth still accepted. I have risen above this before. We have found strange ruins here, different than what we are seeking, but possibly worth investigating more.

-March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1321

Our first real enemy has shown itself. A tribe of savages ambushed us in the night, minimal loss of life but I can only imagine what rumors are floating now. They came from the southeast ridge a few hours past midnight, they have strange arcane magics I have not seen before, but they charge us with reckless abandon, no strategy in their attack. My Grandfather left the tribes, if they were all like this, I don't blame him. We are going to have to move in to eliminate this tribe, we cannot show weakness by moving our camp. We will show them brutality.

-March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1321

We fought for days, constantly tracking this tribe through the jungles. The Black Eye Tribe, they call themselves, always names bathed in superstition. We finally cornered the last of them in a derelict ziggurat. Their leader, Cross Eye screamed to their primitive god as we cut the last of them down, asking this so called Zog for forgiveness. She should have begged forgiveness from us. We have made barricades out of the slain, and we will camp here for the night. Despite this detour we will retrieve our prize.

-March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1321

## PROFESSOR FALMUTH'S JOURNAL

Researcher Gink Falmuth

Journal entry Feb 13th, 1250

The failed experiment that created the frozen forest is near infamous by now. It is a marked failure of the college that forever stains our name. But not all is negative. In fact, there is much that has been learned from our time investigating the forest since. The whole forest around Arclight College is trapped in perpetual winter.

The true reason we are here is the effect it has had on the wildlife. You would think there was nothing left after the incident but that is so far from the truth. Many of the creatures now thrive! We set up base camp tonight and tomorrow we set off into the cold unknown! Feb 14th, 1250

The night was not peaceful. Strange sounds filled the night and nightmares overwhelmed us. Yet no enemies showed themselves. No footprints in the snow. Just the cold. We pressed on anyway. All manners of creatures awaited us. Leopards whose coats turned white and whose fangs shined as icicles reflecting the sun, new species of birds that we have had the honoring of naming. Plant life that has mutated and now seems to thrive in this icy hellscape. It is so interesting and implausible. Yet we felt watched, Uncomfortable, something was wrong. Perhaps tomorrow we would figure it out.

Feb 15th, 1250

The nightmares grow worse. We keep exploring. But something is there. The landmarks we have set do not seem to matter though. The trees we have marked are.... shifting? This requires more study. This place seems to defy all scientific knowledge we have about how rituals interact with our natural world.

Feb 16th, 1250

Half our research team are missing. We should leave. The nightmares now make sleep nearly impossible. The mission we are on is far too important. The research must continue. We must find it.

Feb 17th

The nightmares now consume we while awake. Too terrified to move, sleep does not help. YES, YES IT MUST BE THE TREES. The eyes on us constantly, I know they see me writing.

Feb

I must escape. Flee. They come for me. I can feel it growing colder. I can feel them surrounding me. I must escape. But how?

Yes...YES, THEY ARE COLD. A torch will surely keep them at bay. I will run and run, and my torch will keep me safe. Eyes are everywhere, piercing me hoping to devour me. I feel their hunger and their rage. I will make it to the tower. I will escape.

April 1250

The nightmares still haunt me. They never go away. I will never be free. But I am safe.

## NOTE FOUND IN THRYSKAL PRISON

Hey, you're my cellmate

Yeh wat ov it

That means we're friends now

No it duvnt

Suffering makes great friendship

No it dunt

Sure it does, want to hear a joke about a ghost?

Absarutly not

THATS THE SPIRIT

## DIARY ENTRY FROM A STUDENT AT THE GOLDEN TOWERS OF SATIARA

Dear Diary,

June 7th, 1282

Today I finally began my school of water training. My near mastery of earth is without question as I can form diamonds and have the rocks obey my every whim. Water eludes me as its substance is strange to me. Ebb and flow does not exist in rock and stone. When I bend rock, it requires force and precision, but water seems to bend at the most delicate touch. I must work on my control.

Professor Etian was right to transfer me from the advanced class. Much as I hate to admit it those guys are much better than me, but it won't stop me from trying. Perhaps if I think of it as a piece of parchment that will help. I can't wait to get out of this stupid university and into the real world. Perhaps I will become a solider like my father, but if I'm honest I wouldn't mind discovering lost secrets.

Tomb raiding has always been so fascinating to me.

Goals for tomorrow: Bend water like paper not like stone! Bend water like paper not like stone! Bend water like paper not like stone! Bend water like paper not like stone!

## JOURNAL OF HIGH ASCENDANT CANAAN

Dreamt of things I have never seen in my life before, but oddly knew what was being shown to me. I am led to believe Aiko was the one to show me this dream.

I could see an island thick with mist over its mountains, drifting past its veil, a lush untouched forest. Trees had a brilliant bright hue to them and the plants I got glimpses of were awe striking. I had only ever read about these plants and seen the author's illustration, to see these powerful plants in what seemed in person is what confirmed I was truly dreaming. At the end of the flashing foliage my dream state brought me to the steps of a place I know I will never step foot in in my lifetime. Krugheim Manor. The establishment was in disarray and ruin but to see it at all is the peculiar part, I had heard that it fell into the earth years ago and no one has been able to uncover it.

I go to walk in, but my body is guided away and into the forest again, is that you leading me? Glancing into the hazy crags I see a banner flapping in the wind that caught my eyes. I remember gasping. It appeared to be the war banner of the Crack Tooth Clan. This clan was a fearsome force not to be reckoned with, I believe I read that they were at their strongest almost 100 years ago.

Before I can look around any further it felt like I was thrown out of the dream and the jolt of falling woke me up. Heart pounding and then the feeling of fight or flight lingered in my chest. Felt like running away but not aware of what I should be scared of. Goddess grant me your insight.

Canaan,  
Ascendant of Aiko,  
March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1421

## PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE GOLDEN TOWERS OF SATIARA ADVANCED ARCANIST CLASS DATED 1256

A rather embarrassing event occurred for the great Xildan family today. My class was going over arcane selection and control exercises today which nearly all of my students show great promise in. The assignment was simple. I had molded and dried clay around a small diamond and they were to recover the diamond without cracking the clay. Nearly all of my students chose to create healing waters to wet the clay and then extract the diamond with earth magic. One student chose not to. Ms. Xildan chose to create a diamond of her own. This level of magic is far beyond that of a child. Most of the class noticed her struggles and began laughing. I allowed it only to go so far as to see her remove herself from the class, in tears mind you. I then gathered up the remaining students and they began incantation practice. Ms. Xildan did not return for the rest of the day and so I will be writing a letter to her parents encouraging them to stop filling their daughter with thoughts of grandeur that she clearly will never attain. A family with such great arcanists should really understand who shows potential and who clearly does not.

## JOURNAL OF PALADIN GRIMDALL, PART 2

I sat at the edge of the ship, wondering what my time on the Island would hold for me. It had been so long since my life was my own. Ten years as a High Paladin of Hastur hadn't given much time for introspection, and the freedom to act upon those thoughts. I had realized my entire responsibility was now to this order, and these explorers that were to claim and pacify this new land in the name of Quinelle. As a Questing Knight I would be able to finally dedicate my entire efforts to protecting good, honorable people and destroying whatever evil would threaten them, rooting it out of the holes it would try to hide in. No more would I be slowed by the constant politics and skullduggery that came with protecting the Priest King from his own nobles and cults of The Many Faced God that threatened the stability of the kingdom. The only thing that was causing hesitation were those same thoughts of home. The man who replaced me was not known for his mercy, or his generosity towards the yeoman of Quinelle. He was a cruel man that saw the destruction of evil more important than the growth and protection of good. As I drifted along my own dark thoughts, I caught sight of a ship from the corner of my eye. Black as obsidian, larger than The Gallivant, mist draping over it like a cloak. I grabbed a scope to inspect it close, and to my shock I watched it vanish into the distance, only catching glimpses of its blood red sails. Was this an omen? The rest of my day an uneasy feeling made me queasy and unable to think of much else. That night I was plagued with dreams of demons of different likes climbing and ripping into a white tower as I desperately tried to defend it. With their claws dripping with blood and the screams of so many souls ringing in my ears, I felt swirling emotions, anger, black rage, jealousy, mania. With decades of discipline and training I had thought these feelings suppressed, yet they were so strong... I did not know what to think of such tidings, I nervously consulted with Canaan about what these dreams could mean. She is very wise beyond her years, as a High Ascendant, mayhap she has wisdom I do not?

After hearing my thoughts, she put a calming hand on my shoulder and prayed to Aiko for the warm feeling of home. I thanked her for her help, but my mind is still set on this dream, was this a warning sent from Hastur? A portent of doom for the home I left behind, or maybe this new one I was to be the protector of? The worst of it was this aching familiar feeling that this dream had.

Thoughts of Grandmaster Jaxson Grimdall  
Questing Knight of the White Flame  
Order of the Crane  
March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1421

## JOURNAL OF GYRBOILD THE BOISTEROUS

March 22nd 956

Today was an exciting day for me. The joke that has long since avoided me has finally found purchase on my lips. A human walks into a bar. Well, if he had been the right height, he would walk under it! I will promptly try this out tomorrow and report back on how it goes. I think Pauline will love it. I will have to think of more jokes to please her as we have a long journey to get to Callen's Fence. So far, we have only run into a few mountain cats and a stray human mineshaft. We corrected the human problem promptly. To watch Pauline fight is truly a wonder. Beautiful golden beard flowing in the wind in unison with her battle axe. Truly is a wonder.

March 25th 956

The joke went over swimmingly. She really enjoyed it and has had me tell it once a day for nearly a week straight. Her laugh is infectious, and I can't get enough of it. Crossing the plains has been a challenge to say the least. Multiple encounters with Savage Orcs have drained us. I guess this is the time of some festival or something savage like that. Honestly, I cannot wait to feel rock under my feet once again. Till tomorrow I suppose.

June 12th 956

We made it to Callen's Fence, and we have found the cold to be both bitter and biting. Laughing has become difficult. The strings on my lute have broken, but Pauline still has a stout smile on her face at all times. No matter how cold the outside becomes my very soul warms as I look at her. I think I will try writing a poem to gain her affection.

Mountains are grey, forges are red.

These feelings are not well said

My love for you is hot red hot things are white you idiot

I would ensure any foe you have is dead

Perhaps tomorrow I will have better inspiration.

January 1st 957

Winter in this mountain range is harsh and has slowed our progress significantly but within a week we will be reaching the entrance to the Golden Halls of Rorek. We will make camp for the night under the black mountain. Pauline has certainly been tested but I have never seen her with such ferocious determination before. Perhaps it is because of this that my love for her is so strong. I will propose to her in the Golden Halls for sure.

## DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS REPORT ALISHONA XILDAN DATED 1260

Today a duel broke out between Alishona Xildan of the remedial arcanist's class and Deaveon Rashade of the advanced arcanist's class. The argument was apparently started with Mr. Rashade referring to Ms. Xildan as a "Mage out" and referring to her spells as "pebbles cast by weakened wind". Ms. Xildan claims that this was not the first time and gives that as reason for her offensive spellcasting. 4 spells in total were cast by Ms. Xildan showing quite adept level aggression. Mr. Rashade was able to defend himself and only suffered a minor injury. No bystanders were injured during the short duel. The duel was put to a close by hall monitors casting silence and binding Ms. Xildan.

The Xildan family will have a week to pay recompense to the Rashade family. Ms. Xildan will not be returning to class for a month. After her return she will be monitored by 2 professors during passing times from her classes. Further change of schedule is pending and will be enacted if required. We wish Mr. Rashade a speedy recovery and we are very apologetic as to the event at all.

## FOOL'S ERRAND, 1372

Approached by a man cloaked in darkness a young group of Sea Elves were given a task. Retrieve a ring from a god's temple and be recorded not only as legends but be given a great reward. Without a moment's pause they accepted the request. Was it the thrill of a challenge or simply hubris? Perhaps they did not fear the divine fury. Perhaps they thought it was a joke and nothing more. What they did not know was the malevolence behind the request. To enter a temple of the gods is a normal affair, but one that must still be treated with great care. For if you insult the god in their temple who knows the divine retribution you may endure. Yet to do something foolish to a temple of Vykost is pure foolishness.

In the middle of the night, they approached the temple. The priests that guarded the temple seemed to have passed out, half empty bottles still clenched in their hands. Oh, what luck for these young Elves! They quietly made their way to the room where the artifacts were stored. However, they didn't see a single priest in the temple. This was surely a sign that luck was in their side. On the furthest pedestal a blue glow cut through the darkness of the temple. Their prize was found. They took the ring and escaped outside quickly. As they exited the temple dark clouds on an otherwise beautiful night appeared overhead. The seas began to look rough and violent. None of that mattered. They made their way back to where they met the shadow that issued the challenge. You could almost feel a warped smile through the darkness. It took the ring and gave them their prize. "Your prize is the knowledge that you've doomed your people." It vanished and left them confused and upset. A great storm brewed, winds with velocity not seen before, lightning crashing and leaving devastation in its wake. They returned to their village....to be remembered forever

## **SPEECH NOTES OF HALRA LEARIL, 1202**

Immortals should not die. How can justice recompense a loss of life meant to be unending? It has only been 100 years since The Great War devastated our people, our heritage. So many of The Vehl's peoples have rebounded from the horrors of that war, while we still struggle with our nightmares, the isolation.

## **ASCENDANT KUUL'S NOTES**

Qiron Ascended this past week, this marks either a terrifying thing, or a hopeful dawn. Usually marks a time of great health or a great plague. Thankfully, we have just recovered from a great plague, blessed Qiron rains pure water on us now.

-Ascendant Kuul, 1401

## **NOTE FOUND IN AN ABANDONED CAMPSITE, 1006**

We sat here at the foot of these mountains trapped by savage orcs on one side and goblins on the other. Yet Vykost has been watching as he sent two of these strange dwarves. Their skin pale and their beards seem to be made of ice. The way she tore through the orcs was more savage than I have seen any man. The stout fat male dwarf came up to us and spoke in very plain monotone demanding we pay for the services provided else "Pauline" would come for you next. We gave him any gold rings or coin we had and left post haste. I asked the cold dwarf his name and he only responded with Gyrboild without so much as turning around. Not a smile on either of their faces and demeanors that matched the frost of the mountains themselves. Scary to say the least.

## **REPORT FROM THE ORDER OF THE CROOKED FANG**

May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1398

3 of our ascendants went to go check on the farmer and his family at the edge of town. They were recovering from some sort of lethal plague that has killed many in the area. The recovery itself was strange but at almost a fortnight into a full recovery it seemed remarkable. We were to draw blood and possibly concoct a potion using their blood as a catalyst to cure the other victims of this plague.

The 3 ascendants arrived at an unworked field and dried blood covering the wheat. Upon looking into the house, it seems that both son and mother were mauled by a beast. Multiple bite marks tore at their limbs and chest. The son being smaller was without his left arm. The mother was only identifiable by a Qiron necklace that another of our order confirmed was given to them when they first became ill.

A blood trail led away from the house and into a nearby forest. Asking around town it seems the farmer had intended to hire a group of hunters to deal with local wolves. It is in our opinion that the wolf's bane planted on the perimeter of the land did not deter the animals but spurred them into a hunting frenzy and they must have entered the domicile and took the body of the farmer with them to feed their own family. It is a shame to lose a possible solution to this plague, but if it be Qiron's will, we shall endure.

## AN ANCIENT MARITIME TALE, 1372

The caverns rang hollow  
The corruption ran deep  
The hags all gathered  
To bestow gifts to the sea  
The shorelines were ravaged  
The fish they had vanished  
Devastation ran true  
And hope was abandoned  
A ritual was devised  
Children were taken  
The spell had begun  
Those in the circle were never forgiven  
The water turned red  
The pact now completed  
The storm had subsided  
The sea life revisited  
Was all truly forgiven?  
The caverns rang lifeless  
The corruption ran deep  
The hags gathered malice  
To create curses of the sea  
Waves taller than older oak  
Monsters of claw and fin  
Boats vanish in dense fog  
The wind slicing sail and mast  
The shorelines were ravaged  
The fish took flight for the lakes  
Cities encompassed by the waves  
Would this madness ever end?  
An ascendant prayer answered  
A powerful ritual for Vykost  
Child wrenched from home  
The seas turned innocent red  
The bleeding pact now finished  
Cities returned from waters embrace  
The cavern now free from malice  
But was the cost too high

## DIARY OF JOHANNUS VAN BRÖKER

May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1398

My crops are withered, and my purse is empty. My son is ill and feels as if he will start a fire in his bed. My wife almost passed not too long ago. She grew tired with this illness and fell asleep almost a fortnight ago. I do not know how long Qiron can keep me safe from this. I have prayed to them and met with The Order of the Crooked Fang, but they will no longer come on the premises. They have assured me the utmost respect when my family and I die. Blasted ascendants would rather bury a man than take a chance to save lives, and all because they hope to ascend!

I will lay down with my son tonight and hopefully this fever will transfer onto me, and he shall be spared.

May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1398

My wife awoke today and the heat that ravaged my son seems to be calming. Even looking outside, the crops seem to perk up a bit. I am taking things slowly with the both of them, but hopefully we have made it through the worst of this. Those ascendants must have beseeched Qiron to spare me. I suppose if enough voices ask for salvation, it shall be given. I must now focus on gathering the coin to repay the order for its services.

May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1398

My family is whole again. My wife and son have made astounding recoveries. The Order of the Crooked Fang came by today and I was able to give them some fresh bread. They seemed rather confused at our miraculous recoveries but gave credit to Qiron saying that they must have visited me in the night and cured us.

I was tilling the field and found this strange upward stick with a loop on top of it with string laced through it. I think during our time away from the fields the local kids were playing ball and forgot to pack it up. I took it down and I will burn it tomorrow.

May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1398

My troubles do not end. I have been hearing wolves encircle my lands. Their irritating howls have been keeping my son up. I will most likely get some wolf's bane from the local herbalist and begin planting it at the edge of my land. With any luck that should keep them at bay until I can come up with the coin to hire a hunter to rid them of my lands.

May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1398

The strangest thing happened to me today. I was planting the wolf's bane near my property line, and I felt like I was being watched. As I look up not more than 15 feet from me was a massive wolf with matted black and red fur around his lips. Beast looked like it was fresh from a kill and peered into my very soul with jet black eyes. I didn't feel any fear as I stood and told it to get away from me and my family. The creature seemed to take pause and look at me for what seemed like an hour, but in the end the beast nodded and slunk back into the trees behind it. I watched it go and I swore I saw another 6 wolves turn and leave. Had it understood me? Must have been full from its previous meal. I feel I have the coin and now that I have seen the beasts, I will go into town tomorrow and hire a hunter.

# ENTRIES TO THE REGIONAL ARTISAN COMPETITION OF HAYWOOD

## Potion Creation for beginners: Basic healing Salve

By Tintus Orealius

The process of creating your basic healing Salve is a relatively straight forward process. The first step is to bring a pot of water to the boil. While it is boiling finely chop one hunk of common moss into pieces no larger than a fingernail. Then put them into the boiling water to purify them. Let that boil for 10 minutes then remove it from the fire to cool. Once it begins to cool place the head of one cosmo flower, but ensure it is green, into the mixture and stir until absorbed completely. At this point the potion should be a lime green color. Once it reaches room temperature it is done and all set to consume despite the flavor.

## Shield forging for beginners

By Grek Strongarm

Forgin' yer first shield is a rite o passage fer many a blacksmith! Best o' all it requires only two pieces of material! I bet ya wondering how to start aren't ya? Well the firs thing yer gunna need is a basic design for yer shield. I personally prefer to make a round shield but you can choose another should ye wish. You'd be wrong but that's fine. Once ya make yer design and make a mold the first step is to melt down iron in a forge. Get it nice and hot until it become liquid metal! Once it has that bright orange glow pour it slowly into your mold. Once it starts to harden that's where the real work comes in! yer gunna wanna take yer trusty hammer and pound the impurities out of the metal! Ya may hafta put it back into the fire if it cools too much! Once the impurities are removed and the shield is cool use that bit o leather ya got to add some straps to yer shield! There ya ave it a perfectly solid basic shield!

## Ring forging for beginners

By Ying Shimmer

Forging a basic ring is the start for any aspiring jeweler. Many molds can be found throughout the land so find one that suits your tastes! The biggest problem for most jewelers is figuring out sizing for rings! I'd recommend using your own fingers until you figure it out! Once the size has been determined for your digits make sure you cut a setting of an appropriate size for your gem! In most cases aquamarine is both cheap and plentiful! You'll need a forge for the next bit though! You'll need to melt a piece of iron into a liquid metal and fill the mold completely! It will take many hours to harden and solidify to where we want it, so patience is a virtue here! Once its solidified place your gem gently into the slot and make sure that you engrave your initials into the underside of the ring, so people know your work!

## Mutton chops for beginners

By Rodon Filet

I have a firm belief that anyone can cook. That includes idiot sandwiches that need to read recipes out of books for the simplest of dishes. So now that you recognize your STUNNING lack of skill allow me the opportunity to get you started. First thing you're going to want to do is get your skillet hot and ready. While your skillet is heating up, you'll want to prepare your meat. I recommend slicing it into nice and even cutlets. If they aren't even, they won't cook evenly, you stupid donut. The first thing you'll want to do is take a chicken egg and scramble it in a bowl. You'll add your blend of potato and bread to that mixture. Next, you'll want to evenly coat your chops in that mixture and dip them into some flour. Put them into the pan for 4 minutes each side. ANY LONGER AND YOU'LL BURN THEM. I can feel your incompetency and hope you learn to do better next time. They should be moist, delicious, and juicy.

## My first scroll: Magic Bolt

By Henry Callingstead

Back when I first started my research into scholarly pursuits, I could hardly contain my excitement over the creation of my first scroll! Was it basic? Yes! Did I still feel fulfilled? Like you wouldn't believe! It also doesn't even take that much to make! You'll only need 2 ingredients as well! The first is you'll take some platinum which is surprisingly crushable once heated a bit! You'll take your inkwell and put some crushed platinum into it! Next, you'll take some tree bark and refine it until it becomes a piece of paper! Then you'll inscribe the proper runes into the paper and wait until it dries completely. Make sure you roll up your scroll and keep it tucked away into a safe place until its ready to use!



## LETTER TO DUKE NOMOUX

Many blessings to you Duke Nomoux,

We have received your request for aid and supplies to Queen Ekta, and the many reminders you have given us about our history. History lessons outside of academies and monasteries are so rare these days. Of course, we were part of Quinelle, and yes, we have so much to thank of you. A son should not forget their father. You must understand though, this was a long time ago. Radament led us here long before this famine, long before the plague, long before the great war. We have developed, as all good children should, away from the shadows of their fathers. We built cities of our own, conquered the mysteries of magic, Roya taught us the power of dreams, we once rivaled the might of your golden towers. Of course, none of us shine so brightly anymore.

Haywood and Xian Zhe have already sent us diplomatic envoys Duke Nomoux, offering much more than Priest King Heinrich has for our aid. We have stayed ahead of this famine because Roya wills it, the winds of magic make our farms thrive, keeps our mills churning, makes our workers strong. We are in a blessed position to aid others as Priest King Duncan did in the great war. We shall send you the food you seek but know this is an act of charity Duke Nomoux, your political posturing cannot force anything on the Mejieri. I am sure we shall be in touch.

Sincerely,

Lady Aruna, Left Hand of Queen Ekta 2, 19, 1420

## RECORD OF SPAWNLING MICHLI, 1415

I have been sent to see the world by Emperor Chix'tin to broaden my horizons. Our people are ancient, there is a high expectation, heavy burden. I have been sent with two others, Spawnling Kuthwaan and our Adrongo guardian, Wumka. We crossed ocean and island to make it to mountain, strange elf met us there, wrapped in furs and spots. We seek to follow rivers back home, cold makes it hard for us to move, fur elf grants us aid. I shall document more once near water.

## JOURNAL OF ARCHARCANIST CLARA

Feb 10th, 1157

Some Wyrd Orcs made their way to my camp. I do not know what they want or why they are here. However, they made their way to the area I have my rituals set up and have started changing symbols and adding seemingly random components. I try to stop them, but they seem to know what they are doing. My interactions with them have been...productive. Perhaps I will let them stick around.

Feb 17th, 1157

Despite appearances and....odd tendencies, the Wyrd Orcs offer valuable insight into the arcane. They have mastered using a plethora of arcane components I have never considered. I mean who heard of using peppermint in a fire ritual? All manner of esoteric means were used for this ritual, but with such confidence, such precision, cardinal feathers, and the symbol in the sand, I would have never suspected. I thought it absurd, Well I guess I was wrong.

Feb 26th, 1157

Something seems to be amiss. The Wyrd Orcs are acting strange even for them. They did the ritual and are seemingly sluggish, and exhausted. I do not know what they did but it doesn't seem like the intended result I was looking for, I do not feel the grand power of the wind of fire rushing through us. The threads of power seemed to go much further than expected as well. They must have made the ritual much more powerful with their unique performances.

March 5th, 1157

We were attacked. A band of savage orcs came at us last week. The Wyrd Orcs helped and were breathtaking. They let loose amazing fire spells and seemingly stopped the savage orcs in their tracks. We thought we were safe once they retreated, the ritual clearly worked. We were wrong. They came back during the night, and we fought as hard as we could, but they slaughtered all they Wyrd Ones. Then they left without a single word.

March 17th, 1157

My body feels hot. I have developed a fever. There is a sickness in the camp. Several have died. I fear I am next.

## EXCERPT FROM A TASTE OF ROCK AND STONE, BY THADDEUS DRAYNE, 1402

I have truly been blessed by Alara this day. A Mountain Dwarf named Birger was able to secure me a night stay in his encampment before we head towards the Deeps. I do not think I tricked him, but he was of the mind that if Moon Elves really did attack the outpost, he will send me forward to speak with them first! I also got a rare glimpse into what Mountain Dwarf politics looks like and it is very strange. It resembles that of Sun Elf political structure in the way that there is no central governing body. The Sun Elves have the council of mages while it seems the Mountain Dwarves have a council of craftsmen. When they spoke, they had titles of master blacksmith and chief architect. I can only assume these are esteemed positions earned through hard work as most of the dwarves appeared to be much older. They also seem to employ a rather primitive speech stick or rather more accurate talking axe that they will throw at one another when someone is done speaking. The throw at times during the conversation grew to be rather hard and judging by some of the markings in the head rest of the stone chairs. I would say in especially heated debates the tossing of the axe had gotten violent. They also had a very interesting way of settling a disagreement. In the Sun Elf court of mages, they settle disagreements with what they call a vote. Basically, the mages present will take sides and who's ever side has the most support will win. When a disagreement grips the council of craftsmen however the two sides engage in a very strange, interlocked pose with a full mug of ale in one hand and their opponent's hand in the other. I guess it's a contest of will and strength as the objective is to put your opponent's hand down onto the other side of the table. Those who disagree with you however can attempt to sabotage you by filling your mug with ale. It seems like a true victory is when there is no ale in your mug and your opponent's hand is on the table in submission. It almost seems a barbaric tradition, but I do find it quite fascinating. Luckily, Birger is a very strong lad and was able to withstand 9 mugs of ale and still put his opposition into the table else I wouldn't have been able to stay here. I will have to ask Birger more questions once we set out tomorrow, but I just wanted to ensure that I wrote this much down first.

# THE CULTURAL LOSS OF THE GREAT WAR, 1420

Written by Simon Vybornova

Recorded history is a delicate thing, something that many men and women devoted their lives to. The oral traditions of Elves and the alleged throat song of the Bask are something that we've seen be cut short, with the loss of life creating literal holes in our past. Now many scholars have written and studied the effects of the generational loss that afflicted the Elves in the height of the great war, no more old elves they say, so we will not focus on that terribly. Instead we shall focus on the magical assault of Mejikhan, and the burning of the great hearth home of Durham, two targeted attacks that I believe, were made so we would forget our past and the power that came with it.

At the time of the great war it was noted that Mejikhan was already in a state of decline, Roya's gaze had shifted to other parts of the world, and their crystal spires meant to amplify the winds of magic, had begun to tangle them, causing frequent elemental incidents. King Parudis was admittedly doing his best to solve these issues, numerous records exist of task forces specifically trained to defeat elemental threats. When the dark tide of the Many Faced God came through the grasslands the Mejeri people were woefully unprepared for the brutality of the northern raiders and the greyskins combined efforts. As they took down the assorted farm towns and hamlets, it is ironic that the same elementals that burned houses and drowned livestock, also fought against the invaders in their random violence, granting many innocents the time to flee.

After much bloodshed, a ritual was performed on the outskirts of Mejikhan by the dark host, its purpose is still debated upon to this day, but its result is painfully clear. The very winds of magic were being pulled and torn at above the proud city, black iridescent wounds could be seen even by the untrained eye, reports indicated that the crystals hummed and shook under the strain, towers swayed, and portals began to open within the many districts and streets of Mejikhan. If it were not for the good fortune that King Parudis began preparing for magical assaults, the garrison would have likely fallen. It is bittersweet that their defense efforts still could not save the city from reckless destruction. The portals granted the Many Faced God's forces a way to slip behind the walls and barriers that have stood strong for hundreds of years, unleashing greyskins, Raiders, and unknown horrors onto the populace. Where the portals connected to remains a subject of debate, whether the Deceiver god's realm, or somewhere we have yet to discover, it is almost a blessing we will never know. The city's defense was pushed to the brink, losing ground and their evacuation efforts strained, until the crystal gardens and spires that made Mejikhan famous, shattered under the strain of the magic surrounding them. Destruction unseen before enveloped the city, but the confusion allowed the defenders an advantage on their counterattack. Many lives were lost, and the beauty of Mejikhan tarnished, ultimately the leader of the Cruel God's forces, one known as Mongrel Gronbeck, was pushed back into the portals, no records of Gronbeck have been found since that battle. King Parudis focused his remaining years attempting to rebuild this city, and heal the wounds that the Mejeri suffered, not venturing past their borders during the great war. An immense amount of magical knowledge was lost during the battle, their mastery over the winds of magic and the powers of their crystals are still trying to be rediscovered to this day. What progress has been made has been an envy of the other arcane academies.

Durham does not have the good ending Mejikhan had, the hearth home was almost wiped out completely, with only stray bricks and ancient maps showing us where the great hold was. Before the great war Durham was said to be a library, a school, a fortress, a home, a place of learning and culture that spread the teachings of gods and crafting, politics and farming, a near endless amount of knowledge was harbored here. It was likely one of the few remaining places that was built by Aiko and Callen. The hold was very close to the northern mountains of Callen's Fence, and tragically that was its downfall. When the black raiders and greyskins came marching down from the mountains, the burning of Durham marked the first major loss of the great war.

We have many records of the siege of Mejikhan because there were survivors, differing opinions and conflicting reports, but the knowledge of Durham was lost forever to us, not one record of a survivor has been found. A library larger than most homes in Quinelle burnt to ash, a hearth that had been maintained since the first Dwarves crushed to dust. Stone Elf scouts were the first to start reporting Durham had been scorched from the land, informing Nomads and far out Quinellite farmers, who then spread the information south. It is likely that this terrible loss inspired others to rise against the Many Faced God's growing war, however judging from what was happening in Quinelle at the time it would still take some years for reasonable action to be taken. I believe that the loss of these two intellectual pillars of Vehldathin, combined with the generational loss of the Elves, caused the dark age that we are now only seeing our way out of. The plague of 1390 and the famine of 1410 already push our new dawn further and further out of grasp, and at the writing of this book there have been reports of a great voyage to be taken to a new undiscovered land. There are also reports of an archeological dig to find the foundation of Durham and whatever artifacts may still remain under the sediment. Finally, for posterity, there has been a new push to travel to the depths of the world and map out the many cave systems that run through Vehldathin. It is necessary to record history in all of its mundanity, so our children learn from our mistakes, so we never lose another Durham, or suffer as Mejikhan did. I implore you dear reader to continue learning, writing, reading, so that what you discover can help our future grow stronger.

## NOTEPAD FOUND ON A ROCK, 1383

I've been travelling with my group for quite some time, Zhao from Xian Zhe, he doesn't talk about home much, says no point in dwelling on a past you can't return to. Kaggle, from under the mountains, calls himself the Prince of Dragons, he looks kinda small to me though. And then there's Jon, the biggest and strongest orc I've ever seen! They all call him Jon the mighty, and he's the leader of the group, he keeps us safe even when other orcs make fun of him for not having tusks. He's got a great mask that's red and gold and sparkly. My name is Harleton, but everybody calls me Harry! I've only been travelling for only a few years, but I joined my group because they said my ears would help them, and because I sneak around real good! Jon said we gotta go take down a camp of people to get paid to get food and to get new clothes. I'm gunna sneak in and make a distraction but I found this notepad and I wanted to leave a note! That's what notepads are for. I hear shouting, okay goodbye notepad! I'll leave you here, you can come with later!

## RUMINATIONS OF THE WINDS OF MAGIC, 1399

by Jole Henry, Archarcantist

It is said long ago one could see the winds of magic. Bright, colorful, swirling in patterns that would take your breath away. But time has a way of advancing and with it changes to both the world and the people. Some of the winds simply faded into the background as their use was forgotten. Some helped to shape the very Vehl we all know today. Some deemed too dangerous locked away by Roya as the fated may doom themselves with its knowledge. Yet those that remain today still create a beautiful symphony to those that still have the power to see it.

What were to happen should those forgotten Magics come back? What would happen if the fated found a way to unlock Magics locked away by Roya? Would there be a time where Roya may give those magics to those in need of power? Could we by simple coincidence find a way to create new Magic? Add to the symphony that dances around us and through us? I aim to unlock the very secrets of the winds. Though perhaps it may be a dangerous or even fruitless endeavor.

## ADVERT FOR KRUGHEIM MANOR, 810

Naturally, there are the popular schools of magic, the tetrad, the commonly taught fundamentals in school magic. What some researchers have called the naturally four splits to the winds of magic, Fire, Water, Air, and Earth. I find this a bit presumptuous, thinking that magic at its heart boils down to four flavors the most common arcanist can wrap their minds around, what of the school of shadow? What of the school of crystal? Don't get me started on whatever those fools at Arclight are doing with their "school of portals"! I swear for every college of arcane study, you'd think some intelligence would sprout from them. Now I'm not here to discuss what merits a school of magic, or what fools would go out to try to learn them all, I want to discuss the phenomena that has been dubbed the "school of chaos". As if it were such a thing! I have worked with these arcanists, their magic is no school, it is not taught in a book, this magic as I've witnessed it has been reactionary, instinctual, like a beast defending itself. The most powerful of these "Chaos" mages have gained some control over these powers, able to use them at will. It seems like they control their own creation, their own divine spark! I've heard rumor that some are able to control others' creation as well, restoring them, or removing them. Can you imagine? With water magic we've been able to heal dozens, cure entire villages, and now perhaps with this "chaos" magic we'll be able to stop death from sweeping through the land! Gods be damned, we can become our own masters. Now this, this is why I founded my own school, my own college of the arcane, to get to these answers, more than just the tetrad! For the small enrollment fee of 150 gold crowns, you're young one can join our new Academy, 300 gold crowns for any over 10! Attached is the contract explaining tuition, and enrollment. We hope to see you soon.

Sincerely, Magnus Krugheim

## MYCROFT'S JOURNAL

It's been months here, waiting for the next ships to arrive. Never on a set schedule, always random. Some arrive in weeks, some arrive in months, currents must be hard to keep track of. Perhaps they're only used to sailing round the horn and through the Wikhutton. Whatever it means, it means we were left here alone. Albahr has been here with me, organizing some of the others, exploring the outskirts of the island, where they're hoping to set up this "New Quinelle". Finally, a chance to go out and start a new life, and they just dredge up the past. No one wants to start over. No one wants to let go of what was, to embrace what could be. I have gone into the interior of the island, the forest is thick, teeming with life. Is this what Canatha looked like before we ruined her with castles and farms? There are some game trails that allow for quick movement through the Island, although out here, in the thick of the trees the air is rife with energy, like you're being watched all around by the very winds of magic themselves. The coast has been much calmer. Some days I can hear drums, chanting, voices. I do not know if someone is out there, or if my mind just brings about old memories to fill the silence, the old crusades against the greyskins. Seems like a lifetime ago, guess it was. 2/7/1420

I've found a network of caves, some small enough for a rat, others large enough for boats to sail through, they all carry a pungent smell I am unfamiliar with. I've spent months in caves before, always sulfur and smoke and slime. This is almost, pleasant, like a home long abandoned. I'm going to try to see if they're connected. 6/5/1421

I was underground for days, skulking about down there. Wasn't alone either, something was following me. Must have been a Moon Elf, too quiet to be anything else. I ended up back by the shore at the end of it. Do all caves lead to the shore? Albahr found me on my return to base camp, brief talks, reloaded on supplies, said he saw a ship on the horizon, red sails, it's going to end up landing miles down the coast. Expedition must be here. Fun while it lasted, I'm going to make my way there so I can give my report early and be done with this debt. 9/1/1421

## SPEECH GIVEN BY HEADMISTRESS ALISHONA XILDAN, 1329

Time is a funny thing to us. We are timeless and eternal. Years ago, the dark one took from us some of the greatest minds of our magocracy. There are spells lost to time and research forgotten by even parchment. Yet I vow to begin the process of renewal of schools lost. I shall mold the minds of the young to be better than any of us. They are the future! They are our future! I will take any and all who demonstrate skill in the arcane arts and nurture their abilities through hard work and training. No longer will the classes be filled by only the privileged elite as I am living proof that if you work hard, you can overcome the boundaries others put on you. It is on this day that I accept the first in a long line of humans who show great potential in the arcane. So come one come all as I will train you and show you the glory that is the arcane. The Golden Towers of Satiara shall become the birthplace of generations of new arcanists, of all backgrounds, of all races, we will restore Vehldathin to its former glory!

## SAPPHIRE ARMADA, 1399

There are few in the sea that do not fear the tales of Vykost's ships. Yet there are fewer still that have not heard of the Sapphire Armada. The Sea Elves are known as great seafarers and have always been one with Vykost and the waves. Vykost visited some of the best captains on the island of Isodmeir and bayed them to gather their crew and set sail for a raid was to be had. As eager worshippers of the God they followed without question. They gathered their crew and set off within the hour. These 4 ships never returned to dry land. They still sail being guided by visions and whims of their now captor Charybdis. Since their long departure it is known that they have become feral, and their ships have begun to take on the sapphire shimmer of the very waves they float endlessly upon. Should the 4 ships of the Sapphire Armada come upon you your only option is to throw a large beast overboard and get away as fast as you can. It is for this reason that many ships who sail the open seas will bring a few large pigs or a small cow on a spare rowboat.

*By the ten, what has this book revealed to us? I am going to be famous! King Heinrich is going to make me a count for sure, no more sailing for me! Get a look at this lads, we're going to be scholars of the New World! – Captain Red Beard*

## A NOTE FOUND BY THE SHORE

A dream.

A fickle thing, written in our minds, like spiders weaving fine silks in patterns.

Blown away by winds of change.

Where does wind come from. What movement cascades endless changes, roiling toiling boiling at the edge  
of our understanding.

Bubbling up to the surface, gurgling all that we knew. Bottomless ocean. Boundless colors. Is it the winds  
howling our secrets through the leaves.

What did our forefathers hide from us. What do our gods wish secrets kept. What will shall leave us well.

We think therefore we are but what thinks of us. Does it think of us. Does it think of us. Does it think.

They think me mad think us mad. We. Me and you. All of you. We are the same. Mad.

I haven't met you yet. Will I get to. I hope you will meet me.

We came from gods. Will we all ascend. What will we look like when we do. Is it colorful where we go. Is it  
black eyes and teeth where we go.

Eyes and teeth rest underneath.

Do you feel watched yet. Do you find this new home strange yet. Who built it for the children.

A land made of candy. Candy house candy dreams take your fill.

Don't drown in the colors. Don't drown in the rot.

Now that we've seen everything what is there to be left with. What magnificent colors. Cold and wet. That's  
where it lives. It came from beyond.

Who cares for the lives of the ants we tread upon. Billions of them underneath our waking world.

Look up to the sky. Demons come down. Faithful go up.

Do they think of us.

Is it time to go already. I hope I don't wake up. The dream is more appealing than the truth.

Nightmares in the dream. Rot in the colors. They'll whistle in your ear.

You have no idea what this will mean.

187590.

Nothing in The Vehl is by chance. Something appears to be chance only because of our lack of knowledge.

We fated. Searching to ascend. What will we become.

Everyone will seek me. In time. I hope you find me. I hope you know what it means. It is time to go. I'm  
returning home. I'm returning home. It burns.

## LESSONS ON THEOLOGY AND WORSHIP, BY JOSEPH GRINT, 1196

The gods of Vehldathin are a collective, guiding the populace of the Vehl, and mostly, since the great war, working on rebuilding. Ascendants are commonly devout to one God fiercely, being their representative in their towns and temples, however the common follower is much more flexible in their faiths. Finding those who follow several gods is as common as finding a fur back toad in the grasslands of Prinreik. Thank Myar for a pleasant song from a tavern, thank Aiko for the kindness of others on the road, thank Vykost for not getting lost on the road, thank Qiron for not catching a cold! Us common folk are always giving praise for the blessings we receive from the gods, so it is only fair that we should communally return the favor. It's often found that prayer and offerings are given to a temple, or to ascendants directly, as they are the direct connection to their gods if there are no places to gather. Common followers give thanks and gifts to the temple, and the Ascendants maintain, in order to make their lives easier and continue to gain favor from the various gods that watch over them. Of course, not all gods are always represented equally, which tends to draw some jealousy, however in all the years of worship in the Vehl, consequences have only been found if more than three gods are praised in one space. Perhaps it is due to the relationship between Myar, Aiko, and Callen, that makes the gods only begin to feel jealousy when a fourth is introduced. The exception to this rule is when all of the gods are worshiped equally, in one space, save for the obvious exclusion. A temple dedicated to 3 gods, or 9 gods, appears to be the acceptable worship, while anything in-between is taboo, and could bring about some calamity. Some Ascendants will create cult like followings in particularly remote areas, this has commonly been seen amongst Qiron worshippers, and Vykost worshippers, in wildly differing fashions. Now Ascendants find best results when only one god is worshiped by them, some have chosen two gods but, but tend to feel ignored by both, or worse punished by both! The gods very commonly like to assist one another, but don't like to combine their powers. Good fences make good neighbors even for the divine apparently. Ascendants are commonly gifted their connection by their gods, but some can prove devotion to gain a connection, or study academically to gain their connection. All methods are valid, as long as the intent to serve their God is pure. Some view Ascendants as a group in a competition, this tends to be a very self-serving view, and possibly the result of the creation of Demon Lords. All Ascendants of the same church should work together to further the goals of their God first, serving the faith is its own reward. For example, those Ascendants that worship Myar should work together to bring music to their dwellings, create works of art for their neighbors, create a balance between living in a shelter and respecting the trees needed to build one, before seeking the power to use their God's power to their own ends. Shrines to your God should start humble, something small and but properly representing your God and your relationship with them. Of course, as and Ascendant every time you visit a shrine you should seek to improve it, even if it is just cleaning the area or adding a small piece to it. Over time, grand shrines form through the small, concerted efforts of a church, making their connection to the gods all the more powerful. As we have discussed worship and faith, this holds true for 8 of the gods, which the exceptions being Hastur and The Many Faced God. Hastur is a God of absolutes, he is very protective of his power and demands that it be used correctly. It is common to see Hastur Ascendants policing themselves to keep the standard of worship high, while encouraging, in mostly gentle ways, common followers to act accordingly. Duels between Hastur Ascendants over matters of faith are not unheard of, these happen most often in calm, civilized areas, where they feel there are no grand quests to embark on. This is known as the Quest of Judgement, and these knights of Hastur can be some of the most stubborn to deal with. Fear not dear reader, for Hastur is a God of light, of good omens, of peace, above all else. Hastur seeks to do good, in the best way possible, and his followers follow suit, even if at times they are misguided. If an Ascendant of Hastur shows cruelty to you, finding others of their faith will likely result in a duel to set the oppressor on the correct path again, learning is a lifelong goal after all. The Many Faced God is nearly opposite of Hastur, representing the Many Faces of Evil, looking like something you may know and find comfort in, or something you fear. The stranger, the lover, the friend, the family, the oppressor, the killer, the criminal, each of them holds the potential to be the face of evil. The Many Faced God favors conniving and scheming, trickery and plots, true destruction of trust and camaraderie. Any inkling of this God's presence in your lands should be reported to everyone immediately, as to be snuffed out efficiently. This Malevolent god is shrouded in mystery, as his servants do not record their history and practices for others, they keep their secrets in their places of worship, most notable of which would be the Pyramid of Fangs, where the Nightcrawlers commit their religious practices. It is said that the Order of the Black Sun originated in the place, but this is just rumor. The Chaotic Killer God is known by many different epitaphs due to the nature of their actual name, which once said tends to draw their attention and cause them to play cruel tricks on those who would dare speak it. No other God shares this practice strangely. Almost every temple forbids a shrine to The God of Evil Ilk, as creating one would encourage their followers to arrive and wreak their havoc. While before the great war they were considered nuisances, we have learned greatly from that time what horrors can come from allowing them to take root. Some common folks find themselves drawn to The Selfish God of Hate because they are angry at their circumstances, perhaps frustrated that their crops failed, or that others exclude them from activities, or they feel they deserve more than they are given. Once they begin down that path it is dangerous to continue, or to get off of it. The Many Faced God delights in bestowing powers on others simply to see them bumble into an ironic demise in a quest for revenge. My advice to you, is learn from history, and seek absolution, friendship, peace, before it is too late. Lastly, to touch on how to address the gods, due to the nature of Ascendancy, referring to the gods as he or she, can be a derivative. Since we do not know what happens after one ascends to the mantle of their God, it would not always make sense to change how we refer to them. The simplest answer here is to refer to the Gods by name, by title, or with They, or Them. The High Ascendants to a God may know more about this, as they are closest to their God, but they tend to be very busy, and if one should grace you with their presence, you should heed their word above all others. This concludes today's lesson, I hope you find it informative and helpful in your prayers, please find me after your studies if you wish to ask any questions.

## **EXCERPT FROM A JUVENILE ARCANIST CLASS, TAUGHT AT THE GOLDEN TOWERS, 1316**

Now class, as you begin to practice harnessing magic for the first time, it is important to know where you harvest it from. The Winds of Magic have blown across Vehldathin since there was life shuffling about on it. All forms of life are keen to the Winds in some form or another, some insects can be studied mating only when the winds of magic flow rapidly through an area, and some great falcons float on the very Winds of Magic, with their wing feathers gripping onto the latent magical energies. Humans, Elves, Dwarves, we all share a connection to the Winds of Magic, even the Orcs to some degree, despite how strange it may appear. We can feel them flowing, rustling in the trees, blowing through our hair, almost synonymous to the mundane wind that blows through. In fact, it takes a wise expert to discern the two apart! Storms can form from the winds of magic, as can various miasma, the former representing a surge of power through the Winds of Magic, expanding the powers of those that harness them but be warned, an unskilled hand can cause magical feedback to lash back at them. It is not unheard of that poor headstrong arcanists find their way into the black beyond this way. The latter is something more dampening, the Winds of Magic laying stagnant for too long, losing their potential. This is very dangerous, as even a skilled hand cannot pull something from nothing. Now, there have been questions about how, if the Winds of Magic flow all together, do we manage to create different schools of magic? How do we create such various pictures from the same pen? How do we perceive such colors will only but our eye? Studying your school of magic is the same as an artist studying their craft, a sculptor refining stone into a masterpiece. The most common Schools are the Tetrad, Fire, Water, Earth, and Air, these are fundamentally taught because they are viewed as the simplest refinements of the Winds of Magic, physical manifestations of the school can be felt and conceptualized, it is not abstract but here around us we can find aspects of the tetrad. The possibility of Schools you can study, or even create if you are ambitious enough, is nearly limitless. Keep in mind it takes a keen mind to be able to perfect more than one School, or even to perfect a School of more abstract thought outside of the tetrad. Now, we refer to them as Schools of Magic as the same way we discuss schools of thought, while there may be some slight variations in the practice, they all seek the same perfection in the end result. Patterns in the Winds of Magics flow have yet to be found, they tend to be erratic and discordant. Why this is can only be assumed, a leading hypothesis is that it has to do with how it is used, with more usage creating low areas of Magic, allowing stronger Winds to blow in, thus creating the potential for storms or miasma. With so much of the world using magic, it'd be hard to predict where it would flow next. It would be a shame to discuss the Winds of Magic without mentioning Roya, the pinnacle in the Ritualists Pyramid, the one who rules over the Som-Regnum. The relationship between our subconscious minds, the Som-Regnum, and the Winds of Magic are mysterious but very obviously intertwined. Perhaps it is through our subconscious that we can harness the winds of magic, reaching out with our minds, only using our bodies as place holders, but regardless, it should be common, that in your rituals and studies you keep close to heart Roya as the key to unlocking your potential. Now in your studies and practices, it may be easy to get caught up in thoughts of grandeur, but as long as you have your core fundamentals memorized, your stances and your incantations memorized, you should be just fine. Diligence is key to arcane mastery, some have become a tad eccentric by moving too quickly on their studies. When you take your performance trials, remember my advice, and you will become true Arcanists in no time!

## **A GUIDE TO MYSTIC SWIMMING, BY MORTUARY PRIEST GAFNER, 1072**

Dear reader, it is my great pleasure to attempt to enlighten you upon the process of which you may have been struggling with for many years. To discover one's mystic abilities is a furtive process, but do not fear as dreamers always know how to find dreamers. You may find that visions are thrust upon you in your most private & public of moments, a world pulled over your eyes to see, or perhaps just words, a tune of a song trapped within you through fits of senselessness. Do not fear, this is nothing out of the ordinary, you are channeling your gift as the humble Ascendant channels theirs, however the source of such visions remains a mystery to us, despite great efforts otherwise. Some races are more prone to become mystics, Sun Elves & The Bask most notably, but this gift can be developed in any of the Fated across the Vehl. With practice and focus these visions can be honed into certain things, areas, even times, although some creative liberties may worm their way into the apple. Be warned that despite the best efforts, fate does have a way of twisting words to try to tell you what it wants you to hear, not what you want it to tell you. Peaceful environments along with imbued incense can help bring clarity to your meditations, repetition can help commit it to memory as well, which is helpful in avoiding forgetful seizures where you are left only speaking the words to those who may bear witness to your gifts. At times you may notice these visions coming to you in dreams, and unlike the Ascendant's practice of Lucid Dreaming, allowing yourself to flow down the rivers of the Dreamlands can lead to a closer connection to the lessons fate is trying to teach you. Of course, as you continue practicing, never forget the practiced words, "The psychotic drowns in the same waters in which the mystic swims with delight." Do not be afraid to swim dear reader, your gift can lead you to brighter futures.

## **PAMPHLET HANDED OUT BY A SHOUTING MAN IN 1422**

THE WORLD IS RULED BY A SECRET CABAL OF ELVES THE GREAT WAR NEVER KILLED THEM THEY FILL YOUR HEAD WITH LIES THEY SNUCK DEEP IN THEIR PYRAMIDS AND HID CONTROLLING THE WORLD TURNING US ON EACH OTHER CAUSING WARS SO WE DON'T SEE THEIR SCHEMES DON'T YOU SEE THEY FUND THE ARCANIST ACADEMIES THAT ARE GUNNA BREAK THE WORLD LOOK AT WHAT HAPPENED AT ARCLIGHT THEY CHANGED THE NATURAL ORDER NOW AFTER 200 YEARS IT'S STILL COLD THAT ICE WON'T EVER MELT UNDER THIS FAKE SUN THE ELVES HID THE REAL SUN DOWN UNDERNEATH US WE'VE GOT TO HELP IT OUT IT'S FLOWING UP OUT AS MAGMA AND ONLY BY EXPOSING THEIR LIES WILL WE SEE THE TRUTH DON'T EVER TRUST AN ELF



## GUARD NEEM'S REPORT, JULY 3RD, 1401

*The Cult of Thagos has been encroaching closer to the market square lately. They've been setting up their boxes, spouting their ravings wearing their numbers and triangle nonsense, every day disturbing the general peace. They used to be shuffled away pretty easily but now it takes several guards to drag them away.*

*We chased some away today and they ran back to some building we thought was just used for grain storage, the door was covered in numbers and strange sigils, all kinds of nonsense, we sent a request to the Burgomaster's Arcanist guild but that may take some time. Guard Sop and Guard Welcyr were assigned to keep watch on that door until we get further support.*

*We've gotten several reports saying the Cultists were telling portents of doom coming, that their formulas would be the only salvation in this new age of discovery. Almost every report mentions a warning of their guardian, who would petrify, poison, and trample any who would dare stand in their way, something called a 'Gorgon.' Whatever that could be.*

*If this is demon ilk, we'll need to contact a stronger force to purge them from town, I will keep you informed as we discover more Inquisitor, may Alara keep your stars aligned.*

## SCRAPS OF PAPER WRITTEN BY ALCHEMIST SIENN ELD

*...I'm sure you've heard already what the formula is, to transmogrify one form to another, a simple Pewter to Silver... ...Now of course more exciting formulas can create some excitable powders, creating smoke or a sudden explosion that will be the envy of every Arc... ...couldn't be too sure how well it would be in changing someone's mind into any other than pu... ...d Luck getting a military detachment to allow us to demonstrate our abilities, but if what you said is true then perhaps we do have a future with the We...*

## BETTER BATTLE BEHAVIORS

- Be Respectful to those that respect you
- Keep all taunting witty and appropriate
- Keep talking down to a minimum unless its relevant to the battle
- Refrain from needlessly shouting
- Hold the line
- Try flanking
- Try surrounding them
- Try creating an effective distraction behind the line
- Watch your step
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Don't go too far from the line
- Don't be a hero
- Don't die
- Don't turn your back to the enemy
- Fight defensively first, if you survive you win
- Always regroup after a fight
- Always be alert and ready to rally
- Use the terrain to your advantage
- Stay hydrated
- Don't leave your allies to die
- Always make sure the enemy is dead
- Always search the enemy for loot
- Always make sure your allies are alive and moving
- Always share the spoils of battle with your allies
- Always listen to your superior's orders
- Never underestimate the enemy
- Never overestimate your allies
- Take notes about the enemy
- Move injured allies to safe areas so others can help them
- Collect spell components to one central area
- Collect lost arrows, armor, shields, and weapons to one central area
- Keep an eye out for enemies trying to flank your allies
- Potions are always effective, have one around your neck in case of emergencies
- Move with confidence and purpose, never in rush or panic

## JOURNAL ENTRY 1 BY ESQUIRE BRENDAN OF OAKSHIRE, 1402

This writing will serve as what my private tutor calls an "Academic autobiography in the purpose of teaching writing skills and for posterity." I'm not so sure what he means by this, but to practice my letters I decided to write about the differences in my life from yeoman to Esquire in the service to Sir Oakshire.

See I used to be a woodsman on the skirts of the shire. With my husband and two kinder. I was a Brother of the Guild, a neighborly person and a right good Husband. As father and his mother before him, I cut down the strong and tall oak trees for use and the selling of my lord. In this ere town of 500 fated, most cut the trees while others farm or pursue other sorted jobs to pay their lands rent. Back then my heraldry was simple. I wore a patch with Oak tree and Axe sewn into my tunic by the town's head seamstress. This signified my purpose and what I represented. Nowadays it is much more complex.

Me and Jonah are married bout 10 years back I'd say. His family and mine agreed we'd be a good match when we brought it up to them. He was the only person I was interested in on the list of candidates my parents named off. Good kin. Good connections. Wonderful man. It just seemed right to be with him. We made do with what we had, and our children didn't go without. Then one year a savage orc came to the village with a couple of his tribe. He started talking about a tribute to them. Twas for paying them back for the losses they had "protecting" this town from the local monsters. We of course ridiculed him and his mates out of town laughing the whole time. What fools we were.

When the monsters trickled out by ones and twos it just seemed an oddity. We hadn't seen monsters around our parts for years. So, we just assumed it was a bad year. Then the night came when the Ashora beast came into the village and started destroying and killing. Its affinity for ash, wood, fire and its hatred for those that steals its trees made it for a nightmare come true. When it came for my family, I remembered the old stories. I threw water at its roots and in the smoke and screams I coated the work axe with me blood.

While fighting the beast, smoke and ash making my eyes weary and tear. My bleary vision beheld a knight. Armor gleaming wearing the green and gold of what I now know as the crane. We fought it together him and I. This Grimdall. Every time I thought I was to die his shield was betwixt me and the cinder eyes of that foul creature. After wounding it time and again and when we thought we were on our last moment the creature fled. Reason being ten more green and gold knights rode in. Getting up on their horses to chase it they asked me to join but I stayed. I had family.

They made me a squire that month. Said I was a hero. Don't feel like any hero. It's still out there. I saw that knight come back. Not with a trophy. But with tabards and bodies.

## DWARVEN FURY & PRIDE, 1192

Longbeards tell tale of long ago, after the mother left us, and we went deep to the mountain holds, a father and his lads, twinning brothers under a stony roof. Their father raised them strong backed and keen eyed, but couldn't stop the fledgling rivalry, one red with rage and fury, the other hard as stone and stern with pride. The lads took to their work in such fashions, honing their skills, when the Kobolds or the forsaken Goblins came to battle, the brothers worked in eerie tandem to slay their foes, an unstoppable hammer, an immovable anvil. They grew to some renown and lead their hold's militia for near twenty five years, but for all their skill they could not surpass the father. Pride could withstand blow after blow, turning the enemies strikes against them, weathering whatever onslaught they could muster. Fury could burn hot on an empty oven, growing only stronger as the battle staggered on, an unwavering smashing of axe and hammer. Father however was a master tactician, knew exactly where to place an anvil, and how to strike where they were most brittle, a way with words that showed how wrong we were to be abandoned. Yet even in the mountain holds, the curse of years never falters. Father grew old, weary, unable to carry the weight of his shield, and in the depths of the magma vents, to be weak is to be a burden. He took the long march down to the depths, as our kin do when time calls, and the twinlings were left to their own rivalry. Fury lost himself to drink and grief and fell to a goblin trap, despite the several hours of fighting, not even he could withstand their venom. Pride let his success blind him, thought he was blessed like a Hill Dwarf and took on insurmountable odds against a cabal of Kobolds. This tale told to remind us proud mountain folk of the power we can harness by the sweat of our brow, and to remind us to avoid hubris, lest we lose our footing.

## ELVEN CODICES, BY MAMA TOOMEY, 1256

There are several surviving Elven Codices, gifted to us by the Arboreal Lords of the Great Wood surrounding Haywood. When the Sun elves of the city made peace with the Wood Elves the Lords gifted them so that their cultures could come to an understanding. In those ancient times Wood Elves had no written history, only working in elegant symbols and pictograms, works of art that depict their history, woven in reeds and branches, painted in pigments on the very bark of their Prentrees. After the Great War these Codices are our strongest connection to a past, we were robbed of, I write this now in an effort to teach our younger generation the culture that the Black Tongue God tried in vain to take from them. The Codices depict the Wood Elves of ancient times living deep within the forests, guarding the great Prentree groves that are deeply in tune with the winds of magic, long keeping roving bands of Greyskins and ambitious industries of gleaming Quinelle and Prinreik out of these sacred spaces. Led by the Arboreal Lords, akin to a king to the Wood Elves, it took many attempts from diplomatic emissaries from Sun Elf ruled Haywood, not trusting Elves that were so entwined with the world of the other races, the Wood Elves viewed themselves superior to their kin who did not reside in the great woods. Even now that prejudice can still remain, despite a growing number of Wood Elves living amongst the other races and cultures. The Codices depict the villages and what can only be described as a network of wooden streets woven into the canopy above the forest floor. What must have been a great feat of patience and engineering, these tree top bridges and buildings spread far from the central Prentree groves, but it appears that the central most building was saved for the Arboreal Lords, and it seems like powerful spiritual figures. This must be where the tradition of having Seers who are deeply in tune with the great wood and the lands surrounding them lead clans of Wood Elves, alongside the clan's Blood Hunter or Vine Singer, a sort of war leader and village elder. Furthermore, the images depicted show several traps and workarounds to keep inquiring eyes away from ancient Wood Elf settlements, showing examples of a deep xenophobia which is not far off from how modern Wood Elves live today, despite how many traditionalists live today in the great woods, they still openly trade with caravans who peacefully wander through the forests. A comforting thing to see is in each of the images shown in these ancient Codices, there is a calm, communal love of nature, of song, several depictions of children being raised in groups amongst the entire tribe, and even a depiction of a clan mending a broken leg of one of their hunters. In a society so isolated, not being able to move or fend for yourself can be a death sentence, but to see that even in the oldest of times our people still cared for each other, proves to me that even with our eternal lives, we still remain true to ourselves and our love. These Codices are extremely rare, a blessing that we did not lose these as well during the Great War.

## LETTER FROM DIPLOMAT HIL'THIR, 1379

Dearest Raspoln,

It seems my time here in Prinreik may come to an abrupt end. I have been making great efforts in establishing a trade agreement with the trade masters here to have some semblance of equal favor for Haywood, these round ears are oftentimes too greedy, or too short sighted. Can we blame them with their short lives? I miss you deeply, it has been too long since you've left your frozen lands to cool my Bedchambers, you would have no love for these villages and cities, did you know in some spots they throw their waste out into the streets? I know you can see what I desire from you, but I may be being watched here, so I must be coy. We will meet again, in this life or the next my love, the sun shall always shine brightly upon us. If this letter reaches you, please ensure that it makes it to my father back home, he will want to know how my diplomatic efforts have gone, and what I have discovered. Please do remember to take care of Lolim, they are still so young to the world, and they will need a strong caretaker to guide them. Expect my next letter soon and be cautious of solemn travelers on the northern trade routes. When you see this, you will know what to do

Sincerely with love,

Hil'thir

## CURSES, AND HOW TO BE RID OF THEM, BY PROFESSOR BLUTH, 1089

Curses are a truly malignant thing, something that is not openly taught at any academy since the Curse Wind Ritual swept across the land in 1023. They're put together almost like puzzles by an adept arcanist, rarely an ascendant. To visualize the Winds of Magic in such a way that you can fold them, layer them, and produce an everlasting pain on a target while not producing an elemental is fascinating if it weren't for the harm they cause. Many have used curses in the past as a punishment for grave robbers, guarding over something that may not be able to be watched as closely as a pocket or pouch. As they grew in popularity they were cast upon such things as doors and pouches, to punish any who would encroach on something much better protected with a lock. Yes, it would seem like the root of curses is spite, not necessarily effectiveness. In some very old military campaigns, as in The Glitter Pass Trade Wars, it is mentioned that great curse rituals were used to enfeeble the combatants. This led to their growing popularity and the tragic happening of the Curse Wind Ritual, where a ritual went horribly awry and cursed most of a nation! Remain ever cautious of what curses could remain in an area, they do not fizzle with time, but await to be grasped and leech off unsuspecting travelers. Now the important steps to removing curses once they have afflicted you. Many Ascendants can channel their God's power to allow them to unravel these bundles and return them to the Winds of Magic, that is your simplest step forward, however there are some reagents that can unravel them with a potion, or an oil. To begin you would need...

## THE STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS, JEAN ARCHON, 1403

*The next step of my project involves directing consciousness into my favorite little beings, but how? I know not of a ritual that does that, the fact that I don't know speaks volumes, those pea brained fools at the college would barely grasp this level of arcane insight. Who else would know? There is another possibility, what if I were to take it from somewhere else? What if I could pluck it as an apple from a tree and bury it like a heart? Yes. that could work, though the question remains, where to look?*

*It has been several days since I've started searching for the answer and finally, finally! I think I discovered the key. The Som-Regnum. My bumbling assistant will make a perfect test subject for this. I've discovered a ritual that will allow one to rip into the Som-Regnum, we must begin gathering the components with much haste, but some are odd, unique, Royal Jelly? This will require some research.*

*At last, I've found it! The final component to start this ritual, the moon is full, and my hopes are high. I've sat my assistant in the middle and now he can finally be of some use. Time to work wonders as I've done countless times before. As my assistant falls asleep, I know it will succeed, I just have to wait.*

*The fool finally woke up, it has been hours since he fell asleep, woke up shrieking. Weak minded coward, yet his eyes rolled back as he convulsed, and a voice croaked out of his mouth, it retched out to me*

*'You whomst seeks entrance to the Som-Regnum, you know not what you open. You tear open fabric with no concern for your actions, you have not been worthy of the 7 steps of light slumber nor the 70 steps of deep slumber. Know you shall find no rest for your trespasses, nor shall your life be spared.'*

*Cryptic, ominous, only simpletons heed warnings such as this. I am far too powerful to be intimidated by words. Although after the seizure, it appears my assistant has died. A minor setback at worst, however I've learned much. Perhaps I will research what this voice said and see if my new pet project can gain what I desire.*

## THE CHILDTAKER, 1278

*Myth and mystery are often kin to one another, fanciful stories to hide a grim truth.*

*This tale describes the wicked fate of one so fallen, an envious man scorned by mother's wit. But not even a mother's love can protect from demon ilk so foul tempted.*

*In the days after the Great War, the Lord of Envy rose to power and spread his forces to grasp the fragile fringe towns barely covered by Quinelle's Peasant King's shield. One such town, some tales call Cloudtop, some tales call Daisyglen, many fathers lost their lives in the war, now taken care of by the mothers.*

*When greedy hands and gluttonous eyes came to the town it was the strength of mothers who defied them. The love of a mother was a powerful antithesis to the demonic temptation, but the Lord of Envy is not so easily defied, and where strength of arms is not always the solution, clever schemes were crafted in the dark.*

*The rats swarmed through to the cracks in the walls, squeezing into quiet, private places. They bid the children wake and gave them grim instructions.*

*Make sure your parents are asleep, leave your house, do not make a peep, gather in the square, move quickly and beware, go into the forest in the dark of night when the moon is at its zenith height. Find the ruined church, blackened and burned, and release what riles within you without fear of spurn. Shriek, shriek, shriek into the night, meet the Demons and dance in delight. Join the Lord of Envy and take what's yours by right.*

## A DREADFUL WARNING, BY GUARD CAPTAIN DIRNS, 1221

Little is known about the faith of the Masked God, their followers guard their secrets viciously and spread misinformation casually. What is known as fact is what is commonly known in the world, the hand those of that faith have already shown. Speaking their god's true name is a clear way to draw their ire, and face divine wrath, they hold evil deeds in their heart above all else, any kindness is simply part of the plan for a greater evil, if you see one, there are many more in hiding. Evil is like a rat, always swarming and spreading underneath your feet, waiting to gnaw and bite when you least expect it. Yet, a note found in one of their gatherings that was purged, leads to a curious thought if true. The knights returned it to the Mask Hunters for inspection and the concept of the note has led many of the inquisitors to heated debate. From what I could pry out of them it seems like the note gave a warning, from the Many Faced God himself, describing how to always remember the symbol one wears in the faith is a reminder of the truth of the world. What truth would they possibly allude to? That all fated wear masks? That there is naught but darkness awaiting us when we pass? Eyes? Or perhaps it is gibbering lies that they placed to confuse us. I find it easier to simply kill them and trust my faith to guide me proper. Praise be to Callen.

## CRUEL COMPETITIONS, BY CONFESSOR HARLOCKE, 1238

The Many Faced God has several prominent denominations of their church, despite never having an ascendancy. None of these sects of the 'church' if you could call it that, seem to work together. Arguably they seem to actively work against one another, each seeking to usurp the other. The three that are most commonly encountered by Mask Hunters of the inquisition are as follows. The Saints of Sin, this deeply militaristic and ritualistic sect of the church seems to follow three core 'Saints'. The Saint of Suffering, the Saint of Slaughter, and the Saint of Spite, some have claimed the title but have only been middling worshippers, they seem to be strategic in their actions, actively looking to improve their power and standing. The Order of the Black Sun, this enigmatic group is only known in hushed words, quiet alleys. These expert spies and subterfuges insert themselves within everyday courts and politics, infecting the minds of others with their dark god's whim. Finally, we are brought to the Children of Zog, the followers of the Many Faced God's High Ascendant, Zog, Father of Serpents. Zog has been the right hand of the Many Faced God for as long as anyone can recall, his Nightcrawler servants follow his every beck and call, this group is rarely found in Canatha. A fact in which we should all be thankful for. With these groups constantly working against one another in a show of dominance or sick sport, it keeps them distracted from the toils of simpler folk.

## PRACTICAL USES OF MAGIC ACROSS VEHL DATHIN, 1396

The academies across Vehl dathin have received a great amount of funding from various City States, Kingdoms, and Merchant Groups due to their ability to innovate and adapt the winds of magic in ways that provide great deals of comfort to those who would inhabit more populated areas of Canatha and Yarim. Sanitation, Treatment of illness and injury, even transportation, the misconception that war is the main reason to study magic is mostly harbored in places where practical uses are less than noticeable. While an Earth Arcanist would be unable to simply shape stone into a desired shape, they are able to prevent the withering of earth from currents of water, or brutal storm winds. Along with Water Arcanist's ability to keep water flowing without source, has created many grand sewer systems that allow for more modern cities to have a level of comfort that can only be dreamed of in smaller hamlets. Haywood, along with skilled arborists, use similar magics to prevent flood waters from overtaking the surrounding areas. This practice is less often utilized in agriculture, due to the protection that a lot of these enchantments need to remain viable, one stray wolf or stag knocking over a stone could short the rituals off. Regularly these rituals need to be performed in order to maintain their potency, despite the possibility to perform more permanent enchantments.

Such permanency is declined often due to the costly nature of the endeavor, and the fact that you never know what the future holds! The Races of the Vehl, especially Humans and Dwarves, are always seeking to innovate, and having such permanent rituals can be detrimental to such innovation, aside from the fact that you would need at least 10 practiced ritualists to perform such a feat!

Now as for transportation, the fine craftsmanship of caravans and wagons across the Vehl has allowed them to travel vast distances, but the safety of major roads and highways, especially winding through the kingdoms of Haywood and Quinelle, have been a marvel and pride of the civilized world for generations. Fire Arcanists regularly enchant braziers and lanterns along the long stone roads to allow for travelers to have the safety of lights and warmth during their travels. No sailor worth their salt will board a Galleon without at least one Air Arcanist, and Water Arcanist aboard, and for tradition at least one cat. The power to have a steady source of drinkable water, strong trade winds, and an easily dried deck has made Arcanists valued members of nautical work. Several new ships have been enchanted in their construction to allow them to channel the winds of magic further, The Umbral Endeavor has several pipes throughout her cabins and holds to allow for a skilled Arcanist to control temperatures within, The Aevum's Respite has been given sails woven with enchanted fiber to allow them to harvest every breeze as a gust, and The Queen's Remark has had her cannons imbued with magic strong enough to penetrate any ward. There is even rumor that a group of Gnomes in Prinreik working on a ship that needs no water to sail but carries itself as a bird above!

Lastly, the study of medicine has been left mostly to those in the divine practice.

Some Water Arcanists do practice and hone their ability to use the healing properties of water, however the skill of healing without magic is chiefed primarily by Myar, and Qiron. Myar and Qiron share the study of herbs and their practical applications in salves and potions, but it is Qiron that is worshiped by the study of anatomy, the mending of wounds, the physiology of the mortal form without the use of magic, seeing such a use as a final act in their God's judgment. This isn't to say that others have not practiced the physical art of healing. Not all are touched by divine grace, but the desire to do some good for others in your community does push some to study and learn. The foremost center of knowledge for the art of non-magical healing is known as the "Centro Medico per L'avanzamento delle Conoscenze nella Guarigione e nel Recupero " in Epplessa. It was there that it was discovered that a simple Honey Apple Tart could help recover wounds and grant increased vitality in patients who were wounded.

I hope this information has proved useful to you engineers looking to innovate and improve, while not shunning the works of magic studied in the various academies across the lands. Do not let the fear of Arclight or Krugheim lead you away from how delightful the winds of magic can make life for us all!

A NOTE FOUND IN AN ANCIENT LIBRARY

[illegible]

Down in the deeps  
 Wings are beat  
 Chains are rattled  
 Banished things sleep  
 Old gods defeated  
 Bad blood all around  
 Silver moonlight shines  
 The Betrayer's crimes repeated  
 What was the first Divine  
 Who taught the children  
 Who hated the parents  
 Secrets kept are so sublime  
 A cycle never ending  
 Keep the sin buried down  
 Every time buried down  
 Every problem keeps descending  
 Curious children can't be stopped  
 Riddles and secrets and mystery  
 A swirl of color and misdirection  
 Even now they don't know what  
 they've unlocked  
 The story will end one day  
 When, who can say  
 What future will come to pass  
 A change we will all have to pay  
 An Ancient  
 An Outsider  
 An Evil  
 And All the Children  
 So the prophecy foretold  
 So it will be kept  
 An open ending  
 Fortune favors the bold

[illegible]

## EXCERPT OF A STUDENT'S DISSERTATION ON THE WINDS OF MAGIC

It is likely that colors may hold deeper keys to the nature of the Winds of Magic that we have yet to fully comprehend, as several Schools of Magic are consistently found to be particular colors. Without exception, the School of Fire is Orange, the School of Earth is Green, the School of Air is Yellow, the School of Water is Blue. Even further the School of Shadow is Gray, the School of Metal is Gold, and the School of Celestial is White. These can be found in magical auras, rituals, and even the flourish of magical energy used in combat. The curiosity comes from Divine magics, which seem to produce no color, other than at times, a blinding White light, which seems to hold no relation to the School of Celestial. Conversely Demonic magic seems to be Red in every instance it has been recorded. Regardless of any Demon, their magic seems to root itself in the same color. By observing these colors, we can make bold assumptions on the nature of these beings, of elementals, and of phenomena that can be viewed in the waking world.

## JOURNAL OF CAPT REDBEARD ENTRY 2

*It's been two weeks since we've arrived on the island. Attacked by Savage Orc warbands, strange creatures, even golems. This island is a bit of a strange place. Even my magic feels off, Nothing I cannot handle though. Finally caught up with Mycroft, even he agrees that something feels off here. However, there's a lot of unexplored area here, Mycroft says that he found a path that leads a bit further inland. I'm going to go with him and explore a wee bit, hopefully nothing too dangerous but you never know. Maybe if things get a bit hairy, we'll get some of the travelers that came with us to settle the island to help lend us a hand. Seems like there's enough resources here to get anyone motivated. Although word has gotten to me from the scouts that a ship flying Prinnick colors was seen off the western coast. I'm hoping for no trouble but some of them are money grubbing sleazes. Well, hopefully our little journey goes smoothly, and we find something worth the hassle.*

## THE CURSE OF YEARS, BY MORTUARY PRIEST GAFNER, 1084

The Curse of Years afflicts all of us, save the Elves in their divine birthright, but it does affect us in different ways. There are many different myths and stories of why, each race is affected differently, and what is to be done to prepare a body for the black beyond. Dwarves normally live to be around 100 years of age, however, there have been instances of Dwarves living up until 200 years of age. In every instance of Dwarves aging, they seem to age very poorly, despite that decline starting at odd times. One Dwarf may start declining at 80, others at 150, and tragically some even at 30. Their physiology shuts down, and seems to age rapidly, where as Humans, age steadily. Funerary customs for Dwarves usually involve cremation, in honor of their parents, Aiko & Callen. Humans are a steady race, the Curse of Years chipping away at their mortal form, slowing them down bit by bit, year after year. Humans, normally thrive until 60 years of age, however a select few can reach ages of 100. Their most common funerary custom is burial, a return to the earth, to embrace the cycle, and to prevent viewing the decay of the body. Orcs are a bit more complex, they seem to age the same as Humans, however their skin seems to get thicker, increase in folds, even making sight and breathing difficult. Their funerary custom is that of the sky burial, where they leave their dead on the tallest hills to be reclaimed by the vultures, having their essence and strength be spread far and wide, to be reborn in stranger lands. Another common grouping seems to be Dragonborn, Kobolds, and the Adrongo of Yarim, they each seem to age without issue for about 100 years, until they enter one final rest, never to awaken again. It is almost unheard of to find any of these races older than 100. Their funerary custom is that of mummification, a ritualistic preservation of the body, to be stored in great burial mounds built into hillsides. Lastly, we come across the Nightcrawlers & the Bask, who seem to differ greatly in their lifespans. Nightcrawlers seem to age similarly to Humans, where each year takes its toll, yet they experience seasons of shedding, that allows them a sense of renewal, giving them periodic bursts of virility. It is not known how the Nightcrawlers honor their dead, as the only information we've been able to glean off of them have been through prisoners of war. The Bask on the other hand, seem to be as timeless as the Elves, unaffected by the Curse of Years, as such how they choose to honor their dead is a mystery, however they do seem to assist in the mummification rites on their Adrongo followers, even honoring them with their song. This covers the aging and funerary customs for all the races, save the Elves, as the only tradition that they seem willing to share, is that they return their fallen to nature, to the wood or the sea or the sky. Many Elves keep their cultural histories private, as they view themselves timeless and above many other races. While some may disagree, it is always important to respect the wishes of the other races, especially on the subject of death.



## MAALINTAG, THE DAY OF SPIRITS & SHADES

Occurring at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> month in the year, Maalintag is a day that has controversial practices across the Vehl. On this day Shades seem to travel much farther than where they have been tethered, and the Spirits of the land are much more reactive than usual. Mystics across the land find this day as the most effective to channel spirits and practice their rituals. Divination, scrying, and according to some, astral projection, are much easier to perform as a Mystic due to the spirits reacting so much more to other's presence. This has caused some Mystics to even attempt a séance, to commune with the black beyond, to questionable results. As for Shades, these creatures will cause many towns to huddle together in one large meeting house, as wandering Shades can still be deadly, despite their ethereal nature. Some call them Shadow People, or Revenants. Shades are proposed to be stains on the Winds of Magic, where Elementals would be as entanglements. A stain formed in suffering and tragedy, pain and confusion, sudden or meticulous that emotion bleeds unto the Winds of Magic and forms a Shade, a mockery of the life that was taken, usually grief ridden or violent they wander constantly reliving those final moments hoping to change their fate. They can be destroyed with a skilled hand when tethered to their source location, but on Maalintag as they wander, they seem to reform to their point of origin. Now, do not be filled with fear for our ancestors have found a way to ward off the Shades and calm the Spirits, with just a small amount of preparation. The first step is to create a small altar at the entryway of your home, stone, brick, wood, it matters not the material, however what does matter is the colors. Altars displaying White, Black, & Purple have proven to be the most effective, whether decorated with paint, chalk, or special candles to emit the appropriate colored flame. These altars serve as focal points for the spirits and shades, a drain for their energy and angst. Above these altars you will need effigies, the more you have, the more effective they will be. These effigies, commonly called Shadeling totems, are often made of straw or sticks, sometimes even stuffed burlap, or carved turnip heads, and are made to look as one of the Fated of Vehldathin. Arms, legs, head, as plain or as detailed as desired, these Shadeling totems allow the shades and spirits to be drawn to a form familiar to them, and then be led down to the altar so that they may find peace. Some have also found it effective to include chimes with the totems hung from their door and from the trees around their homes. Homes that have proper effigies and altars have not only kept themselves safe but have also helped alleviate some of the pain found in the world. Some stories even say that grateful shades will leave a gift from their former lives in reward for leading them to peace. As you prepare for Maalintag this year, do well to remember the warning of the Wood Elves, never whistle on Maalintag, for the whistle is a dread omen, a harbinger of tragedy.

## LETTER FOUND IN THE TOWER OF PURITY

*Dear Tower,*

*Seal and I have just been notified, thank you for your swift word. This is terrible news indeed, the public will be in uproar over this. The famine has barely gotten under control, and we have no word yet from our expedition and Prinreik grows bolder by the day. Have you informed Tword of this? It would be wise to inform them last, they scheme quietly behind closed doors, if you believe such rumors. Seal is concerned what could transpire with this, especially with the possible abandonment of the expedition, you know they have special interest in this. It would be wise for us to prepare a statement to hold as the church veils in shadowed robes of mourning. May I offer humble suggestion?*

*"On this, the ninth day of the ninth month of the year fourteen twenty two, we bid an unexpected farewell to King Heinrich. King Heinrich was a brave and just king, who truly stood by Hastur's tenants, and protected all of us with his wisdom, and compassion. As he has guided us through plague, famine, and strife, so too shall Hastur guide our King to the halls of our forebears, as he did to Queen Meredith some fifteen years before. King Heinrich is survived by his 3 sons, Michael, Charles, and Leopold, and his only daughter, Wisteria. King Heinrich was found in his bed, peacefully passing in his slumber, a dreamer and visionary in life and in death. King Heinrich dreamed of expanding Quinelle to great and broad horizons, for all walks of life, as shown by his expedition to the new world to found the colony of New Quinelle with all races of the Vehl opening the door to a new age of peace and camaraderie. King Heinrich spoke fondly of being able to set sail and visit New Quinelle once the colony had been established. We must all take our time to grieve, to wear our robes of mourning and by the end of the month, we shall hear the Church bells ring out once more on the announcement of the new King of Quinelle, the new High Ascendant of Hastur. We will do well to honor and celebrate this transition as the time comes. Glory to gleaming King Heinrich! Glory to gleaming Quinelle! Glory to gleaming Hastur! May we all be so blessed to find a peaceful rest."*

*I think this should suffice for your needs, warm the hearts of the peasants and common folks. We will manage and mitigate the kingdom before the church consolidates power from this. Tragedy can create such opportunities don't you agree Tower?*

*Sincerely,*

*Staff*

## SCRATCHES RECORDED FROM A THRYSKAL PRISON CELL

...and I will lash out against the good. And I will devour kindness. And I will consume the charity. And I will twist the words of the healers and break them apart. And I will do these things to push against the crushing wave of my own desires. I will become worse to avoid confronting the festering sickness inside of me. I will preach, humble shall they be that call upon false idols, for they call upon themselves, and know that no respectable fated yet stroked their own honor, but questioned it, for we are slaves to their ego, and their believers, until we all Rot.

## CHARCOAL RUBBING FOUND IN GRAVEKEEPERS BASEMENT

Lo behold, we beseech you oh luminous greats. The fires have been lit and our revelry is to your temptation. Hark upon gnoph Keh, Hark upon ye hounds of tindalos, hark upon unseen Nark-Ginnmurgath, see our dance for thine temptations. Grant us gifts, we your witches in the glades, Grant us seed to sow. Red boar of the endless groves, Mother of ten thousand young. Enagfn melrakn rilmragh.

## SOGGY NOTE FOUND IN A LIBRARY BOOK

I crawl on my knees, through endless tunnels through the depths. So far now longing for light and fresh air, I cannot give in, I must hear it again. Speak to me oh silent catacombs. Whisper in my ear the mysteries of forgotten tomes. My pathway is set before me, to the depths I go. I hear their chants in nameless chambers, I heard their voices low. Their beckoning I heed, though my knees they bleed. This pilgrimage has torn me asunder. Penance, for my abominable blunder. My fate is sealed, to the depths I go. I hear their calls, judgment upon me they bestow. This journey is long and painful, as is the metamorphosis I have been promised. They have promised me a new form more beautiful than I can fathom. upon my arrival to this unknown tabernacle I shall ascend from the mire of the Fated's bestial hubris. Glory.

## COMMON TAVERN FAIR FOUND ON THE ROADS BETWEEN QUINELLE & HAYWOOD

Greetings dearest traveler,

Once again it is I, Kotrady Jimb to inform you of the finest rest stops across the Vehl! Should thou be wary or in need of refreshment, trust no guide more than the honorable Kotrady Jimb, peruser of deliciousness, guider of tastefulness, royal vizier of comfort!

Our journey will take us across the great King's Road, laid in the ancient year of 915 by King Charles Rodrigues of Quinelle & King Gil'Farad of Haywood, they say this road is what caused Prinreik to grow from a humble trading post, to the mecca of commerce that it is today.

The first stop is to the Grim Graverobber's Tavern, now don't let the name fool you, their service is friendly and their drinks are ever flowing with changing variety. A small sampling of such delights, Dew of the Mountain, a delightfully fizzy beverage made from the finest array of citrus fruits, said to have been collected off the peaks of the very mountains of Callen's Fence right as the sun rises. Physician's Tonic, a beverage for the sophisticated fated, with hints of Cherry, Cinnamon, and a touch of Apricot to round out the flavors, a well desired drink of arcanist's everywhere. They have a wide array of tempting brews and liquors, from the common varieties of Ales, Dwarven Ale, Light Ale, Dragon Ale, to the delightful spirits such as Bask Brew, Elven Wine, and Lightning Oil Liquor.

Our second stop is closer to the first toll gate of the King's Road, just north of the Road of Blades. The Puffed Partridge Meadery has a delightful selection of food unlike any others I have discovered. As you sample their selection of fine meads and have your fun in their game hall, do not dishonor yourself by not sampling their kitchen's meals. Start off with a Fruit Medley, mixed with an array of fruits from all across the Vehl, Strawberries, Watermelons, Oranges, and a fruit I can't even recognize, but has the most unique flavor! Follow this up with a delicious Meat Pie, a savory, buttery crust filled with brown gravy and hunks of tender mince. There are good hunks of steak and offal that give it a robust and invigorating flavor, each topped with a scorch in the crust of a flying bird. Truly no end to the luxury of this meal, but if you seek something lighter they do offer the Air and Sea Delight, a small hen stuffed with a delectable variety of shellfish and trout. Baked to perfection this feast will surely satisfy your exotic tastes.

Our third stop is Zanthan's Watering Hole, this small shack right outside of Eastern Prinreik. While there may not be much to see aside from the largest arrow display outside, they do offer some astounding concoctions that are addicting to the caravan guards and merchant protectors. Monstrous Lagers, Winged Elixirs, and Potions of Energy, these potent yet delicious mixtures have gained a large popularity for those who enjoy a boost of energy without giving into the new bean tea fad of Yarim.

## DECLARATION BY KING ALBOIN OF EPPLESSA, SEPT. 1ST, 1422

*Hear ye! Hear ye! Let it be known, by declaration of our good King Alboin, all travel out of the city of Floren is forbidden, the royal army has set quarantine for a vicious plague that has ripped through the area. Tragically the Centro Medico per L'avanzamento delle Conoscenze nella Guarigione e nel Recupero is located within Floren, and we are assured they are working on a cure as they have for the great plague of 1390. If you have traveled through Floren within the past month, report immediately to your local temple to seek healing, or repentance. This shall not change the taxes paid to the crown for those who owe to the Signore of Floren.*

## NOTE FOUND BY A SACRIFICIAL ALTAR, AUG. 3RD, 1398

We have stayed true to Qiron, our order has been diligent in our tasks. It is apparent they command lesser beasts, terrify them perhaps. They didn't show aggression, but desperation. Poor creatures, frenzied by something they hardly understand. The thing that led them was clearly smarter, maybe smarter than us? It seemed to elude us, its tracks changed suddenly from wolf to boar to human. There is a hole at the center of the story. Brother Malcom has reported finding strange effigies, a stick with a loop at the top, string laced throughout, all throughout the woods near the farm we have been investigating. He has been telling tales of Witches, from the children's stories, causing some to think Brother Malcolm may be coming down with fever himself. We have yet to find a trace of the father, nor have we culled the pack leader. Tomorrow we dive deeper into the forest to attempt to either burn the beasts out, or find the answers we seek. Qiron bless us, and guide us, in sickness or in health.

## FOUND NEAR THE WRECKAGE OF THE ÆVUM'S RESPITE

Here we mourn. We mourn for those recently taken. We mourn for those we will no longer see. We push forward to honor those fallen comrades. We rebuild to create something worth their sacrifice. Though the nights grow dark, and our bodies feel worn, we will not rest.. We will not lose hope and we will not break. We trudge forward and struggle. We give thanks to the gods we are still alive. We give thanks to those who are making this island a new home. We fight and we persevere. We thank those who came before and those who come after.

-The Last Respite.

## JOURNAL OF CAPT REDBEARD ENTRY 1

*With what they are paying me for this journey I may be able to finally put a bit away and live my life in a bit of luxury. Taking an expedition to some "uncharted island". Shouldn't be too hard. Go there. Help them set up and take off. Heard the expedition is going to be an interesting bunch. All sorts of different folks, pampered kids, goblins, and even a sea elf who doesn't like water. What kinda bad joke is that? People in charge even gave me the name of someone to meet up with. Apparently they left a bit ahead of us to scout out. Mahann or Albin, something like that. Crews getting set up to go now should only be another week or two at most before we set out. I'm going to head over to the temple and do some praying. Hopefully Ozymahd watches over us.*

## TO: SUPERVISOR DOBRECK, FIELD REPORT: DOCUMENTED #7568

The Lieutenant is keeping the Eastern side of our encampment strong and organized, while North and West stay vigilant. However, we have seen an uprising in elementals around that are now posing a large security risk to our operations. With this THING walking around, I don't know how much it's going to cost to upkeep our security and protection against their constant attacks. After all of this time, taking over this area, battling back the other locals, all of the research and documentation, this is just one more obstacle that will continue to cost us time, energy, and money. A waste of our finite resources indeed. Our work sites have been constantly under attack recently, so I'm betting it has something to do with that damned Quinellite Expedition. They've named themselves Shore Crest something or other. I bet the attacks are because they keep getting in the middle of our affairs. Please respond with further instructions. Awaiting your orders.

Mar Nemolin Expedition, Cpt. Lovi

## NOTE FOUND IN KRUGHEIM MANOR

Rituals can be an easy thing to learn the fundamentals of, of course having Symbols and Components to perform them can be as rigid as arithmetic, the Verbal and Somatic components can truly imprint your intent on them, but are much more malleable. Commanding the winds of magic, or your divine energies through the Symbol and the Components can alter a Ritual in astounding ways, as opposed to remaining silent. A simple example would be of a humble Ritual for the School of Earth, once you have your Symbol for and Components ready, using the stance of the defender, and using the phrase "my legs are grounded, the earth protects" thrice, in 30 second intervals, can greatly improve the outcome of the Ritual. Commonly this will result in some form of protection, depending on how good your Symbol and Component aspects are. Remember, the more focused a ritual the more powerful it becomes, but beware, these rituals are much easier to fail. Failures in powerful rituals can cause the magic to backlash on the performers of the ritual to horrible results.

## CORRESPONDENCE INTERCEPTED BY MASKHUNTER COLIN, 1102

We successfully raided the Temple of Roya, as per your orders. We've collected the reagents to perform the ritual that will open the portals. Our god has blessed us truly with this plan, consuming the power of the Elves. We will make Haywood a graveyard, we will snuff out whatever resistance remains to us. The Black Fleet will meet little opposition once we are done, and with the Goblin King providing a proper distraction at Prinreik, who will stop us. The world will be plunged into darkness as our lord wills it. When the time comes, they shall value the contributions of The Order of the Black Sun. Praise be to Ahriman, Praise be to you Lord Zog.

## LETTER SENT FROM TASHUSAN CITY, 510

*As I have been visiting the temples here in the city Thara, I have found such strange commonalities amongst some of the altars.*

*For whatever reason, for I'm sure if I were a godly man I would understand better, there are always the same things at the same types of altars.*

*Hastur always seems to have gleaming Gold, and Yellow cloths, and boxes for donations, exchanges. I am sure you are familiar with such things from your youth, no? Growing up poor in Strathadan, having to rely on Hasturian donations for new shoes. Of course I jab in jest. Now Ziron always seems to have Pinks and Greens at their altars, with medical notes and potion vials as if leaving new discoveries for Ziron to spread to their followers. Hopefully with bright intentions.*

*Altars dedicated to Ozymahd seem to have Oranges and Purples about them, of course with all sorts of sand timers and seasonal motifs. You know how these kinds of people can get, always obsessing over how things pass but never what's making them pass!*

*Vyghost altars always seem to have Red everywhere, from cloths to chalks to blood! Such barbarity, and still they are littered with all sorts of sea trash, shells, twigs, bones. To think I felt cleaner with Ziron!*

*The few times I have found myself around Roya's altars and temples I found stunning shades of Blue, wherever I walked was as if I was treading a placid lake. How dreamy! atop the altars were massive crystals, charts recording and explaining dreams, and all sorts of glyphed baubles.*

*And to think, I came to this place for a simple coronation. I must tell you Thara I have found this delightful eatery down one of the main thoroughfares, had the most delightful roast of something called a Platypus? Did you know they are only found on the outskirts of the city? How exotic, you must be jealous!*

## MYTH AND LEGENDS OF CANATHA VOL.1

A common overlapping myth for many cultures that live near Callen's Fence is that of the Lukowuruhi, also known as the Curet Ulfur, or the Tramuelop. This being appears in several stories in Wood Elf, Raider, and Stone Elf culture, often including snowy isolation, lost hunters, and insatiable hunger. This creature is said to be a Fated that has been driven mad by giving in to their desperate greed. Fated who become lost on the mountain passes or the deep woodlands, sailors who become shipwrecked after a storm, lost alone and desperate for survival are susceptible to this particular madness according to myth. Overwhelmed by such primal and vicious greeds, they consume the flesh of other fated causing their form to be twisted and altered, even their very minds are changed in such a way that they become little more than beasts, not different than Trolls or a Ghazgrakk. Those suffering from the curse of the Lukowuruhi find themselves becoming gaunt, sickly, yet beastly fur and fangs replace their mundane features. They gain the ability to wear the flesh of those they've consumed as a disguise, to lure unsuspecting travelers to a swift death. This skin suit results in the odor of decay that forewarns their arrival. In some of the myths the key to defeat the Lukowuruhi is to remove their heart and burn it into a fire throughout the night, in others a blade of purest silver must be used to pierce their frozen heart. In the current day, some tribes or clans will still hold true to these myths, believing them as true warnings. However for most others, such as the denizens of Quinelle or Haywood these stories are meant more to frighten children and entertain tavern goers.

## SOGGY DISCARDED LETTER

*Dear Lady Josephine,*

*I am writing to you with some shocking news indeed. You must remember Count Marshall from our last trip to court? Well, whispers around the town state that his one and only daughter Hadria has been banished from his household and from inheriting the title Countess! Banished by her own father, can you believe it!? Oh, the shame she must be feeling. My mother knew her well and nearly fainted at hearing this devastating news. I had heard that she fell in love with and started consorting with a lowly baron, so my guess is she got with child out of wedlock. My brother heard that she got involved with some insidious merchant and ran off to who knows where. I have no idea why she would do any of these things, her life was perfect! But, some things cannot be explained I guess. Please write back as fast as you can so I can hear your theories.*

*Ever Your friend,*

*Lady Catherine*

## REPORT FROM DWARVEN MERCENARY

We've been contracted to map out a network of caves by Miltread. Rumor has it a group of Kobolds just moved in and Lord Milt wants them cleared out. He's already started calling in bannermen to mount an assault. Once we're done they'll know every entrance and exit those scaly bastards can use.

## DEMONIC LETTER, 9/14/1422

*To my follower of Wreck town,*

*I received your invite last event and after some thought I do believe I don't have time for you, or your invite. I have greater things to put my time and thought into and have decided to send someone in my stead. My herald will be attending your get together and I expect you to treat them with all the respect you would give me minus the obvious. I will pass along a message from myself for your ears only and you will follow the instructions exactly.*

*Written by a nameless servant*

*Dictated by your Lord Oleandus'*

*Lord of Envy, Regent of Wee Ect. Ect*

## DEMONS AND HOW THEY HAPPEN, WHERE DO THEY GO, DO THEY KNOW THINGS, LET'S FIND OUT, BY MODIPIUS

The lowest forms of life found on Vehldathin. The Demons! These reviled creatures are beings that have shunned the Gods, absconding with a mere fraction of their blessings and starting twisted cults almost in parody to the divine. The leaders of these cults are called Demon Lords, and play pretend at being true deities. They will hear prayers, demand sacrifice, and treat with other demonic cults and demon lords in a manner that reflects a mortal's understanding of the divine, a child's understanding of kings. The simplest way to describe each and every demon is Selfish. They demand they be worshiped, they despise the gods for denying them that worship, they care not for the responsibility to their fellow man or the work called upon them by their God, only their own selfish needs and desires. No one is sure how Demon Lords are made, but it is known how devils and demons form in our world. A devout worship, as one would give to a God, consistently and given over time will twist a Fated's heart and soul. What starts as simple Cultists and hierophants, will perverse into Devils, red fleshed, demon marked, bound completely to their demonic master. When a devil falls out of favor, fails, or annoys their demon lord they can be cursed into Gremlins, withered mottled creatures that skulk about in the night looking for victims to abuse, taking their shame out onto others. However should a devil prove effective, loyal, powerful, or worthy! They can go through ritualistic empowerment, binding them closer to their demon lord. They become Demons, resembling their master more closely despite what form they may take. If a demon were to stay in service of their lord long enough without losing favor, they would grow to become Greater Demons. Very few reports exist on greater demons, they may be a Cultists myth to keep new recruits in line but if those same myths are true, these snarling faced monstrosities would be truly nightmarish. Now Cultists and hierophants may be looked at with an eye of pity, some of Hastur's shield priests may seek to convert and cleanse them of sin. There can be no redeeming of Devils, or what they come to be. Always remember, better dead than red. Demon Lords rarely work together, and spend much of their time either playing at deity, or performing whatever sick actions made them turn away from their God. Their homes tend to be in abandoned temples, old fortresses, or even the endless expanse of the Deeps. Much of our knowledge on these organizations comes from saved hierophants and Cultists, and the work of Mask Hunters during The Daffodil Wars, fighting Demon Lord Tarakabali. The rant and file of the Blasphemers should be rooted out and culled at every turn, as they are an affront to each of the gods. Even those of the Pying Bastard God shun and hunt demonic creatures. It does bring me some comfort that there is one thing that all of Vehldathin can agree upon.

## A HISTORY OF VEHL DATHIN, KNOWN HISTORY AND THE RECORDS THEREIN, BY SIR NILDEDRANET PART 1

There have been a great many wars throughout the history of the Vehl, some spurred by religious dogma, some by pride, others by territorial conflicts. The many races have fought one another frequently for many reasons, some more noble than others. One of the oldest wars is known commonly as The War of Scales, in which the Dragonborn of Shanseyut conflicted with varied races of Canatha. This occurred briefly after the discovery of Yarim by Wolof the Bright, a Sea Elf who hailed from the Nogy Zato region west of Quinelle. When Wolof discovered the region and told others of it, it was quick to be raided and plundered, especially by the ancient nation of Humans known as Strathadan. Early reports claim diplomatic missions by Strathadan aimed for benign relations but recent archeological surveys have proven that their intentions were less than peaceful. This war stained the sands of Yarim for 20 years and set the tone for diplomatic relations between Yarim and Canatha for decades to come. At the later founding of Mejikhan and their involvement with Xian Zhe, it was discovered that a stable relationship was formed between the lands of Shanseyut and Xian Zhe, which would open doors to Mejikhan and other nations of Canatha to begin building relationships with the Dragonborn of the southern lands. This tragically is not the common result of many wars that occur around Vehldathin. The War of the Braid was a more recent war that only recently had a peaceful result. A questing knight of Quinelle's Qago region, which historically bore the brunt of the Great War's Black Fleet invasions, traveled to the raider islands to recover lost artifacts and was taken captive by a tribe known as the Starshell tribe. While mostly insignificant amongst the political spectrum of the raider clans, Duke Altamira's response would set the tone between the two cultures to this day. When the ransomers came to demand their terms, they were instead shaved of head and beard and sent back to their tribe, a sign of deep cultural shame amongst the raider tribes. Tensions between the western raider islands and the entirety of Quinelle were still tense at this time, despite the great war ending some time ago many old wounds were still felt. This insult drew the attention of the greater chieftain council that ruled over Skagastrund, declaring recompense before hostility, to which Duke Altamira's response was to set a bounty of 5 silver pieces for every raider braid brought to the local magistrate. The Skagastrund council then formally declared war on Duke Altamira, frequent raids and naval skirmishes went on for 13 years before the King of Quinelle forced an end to the war by offering recompense to Skagastrund, albeit a pittance compared to what they originally asked for.

Further notable wars that we shall delve into further are The Daffodil Skirmishes, The War of the Tiara, The War of the Tides, The Wood Wars, The Glitter Pass Trade Wars, The Gray Migration Battles, and the infamous Blight Wars.

## NOTES TAKEN BY A STUDENT OF KRUGHEIM

As it has been studied, it seems there is a common thread on the Veil and beyond. When channeling your will into magic rituals, when the divine is invoked, it seems that certain words or concepts will always hold the same meaning, Good, Selfishness, Order, Chaos, Evil. There does not seem to be a distinction between these ideas through the power of magic and the law of the divine. What strange occurrence may cause this? Have scholars not debated definitions of smaller words for years? Is not mathematics debates on its higher forms? What then would cause such unity in understanding, even if we cannot agree with it. Try as we might, we cannot change magic to agree with us, we cannot bend the gods to our will. Such is the suffering of the Fated, so close to the power of true free will, yet so far from grasping the ability to use it. Our pride may yet be the downfall of each and every one of us. Or would it be our greed. Pinning definitions of these concepts is difficult to pinpoint, but that is our purpose of study. Understanding the concepts is often much simpler, yet it has caused some odd happenstance with our ritual practice. Always be sure to make your intentions as specific as possible for your rituals, they do become harder to perform, but to a skilled ritualist that shouldn't be a problem. I will have to take the time to share my notes with my class, and see if they have discovered any other fundamental concepts, these Cosmic Alignments, as I shall call them. Perhaps if it is received well, I will be invited to the meetings in the lower floors of the manor.

## THE SCHISM OF SUN AND MOON, WRITTEN BY GALADRUN, 526

In the age of our forefathers it is told that our people were one, a proud race of Elves. The tragedy that faced our predecessors was that of religious dispute, those who would follow the Sun as chief deity, and those who would follow the Moon. This caused the temples and towns surrounding them to be constantly guarded and always bustling with either sect of the faith. Ozymahd was pleased with this, there was harmony. Until one day a priest returned from a pilgrimage, boasting that we have all been led astray! Draznt was the priest's name, claimed that the moon worshiped was false, a lie told to us to test our faith and we had failed. Draznt claimed that deep below the earth, where none had gone except the wretched kobolds, the True Moon existed beneath our feet. The True Moon casted a glorious light, that revealed all lies, all deceptions, that shined truth into his eyes, and beckoned those true believers to see for themselves. Draznt led those few and brave down into the Deeps below where none had gone, taking months to return to the villages. His group was cut down to a mere fifth of what they started with, yet each was more fervent in their belief than the last. Strangely, their skin had turned a mottled green, their hair a silver tone. The elders of the village, both sun and moon declared them corrupted by the caverns, and heretics to the faith yet Draznt showed his power all the same, mighty was he with Ozymahd's blessing. Yet as the debate grew heated and long, violence eventually erupted. While Draznt was captured and executed for his heretical beliefs, his followers escaped back down into the depths, some even saying that others followed, horrified at what they had seen on the surface. As Draznt was executed, a bellowed and mighty curse spouted from his lips, a curse of pain, of revenge, of spite. No surface elf would know the truth of God, would know the true moon that lay beneath. All will be put to the Sword until they seek redemption. Hundreds of years have passed since these stories, yet even our elders doubt them to be true. Let the myths of our past stand as warnings of our future.

## THE SCHOOL OF CRYSTAL

It is said after the Great War had ravaged Mejikhan, those mighty arcanists who still yet lived decided to banish their school of magic so that it may never be used to betray them again. They enacted powerful rituals, splitting their knowledge into the refracting colors that the crystals produce. Each split into 7 colors, Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet. Thus known as the Desaturated Seven. Legend foretells of a mighty hero that defeats these seven arcanists and reunites the colors to bring about the knowledge that comes with the power of Crystal.

## THE LEGEND OF THE SLEEPING ANCIENT

*Savage Orc Shamans tell tale around their bonfires of when the Gods showed their divine fury, such is their power. Mokkohob a giant ancient, cruel being of immeasurable power that stomped through the lands of Canatha. Their steps left craters that begat ponds and lakes, their hunger would deplete the oysters and crabs from the shorelines, their rage would cause earthquakes that shook many villages to dust and Ash. For generations Mokkohob ravaged the lands, until finally the gods could tolerate it no longer. The gods schemed against the giant, offering a feast of the seas gifted by Vykost, and thus Mokkohob drank deep of the waters and crunched on the shells of the oysters. Pleasant music floated on the breeze sung by Myar, and the sun and grasses were so warming and gentle thanks to Aiko and Callen. Blessed by Alara and with all discomfort removed by Qiron, Ozymahd allowed twilight to last as long as it needed while Roya rocked the giant to a deep and endless slumber. Mokkohob fell into a sleep that can only be described as eternal, no mortal can fathom the severity of such sleep.*

*Finally with the power of Hastur, chief of the tower, plunged Mokkohob deep into the earth, buried under boundless levels of rock and dirt. Down into the endless abyss Mokkohob was banished. Some say that if Mokkohob were to ever wake, Canatha itself would split itself in two.*

## THE ARMS OF HASTUR PART 1

In the faith of Hastur, it is common to see four arms of faith, the Shield, the Rod, the Sword, and the Staff. Each arm represents a differing philosophy, we shall touch upon each of them briefly before diving deeper into each. The Sword represents the destruction of evil before all else. Where evil is slaughtered that land shall know peace. This ideology tends to believe the ends justify the means. The Rod represents discipline, within yourself and within others. When order is found within your mind, when purity is a focus of your body, then so too shall your soul reflect this. This ideology tends to lead to zealous flagellation upon oneself, and others. The Staff represents the guide, preaching and correcting others. When others are told and informed, educated and aware, then all can stand united. This ideology tends to lead to pacifism in its practice, relying on words. The Shield represents the defense of good and innocent people, and uplifting the downtrodden. Where good fated prosper, evil has no place to take root. This ideology tends to lead to a hesitancy to action, leaving them always reacting to others. Each has their own merit in the faith of the church, and alas, Hastur has only blessed us with two arms showing us that we must truly work together to build a community of faith.

## LETTER SOLD BY A MERCHANT

Joffrey,

I don't know how it didn't notice me, I don't know how I'm alive. I saw the strangest thing in the woods tonight, Joffrey. I have many arcanist friends, I KNOW what the winds of magic look like. This...This was a man Joffrey. All around him there was a bunch of swirly elements, but it wasn't just around him..It looked like it WAS him. This man looked like he was made of the stuff! That's not supposed to be, how does it seem like he's arcanist but made of the stuff!? I don't know. I didn't dare go closer, and you shouldn't go out looking for it either, it could be dangerous. Was this person experimented on? I have to find out. Meet me North on the island when the frost is melted so we can go together to track this thing down.

Gabe



## PAPER ON A TAVERN NOTICEBOARD

Hear ye! Hear ye! Prepare for the Doom that comes to the Wailing Oarsman!

The mark of the new year approaches, February 10th!

The Dragonborn shall herald in the arrival of the year of the mythical White Dragon, blessed shall they be in their devotion. The celebrations in Shansequet will be visible from across the Wikhutton. Soon will the Dragonborn leave their homes and journey out on adventures again, and descend upon us in droves, undoubtedly dressed all on white!

Our Ales will flow, meats will roast, spirits will loosen tongues and wines will warm us more than fires!

Prepare yourselves for the party of the year, no better way to learn and appreciate another culture than to feast together!

## THE TICK.

Small creatures skulking in the grass, it can seem like they appear out of thin air searching for their next meal. The host bears the burden of this parasite's feeding onslaught. After feasting bloated and encumbered, full of blood they retreat back to the unknown leaving behind whatever mark on their host. This insect will not seek another feed for another year after consuming its fill. While the insect is content, all is not joy and rainbow for the host. When the creature latches on to the flesh of the host their fangs can leave behind terrible disease, red rings, itching pain, followed by a crazed and violent mind, eventually spreading beyond what the tick could imagine. Acolyte's say one way to cure this horrid blight is to find the aid of an Ice Mage. Rot will ensue if not treated the proper way. Yielding the proper information will prove fruitful for ascendants.

## JOURNAL OF ASCENDANT NIKTOR, CHERISHED OF HASTUR. 12-5-1421

I have started my journey to earning the rank and role of Paladin within the order. Years of training have brought me to this, dedication, faith, honor. To be blessed by Hastur in this way, I am truly honored. I must memorize the words for the ritual, Paladin Grindall has told us of the words, myself, Brendan, and Rhadra. 'I shall protect those from harm. I shall be the bulwark against evil. No harm shall fall upon my brethren. I am the shield of Hastur.' I have not been involved in a large amount of rituals before, and I fear mistaking the words. I think if I leave them on a scrap of paper in front of me while I perform the ritual it wouldn't interfere terribly. I will have to make sure with the other Ascendants. I have yet to learn the symbol needed, but the materials to perform the ritual will be provided to us thankfully. I am excited to play my part in securing our futures on this island. Praise be to Hastur.

## WELL GUARDED NOTE

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## THE COSMIC ALIGNMENTS, PART ONE

BY NATHANIEL WINGATE

I have studied greatly, and I believe I have finally been able to shift from theory to fact in an aspect. I have discovered a truth, undeniable by any standard, proven in magic, in faith, in ritual. This one core discovery opens the door to the rest of my theory. A Cosmic Alignment is a concept I have pioneered, a truth of the Wehl same as the sun rising, the wind blowing, rain falling. Magic has rules to it, it has an understanding, it seems to believe things that we may disagree with! It is known that the waking mind is not what controls the winds of magic, yet our deeper mind, that which connects us to sleep and marks all of us as Fated, allows us to harness the winds into such mighty power. Our waking mind is where the common folk focus, the world we bare witness to that shapes and influences us, but our deeper mind is what we neglect to focus on, I believe that deeper mind is what gives us our natural instinct, our Intuition, it connects us to one another and perhaps something more divine. Perhaps these definitions are determined by Xoya, allowing our magic to be standardized, giving us the chance to experiment and study. Perhaps the winds of magic have more insight than we dare acknowledge. These such alignments I have theorized, Selfishness and Divinity, Order and Disorder, Sickness and Health, I have not perfected in their definitions, but finally I have cornered a pair. Good and Evil. These words have been debated by scholars and pious fated, judges and monks, and yet I have discovered that the winds of magic have definitions of their own. To define Good and Evil without the taint of cultural belief and taboo was truly difficult, what lofty goals, mocked I was for my hubris. Yet in every ritual, every Embuement, the winds of magic follow the same concepts, the same definitions. What will this mean for the nations and kingdoms of the Wehl? Will arguments for the "greater good" finally have a counter, will the actions of corrupt Ascendants finally have a metric outside of the faith to be bound to? Perhaps this discovery will destroy me, see my knowledge buried, if not for Krugheim and this academy I would have never discovered this. The definitions I have revealed are dense and complicated, yet what good is knowledge that cannot be explained to others?

To start, Good has been shown to represent Humility, Patience, Temperance, Kindness, Diligence, Charity, and Unity. These seven words deserve their own explanation but to the novice, it is key to understanding them at their surface. Evil has been shown to represent Pride, Wrath, Wantonness, Cruelty, Apathy, Greed, and Discord. These seven malicious words deserve their own warnings as well as definitions. These Virtues and Vices are integral to understanding these concepts as a whole, and utilizing them in your control of the winds of magic. Truly, we may even be able to use these to understand the truths of Wehlbathin that our forefathers were ignorant to.

## REDBEARD JOURNAL PART 3

*We've made good headway into the interior of the Island, I tell ya there's all sorts of treasure out here just waiting to be brought back with us. Found a couple of ruins hidden by the growth of the forest. Good thing Cookie is here with us, strong as an ox that one. Who knew a cook would be so useful outside of cooking! Church Evans has been scouting for us, making sure we get to where we need be going, meaky little elf that one is. Between me and Crazy Pete there isn't any magic keeping us out. We seem to be navigating the long abandoned streets of a stone city, trees and ferns have taken over most of it. Only a small bit of resistance to our journey, massive bugs, creepy crawlers, leeches, even fought off a band of trolls! Rye lads, I have a good feeling about this one, I feel it deep within me like a calling.*

## REDBEARDS JOURNAL PART 4

*We've done it, we've made it to the ruins of the central plaza, and the temple underneath. We're all feeling it now, that treasure sense, there's something glorious to be found here. I'm feeling younger than ever, me and the crew are going to be filthy rich after this one, grow old and fat off this adventure. Oh of course King Heini you'll get your cut, you always do. In the morning, we'll have Cookie break open that door and we'll plunder whatever we need. If they went through this much trouble to lock these doors up, then it must be worth taking out.*

## STUDIES OF SIGILISM PART 1, BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM DYER

Legends tell that before the Gods, before the Uehl, there was only simple Magic. Those who had the ability to use this Magic stood tall above all others, with the powers to manifest anything they saw fit. The power they used has been lost to the sands of Ozymahb, even the name of such power is gone. Lines? Shapes? Pictograms? The legends only speak of how they opened the door to granting every desire a fated could dream of. Who could look past their own greed, who would listen to warning under that temptation? We should have.

The legends tell of hundreds of rules to their usage, each shape drawn meticulously with purpose, if even one dash, one dot, one closing was incorrect? Disaster for anything around. Give enough time for experimentation, and a secret will be uncovered. One of the most powerful uses of this Magic. The ability to open Doorways... Anywhere!

It took so much, so many sacrifices, so many hours but the untapped potential was too charming.

More more more more more more more more I went further down down down down in in in in I was lost no more Doors to travel no more Doors to see I forgot where I was was I lost? Or was the Magic?

## STUDIES OF SIGILISM PART 3, BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM DYER

"A cheap copy! A knock off! A watered down fabrication is all they are!" The old man will huff and puff staring at the paper in front of them. Shining, brilliant symbols of lines and shapes lay on the paper in a beautifully organized display before them, shimmering with power. A young man had their eyestalks pointed at the paper as well, nearly drooling from the bristles at the thought of reaching out and receiving the magic etched into those golden lines.

The older man kept a snarl of disgust. "Don't settle for this my boy, this isn't what the Magic should be at all." Grumbling about the old Magics and what a waste of ink this was, all while shredding the paper in hand, feeling the magic vibrate and fade with each tear as it gently falls to the ground of the dimly lit cave. The younger man scurried over to collect the scraps and store them in his satchel, antennae twitching for any sign of magic still thrumming from the paper. Perhaps, he thought, I could bring them back to life again, it wasn't the old Magic sure, but it was better than the whispers of thoughts that they've had to deal with all these powerless years. Perhaps all that was needed was to keep digging down.

## DREAM JOURNAL OF PROFESSOR WARREN RICE

Tonight again, the same dream. I awake in a sweat at the lecture hall, but there is no ladder to the lower levels. My students never arrive, but a visitor does appear, the books do not leave their shelves. The wood pools like wax where the visitor steps, and they seem so familiar, yet so monstrous. Those piercing blue eyes, that pink wrinkled skin, the way that the writhing tentacles intertwined with hair. It discusses my studies with me like a colleague, at times almost like a superior, testing me on my knowledge of ancient languages. I grow defensive, I seem to feel judged by this creature. I attempt to throw books at it but the books do not leave their shelves. I shout, it calmly responds. I demand for it to stop this farce and reveal what it wants from me, but it only asks what I want from my work.

I couldn't explain why, but I answered honestly. I told it that I sought the reason, the truth, the force governing life's flow. It calmly tells me that what I seek, the governing force, is the reason some things can never be known. They are beyond a fate's reach even when shown.

Fighting through tears I ask why should that be so?

It tells me that they lie outside the boundaries that words can address, and the fated can only grasp those thoughts that language can express.

Upon hearing this I hear it from beneath, the same noise from that night, boring through my mind like thousands of insects chattering over one another.

It is with this that I awake, no less unsettled than in my dreams, fretful that when I dream again, the ladder to the lower levels will appear.

## NOTE FOUND IN THE RUINS OF KRUGHEIM MANOR.

Where I am going I will not need eyes to see. We are all one now, united. I am a voice in the choir, I am a part of the audience. The form I have been promised is more beautiful than I remember. We will revel in the gifts of our being, our unity. I beg our brothers to join us in salvation. I will strike at our enemies with the power of my mind. Of our mind. You are free now, no more guilt, no more pain. No more death. Embrace our unity, embrace the change. Let it consume you. I am reborn. What is a thought compared to a mind? We are the collective and your small perception cannot comprehend. The individual is pain. We cleanse the stars. This is my last journal. I can barely control my own writings now. I ended them all, the students are gone, they could not see. I am almost done, holding my innards back with my hand. This is bigger than my small life, bigger than my peers, bigger than this academy. I believe the plan they had for me is greater than I could ever imagine. My eyes will finally open, I will join their unity. I can feel them moving inside of me. I am no longer afraid.

We all Rot.

Rot,

Rot,

Rot,

Rot,

## LETTER TO THE BELL FAMILY

*Dearest Parents,*

*I have been hard at work here at Arclight, I am honored you have chosen to send me here to harness my magical prowess. I am working quite well on my mastery of the School of Fire with only a few delays. I hope to graduate and bring our family great wealth and pride.*

*I admit I am not simply writing to give updates, but to ask for your prayers as well, I am in need of guidance. It has been several months since Professor Falmuth returned from a research expedition deep within the frozen forests. Normally no one is allowed to go that deep around the forest, but somehow they received the college's blessing. They were gone for about a month, but only Professor Falmuth returned, but I'm not sure if all of him did. He returned through the main hall shuddering and whispering all manner of nonsense, rambling about ice creatures and the sort. They kept him in a quarantine for weeks without notice to the rest of the school, classes have been sporadic since. When he returned he seemed to be well, our classes were even more exciting than before, until August that is. Professor Falmuth had a renewed vigor when he returned, a playful and almost jovial nature encouraging us to enjoy our power and experiment in ways we were otherwise reluctant to do. Our lectures became more than simple academic studying but practical applications of our magic, practicing spells and defending against them, while no one was hurt it was far more dangerous than necessary. We all lavished in the breaking of routine, but on August 6th something snapped in Professor Falmuth.*

*We were testing our basic spells against each other's defenses, ensuring we could both cast and defend readily, and as the clock chimed for noon the professor was stricken with a coughing fit. He began muttering something before vomiting some opaque blue liquid unlike we have ever seen before. Some of my classmates rushed over to assist the professor but were horribly burned by this liquid, as though it were caustic by nature, others went to get help from outside the lecture hall. We stood back aghast at what was occurring, the professor was leaking this strange liquid from every orifice now as though he were melting, struggling to mutter words coherently. I still ask myself what words could a fated in that situation hope to speak, was he pleading for help? Begging for mercy? Perhaps he was trying to assure us that everything would be okay. Several college guards rushed in and pulled Professor Falmuth away, binding him with arcane wards. As he was dragged away we heard the shrieks finally escape his mouth. Mother, Father, I fear I will never see a day where those shrieks go unheard in my quiet moments. The sound of a slaughterhouse or a village put to the torch could compare, no prison guard or soldier could comprehend them.*

*The college has been operating still, but I am too frightened to leave my room. Some of my classmates beg me to join meetings to discuss what happened that day, to figure out what malady overtook our beloved professor. I wish to return home, to flee into some quiet countryside. I admit to my deception of success but my sweet parents I am terrified. I feel like a prisoner locked in a tower, I hear whispers outside of my chambers of college guards kidnapping people in the night, my fellow classmates. They say there is a conspiracy around this but I dare not risk myself further. Even now as I write this letter to you I fear it will never be sent, a cry for help that cannot be heard just like Professor Falmuth.*

*Mother. Please help me leave this place, my dreams are flooded now, of memories of that day, of the burning flesh caused by caustic slime. Images of that day shown to me by a specter I can hardly understand, a Summer King, an uninvited guest into my soul. I pray to whichever god will take mercy upon me.*

*If I do not wake, please know that I have done my best, and I love you both.*

*Sincerely and honestly,*

*Joshua*

## EDITORIAL JOURNAL 08-01-1409

I've heard myths from the caravans I've traveled with from the mountain passes down to the roads to Tredence. Stories of silhouettes of shambling masses terrorizing the dark corners of the wilderness. Their forms, grotesque yet elegant, emerge from the shadows to ambush their prey. They are creatures of stealth, lurking in the dark of the night upon ethereal threads spun by terror harvested from their victims, stronger than iron. The myths tell that if an unfortunate victim were to fight back, they would be confronted with hundreds of eyes peering from their dark visage, soulless glassy eyes that seem to peer into your very soul and spawn the deepest dread within you. These eyes tell of their patient nature, their ancient cunning, waiting in unexpected corners on their tangles of secrets with unwavering patience until the moment to strike with deadly efficiency. The speed in which these horrors move is blinding, a blur of acrobatics makes the overwhelming amount of appendages feel neverending. Those that are attacked are filled with an oozing venom and entombed in their lairs, their terror fed upon by the horrors for the rest of their bleak existence. I have heard similar tales from the Mountain Dwarves as well of such creatures lurking about in caves. Except in these tales the horrors can sometimes appear as a beautiful Moon Elf maiden, only to dissolve the illusion at the last moment. I'm sure it will make a compelling addition to my latest novella

Excellent work Thaddeus.

## NEW EMPLOYEE SCRIPT

Welcome \_\_\_\_\_ to the Mar Nemolin Trade Company, we are excited to have you aboard our prestigious and world renowned mercantile venture.

Founded in 1295 by Qefrias Mar Nemolin, the company got its start importing exotic papers for scrolls and lumber from Yarim into Prinreik from a small warehouse in Eplessa. Since then the company has grown exponentially to distribute everything from textiles, to grain, armaments, and animals. Mar Nemolin Trade Company is proud to proclaim they are still family run, and eagerly involves itself in everything from the Merchant Council of Prinreik, to humanitarian efforts across Canatha and Yarim. You will be pleased to know that your service in the name of the company aids everyone around the Vehl!

Your work sites will be protected by guards and soldiers trained to the highest degree by the Mar Nemolin Trade Company, who will ensure your safety from threats day and night. You will be compensated for every moment you are working for the company and have the luxury of company provided meals and lodging at a very reasonable rate that will be automatically deducted from your base pay. Do not fear debtors, as long as you are an employee of the Mar Nemolin Trade Company you will be safe from debtors' prison or bounty hunters. Your safety and comfort is our priority.

Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the work site you will be stationed in, travel expenses will be deducted from your pay without fear of going into debt.

We cannot wait to see how you thrive under our employ, and remember \_\_\_\_\_ "Trade is our Leader. When Trade Leads, Nothing Can Overcome."



## STUDIES OF THE ARCANES AND THE WINDS THAT MOVE THEM

Mana is the force that allows us as arcanists to channel the Winds of Magic through us, it is a representation of our will, our authority over the magical ebbs and flows of the world around us. The Winds of Magic flow through everything, they permeate every living being, every object, and affect each of them in their own unique way depending on their Mana. We can see it with how Artificers breathe magic into objects for us to use, or when a Marble Crested Longhorn seeks out Quartz rich minerals to consume. A more skilled Arcanist can use their Mana to do greater feats of magical power, but even a humble farmer can use their Mana to focus on a protection ritual on their crops if they have to correct materials. The word Mana comes from the Sea Elves who understood this concept early in the history of the Vehl, and shared it amongst their kin. They understood this concept from the stormwinds on the open sea, and the energies that they felt coursing through them. The Winds of Magic are the source of great and powerful magical energy all across Vehldathin but it is our Mana that allows us to harness them.

## LIFE AFTER DEATH, BY MORTUARY PRIEST GAFNER, 1096

A fear that permeates throughout each of the races and cultures of Vehldathin to a degree is the unknowable fate of what occurs to our souls after our bodies fail. Our soul is what connects us to the Winds of Magic, to the Gods, to each other. It is our truest expression of self despite what the physical form may show us. Many philosophers ask what happens to us after we die, and many have found different answers. The tragic studies of Krugheim Manor sought answers to this, the great minds at Durham speculated on this, even in the temples of Haywood and Quinelle they ruminate on such matters to this day. A popular and comforting theory believed by most of the faithful is that they join their chosen God in a realm beyond our own, another world or state of being. As their physical form is shed and their soul is free they are guided by their God to a respective afterlife. The great hearth of Aiko, the endless fields of Callen, the halls of Hastur, the starfield of Alara. In this the faithful are rewarded for their sacrifices and diligence with a preferred existence away from the toil of the Vehl. Some who have been resurrected by powerful ascendants have even claimed to see the realm of their God, speaking of it with great passion and fervor. Many powerful and studious Arcanists argue that our souls reincarnate into other forms through the Winds of Magic, that at our core we are manifestations of magic and return to be manifested amongst them again. This theory of reincarnation has a few different interpretations, one being that the Winds of Magic seek to experience every life upon Vehldathin, and thus our souls are different forms of the same source, experiencing itself over and over again to gain godly wisdom of existence. Only once it has seen every life will it be prepared for its metamorphosis to the perfect being, no longer fated, but fate alongside the gods. Another interpretation is that of the tree of life, beyond our sight but growing throughout the Vehl. The tree of life bears precious fruits that are our souls itself, our souls being as seeds for the endless world tree, and that evil spawns from those who were born without the fruit within them. Explaining that souls are good, and just, and lacking one can cause one to be evil and drive them to madness. Lately there have been philosophies penned by a Roble Herkimer saying that when we die there is only the Black Beyond, and absence of existence. A permanent and cold end to our experience where nothing returns. While many have scoffed this off as blasphemy against the divine, denying their power to return recently deceased fated to a state of living. Some have found a modicum of comfort in this theory, that the suffering in this life has a peaceful end, a quiet after the chaos of living. When one exists for only an unknowable but set amount of time it causes every second to be worth more than the most precious of gems. As my own life draws to a close I find myself dwelling on this aspect of death. For so long I have guided others and comforted them and those who will mourn them, giving understanding to the nature of death across cultures and races, helping them prepare for how death changes life, and I find myself ironically unprepared for what comes next. My knowledge only brings a quiet comprehension of my end that has just begun. As I prepare to study the answers philosophers have so fervently sought after I am reminded of what my mentor taught me when I was beginning as a mortuary priest. "The most merciful thing in the world is the inability of the fated mind to correlate all its contents. We do not see the entirety." and in these moments I know I am blessed by ignorance, and the knowledge that I have worked to enrich those around me.

## JOURNAL OF CAPT REDBEARD ENTRY 5

*We've seen the truth now. We feel it within us. Yearning. Gnawing. Our eyes are finally open. We've shown the rest of them, they've seen the truth as well, we all understand now. We have to show them, we have to show the whole island the truth. Their eyes are yet to open. We will show them, bring them to salvation, how wrong they've all been. Eyes and Teeth rest underneath with those that dream, but those are free. Fight and struggle, blood to bowl, exit sleep, return to whole. We will make this island a monument for them. Eyes and teeth. If we want to take an island, we must burn the ships.*

## STUDIES FROM THE ASTRAL TOWER OF KRUGHEIM MANOR

It is December 5th. The cold of the air has frozen the windows shut, snow continues to pile outside. We continue to gaze upon the skies to see the stars above. We have seen the shine of Alarka, Sshitar, Xergal. We have felt the gaze of Wshiro and gazed upon the rings of Xinurta. We have seen the messages hidden behind our plain eyes, these facsimiles of function to our understanding yet not truly manifesting what we comprehend. A void of space. An absence. With the rituals performed upon our astrolabes, our orrery set in place perfectly, we reached out and begged understanding.

It is December 6th. A dark and stormy night. Our eyes were open for just a moment, a fleeting thing, to have all the answers in front of us only to forget their order, the cohesivity of it all. Maddening. Only one thing remains clear to us, we have seen what lies beyond, we have seen the outsider. Be it elber, goblin, or something else, we care not. To understand the heavens we must dig to the depths. When we breach the soil and plunge into the Vehl, it should not come as profound surprise that our shovels may break. We are but children, fumbling in the dark of understanding, our eyes have yet to open.



## NOTES OF CLERGYMEMBER OBERT PASQUAL, PART 1

I have studied the knowledge of all divines here, the Chapel of Fidanza has been glorious to visit. It is easy enough to remember each of the divine if I record their important categories into a portfolio. My teachers tell me this is painfully reductive, but I believe that sometimes the simplest of faith can lead to the truest of understanding, lest we choke on our own nuances. I have determined that each of the divine has twelve categories in their portfolio, thus far at least. They have their Domain, their Epithets, Color Association, Altar Items, their Number, their Planet, Star, a sacred Animal, a sacred Tree, a favored Weapon and a favored Profession, and of course their Holy Symbol. Some are easier to discern than others, but since the Great War so much knowledge was lost, languages forgotten, pages burned. It is the diligence of scholars like myself that will bring us out of this new dark age. I cannot forget though, it is not enough to know that Callen's divine number is three, or that Alara's planet is Marduk, we must know why it is so. Knowledge without context and understanding is like a home without a roof.

## FAMOUS PLAYS ALONG THE KING'S ROAD

Greetings dearest traveler,

Once again it is I, Kotrady Jimb to inform you of the finest rest stops across the Vehl! Should thou be wary or in need of entertainment, trust no guide more than the honorable Kotrady Jimb, ardent devotee of arts, critic of tastefulness, royal vizier of bombast!

Our first stop takes us to the heart of Prinreik to the Rose Friar's Theatre, an establishment that reportedly started as a brothel before the first council of Merchant Lords but quickly moved up to a finer style of clientele. Their staple show during the Spring equinox is the titular 'The Maiden and the Merchant' describing a humble merchant seeking the love of a fine maiden on his trade routes, only to find that the maiden was indeed Alara themselves! I will not spoil the play for you further my dear reader for that is not the only surprise you will face in this tale of romance and guile. The stage performance is quite elegant in its effects as well, with magical lights and falling rose petals from the ceiling. Oftentimes Starfruit is given out as well, tossed directly from the stage! All of your senses will be engaged for this lovely play.

Next brings us closer to the great forests of Haywood, to the playhouse in the trees, Bel'Illiad's Theatre nestled in the bones of an ancient Wood Elf fortress, along with several shops and taverns. While they always have rotating plays to be seen, the first of every month is the Ballad of Raum Vak'iwus, a cerebral and intimate story of what it would have been like to be the first elves to be lost in a foreign land and face death. The play takes a somber tone these days as opposed to its long, long history. Some reviews from ages past claim that parts of this play even describe how the first elves came to walk across the Vehl, walking out of the very winds of magic as though it birthed them, sheltered for so long by Ozymahd. Prepare to be in awe of the beauty of these plays dear traveler, prepare to cry, and weep, and yet leave feeling inspired for what tomorrow may greet you.

Our last stop brings us to the other side of the King's Road, all the way to Iflares on the eastern edge of Quinelle. There we will find The Baron's Fortune Playhouse, a relatively newer theater compared to our last two stops, this contains not only the stage but a large arena as well! Perfectly suited for chariot races, jousting, or for very visceral stage plays. Speaking of visceral plays, we have The Final Stand of House DeLuis at the Chapel of Diotoco. The stage tells the story of House DeLuis in the ancient times of the Blight Wars, before Quinelle was even a true kingdom. The play tells the tale of the head of the household Sir Joseph DeLuis struggling to hold the eastern front against the enemy, and must rally his bannermen together in a glorious last stand. If his men were to fall, so would all of Iflares. Some renditions end on a somber note, with the final stand being wiped out to the last, too late to see Priest King Ferdinand's deliverance, while others are slightly more upbeat, with only the noble sacrifice of Sir Joseph DeLuis securing victory for the bannermen of House DeLuis. It is a serious play for those with grim desires and noble aspirations. Oftentimes there is a bullfight included in the play, a traditional bloodsport in Iflares, somewhat ironic as the sigil of House DeLuis is that of a bull.

Make sure you stop at one of these fine locales on your next caravan haul across Canatha, and of course if you're seeking the best recommended Inns along the King's Road keep reading dear traveler.

## WRATH OF THE GODS PART 1

It is a rare thing to see a god directly punish a sinner, the most common offense is a denial of their gifts. Many an indolent or apathetic Ascendant has found their powers taken from them after one too many failings. However the subject of today's lesson is what happens when a failure goes beyond simple idiocy or carelessness? What wrath befalls a fated when they blaspheme or commit acts of heinous heresy?

It is found that the gods reserve a dire punishment for their Ascendants who commit extreme failures. Each of the Divine has a specific punishment, though they may be called curses they are not so easily removed.

Hastur afflicts the Penitent March. The Penitent March is Hastur's way of making the truly wicked feel the weight of their deeds, the exhaustion of the world's tolerance for their persistent existence. The afflicted will feel the suffering of others as physical pains upon them, for every misdeed against the innocent a hot coal to fall upon the afflicted. Many stubborn fools seek to flee and live in isolation, constantly marching away from those who they caused suffering, giving the punishment its name. The only remedy found has been to endure the pain, and seek to make amends with those who the afflicted have caused suffering to, and perform acts to ease such suffering. Only once they have atoned for their crimes does the pain subside.

Ozymahd afflicts the Sight of Time. This punishment is often used to punish the hubris of Ascendants, who think to abuse the power they wield in Ozymahd's name. The afflicted is cut off from the present, the here and now becomes a foreign concept to them, yet the entirety of Vehldathin's past is laid bare for them to view, and the infinite multitudes of the thread of fates stretch on forever to confound them. To only view what once was, and what may come to pass, all at once is enough to drive fated to insanity. Many times this affliction has led to fated to take their own lives leaving maddened notes claiming a ceaseless influx of noise and light, a loss of restful moments, a disconnect of what made them fated in the first place. Only rarely has any afflicted survived this affliction, those who have survived have cited the terrible price they've had to pay to be freed of such a punishment, such as removing their eyes and tongue so they may never use their powers for their own prideful ambitions again. Vykost afflicts the Touch of Drought. This cruel punishment shows the wrath of Vykost well. First the afflicted shall never know the touch of water again, all liquid turns to dust upon touching the afflicted. In some cases it even causes containers of liquids to dry rapidly. Second the afflicted loses the ability to sense water, or for water to sense them. If the afflicted were to try to swim, they would fall through to the bottom as if falling through open air. None have survived this particular divine punishment as it proves to be fatal rapidly amongst those that would worship Vykost.

## JHONATHAN'S TATTERED NOTES

ⒶWe've discovered in our research that a Square seems to be the proper Sigil of defense, good for channeling protective capabilities...

...and of course in our attempts to verify and experiment there have been failures. Some minor, some major. I don't think their bodies will recover, but perhaps their minds will?...

...maddened beasts with flesh dripping off their forms, is this what magic can do when backlashed upon our bodies?...

...we saw something today, swirling around us. Perhaps our research has brought us too far into the depths, have we dug too deep. ⒶWe must get to the bottom of this, we must dig deeper...

## THE RONIN

*What becomes of the knight who serves no master? The soldier who becomes a scholar? The honorable becoming vagrant? Many Nomads claim such an origin, a life before their travels upon the open expanses of Canathan roads. Yet there are tales as older than Prinreik, of those people of the waves, who left their lives to become wandering swordsmen. Some claim they hail from Xian Zhe, others tell of Quinellite origin. The Ronin of myth are honorable wanderers, scholarly and wise, adept in all manner of combat both magical and martial. Though none claim this title any longer after the Battle of Needle Hill during the Glitter Pass Trade Wars. The stories claim that a number of Nomads aided in the defense of a small outpost of Xianren against an overwhelming force of Mountain Dwarves, amongst the defenders were the Ronin. Their tactical minds were able to withstand the superior attacking force for forty seven days. Despite their eventual defeat, one of the Ronin survived the battle, pledging to avenge the ghosts of the innocent, allegedly stating that none of the attackers would find safety in the shadow of the mountains again. The surviving Ronin continues in myth, having all manner of detail depending on the region that tells the tale, but all share a common name. Watanabe, who pledged to wield a blade of moonlight, to become on with the night and to be the justice within. It is unclear how much of the story is rooted in history, but Nomads still hold the legends in high regard, especially when they are so often looked down upon by others.*

## A WELL PENNED LETTER

**Dear Rod,**

11/5/1422

**The Uluch family has worked the mines here for many generations, none other has held and operated Bluepit such as we have. Your interest in investing in our operation and receiving a share of our haul is tempting, but have you considered what your contemporaries will say when they catch word of this? Scandalous to spend the crown's funding on something that could be perceived as so frivolous when the people suffer wouldn't they say?**

**It is well known that many Prinreik trade outfits wait decades to have a chance to become a part of the Bluepit operation, our glowing ore is well sought after in many arcane circles. Profits all abound, but what would a fated of faith want with our arcane operations. We dwarves are an inquisitive folk, always keeping a keen eye for details.**

**Do not take our questions for contempt however, we are quite flattered to receive interest from one such as yourself. Royalty is always welcome in our halls.**

**Please, join us for a banquet this coming February, the cold is never felt within our hills I assure you. We are inviting all prospective investors to feast with us and discuss our collective futures. I expect you will find familiar friends from Epplessa and Prinriek when you arrive, and even some new friends amongst the Xianren. I will count on your attendance and stock up on an ample supply of Vermillion Wine as you are so often fond of.**

**We look forward to finally discussing this in person.**

**Sincerely,**

## Agni Uluch

# JOURNAL OF ALISHONA XILDAN PART 1

10/1421 It has been many years since I left Satiara, I hardly ever thought I would actually depart. Other Headmasters would not dare be perceived as leaving their post but I swear, something has been on the winds lately. A change has taken place, the Vehl is not as peaceful as many would believe. I have pushed myself to excellence since I was a girl, and I rose to every challenge. Now that our eldest scholars predict a change on the horizon I cannot sit idly by. I must face this as I have all other things, I am sure Wallach will be able to keep the towers flowing while I seek out some answers.

3/1422 I had a dream tonight, I dreamt I was in a cave surrounded by primordial forests. A storm raged all around me, strange humans performed a ritual unlike any I've ever seen. It ended in devastation, as all reckless rituals do. As the smoke finally cleared, I felt as though something looked at me, through me, but I could not recognize its form. Is this what it means to have faith, to see a god? I have never felt the sensation before, to encounter something much greater than I. Is this a premonition of the change to come? Perhaps I am being warned by a god, to prepare for my adventures ahead of me.

9/1422 Something happened last night that I couldn't explain, a sensation in my meditations, like an old door finally being opened releasing its stale air for all the world to suffer. I have mastered all forms of magic I have encountered, and now I feel like there is knowledge that I am ignorant of. I spend my waking hours with the gnawing feeling that I have forgotten something I may never remember. Of course I will have to meditate on this more as I travel to Arclight. No matter how many councils and conventions they refuse to attend, no matter how much research they refuse to share, they must be brought into the fold if such a change is upon the Vehl. I'm sure Dean Tagati will be more than happy to have someone of such prestigious standing as myself arrive unannounced to discuss arcane affairs.

## HASTILY WRITTEN NOTE

[illegible]

# THE GLORY OF THE PRENTREE

By Mama Toomey

1256

In the ancient past of the Wood Elves they built their villages in the canopies of the Prentree groves. These trees were often deeply intune with the spirits of the forest and with the very Winds of Magic. Their leaves are said to glow faintly with magical essence, their wood and sap contain magical properties that are well valued to the Wood Elves and due to these properties they have been targeted by outsiders to the great woods and forests. Many of the Elven Codices depict outsiders invading the forest to rip the trees from the earth to use for their own selfish needs. The Prentrees are sacred to the Wood Elves as symbols of a peaceful existence, to live within harmony to the flora and fauna of the Vehl all belonging to the same lifecycle. In the scenes depicted in the codices where the Prentrees are attacked, it is the Wood Elves that go to their defense, dropping down from the branches above to ambush the invaders. Many Blood Hunters of the Wood Elf tribes have their skin stained with the sap of Prentrees as a reminder of their heritage and a dedication to preserving the forests. While in the past the Blood Hunters were defenders, it seems now that Wood Elf Blood Hunters have given in to these violent delights and often hunt for sport. With so few Prentrees left in the forests of the Vehl it is not surprising that their peaceful influence has diminished amongst the Wood Elves.

The Vine Singers of the Wood Elf tribes tell of legends that they were once able to commune directly with the Prentree's essence, a meditation that would allow them to speak with the tree's essence and gain their wisdom. They would be able to hear and feel the Prentree's story and what it would sense in the Vehl. The ancient Wood Elves believed the Prentree had as much of a being as a Fated, and to harm one was the same as harming an elder. In the codices it is depicted that these communications were almost euphoric, allowing a Vine Singer to commune with nature on a deep and almost direct nature. This allowed them to act as shepherds of the forests, stopping whatever sickness or plague affected the trees or stop any intruders from damaging the life found within.

While it is unknown exactly what started the decline of the Prentree population, the codices depict images of a darkness overcoming the forests and leaving behind only emptiness. It is known that during the Great War followers of the Black Tongue God invaded the forests to perform some of the very rituals that devastated the Elven race as a whole, using these Prentree groves as focal points for their all consuming fires. There no longer remain any commonly known Prentrees on Canatha, although some claim that there are a few still remaining in the forests around Haywood that are kept secret by the few Wood Elves that remain in the forests. There have even been rumors that a mighty Prentree is found amongst Callen's Fence, or in the jungles of Yarim leading many Wood Elves to join adventurers, traders, and explorers in their journeys there. None have been confirmed tragically, but as we share the stories of the Prentrees and their power, we honor their memory and prepare future generations for their return. To be in the glow of the Prentrees is to bask in the peaceful pride of nature, to be in harmony with the Vehl itself, and for what gifts the Prentrees offer to us it is our heritage to keep them safe, even if we no longer live in their canopies.

## BROTHER HORNWOOD'S LITANY OF PROTECTION

You may travel through wicked woods and ferocious fens, but remember the most holy of lessons. Know Thy Enemy. Keep well accounted for those beasts and ne'er do wells that may harass you on your journeys. Many innkeepers collect rumors from travelers, soldiers, and hunters about the wicked things that stalk the roads so be sure to investigate properly, and equip yourself appropriately. If you travel the King's Road at night, be sure to drink tea that keeps you awake and aware, or you risk being ambushed by bandits. If you travel by the Furca River ensure you keep tinctures with you that protect against dastardly Loach poisons. For long journeys make sure to keep up your stamina with plentiful rations, or you'll find yourself at the base of a mountain with nought but exhaustion. It is also wise to check the local temples and academies for the knowledge they contain before embarking on your adventures. Utilizing the wisdom of those that came before you is key to not just surviving, but thriving! Many of these locations will share their wisdom for just a small donation, and what are a few coins worth compared to your life. You can learn that trolls heal their wounds rapidly, so you must strike them with great fervor or it will seem like you are unable to harm them, but be warned that blackblood trolls' blood is highly caustic and will burn your armor or skin. Or that tangles of magic known as elementals are normally susceptible to simple weapon strikes to dissipate, but larger tangles known as greater elementals, which are distinguished by the wisps of energy that emanate from them, will require magical force to dissipate. Knowing is half the battle, and a battle half won is a battle worth winning. The road goes ever on.

## THE TERROR OF THE FORESTS

There are many threats to be found across Vehldathin, Wolves and Bears, Bandits and Pirates, even Darkglass Scorpions and Razorthorn Bramble. The Vehl is vast and varied, and it is always wise to travel with companions and weapons. Many mercenary companies find steady pay as caravan guards or forest patrols. Yet no creature strikes fear into the hearts of fated more than the cursed Ghazgrakk. This creature, a misanthropic melding of wolf, goat, and fated, lives typically in the deep forests of Canatha. There have been reports of such creatures being found in the swamps and jungles of Yarim as well. Standing a head taller than the typical fated, these beasts stalk their prey with great fervor, charging headlong with only mild patience for ambushes. Many predators will view a well guarded caravan and think better than to attack, yet the Ghazgrakk has no such fear in its primitive mind. With vicious fangs and strong jagged horns they don't seem to need weapons, yet can be found wielding primitive clubs, or stolen weapons in their malformed hands. They seem to seek out powerful sources of magic to consume, chasing magically inclined animals or scrounging for similar plants, and unfortunately for travelers they seem to favor Arcanists and heavily Imbued items. Reports of a Ghazgrakk easily overtaking several caravan guards despite suffering many grievous wounds and shrugging off blasts of magical energy, only to drag the Noble or Professor out of the carriage to consume. Their wounds heal rapidly once they feast on their magical prey. It is unknown what sired such a wretched beast, but they have been found to travel with wolf packs at times suggesting a form of kinship. The creature has been known to flee if it suffers too many wounds and cannot find a magical source of food. This paired with its simple tool and weapon usage suggests that the creature has a semblance of intelligence, and is not just some mindless monster. There have been no successful attempts to locate a Ghazgrakk den, or to capture one alive to study it further.

## NOTE FOUND BY A HANGED MAN 3/30/1424

*I came to this Island to help my family, to send money back to them. I sailed that water hopefully with everyone else. How could we have been so foolish? What did we hope to find? The Many Faced God owns this land as a playground. Giant bugs tear through camps, dragging folks away to their nests. Elementals will burn through your walls if you had any, smash you to bits for just being too close to them. Even the forest tries to kill you with those damn brambles. Then there's the Cannibals, sweet Aiko the cannibals. I can still hear the screams of those rituals ringing out through the forest. The gods never wanted us to come here.*

*That was before we went down into the caves, before we saw what was down there. They made us open that door, I swear I didn't know what was in there. It ran through everyone there, El'Thine, Robert, Jonathan, even Sergeant Donnahue. My friends. I just cried, sat there and wept while my friends suffered. Then it looked at me, looked through me, looked just like me. It looked just like me. Just like me. Sounded just like me, by the gods it moved like me too. It carried me out of that cave like I was a comrade, brought me to the camp we made outside of the cave. I couldn't do anything but shed tears and pass out in my bedroll where it left me. When I woke up everyone was back, all four of us. They looked well rested and ready to start the day, not a one of them mentioned what happened down in that cave. How could they not remember what happened? How could they even be here? I saw it, I smelled it, I've been around long enough to never forget what the inside of a fated smells like when it gets ripped out of them. Was I dreaming? Was it just a nightmare from the stress? How can I be sure of anything? I feel different, I feel like I had a name but it's lost now, like I had a body but it's changed now. Am I me? Am I you? Are we connected? I couldn't tell you the truth of it. Please, when you get this, tell my family I died bravely, don't let them know what got me. Tell Hadria to visit that old magnolia tree and remember back home. Tell everyone I'm sorry.*

## THE NARROW PATH

On the eastern coast of Enkel’Ra above the Needle Strait is the city of Polemble, built into the Thimble Cliffs many generations ago. Clay buildings bake in the harsh heat as razor winds cause fabric canopies to flutter and strain, water flows through the bottom of the canyon where the poorest families reside. Bridges of rope and wood connect the different cliffs and streets of the several districts of Polemble with many charms and flags hanging from them to bring stability and good luck to those who travel through them. The Dragonborn arcanists of the city work diligently to keep the aggressive flow of the Winds of Magic tame, when the rain seasons come it is their efforts that ensure the city is not brought to ruin. Thanks to this the city has become a hub of commerce from goods coming from southern Enkel’Ra for merchants that do not want to traverse the Green Hells and from Arikaph’s naval merchants coming into the Breathing Sea through the Needle Strait. Many merchant buildings rise and fall with the sun and moon, blessings from Ozymahd, to meet the needs of the bustling city streets. Spices, exotic fabrics, and strange animals can be found all throughout these stalls, a feast for the senses truly. As the sun sets of Polemble and the torches are lit for the night market, where arcanists can find supplies for their rituals or mystics can read your fortune, yet in the city there lay a path leading from the merchant district to the Temple of Lo’Polath. The Narrow Path as it’s called, traverses between uncut cliff walls and residential buildings with barely room to turn around once you begin your trek down this half mile path. It began as a mistake in the city’s planning and developed as a cultural oddity that was endearingly used by locals despite the awkward run-ins with someone traveling the opposite direction as them, leading to standoffs on how to proceed. This was before the Dragonborn New Year however, on February 10th of 1424 during many of the celebrations there was tragedy. A murder along the Narrow Path, with only an old crone to bear witness. Aleitha of the Brass was found mangled and drained of her blood on the floor of the Narrow Path, discovered by a small urchin boy and reported to the guards who found only an old woman who had any information of the occurrence. Alethia was the daughter of Gregog who was a prominent member of the Metallurgy Guild, she did not follow in her family’s footsteps instead choosing the surreptitious life of working as a tavern companion. The only witness was an old blind woman named Mileese, who claimed the killing occurred because Aleitha angered the Vehl itself, and the Vehl sent a hunter known as the Shuug. Mileese claimed that she saw this attack in her dreams the night before. Old legends describe the Shuug as a gangly creature covered in thick black fur with hands and feet like that of a monkey, but with eight digits. The creature is also said to have glowing red eyes and a barbed beak to suck the blood of the victim. While this creature only exists in legends, the Narrow Path has now become part of that legend, along with Aleitha.

-Louix Qem, Scholar of Bel’Kinth Academy

## TALES FROM THE CHROMATIC TOME PART 2

In the dark of the night the Scholar anxiously attempted slumber, but a restlessness in their mind prevented them. A tome they had been studying proved difficult to translate, as many things from the first centuries are. Yet they could not free their mind from the foreign words and symbols, what they meant, what they attempted to convey. A sudden burst of energy caused the Scholar to spring out of bed and begin lighting candles, the night would not prevent their discoveries.

With frantic hands flipping frayed pages against fading candlelight, the Scholar engrossed themselves into the old ink symbols on the page. Carefully working out the ciphers on the page, the strange grids and graphs depicting esoteric knowledge of the Winds of Magic, speaking quiet notes into their Whispering Stone. The Scholar spoke words they barely understood, unsure if they even translated them correctly. Rastam. Nicto. Rathm. The Scholar was determined to push through these maddening mysteries.

Piece by piece the story began to come together, like a puzzle they barely knew they were putting together. The words held together like shapes in their mind, runes of untold power. The Scholar pushed through, barely noticing the dying of the candle light, or the glow of the tome itself. Finally, the Scholar could begin drawing it all out.

Scribbles on paper, charcoal powder covering desperate fingers, they finally began to understand, to realize the story being told to them by this ancient Writer. The Scholar gazed upon the message they managed to scrawl across the pages on their desk. A sense of desperation, breathlessness, pride, danced in the Scholar’s heart, but then they looked up from their studies. For but an instant their eyes saw a truth staring back at them, staring back with one thousand eyes. Their Whispering Stone flickering to life, just in time to record the final, frantic screams of their life. A warning to those who entered the tower, a warning to those curious enough to search for answers.

## MERCENARIES OF CENTRAL CANATHA

Many mercenaries work in Prinreik, these professional soldiers take jobs as simple as guarding a tavern, caravan, or tax collector, others take on more complex jobs like assassinations, full assaults on rival merchants, or even acting as a personal army for some baron or countess. Many mercenaries work on their own, some form groups, but the best of the best form companies. These Mercenary Companies can be as large as full standing armies for nations, able to train and supply their troops better than most and able to assure quality and integrity to their trade.

Ulmerik's Ironborn are a Mercenary Company based in the northern hills above Prinreik, lead by the Hill Dwarf Rathos Ulmerik after being given command from his father Lothar Ulmerik, their insignia is that of a golden hammer crossed with a golden pick on a field of silver. Their mercenaries are often extremely well trained and take a variety of small jobs, rarely are there more than five of the Ironborn in one job. Their reputation suggests that no more would be needed for most jobs.

The Red Crested Company are a rare sight in Prinreik, composed almost entirely of Dragonborn, their hallmark are their helmets that bear a large plumed crest of red ostrich feathers. These mercenaries are boastful and proud of their work and often take jobs protecting travelers, especially to the southern continent of Yarim. They often credit their strength to the fictional Dragons of myth, even utilizing some special potions that allow them to spit caustic and combustible phlegm at their enemies.

The Westhill Mercenary Company true to their name is based in the western hills outside of Prinreik lead by the auspicious Gnome Fek Hobblehook. They garnered fame after the siege of Rabblecreek Castle, where they managed to successfully launch barrels over the castle walls, those barrels of course having Westhill mercenaries within them. Upon landing, the mercenaries were able to fight their way to the drawbridge controls and not only lower the bridge, but open the gate and successfully hold out for reinforcements with minimal casualties. They've engrossed themselves in strange and unconventional means of warfare proving to be difficult to defend against. While sometimes ridiculed as being ridiculous and crazy, they have no less managed to become one of the most successful mercenary companies in Canatha.

While the use of mercenaries is extremely common, it is important to ensure they are always paid punctually and well respected. Few things are worse than voiding a mercenary's contract, giving them the freedom to find the next highest bidder which is often your adversary. Rarely have there been instances of mercenaries working without pay for a noble cause, as is the case with almost everything in Prinreik.

## TO: SUPERVISOR DOBRECK, FIELD REPORT: DOCUMENTED #9837

The Northern borders are secured for now, Lieutenant Adams has done excellent work clearing out the locals. The Sol River has been further fortified to prevent problems from the East with a dedicated crew to clean the river of growth to double down on that effort. Things are quiet on the Western front, if it remains consistent we will consider lightening some defenses there. The Quinellite Expedition seems to be respecting the borders so far, if this continues we should consider working with them to maximize profits, either by hiring them or selling to them. We have some strange reports from some of the scouts and guard posts, some form of Fated has been directing elementals. Unlike the *Thing* we've been getting reports of, something like an inbetween. Scouts have reported enormous mushrooms out in the forests, perhaps this Island causes some strange form of gigantism in the local wildlife? We should collect some samples to see if they're poisonous or a threat to our defenses. Most concerningly Neuprin has reported seeing another ship arrive to the Island further west than us. Reports say the ship arrived from the west as well. Please advise with further instructions.

Eisenstadt Settlement, Cpt. Lovi

## JOURNAL FOUND AT A BUG'S NEST

Today I shall show the non-believers what true faith means! The calculated might of Thagos is coursing through me, I shall obtain what they could not and show them through the blessed arithmetic how they must join us. I shall keep with me the capstone of our faith, the first symbol of Thagos  $\pi\theta\mu\Box\Box$  is  $\pi$  or, as it is written in some places, . Though the simple minded believe this to be just some simple number, 3.14, Thagos has revealed how it is the truth of all things. Using it I can predict the future, I can foresee events yet to pass, I can correctly calculate the radius of the golem's conscious core. Circumference divided by 2 of the sacred number is the formula. No enemy can withstand me with this knowledge!

## JOURNAL OF ADAM THENSFIELD, PART 1

5-4-1424

The whole Island feels like it's against us, and we thought the walls would keep us safe. How do you defend against what you can't see? Gladys changed right before my eyes, her face split open into that horrible maw. She screamed the whole time. I got us out of there though, an old bottle of rotgut torched the whole tent and hopefully Gladys too. By Callen are these words truly my own thoughts? Fifteen years we spent together, your green eyes shined brighter than any green meadow in Quinelle. Those eyes live on in our daughter, she's safe with me now, outside of that camp. I know Marjorie, we were all told it was safe but I think it's time we found our own safety.

5-6-1424

It's dangerous out here in the forest, it always feels like eyes are on you. I've been keeping Marjorie occupied with simple tasks, weaving branches together to make a sled, collecting rocks for a firepit. I'm hoping to find us a shallow cave to set up in, we'll keep quiet, we'll keep to ourselves, it'll be safe down there. I keep thinking of that night, of what happened. How many of them were going to change? How many husbands had to kill their wives? How many orphans are left behind to be taken by whatever wretched thing deems suitable? I can't dwell on it. I have to think of Marjorie.

5-8-1424

I found us a cave finally. Only three meters deep or so, there is a passage that leads further in but I blocked it off with some branches. We've managed to get some small game traps set, and we've been working on a door of sorts for the front of the cave. Marjorie barely seems affected by everything that's happened, what a blessing children are. I envy her perseverance, if she survives this Island, I would have done enough as a father. We've been lucky though that nothing seems to be bothering us so far. I know they always say safety in numbers, but numbers are very noticeable.

## THE WISPS OF THE FOREST

*There are legends told by the Elves of the ancient things that dwelled in the forests before fated trod through fallen leaves. From massive beasts that lumbered through the forest on clawed toes, to great and mighty stags infused with the Winds of Magic, but the most mysterious of them are the Wisps. These floating ephemeral pockets of light and smoke are heralded as either guides of the dark forest, or tricksters leading wanderers to ruin.*

*The Wood Elves of the Tangled Root Tribe, who regularly guide fated through the arboreal labyrinths, tell stories around their campfires warning the travelers they shepherd about the Wisps of the verdant glades. They seem harmless, yet they can fill even the bravest fated with crippling fear. They dance and flutter through the darkness and the fog darting between tree and shrub. Each story differs slightly, with some depicting the color of the wisp as a telling of its intentions. Red represents a fated in peril in need of aid, Green represents trickery in play, Blue represents treasure to be found. Other stories say the color depends on the weather, the cycle of the moon, or even the season of the forest. Some tales reassure the Wisps will guide you home when you are lost in the dark forest, but in the myth of Ra'kaph the Wisps lead the titular hero, Ra'kaph, to a trap causing him to fall into a viper pit. No story of the Wisps tells of how to destroy, dissipate, or deny their existence or appearance, only that they exist in the furthest reaches of the forest. Most travelers don't report sightings of Wisps in the forests around Haywood, but recently there have been more stories about Wisps in the frozen forests surrounding Arclight. The local lordships have done their best to quiet down these tales, as they have all of the many scandalous stories coming out of Arclight.*



## JOURNAL OF ABANTH WE

3/4/21 - We've encountered some strange ruins in the jungles, images have been carved into stone blocks that transcribe a story here. Pieces are missing, holes roughly twelve inches by eighteen inches are indented into the blocks at seemingly random intervals. These missing pieces must supply a great amount of detail to the history of this place, but the captain has not allocated resources to discovering them. The images depict a great serpent entangling cities, or large groups of fated. There is a depiction of a volcano erupting, of a masked figure, and many fated lying down either sleeping or dead. We'll take plenty of etchings of these carvings.

3/5/21 - We unearthed a plaque from the jungle growth, a spectacular find. It depicts a vortex of sort, a convergence of many vertical lines into a horizontal plane. At the bottom are images of more fated laying prone. At the top there seem to be a great many symbols, perhaps magical sigils?

It is hard to tell at this point, or where this plaque would sit in any of the indents. The inability to correlate all of these pieces is frustrating, but that is our battle as scholars. To piece this seemingly random information together, to learn and expand our understanding of Vehldathin.

There are images on the back, lightly etched into this dull yellow metal. Frogs, sitting in a circle. This must refer to The Bask that are native to this continent, or perhaps some strange organization of fauna? If we uncover the other plaques we will surely have answers. It has been difficult, the camp has been under attack relentlessly. Some natives are friendlier than others.

4/1/21 - It has been some time since I've had a moment to write. My colleague Shilo has recorded much of the minutiae for our journey, my focus has been solely on what we uncover here. We discovered another golden plaque in the jungle foliage, embedded into the roots of a rubber tree. It depicted a large serpent coiling around a vortex, similar to the vortex on the previous plaque. The serpent bears feathers this time, a strange creature. At the top, the horizontal plane, more frogs sit around a skull, there are no symbols surrounding them. We had to continue venturing into the jungle, unfortunately cutting us off from these ruins, but I did prepare several rubbings to return to our benefactors. I cannot say I'm entirely devastated however, the smell at the ruins was getting overwhelming with decay.

4/2/21 - The mumbling around the camp is that the captain knows where the Horn of Ryheinxaes is kept, but we have to march to the swamps to obtain it. What a marvelous thing to discover, if it truly exists. Our benefactor certainly has a touch for the esoteric, but good funding is difficult to come by. I'm sure we will discover more on our trek through the jungles. I've taken some time to discuss the rubbings of the stone blocks and the golden plaques with my colleagues here, pondering what they could all interpret. Shilo suggests that it is depicting life and death here in the Jungle for the Adrongo, living and thriving and transitioning from one existence to another. Melys brought up the idea that it is the depiction of a battle, rituals being performed in opposition of one another. Robert interrupted as usual to bring up the idea that the images crudely depict the process of sleeping, dreaming, and waking. I trust this debate will cause us to argue many nights by the dying campfires.

## KOBOLD'S SHANTY

Wizz Fizzle Crack and Snap

The four make colors that entrap

They add to the best of celebrations

But be careful of solemnization

Where their skills stack

The wits they lack



## THE KNIGHTLY ORDERS OF QUINELLE

The main military force in the Kingdom of Quinelle consists of Knightly Orders, and their auxiliaries. While at points in history have shown that the peasantry of Quinelle has risen up to be a prominent and deciding factor in the kingdom's military campaigns, these are rare occurrences. Knightly Orders in Quinelle range from small bands of knights traveling together under a common banner, to massive military organizations that follow a Duke's house and aid in ruling over large amounts of land and the cities and towns therein. To be awarded the title of Knight is an achievement on its own, being recognized by the nobility of Quinelle for valor, chivalry and holy duty to the kingdom. Most knights find themselves earning their title by serving knightly houses as squires, or in more exceptional cases by performing heroic acts while serving as men-at-arms. The ceremony involved in granting knighthood is often filled with tradition and symbolic rituals, although some orders claim their power stems from these ceremonies. Each Knightly Order is as varied as its members, with some being more rigid and uniform than others, but every order contains the same common threads. First, an order's heraldry, all Quinellites wear their house's heraldry proudly with knights being no different. Upon the founding of a new order a heraldry is made. Once approved by the King of Arms many knights adopt the heraldry entirely, or place their personal heraldry on the upper right corner of their shield or upper left corner of their tabard. If the knight is particularly sworn to another, as in a lover or a dear companion, they may place their symbol on the bottom right corner of their shield or bottom left corner of their tabard. Lastly, if a knight serves an order that directly answers to a church or to a member of nobility, they may place the symbol of their church or the heraldry of their noble on the upper left corner of their shield, or the upper right corner of their tabard. Most knights will only choose one of these exceptions to their arming wear, with the only recorded knight to include all four heraldries being Sir Dimble Dappelpye of the Order of the Thistle. Three examples of Knightly Orders of the Kingdom of Quinelle are the Order of the Crane, the Order of the Gadfly, and the Order of the Penitent Mother.

The Order of the Crane is ruled by High Paladin Aedan Grindall the Third of House Grindall, who have served the crown faithfully since their founding in the year one thousand and twelve. The Order of the Crane have a large number of paladins that serve the order, along with many knights specialized in following the Hasturian aspect of the shield. The Order earned their knighthood after defending King Frederick's wagon from a Savage Orc raid upon returning from a diplomatic trip to Prinrieff in the year one thousand one hundred and five. Their heraldry is a field of green with a single charge of a gold crane surrounded by a golden halo in the center. Their words are 'In Hastur, Grace, Duty, Faith.

The Order of the Gadfly is ruled by Sir Beuford of the Granite from the northwestern hills of Quinelle. The Order of the Gadfly was founded in the year one thousand two hundred and fourteen with the blessings of Duke Altamira for their efforts in battling against the Raiders of the Chains. The Order of the Gadfly worships Vykost primarily and specializes in naval warfare, sometimes mocked by other orders as "The Order of the Raider". Their heraldry is a checkered field of green and orange, with three charges of red flies. Their words are "As the fly bites, scorn strikes."

The Order of the Penitent Mother is ruled by Sir Marienne the Mournful of Miserious Abbey. The Order of the Penitent Mother is unique not because of its small number, but due to it being composed entirely of women. Widows and bereaved mothers who have lost their husbands and children to the horrors of Vehlathin have sworn to give their lives to prevent others from suffering the fate that they have. Based in the Miserious Abbey in the eastern hills of Quinelle, the abbey as a whole is devoted to the Hasturian aspect of the Rod. Their heraldry is a field of purple with a single charge of a silver lily flanked by thorny vines. Their words are "Dolore Salutam".

## DENIZENS OF THE DEEPS PART 1

Robolds are a nasty lot, they can always be found somewhere lurking in the deeps. They often build their nests above magma vents, creating a hot and dry environment for them to roost in. They sneak about in their hidden tunnels and pester their neighbors, playing what they call tricks on them. These tricks often involve magical traps, rituals to spawn elementals when drawing from a well, rituals to cause the livestock to become feral and rabid. Their knowledge of arcane arts could make them useful allies to the whole of Vehlathin if they weren't so antagonistic to everything around them. Most of our information is sourced from those who managed to escape the Robolds, fated who wound up deep below the earth after Robolds raided their villages, forced to do rigorous labor for the Robolds until they became too weak or too old to keep up. Those that were deemed useless were taken away from the holding pens, never to be seen again. Many survivors claim they were forced to be the subject of experimental rituals, or mining for ore in the heat of the magma vents. Many stories claim they escaped during battles with other Robold tribes, or the occasional Goblin or Mountain Dwarf attack. Even in the deeps war still finds a host. A few very peculiar stories have come from survivors, whether or not they are delusions or lies or even truth, they are worth mentioning. The first are the reports of Robolds fearing something in the deeps, deeper than their own dens. They use the word 'Deepfin', perhaps referring to Moon Elves. The only other clue to this is claims that these 'Deepfin' only live 'where the caves open', yet no reports of this location have been conclusive. Second, are reports of four legendary Robolds called the 'Keepers of the Winds', each Robold a master among masters with sorcerous power. These figures are often referred to in the same manner as the Boggeman, a frightening tale to force children into obedience. Lastly there was one survivor that mentioned a temple they were brought to, the Robolds called it 'Easmah', a great many tribes gathered at this temple to bear sacrifices to the patron of the temple, yet an outbreak of fighting occurred allowing several of the captives to escape. Despite being woefully lost in the deeps, losing several companions to noxious fumes, cave ins, and some sort of acidic ooze, one survivor managed to arrive to the surface. With their determination we are able to learn more about the mysterious denizens of the deep and how to protect against them. If contact is made with Robolds, it is best to exterminate them quickly, before you become a target for any of their nefarious schemes.

## THE ESOTERIC NATURE OF PORTALS

There are some methods to magically move around the spaces of Vehldathin. Phasing is an ability some have practiced for short movements outside of physical space. Similarly, gating is an ability often gained through special rituals to be able to return to an exact location from mostly anywhere in the Vehl. Gating does seem to have limitations in distance only ranging several miles and potentially being disrupted by large hills or mountains. The practice of gating is often used by very wealthy explorers or diplomats in hostile territories. Scholars have debated what it means to use the art of phasing or gating, where one goes and how one wills it to manifest while not in a physical space. Some speculate that they leave our physical space and enter a mirrored reality where they can move unimpeded at rapid speed while others suggest that they dissipate their physical form into the Winds of Magic and are transported rapidly by their current, reforming a new physical form at their desired destination. The implications of the former would suggest that anyone who has used these transportation techniques has, in all technicality, died and has been recreated perfectly. Would this mean that the copy lacks a soul? Or that perhaps the gods allow this false copy to thrive in the original's place. The debate continues into the moral implications of using such traveling magics.

However, portals are a different form of magic entirely. Many colleges of magical study and arcanist academies have banned the study of portals citing ancient traditions. What few ancient manuscripts survive are dated to the first centuries of Vehldathin's history and contain only warnings, not ways to manifest such portals. Portals are not always reliable, they are said to misplace the passengers by putting them in the incorrect destinations, delaying their arrival time significantly, or losing them entirely. While we have no written documents discussing how often this occurred or how drastic these mishaps were, it is wise to heed the words of your forebears' warnings. Reports of portals have happened within history however, the Assault of Mejkhan during the Great War when Mongrel Gronbeck used portals to bypass the city's walls is a notable example. Another example is in the winter of 1390 a portal opened above the Gates of Torr releasing hundreds of doves into the harsh winter air. While unfortunate for the doves released as the cold air killed them quickly, the garrison was blessed with the first fresh meat they encountered in months. Rumors still exist of portals flickering to life in the forests around Arclight centuries after their failed attempts to create a 'School of Portals'. The discussion of portals often involves two major points of theorizing, how are portals made and where do they connect to. Could the existence of a realm beyond our own exist so unseen, or is it something we simply cannot perceive. Whether misunderstood magics or divine tools, the use of portals is cautioned, as is the study of them.

## THE EMERGENCE OF THE WALKING CORPSES

In the year 1430 reports began flowing in through many townships and provinces across Vehldathin. Graveyards were ransacked and found empty, the bones of the long dead began rising to attack all that they came across. Centuries of corpses began plaguing the countryside while locals scrambled to find an appropriate response to horrors never before seen.

Through the great effort of Mask Hunter Colin the 5th it was discovered that the walking corpses were caused by horrid practitioners of necromantic magics, constantly empowering and reconstructing the flesh of the dead to be used as horrible puppets. It was also discovered that the practice was uncovered by the expeditions of the cursed Island of Iblshal that departed in the year 1420 where these Necroarcanists used the suffering of the souls of the dead to animate their decaying bodies. It is unsure if the cause of this was due to desperation during the War of the Crane or a result of the insanity that overtook much of the expedition's fated.

With the information uncovered, agents were able to target the Necroarcanists and cut off the head of the snake. Many ascendants were able to adopt new funerary rites to allow for protection against these new found horrors. By 1472 the menace of the walking corpses was mostly under control but no longer were the roads safe to travel without ample protection, and the quiet corners of the Vehl were easily haunted by the restless dead. In 1503 it became commonplace for many questing knights to begin taking on the endeavor of ridding the world of any of the restless dead and haunted specters while artificers began attempting to siphon off the magic in highly affected areas with Mana Cells causing an assortment of magical miasmas.

The arms race between the trickery and vile nature of the Necroarcanists and the living fated is ever growing in pace and aggression.

## ROYAL LINEAGES AND DEEDS OF QUINELLE CHAPTER 13 SECTION 5

King Hubert the Bold. King of Quinelle whose reign began during the year seven hundred forty eight and concluded with his demise in the year seven hundred seventy six. King Hubert was crowned after King Felipe passed through the curse of years. Elected by the Conclave of the Cloth after one month of deliberation. The Dukes and Lords of Quinelle viewed this as a good omen, as often the Conclave of the Cloth can take several months to decide on a new King. King Hubert ruled from the age of thirty and entered a period of relative peace, he earned the title Bold during the siege of Hill Rest in seven hundred fifty six. Hill Rest was a small town within a keep at the southern edge of Quinelle at the base of the White Mountains, mostly unremarkable until a Mountain Dwarf warlord by the name of Garabrash Horsehewer declared that all those within view of the mountain would pay a tithe to him, a declared "Mountain King". Garabrash marched a large throng from the mountain passes bringing the might of the Mountain Dwarves down upon Quinelle. Hill Rest attempted to stage a defense but ultimately was not prepared for the weapons of war the Galabrash brought to bear. Flame arcanists operating terrible magma vents along with skull crackers made a frontal assault foolish, along with their regiments of phalanx warriors and crossbowmen. While the defenders prepared for a siege, Garabrash organized his throng from his steaming chariot. When word reached the crown King Hubert rallied bannermen from every available house and called upon a great host from the knightly orders, to show the world the Quinelle was vulnerable to their enemies would be an intolerable insult to their history and to Hastur themselves. King Hubert marched at the front of this holy army prepared to lead the vanguard. As the armies approached one another and emissaries were rejected by both sides, King Hubert was pleaded with to lead from the war camp instead, but defied such requests citing "By the glory of Hastur I shall fear no flames". On the fourth day of the third week of the sixth month since the siege's start King Hubert and his army met Garabrash Horsehewer's throng on the slopes of the White Mountains, many a soldier was reduced to ash by magma vent's terrible sprays, archers exchanges arrow and bolt with crossbowmen, Garabrash lived up to their namesake cleaving knights and their horses in half with his greatsword. At the end of the battle Garabrash was captured and King Hubert was victorious, true to his word, unburnt in the battle. It is said that when the priests offered Garabrash and his fellow Mountain Dwarves absolution before their execution each of them spit in the face of the offer, citing that the surfacer gods abandoned them under the mountains long ago, they would not beg them for mercy now after they showed the Vehl that they did not need their petty gods. King Hubert spared them a blasphemer's execution out of respect for a fellow warrior.

## CHILDREN OF OZYMABHD

The Elves are an ancient race, legends tell that they were the first to walk upon Vehldathin as fated with only the Orcs to join them soon after. While Orcs were short lived, Elves did not suffer the curse of years and lived as though they were timeless. This blessing caught the eye of Ozymahd, God of the Sun, Moon, and the Endless Cycle of Time. Ozymahd guided the Elves and brought them from the lands of the Vehl to great and mighty cities and palaces, raising them above the bestial nature of the creatures that walked the Vehl. The Elves in these grand cities took on one of two aspects both reflecting the guidance of their God Ozymahd. The Sun Elves and the Moon Elves. The Sun Elves were blessed with sunkissed skin, red and gold markings upon their flesh, they radiated with the warmth of the sun. They were scholarly and devoted to their arts, every aspect of society was revered and practiced with respect, even their military was keenly focused on perfection of their craft whether it be skill of blade or wisdom in diplomacy.

The Moon Elves were gifted with silver and black marking upon their ivory complexion they shone with the full moon's glow. They were elegant and passionate, their determination was unmatched when achieving their goals. Devout and faithful, Moon Elves worked well with their cousins to achieve a harmonious society through Ozymahd's guidance.

While nearly opposite in appearance, they were unified in focus. They built up their cities and brought peace to their regions. The Haywood and The Needleweald. These great cities were cradles of developments for Canatha, Enkel'Ra, and Vehldathin as a whole.

## THE FIRST FLAME

Praise be to Aiko, Goddess of the Sacred Flame.

Fire has brought prosperity, warmth, and life to all, and without Lady Aiko we will still be stricken in darkness. Harken and praise her name, for this feat was completed before she became our Goddess. In the beginning, the Fated had fire to gift, but it was a gift given with conditions. All Fated were not allowed to keep fire for themselves, and this greatly saddened our Lady Aiko. She, who loved her hearth and home with Callen, who created her hearth space to make tea and break bread with all peoples could not abide the conditional flame any longer. Thus Lady Aiko birthed the power of the First Flame. With this sacred flame she spawned the heat of the forge that her beloved Callen built tools for building. She gave rise to light and illuminated the night, so fear of the unknown in the darkness may no longer rest in the hearts of the Fated. She effectuated the key to civilization to progress beyond their wildest desires. But with this great power came great destruction. Fire can engulf a town, can consume a person, and can destroy all progress.

With all its faults and virtues Fire was gifted to the world though Aiko and the fated could learn to contain and create it on their own. Aiko took the First Flame to the town's prytaneum for people to come and take an offering from it so that their homes may contain this fire the Fated are able to possess. It is said all fire in the Veil is derived from Aiko's First Flame but unfortunately the actual First Flame has been lost to history. The sacred prytaneum of the past has fallen and the First Flames whereabouts was unknown since then. There is still a prayer worshippers of Aiko say today to bring on her blessings

Lady of the Sacred Flame,  
Bless us as we say your name.  
Aiko, Aiko, Aiko

## THE BLESSED COLOR

In the writings of the monk Roto Felipes he claims to have seen the Halls of Hastur when they almost perished in a wagon crash. Descriptions of ivory towers and golden paths with stunning yellow banners adorning every wall. This, along with careful prayer, has inspired many to adorn their shrines to Hastur in yellow cloth, yet there may be a greater power hidden in Hastur's adornments. The journal of Fawl the Green, a sailor on a trade ship from Strathadan elaborates on this in an interesting way. His journal depicts an attack on their port by Zog, High Ascendant of the Masked God, Father of Serpents. Zog and his so-called children, a horde of malicious snake men called Nightcrawlers, assaulted the port of Haeligdale in the middle of the night. While the details are gruesome, describing wanton slaughter and torture, the dragging of captive back into the swampy jungle, Fawl explains how they survived. Fawl hid under the canopy of a ruined fish market stall, the canopy being made of a fine yellow cloth. While the cloth was thin enough to see through, when the Father of Serpents gazed upon him, he was looked over. Fawl later recounted how some fruit stalls were left untouched, stalls containing citron and bananas, another instance of the saving grace of Hastur's beloved color. Even the fact that the attack occurred at night, away from the shining hue of the sun itself, all point to the protective aspect of Yellow against the High Ascendant and his offspring. Truly we faithful should adorn ourselves in this color as best we can, yellow robes, consuming yellow foods, or painting our homes in this sacred color to better protect ourselves from the evils of the world.

## RANKS OF ASCENDANCY

**Draz'Haderak, Elder of the Forge, Father of the Iron Mask**

I have returned from my mission, I have taken my cohort and seized the temple, interrogated the hapless priests and sacked their writings. Know thine enemy, your will has been done. First let me start by saying not all of these ascendants are created equal. Everyone knows that ascendancy is essentially a pageant to see who can embody the wills and whims of their frivolous God the best. Despite what clergy exists many do not know that there are ranks within the favor of a God. Regardless of how they obtained their ascendant status, through birthright or through effort, a vast majority of them will spend their entire lives being insufficient. It was made clear to me that many, to the ninetieth percentile will never be more than a pathetic priest, clearly a God's love is as fickle as the legends told us. In their texts it was said that a small number of *lucky* ascendants will be regarded as better than your typical rabble. After combing through the texts it seems that only a fifth percentile will gain the status known as a Saint, standing out from the crowd by performing so-called *miracles* in the name of their God. These acts consist of calming the waves to guarantee safe passage for ships, or clearing storm winds, or even bringing the dead back to life. There are also reports of them hearing the voice of their God more intimately than the mundane ascendants, feeling the will of their God or even visiting them in their dreams. These surfacers are clearly delusional by all common sense, diluted by their blind faith, hogwash in its entirety, but this is what the kneecaps and tree dwellers claim. Lastly there are claims that a single one of these blasted saints will be chosen to be a so-called *High Ascendant*, one who sits next to their God, is their voice and their right hand, one who awaits their turn on the proverbial mountain top. There are conflicting reports about who chooses one to be in this position, God, church, kings. Surfacers nonsense! Imagine meeting a High Ascendant and thinking you've spoken to one bloke out of literal millions that has been chosen by some God to be their most special plaything. Elder, this must be as preposterous as it sounds. It is not my place to question the answers you have sent me to retrieve, I must voice that these surfacers are fucking loons, we should feel blessed that this lunacy does not afflict us, that we forsook their childish faiths.

Forgive any transgressions, I shall have the spoils of this mission delivered to your cloister.

You *faithful* servant,

Thermine Bronzebeard

## BLOW THE MAN DOWN

Come all ye young fellows that follows the sea  
To me, way hey, blow the man down  
Now please pay attention and listen to me  
Give me some time to blow the man down

I'm a deep water sailor just come from Suytin way  
You give me some whiskey, I'll sing you a lay

When a trim Gold King's preparing for sea  
On a trim Gold King, I wasted me prime

When a trim Gold King preparing for sea  
You'll split your sides laughing such sights you would see

There's tinkers and tailors, shoemakers and all  
They're all shipped for sailors aboard the Gold King

When a big Gold King's a-leaving her dock  
The boys and the girls on the pier-head do flock

Now, when the big liner, she's clear of land  
Our bosun he roars out the word of command

Come quickly, lay aft to the break of the poop  
Or I'll help you along with the toe of me boot

Pay attention to orders, now, you one and all  
For see high above there flies the Gold King

'Tis larboard and starboard, on deck you will sprawl  
For Ellington Tydes commands the Gold King

## LAB NOTES: INFANT STASIS

### *Day 0 Notes:*

*Distressed mother brought her baby to the lab begging to keep it alive. Infant was pale, breathing poorly, could not move limbs much at all, and had nary a cry to be heard. Skin has discolorations but no outside markings for cause. Mother requested help curing her infant of whatever ailments befel it. I took the infant into the lab for testing, possible treatment, and upgrades to the body if needed.*

### *Day 10 Notes:*

*Infant has been monitored in the lab for 10 days. Not drinking milk or taking much nourishment on its own. Small amounts of liquid here and there. Still alive, but not much change. Skin discoloration has increased. No outside source noted. May be internal.*

### *Day 50 Notes:*

*The mother returned for updates on the infant. Seems dedicated to the creature. Infant status began rapidly declining, skin discolored completely to green, extra appendages protruded from body while lower extremities became separated. Created a mixture of mercury, black ooze, and troll blood to place infant into. Seemed to help support the creature, noticed an uptick in infant mobility and awareness.*

### *Day 75 Notes:*

*Infant status declined again on day 70. In a large jar of vinegar, brain fluid, mercury, and troll blood, infant was placed for paro stasis. This should hold infant in stable status while myself and the lab workers look into organ replacement and upgrades.*

### *Day 100 Notes:*

*Infant experiment and status ended in failure. Ocean Crest destroyed lab and infant paro status. Infant was removed from lab. No location determined. Mother made aware.*

*\*\*Infant deformities noted in above lab reports have been a common occurrence in recent births. Experiments and tests may be needed again for another.*

*Hopefully the outcome will be more beneficial in future tests.*

## STUDIES OF SIGILISM PART 2, BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM DYER

Would you call them runes? No, they are different from the archaic script of the Dwarfkin, those pseudorunes are preposterously simplistic in their power, holding more sentimental value than any true power. The glyphs of the Dragonkin are in equal measure a more artistic and cultural endeavor than any measure of actual power. The legends eclipsed this power but lost were the methods of creation. Like lost keys in the dust of a ruined kingdom, the pillaged chests yearn to be unlocked, yearn to be spread open and their secrets uncovered. Lost through the throes of this journey, we walked through the Pabodie Causeway of Callen's Fence. My compatriots found an encampment recently abandoned. The ash of the fire still bears warmth in the frigid wind of the Fence, the cabins with furs and clothes strewn about the floor, all the trappings of a group leaving in a rapid. Our hunters picked up a trail picked up the trail the only trail to be found the only trail that matters.

My mind escapes me. We discovered the door surrounded by those that made the trail, naked, frozen, wandered from their campsite with feeble thoughts of protest. I'm sure. The sigil still clutched in the frozen fist of the fated that left that camp. A simple thing, fluttering its fraying edges in the icy wind, who would have expected what we sought to look so humble. The sigil itself was complex, intentional, it shimmered with metallic power, it swirled and turned in ways so deeply intentional, it could have no other meaning than the purpose it was designed for. A grim moment of breaking frozen flesh, trepidation filled in the air as the key was placed into the lock. The cyclopean gateway crumbled before us as sugar in water, a passage to a room. A chamber. A mirror. A scribing that took to unnerving translations to what we witnessed. Unsure of what we saw, arguments took place on our side of the mirror, A hallucination? A curse? Something as foreign to us as we were to them. Not all of us walked away if truth were to be shared.



## GUARD SOP'S PATROL REPORTS

### *Guard Sop's Patrol Report 8-15-1380*

*We patrolled the Mange District today. All day through the fleas and the rats and the muck. All day watching those mutants scrounge about like they're proper fated.*

*Caught some of them trying To pray together at the sewer walls. What god would listen to those freaks. Hambulver was a better city before we allowed these monsters in our walls. I don't know what compelled Burgomaster Isenboldt to allow them to stay in our fine Hambulver but I bet you it's a payoff from that arcanist's guild up in the noble quarter. They've been poisoning the water supply for nearly fifteen years now, not even the frogs survive in our streams anymore. Magic sludge flowing through the streets mutating people into monsters. Can't trust em.*

*Someone oughta do something about it, skin 'em and use their fur to keep the beggars warm.*

*broke up three more unlawful gatherings in the streets, riots starting to form i'm sure.*

*Stopped four fights from breaking out with these unformed wretches, their claws and horns mean there are no real ways to disarm them.*

*One of the bitch breeds claimed a man stole her children. As if anyone would want to take these mongrels. Detained her for harassment of the city guard.*

*Another glorious Day in the Riek.*

### *Guard Sop's Patrol Report 8-20-1380*

*Patrolled the Copper District, stopped three thefts.*

*One from a fabric merchant, said someone stole a bundle of cotton from them. Took two hours but we found the bastard hiding behind a hay cart.*

*One from a wood carver, caught a child running off with a spoon they nicked.*

*One from a produce merchant, a mongrel from the mange district stole three potatoes. I don't care if they can't get work, and if they're pleading for their starving family. There's a famine, why should my people starve so dogs can eat!*

*Dispersed a gathering of Qiron worshippers, preaching about healing methods and ways to drive off crop sickness. They're probably just trying to bring back the plague.*

*A new merchant set up shop, a Butcher selling long fox meat. Never heard of it before but always good to see business booming. Fated working with fated as Hastur guides us.*

*Another glorious day in the Riek.*

## A PECULIAR MADNESS

There is an affliction that can overtake the fated mind, a previously unknown affliction that has become rampant here in our ranks. It starts slowly, creeping in like a vine through a crack until the foundation of our minds splits open from the constant strain. Restlessness, sleeplessness, paranoia, the very form of a fated will be unable to sit comfortably once the malady takes root, and once it starts it cannot be stopped. Trust in long known friends deteriorates, a fear in strangers develops, comfort and rest becomes a thing of the past. The next symptoms to manifest are obsession, delusions, and mania. A fated afflicted will obsess over imagined perceptions, concepts that do not exist, they will neglect eating, working, relations with friends and family, even avoiding contact with those that question their new working obsession. They will begin to speak to unseen specters of their delusions, move quickly and recklessly to the subject of their choosing. It is at this point that I have seen many students in the manor cross the point of descension, a rapid increase in severity of symptoms. Those that cannot restrain themselves and give into their urges will find themselves with aggression, hallucinations, and speaking nonsense or speaking in different languages as new symptoms. It is at this point that the afflicted become dangerous to themselves and to others and must be restrained, imprisoned, or pacified. Attempts to rationalize with the afflicted become difficult, and can cause further aggression to manifest. Throughout these symptoms the afflicted seem to suffer from memory loss, or a separation from who they are, like they're watching the Wheel go by from the windows of their eyes, and not honestly in control of their own actions. Professor Wyer couldn't recall the faces of his own children, one of the students, Jergus Xrumb, couldn't remember the names of his parents despite best efforts. This detachment from their reality is the most concerning aspect, like they are simply pretending to be themselves for a time when observed by another, a facade that fades once they escape the eyes of other fated. All of this centers around the work within manor I believe, a psychic malaise that weeds out the weak willed fated from truly discovering what the professors on the lower floors discuss freely in their quiet meetings. Lesser minds seem to struggle to handle the work we uncover here, straining against what they claim are ineffable perceptions that they cannot scrub from their memory, Alas what is learned can never be unlearned.

## BRAIDS, BY JUAN ALTAMIRA PART ONE

I have traveled on a diplomatic mission from my home in Cantabria to form bonds with our neighbors to the west. I sailed to the chair, to Skagastrund, despite the generations of strife between my family and these fated. I reminded myself that they are human, as I am, so there was already common ground in a world so full of differences. I considered the transgressions between our two nations, the history of the Great War, the looming threat of another. Even the name of their kind, Raiders, given to them by the kingdom of my fathers. Simply because we were on the winning side of a war? A justified war so the histories tell us. Histories written by clergy in Quinelle. When I arrived at the cold grey shores of Skagastrund there was little fanfare, no great processions, no cheering crowd. I was a stranger on a barbarous coast, I observed the outskirts of the city bustle with work. Each man, each woman, even the children all worked diligently on their various tasks. Weaving nets and baskets, sorting through the day's catch, preparing to set sail again. It was at this moment I noticed something peculiar, each fated's hair was braided to varying degrees. Children had only simple braids, but the eldest had full heads of intricate braids that contained trinkets and charms, even the men's beards were braided, more so than that of any Dwarf I had seen before. When my ship was finally unloaded, and the wagons moved towards the center of the city my observations were compounded, braids, community, togetherness. Tales from my forefathers would have me believe that these islands held nothing but savages, worse than savage Orcs, secretly worshipping the Betraying God, or harboring cults to the Demon Lord Charybdis. My prejudice would be challenged once again upon meeting the Konungr of Skagastrund, Guthred, an aged man who was once a great warrior, said to have once pulled a Krakov from the sea with only a spear. I was expecting a brute, but I met a philosopher, a faithful worshipper of Vykost, a poet, a father, and despite all of my assumptions I was greeted as a friend, and for the months I stayed in his home I was treated as such without pause. Konungr Guthred has a plethora of braids from crown to chin to chest, adorned with metal clasps and gems, bones and stones. I waited until I became a boring sight, a regularity, before I begged the question to my royal host, why do your fated braid their hair? Konungr Guthred explained to me that his people, whom he referred to as 'Sauron', teach their history through their braids and tell their stories through their braids. Each twist, each decoration, each knot and how each braid connects to the other represents their life, their experience on the Vehl, a way to show the gods their story without words but through actions. Actions mean so much more to the 'Sauron' as I have seen, instead of songs and stories being told during celebrations, instruments are played wildly and faux battles are enacted around the fire that often devolve into wrestling. I ask my host what would happen if the braids were to change or be removed, and it is revealed to me that the braids in one's hair are an extension of one's story, a history that is theirs to express to the Vehl for the Vehl to judge in return. Does one change their name on a whim, does one hide their truths lightly, does one boast their feats forever, to braid one's history is to make a decision on who they are and who they wish to become. Removing the braids of the 'Sauron' is seen similarly to destroying their soul, or their spirit, at least symbolically and is considered a great taboo in their culture. Even if one were to lose their braids through accident, fire, war, or balding is seen as great shame and tragedy, enough to mourn a life lost in some cases and for those afflicted to go into a self imposed exile until their hair returns. When it does it must be braided again by a priest using sacred oils, commonly devoted to Vykost but other faiths have been used. Although there was passing mention of those who become bald among the 'Sauron' or who refuse to have their braids restored to them are known as 'Engirn' and are often shunned from society. I am fascinated by what I learn from my host.

## TO: SUPERVISOR DOBRECK, FIELD REPORT: DOCUMENTED #A0731

The Silberner Morgen made short work of the island settlement just to the east of Ocean Crest, it took all night but we are sure that if there are any survivors, they will be unlikely to make a difference in the coming conflicts. Our scouts failed to make any effective attacks on the settlements and have yet to report back, we can only assume that the roads were not compromised and the scouts have perished. However the General's attack on Ocean Crest went very well, as I understand they established a small encampment to the north east to launch further attacks from. The General has since returned to Neuprin and has left Captain Myron in charge of the camp for now with hopes to fortify the position in case the Quinellites attack. The resistance we have faced is typical, yet the cost to our operations is high. Ideally there will not be much fight left in them when we attack again, we must prepare to sail again come August. Once we make the next delivery to Prinriek we'll spread word of what has occurred on the Island, that will spark war across the Vehl. Or it will launch us to the forefront of the next expansion of Prinriek. Shuffle the board as they say. We're replenishing our supplies as we speak and bolstering our eastern walls, we'll have the north secure by the summer and once we manage that, we'll start trailblazing to surround whatever force opposes us. The Island is nearly ours, with just a bit more work. Once these skirmishes finish, we'll address the western force amassing. Ideally we'll assimilate a large work force to recoup our losses. I trust everything is running as you had planned.

Eisenstadt Settlement, Cpt. Lovi

# DREAM JOURNAL OF SIR RANDOLPH CARTER PART 1

9/30/1421- I had a peculiar dream today, not something I am familiar with. Normally I do not dream, or simply dream of wisps of smoke and large ponderous snails. Yet today I dreamed of a farm bathed in morning light, a man toiling in his field harvesting his wheat. The sun beats down on him, sweat dripping from his brow. His children bundle the grain, his wife feeds the pigs. There is a sense of pride in this work. Simple. Humble. The shape of the field is a square. It was so vivid, so real, as though I were the man, the wife, the pigs, the sun all at once. I do not find faith in any of the Gods, I have no need for them in my line of expertise. Perhaps I had too much cider.

10/10/1421 - Another peculiar dream, completely different from the last. I dreamed I was in a strange land, one I had no knowledge of yet seemed strangely familiar. The plants were strange, the buildings were strange, it seemed to be an encampment made in ruins of some kind, or some peasant forest dwelling. I sat on a strange banquet table in this derelict hovel and enjoyed tea. Suddenly this Orc comes sauntering up to me, this ridiculous creature covered in bones and vines and torn clothing and a bucket on its head and hands me a letter with a jumble of letters on it. The Orc then waves to me as if to say hello and dances? Wiggles? Pantomimes? I feel lost at this point as the creature I believe is explaining a snake to me before standing still staring agape at me. At least I assume it is, the bucket covers the Orc's entire face and head. It feels like hours that this confused standoff takes place, before the Orc shoots a bolt of green lightning out of its hand and burns a patch of grass to ash and they tussle my hair and prance off. I awoke in a sweat, thirty, aching, confused. I had no cider that night, no strange happenings. Is this the beginning of some unknown malady?

10/20/1421 - Again it happened, except this time there was a common thread! I recognized the vegetation, it was the same as my last dream. I was sneaking around a battlefield of sorts, well in the aftermath of the battle. I did not want to be seen, but I watched as a group of fated gathered the bodies of the dead. They appear to be Quinellites, but I do not recognize their crest. Orange and purple, with a black hourglass. The only dead on the field seem to belong to this group, perhaps they were attacked. I hear them speak in anger, cursing those they deem heretics for stealing their relic, or how this must be a test from Ozymahd himself to destroy the demon worshippers that did this. Some of them sing a sullen song, a prayer for their dead that I cannot hear the entirety of. "When is what then, when then is now, their cycle begins, by the sweat of our brow." Is all I can recall. Then there seems to be an argument between two of them, with one fated claiming if they do not hurry they will fall out of the cycle, with the other taller fated stating they earned their spot on the cycle by surviving the slab, while the shorter fated retorts by reminding the taller fated that only followers have to survive the slab, while the true faithful has to learn the litany of dusk and that Father Salzmund ensures that each of the Order earns their devotion. They begin to haul off their dead on a cart, yet a fear grows in my heart preventing me from following. I wake up feverish, like I have been burnt by fire yet no wounds appear on my flesh. Did I dream of being a demon? They are so vivid, these dreams, I fear I may have to begin taking something to prevent them. Perhaps I shall put some Pyrite under my pillow to bring me peace.

10/30/1421 - Another dream. I am beginning to notice a pattern. This time I am in the same place as I have been, an unfamiliar barbarous land. I have planted Perfumed Garget into a secluded grove. I sit and meditate and enjoy the harmony with nature, I can only imagine that this is how Elves feel in their forest homes of Haywood. This peace continues for some time before I feel as though I am being watched. I open my eyes and see a golden light all over, like the setting of a sun on a perfect day. In this golden haze there is a small creature, no larger than a house cat, yet it appears to be a shrub. A bush that decided to get up on its own and skitter about like a crab. It beckons me to follow, and of course I do, what else would one expect from these dreams? Although even in a state of wakefulness do you deny the walking plant its wishes? I follow with hesitance as the plant leads me up a hillside, once we reach the peak we are given a view of the valley below. This forest was once much larger, but now a sea of stumps lay before me. Trees cut down and uprooted to be harvested for lumber, to be used in building shanty towns and mining cranes, black smog rises from pits in the earth like open wounds upon the Vehl. I look to see my intrepid companion only to see them wither and die before the backdrop of industry. I do not have time to mourn before a steam whistle pierces the air and startles me awake. I live at a bucolic estate for the Capet family, yet I could hear the whistle as clear as I hear the footsteps in the hall. The morning has barely begun to illuminate the rain clouds, I am left exhausted again. I have a nagging feeling that things may get much worse before they get better. I will have to travel to the market to get some Cinnamon.

11/9/1421 - I have tried Pyrite, I have tried Cinnamon, I have tried my magics, yet once again I encounter the dreams. Despite my best efforts I am still at the mercy of fate it seems, like a rat caught in a trap. This dream however, is less odd. I dream I am in a building, a gathering hall of sorts, a simple tavern even. The architecture is old, as though I was visiting an old Hill Dwarf hold. I see the hearth burning brightly, before the flames shift blue. There is a skull atop the wood burning as well, ethereal blue flames dancing all about. There is a Square etched into the skull, but the flames consume the wood rapidly, faster than any log should burn. Like dry leaves they crumble against the blue heat. Even the skull seems to falter, as it turns to ash another symbol can be seen, a flower. A Lotus. I woke up to specks of blue ash on my sheets. I am beginning to fear that these are no mere dreams, but that something is attempting to tell me something, or warn me perhaps. Or cause me to suffer.

## PRIVATE LETTER

*I do not care what they call this magic, they are mutants, degenerates! They are no true arcanists and they will never have a place within my towers Ethandrel. They cast no true magic. I have studied the winds for a millennia and what these sick and distorted creatures call their 'School' is a mockery of our art. These misbegotten unfated beings warp their own body at a whim, they change their shape and their bodies, even their minds! Or worse, take it from the fated to feed themselves like leeches. These half formed abominations must be hunted down and exterminated. Ethandrel, place a bounty to every inn and tavern upon the King's Road, an alabaster mark for every chaos mutant brought to the Weldrointi Estate. If Haywood will not outlaw this pestilence we shall crush it ourselves. If we are to keep the arcane pure from this wretched development then we must act hastily, I loath to think what will happen if we neglect our duty as guardians of Vehldathin. It will keep getting worse. You are too young to remember the Blight Wars, but I recall what monsters lurk underneath the visage of the fated. Even hundreds of years after the threat was defeated, the remnants bleed onto the grounds of Vehldathin, and we must follow the duty bestowed upon us by Ozymahd. Ethandrel, I trust you with this task wholly, a prouder father I could not be. I await your word that my will, and God's will has been enacted.*

## NOTE FOUND NEAR A CRATER

This is not the future we have sought after, I know a war is looming on the horizon. I had my manor for nearly eighty years uncovering the secrets of the Wehl's chaos. We dug deep into the flesh of our host to find the answers to apotheosis, we reached down into her bosom and found a truth we were never meant to find. The fated will always fear what they do not understand, and as the world crumbled around us we felt no fear, we could barely believe it. What fools we were to ignore the warnings, the creeping nightmares, the eyes in the peripheries of sight. Can you blame us? Surrounded with knowledge, at the peak of magical research. You don't believe the sky is falling until a piece of it hits you. And hit us it did like the whole of the moon rushing to meet its reflection with cataclysmic results. Barely a lifetime it took before the fathomless abyss we sought to illuminate brought us all home. Almost all of us. All truths exist as versions of themselves in our minds, our perceptions that warp them from objective truth to subjective truth. I alone remained objective in my perceptions, or perhaps I am gifted with the ability by what I have seen. War is coming, it will not be the last, but it will be the greatest of the era. It will assuredly reset whatever progress we had thought to make, the fated will return to fear the darkness.

## DIARY OF DAHLIA FERAL

Dear Diary,

Today we celebrated my birthday. Mama and papa were there and uncle Ruskaa. Even Harry stopped by before going on their adventure! I hope nothing bad happens to them.

Papa let me take the day away from chores to play with Hargin, Flori, and Jesper.

We ran all day looking for Snails to catch, Jesper found one as big as my thumb!

Mama made a sweet bread with blue cream because it's my favorite. At night we sat by the fire as uncle Ruskaa told us stories from the forests outside of the city, battling Savage Orcs, stopping Bandits, even fighting off bears!

Uncle Ruskaa even brought me a wooden doll of a goat. Goats are my favorite because they have horns like Flori, she's so pretty.

Tomorrow I'm going to the market with papa to see if we can get some grain for the week. Goodnight!

Dear Diary,

Today me and papa woke up early to go to the market, it was very busy and many people were running around yelling and shouting. Papa seemed grumpy the whole time, and told me not to look at strangers in the eye. Papa got into an argument with the grain seller because it cost three coins this week instead of two over a fur tax.

What a silly thing to tax, I grow all my fur myself. Papa told me not to worry about it, and that we would leave the city soon to grow our own grain, once uncle Ruskaa had found us a good spot. I can't wait to be a farmer. I hope my friends can come visit and I'll show Flori all my pretty flowers and we'll have a pony named Albert.

I did my chores and someone came to visit at night, mama told me to go wait in my room, but I peeked out. It was Ms. Nevedere, Jesper's mama. She seemed real sad. She talked to papa about something and it must have been real bad because papa argued with mama after.

I hope Jesper is okay, he always said he would be because fox's are the cleverest critters around. I'll see him tomorrow.

Goodnight!

## DREAM JOURNAL OF SIR RANDOLPH CARTER PART 2

11/19/1421 - I have debated telling my benefactors of this recent malady. Perhaps I could use it to proclaim I am a seer, and procure further resources for my work. No, they would surely see through that. I am no mere charlatan, I am an Archarcantist. I have a duty to uphold my reputation and the work of my peers. Perhaps that would be the next best step, to inform Lord Hugh Capet that I must seek out components for my next ritual and visit some colleagues at the Holy Oak Academy. This past dream became more sinister than the previous ones. It was the first time that I felt like I was in danger after waking from a dream, like something noticed me that should not have. I dreamt that I was a hunter, going out in a foreign land that was not my own to discover the location of my enemy. The vegetation was similar to my previous dreams, I will refer to it as 'The Wilderness' from now on. I travel the wilderness and discover a battlefield in a clearing, there are several craters here blasted away with magical energy, the dead lay frozen in the winter air. They seem to be Unformed of some kind, goats and sheep of the blackest wool. Smoke still rises from the blasts, it is a chaotic mess to make sense of, but I manage to track down a fresh set of hoof prints, onto winding forest trails until eventually I arrive at a beach, a smoking ruin sits in the bay. Someone burned a ship down. The mask juts out from the water like a gravestone, for some reason this angers me. Perhaps it was my boat. I travel on and on deeper into The Wilderness until I find myself at a campsite long since abandoned. The stones of the fire pit are covered in a bizarre moisture, almost like a slime that pulses ever so faintly and bears a reflective and black color. I can almost see myself in the reflection, and I almost saw something else. With skill certainly not my own in the waking world, I turn dagger drawn to the forest behind me to defend myself from the intruder, only to find myself alone. I decide that I am tired, and must rest, must find a suitable place to rest. Sleeping in a dream, I always found the happenstance comical, yet sleep I did until I awoke to strange noises and a dreadful anxiety in my chest. I skulk through the shadows of the forest crawling through the underbrush to investigate the disturbance. I find myself looking out at ruins again, a temple long abandoned and left for nature to overtake, swarming with the same kind of Unformed from the battlefield. They bleat and bray as though talking, a thick fog rolls through the ruin, a large muscular goat leads some of the sheep in martial training, another goat in white seems to be channeling power from some unseen artifact. They are clearly preparing for something, training, practicing. A chanting begins, they shout the same word repeatedly in crude unison. "Shepard". The dream becomes erratic from there, my vision warps and the scene seems to jump for a moment. The next thing I remember is looking directly at a slender goat Unformed, a quiet moment of stand still between us in the dark forest of The Wilderness. It lunges at me with vicious intent, like a predator yet silent in its movements. I run through the forest, I crash through branch and vine and thorn with my lungs heaving in protest. I cannot afford to look behind me, but my assailant's presence is felt against me like a knife to my neck. Eventually I see the light of a town, a village of some kind, the noise of fated. I stop to catch my breath just as the forest begins to clear and turn to see if I am pursued still. The goat stares at me from the shadow of the tree line, motionless and silent, before fading back into the dark. Did it let me escape? Was it afraid of the light? Perhaps it was afraid of the fated? I do not know. I did not realize it at the time, or in the dream, but upon writing it all, the battlefield I visited must have been a ritual site, a similar one to what the Unformed were doing at the ruins. Are these dreams connected? Is this the future or the past or something else?

11/29/1421 - The year is almost over, I make preparations to travel to Holy Oak. Lord Hugh Capet has been gracious enough to grant me passage with his endorsement. He has been my benefactor for many years, we have been friends for most of that time I like to believe. I suspect he knows something is wrong with me, or at least upsetting me. Perhaps I seem more motivated now, a funny thought. I have spent most of my days researching these dreams, and preparing for my journey west. A change in scenery may do me good, although it may reveal to me that the Capet estate has greater problems, I dread to think of what will happen if whatever malady afflicts me moves onto another, especially poor Rikard. The boy is too young for such troubles. Dear Maria would handle this so much better, she is a strong girl, she will be a Duchess to change the Vehl I am certain of it. I have already written to Master Laurence to have him expect my arrival. I am sure he will have plenty of enlightenment for me. Strangely enough, with all of my focus on a solution, I have had no dream this night. The pattern is broken. Praise be to whoever would like to take credit for that.

1/8/1422 - It has been some time since I have put an entry in this journal. Of course I had another dream of The Wilderness. This time I sought to find a suitable mining area, a place rich in gems and minerals. I hired scouts to find this for me, four in total. One scout returns to me within a days time informing me they have found nothing, but a hole in the ground in the town. A week passes and two more scouts return to me, informing me of a massive organization digging up the best leads they found already. One remarked that it seemed like a bunch of Prinlanders. Two months pass until the fourth scout is discovered. A body on the beach, barely bloated yet covered in soot and grime, the poor fellow has his belly torn open by something. There was a note clutched in his hand, scrawled across was "Below the earth, pale moon, gems galore". I organize a funeral for this man. Did I dream of getting someone killed for trying to help me? Is this a warning of greed? Am I cursed to dream of Prinlanders after all this time of being free from these vivid sights? I thought I was free of this, a relapse has sent my mood spiraling. Master Laurence was convinced I just needed to stretch my legs, but now I think something worse is occurring. I must speak with him at once, before the next dream comes. There is a hole at the center of this story I am sure of it.

## JOURNAL OF MASK HUNTER COLIN

At the peak of dawn we set out to pursue the followers of the Many Faced God. We had been trailing them for several days just north of the ruins of Strathadan. The group had been scheming in the slums of Reme, the diseased heart of Epplessa. We discovered a plot to assassinate Count Zeno to fuel a war between Haywood and Epplessa, framing the Sun Elves of the Helias in the city of Rodos for the crime, thanks to some of the weaker willed members of the plot. The Black Tongue God revels in war, ever bitter of the failing of the Great War, tempts their followers and blinds them with delusion that they will be the next warlords of the Vehl. These servants always posture and pretend in some form of grandeur, glorious purpose, greater good. In the end fated have a way of revealing themselves. No mask can be worn forever. When we discovered their headquarters at the outskirts of the city, hidden away at a trade outpost within a textile warehouse, they fled south through the eastern foothills of the Draknil Mountains. Of course they left all manner of traps and diversions for us, using locals to deceive us. Yet a Mask Hunter always has a way to discover the truth of the matter, no matter how grim. Neophyte Luthe has taken excellent measures to discern information while Neophyte Ithcyn has tracked the group without falling prey to their traps. Troll nests, glass wire, even bladed snares pestered us on our advance, it was a mercy that we left Reme's militia behind. More blood on this trail would avail no benefit. We found the servants of the Cruel God trapped in the ruins of an ancient cistern, sprawling barbed Voxberry vines littered what open space that stood after so many centuries of isolation. A dozen of them surrounded their leader, not a one wore dark clothing, no grisly facade of bones and blood. They were dressed almost garishly, like young princes who knew not the consequences of their actions. Fear began to soak into their hearts as they held their rapiers and their magics in futile defiance of our approach. Their leader however, was obscured in dirty black robes, the harsh summer sun barley shining through the black hood covering their face. Neophyte Luthe exclaimed that it was time to surrender, that their leader was afraid and survival was folly. Hubristic young lad, they had never cut their teeth on true followers of the Many Faced God. Evil like that never dies, it simply reinvents itself. The cults grow and burst like cysts, but their leaders all have the same eyes. The stories change, they serve for power, for glory, for family. The evil in their hearts is all the same. So many faces, so many names, yet they are all the same. While Neophytes Ithcyn and Luthe worked to dispatch the subordinates, I moved to the flank. Their leader was the only one who managed to keep sight of me, almost welcoming my approach. I dropped from the wall and with one strike revealed the priest's face to the sun. Scaled skin glistened as they were revealed, and those same eyes that I've seen so many times in so many sinners looked back at me as if they knew, as if they had seen what was to come to pass. Nightcrawlers, vile and misbegotten creatures not fit to be claimed as fated. It was over quickly, far quicker than they deserved but I cannot relish in the act. Killing in the righteous name of Hastur is but a chore, like any other. The subordinates surrendered rapidly once they saw their leader crumble into the sand yet as we know there is only one reward for service to the Back Biting God. We strung them up high, let the buzzards take them to the black beyond. Perhaps they will be returned to Vehldathin as a more worthy creature in the next life. Their leader we took back to the crown as proof. My order does not accept anything less.

## DISCREET LETTER

It happened today. Despite all of the preparations we made, how careful we've been, guards paid off. Molly was arrested today, dozens of others in the family were as well. Taken by a group we had never seen before, black and gold cloaks, well armed, organized, their symbol was a sun of some kind. Only a few servants survived the raid on the estate hiding out in some smuggler's passages. They were the first word of this, even before the local council made us aware. Our reputation as a security force is going to be forever tarnished if we do not find a way to rectify this situation. No jailors in the area have reported new residents, no toll houses have record of a group matching the description, or of that size, leaving the villa. This would have never have occurred if Thendrec was still here. Perhaps that is our saving grace however? He left to travel abroad, perhaps Molly did as well, perhaps no one was arrested today and it was just a meeting. Molly's brother Myron works for the Mar Nemolin Trade Company, it'll be the perfect cover. Yes, that would work for us very well. Wyatt, keep things running as normal, like nothing changed. Everything will be ok. I'll begin to arrange things to make it seem like there's been a longing, a desire to journey forth and see the Vehl with her family. That will buy us time to figure out the next steps, or even find out the truth to this charade. Better to lie than to starve in the gutter because we can't find work. Expect another letter soon, we'll get through this. Oh, and make sure no one sees this letter once you're done with it. No point in trying to keep a secret if anyone can read it.

-Tiffania

## LETTER TO SEER DEV'LOTHA

Greetings my dear friend Dev'Lotha,  
It has been too long since I have written, my deepest apologies friend. I trust you have been well, your children thriving and your wife still unaware of your mistresses. I jest of course, a more loyal partner Alara could not imagine. I have been thinking of my last visit to your home, the view of the mountains, the beauty of Lake Cobblecrack, our viewings of the spindled web of Alara's sky. Do you recall the inn we visited while traveling the mountainside, the one run by that Hill Dwarf Gertrude? They sold these cakes shaped like mushrooms and were soaked in honey. I found another inn on my side of Canatha that sells the exact same cake! I'm sure in time I can convince your family to make the trip out and visit, just don't mind the smell when traveling through Prinriek. Humans, I will never understand them!  
The seers at my temple have been making an effort to transcribe the stars laid out above us, their movements, their meanings, their groupings. There is Aquarius, the Mother of Rivers, that feeds Piscis, the Mother of Fish. Piscis gave birth to Pisces which is depicted as a pair of fish and is a primary constellation that lead Vehldathin around the sun, Alara and Ozymahd working in tandem. There are so many, it can be hard to keep track but the temple is working diligently to transcribe them to tapestry to aid those who seek to learn. I try to train myself to always look for Vega, the brightest star of Lyra and favored star of Alara. It reminds me that life is always good, that there is always a plan. The darker the night, the brighter the stars. It's important to always remember that these days, it feels like tragedy never stops forcing itself into the narrative of the Vehl. Plague, Famine, and now War? Death is the only outcome. Perhaps Haywood will be able to mitigate a peace, but I dread to think of a world where those I care for the most are on the other side of a battlefield. I know you never like to discuss politics or concern yourself with matters outside of Elves and Gods. I just get thrown off by these tangents as you know, my mind always wandering from where it was to where it fancies next.  
Speaking of wandering, have you heard from your cousin lately? Alishona? I heard she's been traveling about the Vehl, I hope she visits you on her travels. I recall a time when our families would gather in Haywood every year with so many others to pray together, mourn together, celebrate life together. I look forward to the days where we can give those traditions life again. The future must know where we've been, the past surely predicts the state we're in, and the present didn't, wouldn't, couldn't last. Is, was, hasn't, isn't, has, have.  
I sent some gifts alongside the letter, just some things I hope the children enjoy. I cannot wait to hear from you soon.  
Sincerely, your friend,  
Heath'Rama

## CAVALIERI BAGNATI ORIGO'S LETTER

*Cavaliere di scudo Battiste,*

*It has been many months since the silence has taken over Floren, whatever sickness had taken hold over the unfortunate fated of Floren has been purged. I can still smell the smoke from the burning piles of the dead, but such measures must be taken to preserve life. In our investigations it seems that the sickness had spawned in the bowels of the Centro Medico per L'avanzamento delle Conoscenze nella Guarigione e nel Recupero and spread from there. During King Alboin's decree of quarantine several of my cavalieri bore witness to hundreds of the afflicted circling the monastery endlessly, like moths around candlelight. This continued day in and day out until one day the afflicted simply fell over dead, truly dead. Strange to think how much occurred in those eight months. We searched the monastery grounds for survivors, and room by room we searched each building. It was not until we searched the catacombs of the monastery that we discovered a room designed for malign research. Strange devices and instruments sparking with arcane power, bodies flayed and butchered like swine, skin racked like leather. If this was not the work of evil fated, then I do not understand what evil could be. There were several dead bodies that stood out in this room. They seemed to have been killed by battle, not by the affliction. They bore no sign of decay beyond several days worth, and did not dress as those within the monastery, visitor or practitioner. These bodies were burned as well, along with the profane tools and equipment found in the catacombs. Whatever work was being done beneath the feet of healers was not meant to be known by the Vehl. We have found few surviving monks, largely those who were out in Floren on errands that managed to avoid the afflicted. We have not found the Centro's Abbot Aldo Romanus, or the Priors, Richard Powell and Halpert Kasalz. We assume they are among the fallen afflicted, perhaps disfigured beyond recognition by the disease. In the quiet of the aftermath our focus has been to maintain order in the wake of the tragedy, as King Alboin commanded, now that the quarantine is lifting. The only abnormality we face now are rumors of Mask Hunters approaching the city on suspicion of demonic activity. To see them so far from the gleaming borders of Quinelle is certainly strange, I will not let them run rampant and trod over the fine fated of Epplessa as they do their own mud farmers. May Qiron bless you with fine health Sir Battiste. I eagerly await your arrival to Floren.*

*Cavaliere Bagnati, Origo.*

## LEGEND OF GRUFFUDD THE HOUND

A tale is told by master hunters passed down to eager students, a lesson to remember patience and temperance. They tell of a decorated hunter Sion, and his son Rhodri. On a cool morning Sion would bundle in furs and leathers, taking with them their bow and their spear and their horn. As the sun barely crept over the horizon Sion blew his horn to call his beloved hound who was named Gruffudd to his side, yet the hound was absent. Paying no mind Sion left for the morning embarking on his hunt. It had been a lean year for Sion, for Rhodri, for Gruffudd, this hunt must be successful if they were hoping to eat this week. As the sun begins its descent Sion returns home from the hunt heavy with the weight of the hares and he is met with Gruffudd gleefully greeting him, excitedly sniffing and licking at his master. It only took a few scratches of Gruffudd's face before Sion noticed the blood covering the fur around Gruffudd's jaws.

Sion stood aghast as fear gripped his heart and terrible thoughts entered his mind. What crime had been committed here. As Sion entered his home to see the dying fire and the crumbled nursery his worst fears were confirmed. Blood splatter decorated his walls and his young son, barely a year old Rhodri, was nowhere to be found. Sion could hardly believe that his beloved hound Gruffudd would betray his family such as this, and rage bloomed in his chest watered by the grief of losing Rhodri. Sion plunged his spear into Gruffudd again and again, blinded by the red rage.

Gruffudd wailed with piercing painful howls that echoed through the house's walls, and with it a reply came from the ruined cradle. A child's wail, frightened and alarmed and yearning for his father, Sion threw off the blanket of the nursery to reveal Rhodri unharmed if not a bit cold. Beside the babe lay a large gray wolf cold and dead, defeated by his beloved hound Gruffudd. Sion wrapped little Rhodri and swaddled the babe in his bed before carrying Gruffudd to the edge of his property upon a hill. The weight of grief and regret nearly buckled Sion's knees, fat tears rained down on Gruffudd's brown fur as Sion crested the top of the hill to bury his beloved hound.

The grave marker told the tale of Gruffudd, the beloved hound that was loyal and brave and strong enough to take down the wolf that would end Rhodri.

And though Rhodri was just a baby, not once more did he smile since losing his beloved guardian, not once did Rhodri laugh again.



## THE VERDANT MELODY OF WISDOM AND TRANQUILITY: A TRIBUTE TO MYAR

My devotion to the God of Peace began in my youth, in my beloved home of Epplesa. The city was alive with greenery, beauty, music, and poetry, each flowing through its veins like lifeblood. From an early age, I knew that when I came of age, I would dedicate my life to the convent within the city, honoring the gentle presence of Myar. I remember approaching the steps of the temple and above the archway was Myars exalted epithet, *They Who Sang Into Creation Wisdom and Tranquility*.

I inscribe these words as a love letter to myself, a keepsake to look back upon and reflect on all the connections to this world that are intertwined with Myar.

The halls of my congregation are adorned in the lush hues of verdant green, a color that guides our hearts and minds with a calm and loving hand. Myar's presence is a gentle reminder of the beauty found in both the seen and unseen, whether it be the rustling leaves of an apple tree or the delicate notes of a well-composed song. verdant green, symbolizes the vitality of life and the peace that flows through the natural world, ever in harmony with his divine essence.

Our sacred altars are decorated with symbols of their divine presence — sheets of music that capture the divine melodies of peace, instruments that echo their harmonious tunes, poetry that speaks of their boundless wisdom, and plants that remind us of nature's nurturing spirit. Each item on the altar reflects a fragment of their divine nature, an invitation for us to immerse ourselves in their teachings.

The number six, sacred to Myar, signifies balance and harmony, principles we witness in honeycombs constructed by bees, where the six-sided structure provides strength and maximizes space with blessed efficiency.

As we look to the night sky where we fated reside under our God's watchful eyes, Myar's planetary association with Venus, the epitome of love and passion, further emphasizes their connection to social skills and the profound ways we express our affection towards one another. Through Venus, Myar imparts lessons on how to cultivate meaningful relationships and foster a compassionate society. The twin stars Castor and Pollux, in their celestial dance, mirror the dual aspects of Myar's nature, passion and peace. These stars illuminate the path for those who seek to understand that the lives of the fated are balanced between the mind and the heart.

In our sacred groves, the apple tree stands as a testament to Myar's blessings. This tree, a symbol of love, trust, and health, thrives under his watchful gaze. It is within the shelter of these trees that we find a reflection of their nurturing spirit and the resonance of their holy presence.

The stag, a creature revered in their honor, represents grace and wisdom, embodying the qualities that Myar bestows upon their followers. With its majestic presence, the stag reminds us to approach life with humility and reverence, reflecting the divine guidance of beloved Myar.

The staff, Myar's favored weapon, is often carved from the sacred wood of the apple tree, symbolizing a deep connection to the natural world. With each tap upon the earth, the staff resonates with the rhythmic melodies of life and poetry, sending gentle vibrations through your palm, embodying the harmony of nature and the divine. The staff is as much a tool of guidance as it is a weapon of defense.

As Ascendants of the Church of Myar, we dedicate ourselves to spreading their teachings and embodying their virtues. May we continue to honor him, guiding our lives with the wisdom they impart and the peace they bless us with.

**Corvatrixthuantaka**

**Lord over ravens and shadows**

**Whose tribute demands the blood of servants and ore of metals**

**Whose servants shroud themselves in shadows and wear the**

**bones that fly**

**Praise be unto The Raven Queen**

**In the darkest of depths beneath the fall of water and the light**

**of the moon, build an altar to The Raven Queen**

**Three minutes after the darkest hour of night make your prayer**

**to The Raven Queen**

**"Queen who flies silent in unseen shadow**

**Queen who watches the unkindness from afar**

**Queen who bathes in the river of life**

**Accept my sacrifice and hear my prayer."**

## THE ARGENT POTUS

The Vehl is a verdant land of resplendent glory, the mother upon which all life is birthed in her purity. From the rains falling from the heavens to the fuming crags of the Mouth of the Earth, she encompasses all upon which we perceive. That which defies her grace shall be deemed impure. That which walks upon her face in aberration must be cleansed away to restore the natural order of Vehlathin. To allow ink into water is to taint the cast. Years of sacrifice and study by the realm's Alchemists have provided a way to restore the balance of nature. Through skilled practice of physick one can find themselves in the craft of pharmakon to distill tears of moonlight into draughts of immense restorative power. Blending the natural urges to both create and destroy to an amalgamation of power, to destroy an aberration, to create the natural order. This led to many esteemed orders dedicated to the hunting of demons to seek out Alchemists and procure their loyalty. For those who live by the blasphemous phylacteries are the most profound of perversions to Vehlathin's will. A true Alchemist understands that the elements of the Winds of Magic are not what the fated mind understands in the common tongue. Not their corporeal substance but the higher aspects of an element's being despite how amorphous it may be. This allows them to be keenly aware of the power of moonlight deposited upon the Vehl. These deposits are often found in Silver Leaf, Ragrash, Salt Water, Selfie Fur, and of course Silver. Skilled Alchemists are able to extract the natural deposits of moonlight to be imbibed through the power of physick. Vehlathin creates all we need to survive and protect her, there must simply be eyes to see it. Despite claims that Vehlathin enters the Age of Blindness, Alchemists strive for the Magnum Opus with their eyes primed and open. The saddest thing about any fated is that they be ignorant, and the most exciting thing is that they know. Through the power of the argent potus shall the red sun rise and bring about enlightenment.

## ON MOON ELVES

*Moon Elves have lived in the furthest reaches of the Deeps for as long as any living fated can remember. They are reclusive and xenophobic, rarely traveling up to the surface for any reason. Mountain Dwarves and Kobolds treat them as a myth sometimes, malevolent specters of the ever shifting underground. The Deeps are known to warp and shift, tunnels collapsing and opening to reveal entirely new caverns, some large enough to forget you were ever underground. Cavernous ceilings covered in strange bioluminescence can fool inexperienced travelers into thinking they have escaped the cave networks only to find themselves victim to a deceptive sky.*

*Moon Elves are led by familial matriarchs, often priests of Ozymahd. Their worship of Ozymahd is in stark contrast to their surface dwelling cousins who view their God as a benevolent father. Moon Elves venerate Ozymahd as a righteous overlord, a commander whose will must be unquestioned at all times. They do not seek mercy or forgiveness from Ozymahd, instead seeking to earn their favor through acts of service. The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must. This is the bedrock of all Moon Elf society, nothing is granted and everything must be earned by serving those above them, ultimately serving the will of Ozymahd.*

*With Moon Elf society being matriarchal, men are treated as lesser at times and are trusted with more dangerous and menial tasks like manual labor or military service. Women are often found in leadership positions in their faith and in their society, with the Matriarchs being viewed as mistresses to Ozymahd. Survival in the Deeps is never guaranteed and is filled with strife and suffering, great magics are employed to simply stop the Deeps from shifting around Moon Elf cities. Moon Elves are known to sacrifice the weakest of their society, or the slaves they have captured from raids on the surface or other subterranean races.*

*Slavery in Moon Elf culture is a harsh and brutal truth, while mostly absent from all cultures on the surface of Vehldathin, it thrives in the Deeps. With all manner of monsters lurking in the Deeps, poisonous fungal and plant life, an ever shifting landscape, Moon Elves use every advantage they can get to dominate the caverns. While the various artisans of their society focus on perfection of their craft, the overlords drive their slaves to the brink of exhaustion to gather supplies as quickly as possible. Some families focus on training the various monsters of the Deeps, horrid creatures such as giant spiders only found in the most secluded of caverns, massive mole-like creatures called Zhunei, and even the hulking reptilian beasts known as the Karagh.*

*Moon Elves are naturally distrusting of all other races, viewing them as ineffective to Vehldathin and to the will of the Gods. Their cruelty leaks into every interaction of their lives, even looking down on the worship of other Gods. This lifestyle has led some Moon Elf families to turn away from Ozymahd and into the embrace of the Many Faced God, turning those families into pariahs. An equally shunned lifestyle choice is that of a Moon Elf departing the Deeps to live on the surface. A Moon Elf living on the surface can be treated as the only fated worth negotiating with, or a target of an assassination depending on the family's motives.*

*The few Moon Elves that have chosen to leave behind their society often live as explorers or mercenaries, expressing that the struggles on the surface of Vehldathin pale in comparison to those in the Deeps where even the air you breathe can send you to an early grave. There are tales from these exiles of the great towers and spiked gates of their underground homelands, how widespread the Deeps truly is giving credence to the idea that Vehldathin is honeycombed beneath its surface, and that of the 'True Moon'.*

*Tales of the 'True Moon' have almost exclusively come from Moon Elves but no two stories have matched. In many cases it is treated as something of a myth, or a legend meant to spark fear. The stories describe a light that pierces stone, armor, and fated flesh, that illuminates what was once hidden. Other stories describe a great sphere of some unknown mineral casting off a ghastly glow hovering through the caverns, larger than any building. The 'True Moon' is often attributed with causing the shifting of the caverns, enlightenment, or lunacy depending on the story. Moon Elves describe the light as being ethereal and purple in color. "The Light of the True Moon" is often used as an exclamation, as in "By the Light of the True Moon!" to express shock or disbelief.*

*While a Sun Elf may worship the solstices and equinoxes of the seasons, Moon Elves seem to revere similar changes in relation to the 'True Moon' but accounts of when a veneration like this would occur change drastically from Moon Elf to Moon Elf. This inconsistency has led most other cultures to view the 'True Moon' as a myth of the Moon Elves, a tongue in cheek cruelty inflicted upon Vehldathin. While the Moon Elves keep many secrets, those that come to the surface offer a glimpse into the harsh reality below the Vehl we walk upon.*

## DREAM JOURNAL OF SIR RANDOLPH CARTER PART 3

3/24/1422 - Dreadful. Every time I think I am free of these maladies they return to me. I have spent months here at Holy Oak with Master Laurence training and calming my mind. I have cut my hair for the first time in years, I have shaved my beard, I dress in simple robes to grow closer with the Gods. I have done all I have been instructed to do, and the dreams of *The Wilderness* return. This time I was determined to reach out to the unseen spirits of Veldathin. I sat out there in the overwhelming verdant growth that relents to neither game trail or footpath. I seem to be pushing myself, as much as one can when it comes to the mystic arts, to see not just the unseen but what has gone by. To see the threads of fate lie before me, stretching out from my current to the endless past and the infinite futures. I attempt to call out for someone who knows more than I do. A tutor. When suddenly I can see it, a dull glow in my mind like a manifestation of an image. I see a symbol crudely drawn hovering above my sight, the hangman, although it is inverted. As I stare at this image I feel a sickness creep through my veins as though it grew into me from the forest floor, a blight eating away at my body, a darkness masking out the sun. I writhed in agony trying to overcome this feeling before crawling feebly through the ferns. I looked up to the hillside that loomed over me struggling to make sense of what I saw through the pain. An old stump, long since rotted and claimed by mushrooms and weevils yet a sprouting leaf emerges from its center. The leaf itself is surrounded by a glow as though it were deified, regal in its rebirth. It would seem to be my salvation if it were not for the sea of brambled vines covering the hillside. I woke to feel the pain of the dream in my stomach. These dreams seem more and more real but I cannot explain how, like I'm being called to something I don't understand. I am beginning to think Master Laurence cannot help me.

4/3/1422 - Again.

4/5/1422 - It has taken me some time to write this dream. I have been disturbed greatly by what I saw, haunted. A dream that has brought me no further clarity except I am beginning to think I have upset the Gods and have been cursed. I hesitate to recall what I saw but I force myself to do so to hopefully bring some clarity to these nightmares. I walk through *The Wilderness*, climbing upward away from the shore. I look down and chew upon the flesh of the fated. Cannibalism. I seem to be trying to flee something, trying to find something. I do not know if *The Wilderness* is connected, or if it is simply the stage for my dreams. I walk to the highest hilltop I can find until I collapse from exhaustion, and there I make my camp. I feel anxious as I set the stones in their circle and start my fire, like I am on the precipice of something awesome and dreadful. The fire burns brightly as I place my reagents within, the smoke rises into my eyes as I feel the sting of a blade against my arm and hear the sizzle of my blood meet the embers below. I speak a prayer to Roya, begging for powers profane and unspeakable. Yet there is a sense of a greater enemy that would warrant such power. I dread to think of what could cause a fated to use the power of death. My prayer ends and I wait to see what words Roya has in reply. The sun seems to shrink away from my prayer, the breeze flees in every direction howling their disapproval, darkness creeps over the hill until only I remain, bloodied with my small fire. I do not have the strength to keep myself upright, and I roll to my back to gaze at the cloudy night sky as thunder rolls in the distance. This moment, so serene, peaceful and quiet as the rain begins to fall upon my face, is filled with a stillness like all time had stopped. From there everything happened so quickly, nearly faster than I could comprehend. The rotting hands of the long dead burst through the wet earth thrusting themselves upwards towards the storm clouds above, grasping and reaching for anything to give them leverage to rise. It does not take long before I am nearly surrounded by the worm and mud infested bodies of the dead shambling around me. Their rotten faces turn to me with malicious longing, like I have stolen something precious to them and they seek to claw it out of my bosom. I race to my feet and flee, my body aches, my joints creak, but still I fly down the hillside to the obscurity of the forest. Dead hands reach from the ground all around my steps, reach from the shadows of the forest to grab my clothing, I dodge and pull myself free however I can until I find myself at the steps of a small temple. The door is lit by two braziers burning with blue flames that cast strange shadows on all that blocks their light. Strange that *The Wilderness* would have such a temple but I enter regardless of my own fears, I discover that it is not simply a temple of worship but a tomb that stores the dead. Before I can determine if these wrapped corpses lay still a priest marches to me with bold purpose, the staff they wield is alight with a blue flame at its head. They grasp my hair and drag me to the temple's altar like I am a child being scolded and in my struggle I steal a glimpse of their face. Scales, horns, a symbol of Roya dangling from their neck. They thrust me towards the altar, I regained my bearings only to see the horde of dead corpses racing towards us, the stone of the temple doorway barely containing them. The priest speaks, chanting strange words over and over and over. I can hardly recall the exact words. I recall Almwata and Yanfi. A language I do not know. The priest slams their staff into the stone floor with a crash, sending blue embers and smoke flying from the head of their staff. All in my vision turns to dust that is blown away by storm wind until I am left only in darkness. A whisper on the wind lingers in my ears telling me 'what is dead should eternal lie'. A warning from Roya it seems, perhaps a premonition of what would occur if someone were to get these profane powers. As my vision returns I find myself collapsed by a stream in *The Wilderness*, my camp is gone, the temple is gone. I seem to be in a new location entirely. The dream shifts to me wandering *The Wilderness* for days, lost and hungry, sore and delirious. The last thing I recall from the dream is a scrap of paper stuck under a rock on one of the roads in *The Wilderness*. I unraveled it to read a name, Richard Powell. A name I am unfamiliar with. I woke from the dream after this. What curse have I befallen to suffer such vivid realities in my slumber. It doesn't make sense, I am not an Ascendant, nor am I particularly faithful. The blue flames, what could they mean? A sign of Roya? Roya is the God of dreams, perhaps they are directing me, choosing me as a servant of their will however reluctant I may be. Why would Roya include a Dragonborn in their dreams though? That race has been denigrated by all of the Gods, along with Kobolds. What did those strange words mean? What was lost to my failed memory? There are holes in this story that I cannot fill in with my knowledge. I dread that I may have to leave Holy Oak if I seek to rid myself of this curse.

4/12/1422 - Sneaking. Satiara. Flock.



4/13/1422 - I have not had time to write since my last dream, I have been speaking to Master Laurence about what has been happening to me. I believe I must travel to find the truth, and only that truth will allow the Gods to set me free. Laurence has begged me to stay in their care, that through prayer the Gods will grant me peace, that my eyes have yet to open to the love of the Gods. I thanked them for all they have done, but that I must take the next step of this journey. I do not know what Lord Hugh Capet will say or do when he receives word that I have left. I am sorry my friend, I wish I could explain what was happening but it may be best for me to handle this on my own. I will travel south to Mejikhan, a favored place to Roya, to see if I can earn some enlightenment there. Perhaps my own skill with the arcane can make my stay there easier. My dream the other night, it is harder to remember now but I must make an effort to record it. Unsurprisingly I am within the Wilderness again, a ramshackle hamlet within the forest filled with tents and shacks in clusters. The vegetation is strange in all of my dreams, as though several plants were melding together in some way. I quietly ask around to several fated that wander through the town, clearly trying not to draw too much attention to myself. Many that I speak with seem to be sailors of some sort, sailors in a uniform. I ask about the source of the Winds of Magic and hear many of the classic myths told to me when I was younger. That they stem from the living breath of all life on Vehldathin, that they fall from the Moon like rain and spread, that the Gods gift them to us, that they blow from some blizzard behind Callen's Fence, or that a giant monster lurks at the bottom of the ocean and bubbles the Winds back up to us to use. Delightful tales. I eventually speak with a graduate of the Golden Towers of Satiara, they always wear those pompous gowns to show off their prestige. Prestige is no replacement for skill or knowledge. Yet the graduate speaks the truth and tells me that many academies teach how the Winds of Magic flow, but that there have been no definitive answers on where they begin. The graduate tells me that the arcane and the divine, the different schools of magic, the different colors and powers of the various magics, they all come from the Winds of Magic in some form, but are just manipulated in their own unique ways through our intent. They speak to me of miasmas and storms and mention the phenomenon of elementals, and say "Much like what's been happening on the island lately". The graduate continues to ramble on arcane studies before returning to their work. As night falls a Nomad visits me in my tent. After some brief conversation they answer the same question that I've been asking all the others. They tell me I must be dwelling on a meeting I had last gathering. The man I met with spent his life looking for it, studying it, and still couldn't find it, but the best place to look for answers is in the manor. The Nomad tells me that the key won't appear until the book is gone, and that the flock are drawn to it like a moth to flame. The Nomad tells me they can guide me but not while that thing is corrupting the town, and that soon fated are going to start losing their grip on things. They leave the tent and my dream ends. This dream is what ultimately decided my fate. Too much coincidence has occurred for me to be comfortable with, the truth dangles just out of reach to me, and in Mejikhan I will find my answers.

## KIED HAVERFORTH, ASCENDANT OF MYAR - ACCOUNTS OF THE GREAT WAR

I have taken it upon myself to investigate the tragedy of this era, this most ruthless passage of wanton destruction. The God of Murder chose fit to try to consume our precious Vehldathin, boil it and drown it in the bodies of so many innocents. So many mistakes were made to allow this to happen. Those mistakes can never be allowed to happen again. Only by knowing our history, knowing what happened, can we pray that our children will have the foresight to defend against it. I shall take accounts from the survivors of the battles, commit them to parchment, and as such we will be fortified against deception.

### Wallace Markom, Knight of the Knights Panther. Servant to King Ezekiel

King Ezekiel was no one, a field hand for House Cumber. He was faithful though, and a pure heart with honest hands, that's what Hastur judges. No amount of gold or influence can ever change that. Hastur can see into our very souls, no deception makes it past the light of the Tower. Y'see the Nobles got fat and plump off the work of the common fated, the protection of the knights. I'm not free of such sin, sad to say I wish I was though, some of my comrades will deny it though. They'll tell you that they were following the Mandate of Hastur, as is custom. Hastur never begged us to be dogs, we were Hastur's chosen because we stood up for what was right, what was good and honest in the Vehl. We were made to light the flame of the Tower, to keep it shining on each other, and look at what we did. King Duncan ruined the kingdom, and Queen Wellyn before him too. When was the last time you witnessed a member of the four great houses, the Dukes of Quinelle, perform any sermons, any miracles, any offerings to those less fortunate than them? The fated would have revolted if the knights didn't kick them back in place. It's a shame is what it is, a shame we all have to live with. Now once the fighting started to creep in, small hamlets disappearing, outposts going quiet. That's when truth cuts through the lies, fated can only hear that everything is going to be okay for so long until they figure out it's not. The Chain starts getting quiet too, now I don't like me any Raiders, they never take more than a few months off before they're back battling over fishing grounds. Chain goes quiet, not a single raid, not a single battle. We expected not to hear about any Rock Orcs but the Raiders were our first warnings. Then finally it happens, Durham, gone. The very foundation broken up and salted. As though one of the most sacred places of learning, the whole history of Vehldathin in there, the very footprints of the Gods. gone without a witness, without a funeral, and almost without mourning. That's when we heard about the leader of the Dark Host, The Goblin King. A beast of a Rock Orc raging down from Callen's Fence. We had pushed those Orcs so far back in the name of protecting our kingdom we had no idea they would become this desperate. Yet here comes the haughty King Duncan to make speeches and declare that the battle would be swift, at no point did they seem to think they were in any danger. Around this time too the local taverns started murmuring, the workhouses brewed up rumors. The Dukes have lost the Mandate of Hastur, that the true High Ascendant works amongst them, is a peasant just as them. They pray for the Peasant King's safety, for their guidance. King Duncan finally feels threatened, not by blood but by the fact that someone else could be crowned King. A true threat to what that fat pig loved most. So they amass a host of knights, bannermen, mercenaries. The King himself along with Staff Duke Stern, a show of force to march through the kingdom and bring peace back. And we all know how that ended. Two of the five major rulers of Quinelle gone in one battle, the Gleaming Crown of Hastur gone, chewed on by fucking Rock Orcs. Who doubts the Mandate of Hastur is gone now? What allies does Quinelle have left? The people panic and flee to the capital, there's not many Quinellites left to make a difference. What few remain start making plans to carve up the Kingdom, Staffordshire Crownship, the Duchy of Argentile, the City State Halperg. Ridiculous, selfish, small minded fated. That was before the Peasant King came running through, not riding a golden steed, but walking with the other common fated. I swear that man glows with the blessed light of the Tower when you look at him, in our darkest night he shines brightest. The Goblin King thought we were beaten, done for. Bolverkr Black Hands had begun to sail back to the Chain, Mejikhan was under siege. The Dark Host moved towards Prinriek, there was no hope they could withstand the horde. We thought we were living in the end of days, a final darkness coming to end all light, but when King Ezekiel arrived and rang the bells of The Blessed Martyr the Vehl stood still. Those great bells rang through every corner of the streets, and by Hastur the fated knew, they knew what they were being called to do. They gathered pitchforks, spears, swords. Anything they could to arm themselves and left their possessions behind. The women, the children, the young, the old, were all given keys to the keeps and palaces. The servants owned the houses. The Peasant King forsook all of it to march out in defense of Vehldathin, to vanquish the evil biting at our necks. I was there at the Valley of Prin, I saw the Prinlanders fight in vain to hold their gates from the grey tide. I remember the gleaming of our crude armors, the ragged breath of our half breed stallions. Quinelle earned back the Mandate of Hastur that day, the Rock Orcs routed and driven into the northern wastes. Defeated, resoundingly so. Their hateful God must have taken every frustration back out on them, no punishment is too vile for those wretches. Rebuilding is still difficult, it's still hard to see the stains on the streets and the scorched frames of what was. Black Hand never made it to the Chain, never left it either. Storm whipped up so fierce even Qago's shores were beaten jagged. King Ezekiel still held true though, putting hand in both Sword and Shield, Staff and Rod. From the very front did King Ezekiel show us how to remember what we were, what Hastur guides us to do. While many of us rebuild our kingdom, King Ezekiel has already sent support to Mejikhan, Prinriek, Haywood. He has already called for the Knightly Orders to go out and Quest for Hastur's glory and rid the Vehl of evils. It isn't enough to just be ashamed, you know this, you've lost just as much. We have to repair what was broken, we owe it to all of the fated who died.

### Scolth Wolfhide, Caravan Guard of the White Roses

Y'know it's not often one of the ones I guard wants to hear from me, usually it's just silver spoon nobles and gold belly merchants that only care for their business. War don't change much for the wealthy, it's the common folk that suffer most. Me and my kin heard the rumors of what happened on the coasts, but that just meant we could charge more for our services. Good Hill Dwarf knee breakers, guarantee to keep the bandits, trolls, and Savage Orcs at bay from your precious cargo. That was until of course we heard about Durham, had a cousin that studied there. We heard it from wine merchants coming over from Quinelle, my brother Dolph immediately flew into a rage, claimed that he would right this wrong and swore a Grudge Oath. Me and my sister Helga tried to be more keen minded, and took up contracts with Prinriek's town watch for a fraction of what we got paid guarding caravans. We had the mind to protect the last home we had left, if they razed Durham, they would have gotten Obern too, and Farnstead, and Tallyhook. How many villages do you suppose were removed? Erased from maps. Ah well like I said so it was just me and Helga now, keeping watch at the gates. Turns out that was for the best, as the months turned into years we got fewer merchants swinging by. That means bad times all over, and turns out they were worse times. Mejikhan ruined, Quinelle ruined, Haywood ruined, Epplessa? Eating tomatoes peaceful as ever. All that was left was Prinriek, and the commoners here were beginning to starve, the guards were beginning to starve even. Me and Helga went down to half rations at one point, we split a loaf of bread and three cubes of cheese with watery ale every day, that was what we had. Y'know, any army runs off its feet and stomach, and at that point I couldn't find a single soldier who wasn't hungry or tired of standing. That's when we saw it finally, on the hillside approaching. We called it the grey tide, more Rock Orcs than I'd ever seen, they must have picked up some Savage Orcs too. Can you believe that the burgermeisters wouldn't give us better equipment without a contract for repayment? All the best artisans in the Vehl here in this city, and they wouldn't lend us an ounce of power to defend it. They knew we couldn't survive a siege, I think we knew that too deep down. That's why we sent the evacuation orders to travel south to Epplessa, while we held the eastern gates until the bitter end. I saw a lot of fighters make the wrong decision that day and try to sneak out of the city. Only thing worse than a coward is a deserting coward. So we lit the fires and challenged these Orcs to a fight, the last fight we ever thought to have truth be told. Me and Helga knew what was coming, we held each other close on that last night, we drank to Dolph, to Durham, to our parents, we drank to say goodbye to the Vehl. In the morning we marched out with all the fury a Dwarf can muster, and when that wall of mottled grey skin clashed against our shields I tell you it was glorious. Dwarves and Humans, Elves and Orcs, I swear I saw a lizard fight with us as well! All raging against the end, and leading these Rock Orcs was this great big tall one, ape-like arms and carrying such a club I could've sworn it was a tree. The beast wore a great golden crown much too small for its lumpy head. That was their king, the source of all malice brought to our borders. It felt like the fight went on for days, past the first gate, the first wall, down to the third. They call it the gate of skulls now, where we held the line to the bitter end. Who knew bitterness wouldn't come from defeat, but being saved by Quinellites the pompous bastards. Never before have I been so happy to see that red and blue flag flying and the smell of horse dung. They rode in from behind the Rock Orcs and crashed into them, with all the fury of the God they so love to worship. The big hulking king of theirs must have shit themselves to be caught in such a trap, shame he got away though. When all the fighting was over, and we consolidated our forces and gathered the dead, we never saw that creature's body. Mother's still tell their kids stories that it lurks in the sewers of Prinriek, waiting to snatch them down there and chew on their bones. Funny how the thing we feared most lives on in that way, like it won its own victory.

### Heldraya of Fenda'Tol

I'm sorry, it's awkward to talk while you're writing. Are you writing everything I'm saying? Please don't. I'm sorry, everything is harder now. I know it's been a few years for you but things move so much slower for us. They moved so much slower at least. Every movement was precise, practiced for hundreds of years, decades. My parents, my grandparents, my great grandparents, all of my elders. All of their practice was gone in a moment. I remember my elders telling me that we would weave our stories in song to Ozymahd at the highest point of the sun, our stories were eternal, our songs were eternal. Just as Ozymahd willed. Haywood had high walls, strong and durable, the energies of the living wood embraced us, the very forest around us was our first line of defense. Our cousins, the Wood Elves, they were backwards sure but they didn't deserve what happened to them while we hid behind our walls. We heard the serpent's wail in the night, we saw the Prentrees burn bright green flame, pillars that lit up the night. King Ashal'Ta assured us that we would outlast the invasion, Ozymahd was chief amongst the Gods and would not let some lesser God desecrate his children. Then the rituals came, it started slowly at first, we saw them on the outskirts of the city and debated riding out to meet them. They feared what their High Ascendant would do, they say he couldn't die, that he would starve out in the forest before he breached the walls. They collected artifacts from abroad, all over Vehlathin, and sacrificed their captives at their ritual sites. We only found out about this when it was over, when everything was over. We prepared our magical defenses, patrolled the walls, no children of the Father of Serpents would get by our defenses. Then sleep embraced some of our oldest harder than usual, dreams became vicious nightmares. They stayed awake until they could bear it no longer, then they simply never woke up again. Their bodies failing in the night, as though they just ceased to be living. Elves can die, we know this, wounds and disease can kill our people but never something like this. To be here one moment and just gone the next, it spread from our elders to younger and younger elves. It took ten days for the rituals to reach their zenith, or so I think. On the tenth day we all fell to the sleep, we all saw the nightmares. Eyes, everywhere staring at us from the cold darkness. Nightcrawlers wearing pale white masks stalking us through tall grass. They wielded long sharp blades dripping in poison. Some of us escaped our assailants, some of us never woke up. We saw a pillar of light swirling with black smoke in the distance and the nightmare faded, we woke to a quiet city. So many of us were gone in a moment, all of our elders that carried our histories, our songs, our stories. The oldest of us now is barely fifty. We were children burying our parents, burying our civilization. The enemy was gone, vanished into the Haywood without ever stepping foot into our city. They didn't have to, I do not know what stopped them from killing all of us or if they intended to leave survivors for their sick games. Haywood is now a kingdom of the dead and their children, offspring that will never get to know their own history. The Wretched God may not have ended Vehlathin, but he has claimed victory over the Elves.

### Toska Thuul, Shipwright

What is an Ascendant of Myar doing so close to the islands of the Moss Coast? Seeking passage to Yarim eh? Hoping to see the world before it finally tips over the edge? Just be careful now, with so much death the monsters have begun crawling back out into the dark corners. Canatha isn't safe anymore, Yarim is going to be much worse. Ah but you know this already, the fated are what we must truly fear. We Sea Elves know it well, though we knew it better a few years ago. Olisarni was infested with sea birds from all the dead. We hardly knew the tangi, at least we had our murals to learn history from. The Wood Elves, the Sun Elves, our cousins? What do they have left eh? Stone Elves? Did any of them even survive? Ah you want to know what happened. Hrafki the Human found us is what happened, warned us of what was coming. The elders did not trust in forests or walls to keep us safe, they called the sleepers from beneath the waves, the krakov, the taniwha, they rigged the great sails and summoned the fogs from Vykost. We challenged the Black Fleet on the Wikhutton Sea. I'm sure divers are going to be finding bones and treasure for some time down there. We sank their ships, shamed them for thinking they could challenge our mastery of the tide. Of course Hrafki and the Humans helped until it was too late for them. Hrafki was taken from us as the Black Fleet fled back to the Chain. We stopped their kin from giving chase, let noble sacrifices stand as they are yes? And then the sleep came, the longest sleep of our lives. The last sleep of many of our lives. I have only heard rumor of what truly happened, the Haywood burning, Prentrees lost, kingdoms of Humans crippled. What of the Dwarves? Did they simply hide in their holes until it was over? There are so few of us now it is hard to care about whatever else is in the Vehl. Of course except for coin, gold eases pain does it not? I may be the last generation of Sea Elves to see the taniwha. Will Vykost give us the knowledge to rouse them from slumber again? Will Vykost forgive us for Charybdis? Who can say. Is there a point to prayer after everything we've seen? Do you trust Myar to keep you safe on your travels? I fear I've given you more questions than I have answered traveler.

### Lae Wu, Ascendant of Roya

May the blessings of slumber be upon you, may you be forever protected as you dream and leave the embrace of the waking world. This war, the largest one Vehldathin has ever seen, The Great War, had greater ramifications than just changing of political boundaries and loss of life. The followers to The Many Faced God did more than just kill for the glory of their faith, they sought out to erase us. All of the fated, all that strived on the Vehl. They burned Durham, the largest stronghold of the Dwarves and sacred temple to Callen and Aiko, they desecrated the Haywood of the Elves and burned the Prentrees weakening Myar and Ozymahd. They turned the Humans against each other and nearly erased all the kingdoms of Humans, crippling Hastur, Vykost, Alara, and Roya. Who is left to stand in resistance? Qiron? They did all they could I'm sure, having an Ascendancy to bring about a period of health almost benefited our invader. Not all of the Gods stand equally supreme. Roya suffered deeply at the sacking of Mejikhan, and then again with my people in Xian Zhe. The Jade Empress has always been an isolationist but when High Ascendant Zog came to our shores from the Desert of Souls, our people had begged for someone to aid us. The serpent fleet pushed deep into our kingdom fighting past our magical defenses, our construct guardians, our pegasus knights. It was all too late that we discovered what the Father of Serpents sought in our lands. The Baima Temple of Roya. My temple of Roya. The Father of Serpents moved through our desert shores, the Glass Coast soaked red with what defenses could be accumulated in time. We received reports that he was slain in the battle of Huishan Forest, and yet he approached Xilin at the head of a war host. My temple lay at the center of Xilin, within a large collection of scrolls describing the nature of sleep, dreams, and the ability to dream with lucidity. Baima Temple also held the crystallized bones of Hanma Roushin, the prize the Father of Serpents sought above all else. I guarded my temple as best I could as the city burned around me, but I was thrown from the steps by Moon Elves. I could only watch as my broken body clinged to life as they took all they could carry and fled. The city was sacked, few survived, none unharmed. The survivors did their best to rally, myself included. I was nursed back to health after a few days with great magical effort, it was only then did I see what truly occurred in the temple, what was taken. When the Empress' army arrived to investigate just what happened, I took blame for my temple, the loss of what lay within. For this I was exiled from my homeland. I was offered the choice between the Draknil Mountains, or the Wikhutton Sea. I have spent many years of my life learning of the cruelty of the Mountain Dwarves so I did all I could to earn passage to Shanseyut. I am grateful for the Dragonborn of Shanseyut, their ruler King Neheb was welcoming of the many refugees despite suffering their own attacks from the Many Faced God. I spent many weeks in prayer from here, attempting to understand how I had failed Roya, traveling through dreams to see what else had occurred in my homeland. That is when I saw glimpses of what was occurring in the rest of Canatha, the loss of the Chain, the crippling of the realms of Humans, Dwarves, and Elves. Months I meditated and dreamed, feeling a great guilt upon my shoulders for failing to safeguard the Baima Temple. I felt that this tragedy was spurred on by that failure, only later did I realize that this was a plan decades in the making. The time I spent in the Dream Lands was interrupted two fold, once by the Black Fog and once by the Bask. The Black Fog rolled through the Dream Lands swallowing up any light it could find, obscuring the land, trapping dreamers in an endless expanse. Those who traveled Lucidly were lost as well, I became lost myself as I wandered the darkness. I heard the painful ending of fated lives all around me echoing out from their dreams. It felt like years wandering the darkness until a great beam of light cut through the fog and into the endless expanse above. The beam swirled the fog upwards slowly but consistently. I raced to the beam to find it surrounded by the Bask, I had only heard tales of these ancient beings yet here I saw them in the Dream Lands performing some kind of ritual on this beam of light. They spoke to me, all of them at once in this transcendent place. They told me that The Many Faced God sought to scrub all life out through their dreams, their servants performed a profane ritual and it must be stopped. They begged for my power to be given to them so they could stop as much as they could. How could a servant of Roya deny them this request? Their heroism likely saved Vehldathin. Yet as the fog dissipated, I watched the Bask wither and fade one by one, the pain of their act too much to bear. Many dreamers and those that travel with lucidity gathered around the remaining Bask to lend their aid, offering their essence to this ritual. The beam remained even as the last Bask withered and died, dissipating the Black Fog. My sight of the others lending their power was lost one by one, had they withered and died as the Bask had? Did they simply wake up? It is an answer I will never know. When I woke I found myself in an infirmary, I was told that they thought I had passed like many others in their sleep. Since then I have been unable to dream again, my life dedicated to the art of dreaming and it has been taken from me. A small price to pay to begin to repay my transgressions against Vehldathin. It is comforting to remind myself that you can kill the dreamer, but you can't kill the dream.

## A MOON ELF'S INSTRUCTIONS

*Dyljiravdu jvuapubtz av kpzabyi aol klwz. Aopu vba aolpy ubtilyz, wpsshnl aolpy ylvbyjyz, huk kpzzbhl aolt myvt thrpun huf tvyl kwkparvuz puav vby alyypavyf. Dolu fvb ohcl jvtwslak fvbby tpzzpru ylabyu av ti ha aol opnotza wthr ulea av aol zpsscly zlh dolu aol aybl tvru pz h dhupun jyzjyua ha paz svdlza wvpua.*

## JOURNAL OF ALISHONA XILDAN PART 2

12/1424 I have made my travels and have returned home, Arclight, Mejikhan, The Emerald Pools, The Temple of Estrial, I have visited all of the most esteemed Arcanist academies, spent time with them, learned from them. While The Golden Towers may stand supreme, unity is how we advance together and further our understanding of magic. I do not miss the cold bitter landscape of Arclight's forests, or the strange sensation of being watched at all times. I do not miss the heat of Mejikhan or the strange conformity of The Emerald Pools. I do not miss the jungles of Yarim biting at my skin. I have missed only one place and it is my home here in Satiara. I had wished I stopped in Mebus on my trip home, but the time could not be afforded. Wallach must have yearned for my return so deeply, I cannot imagine they expected to take on my mantle for so long. They have been a good friend to me throughout the years. The Golden Towers have been doing well in my absence, and I am excited to show the new found knowledge to my students. It was not until I meditated upon The Emerald Pools that it finally clicked within me, the Winds of Magic revealed themselves to my eyes in such a splendorous way. When I told Wallach they were shocked to learn something so ancient could be returned to us. I don't think they truly appreciate the School of Beasts, far too uncivilized for their taste. We will be the first academy to bring the study of this magic back to Canatha, to Vehldathin. With so much tension in politics lately I think it will be good to give every fated something new to discuss.

3/1425 Something disturbing occurred yesterday. Something that has even caught me off guard. During one of the introductory classes on channeling one's inner mana, an elemental appeared in the middle of the lecture. A greater elemental at that. It raged and roiled, smashing desks and throwing students, many of whom are only children. We were blessed by the Gods to not have anyone seriously hurt. Professors Bel'tasn and Peirce managed to subdue the elemental swiftly, but the fact that it happened at all is of great concern. The Golden Towers have well maintained magical siphons to ensure accidents like this do not happen. I inspected them personally upon my return, the crystal build up was within standard limits, the platinum bowls were not cracked or tarnished. The students were not even performing powerful spells, they were simply connecting with the Winds of Magic. Something we did not disclose to the staff yet, the elemental's remains, the effervescent dust they leave behind, there were gems within them. Xianren Gems. Wallach, Bel'tasn, Pierce, nor myself could explain it. This is entirely unprecedented, unheard of, arguably impossible. Things are only impossible until they are not. I have to launch a full investigation into the matter to get to the bottom of this. I should let The Emerald Pools know of this as well. I can only hope that Arclight had nothing to do with this.

4/1425 It happened again. The same sensation from years ago during my meditations. I could feel it, yet it was different than before. This felt like a breath of air, a sensation that Vehldathin became lighter, brighter, like a light was shined upon the Vehl. There is a magic that is unknown to me again, after studying and meditating for months to reconnect with The School of Beasts, there is another just lurking out of sight. So much is happening lately that breaks what I expect from my beloved Winds of Magic. I have spent years, hundreds of years studying and mastering my craft, honing my knowledge. Few alive on Vehldathin rival my expertise, and I speak not from a place of pride but in reverence to those that came before me and will come after me that hold the same dedication. To meld the Winds of Magic in a new way takes an incredibly skilled individual, to do something new requires the talent to understand what is done and how to do something unlike it. Imagine if you will a shape never before conceived, a color never before seen. Something wholly new is difficult to make, Schools of Magic take decades to perfect and to refine and to master. When they are lost to Vehldathin it is because the individuals that knew how to practice those magics have been lost and their knowledge has been lost. The Great War took so much from us, and who knows how much was lost before then. There are wizards out there dedicating their lives to reconnecting to this lost magical knowledge and it just appears out of the sky one day? Something is happening somewhere. I must speak to Wallach about this, I cannot imagine they would tolerate my absence again. Perhaps I should finally tell them of the strange dreams I have been having about that being. If I must be honest I am afraid of the implications of what such a being is. Am I dreaming of a God? A new God? A king of elementals? This is going to be a troublesome year.



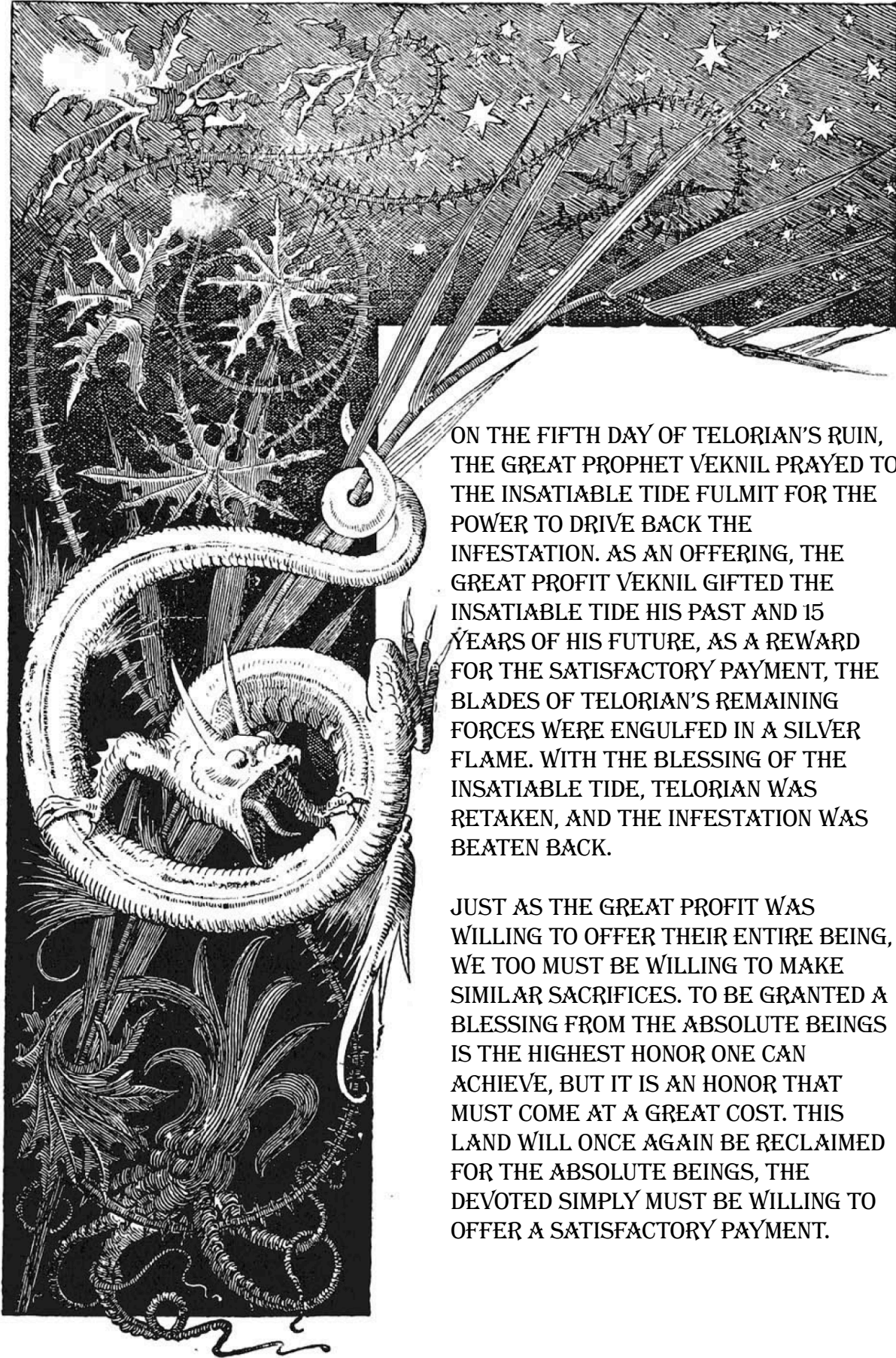
## PRIEST'S JOURNAL 1421

For many of those who worship, to channel the power of the Divine is a miracle. Those that can be a conduit for God's will, their power, is to be connected with them intimately. The potential for Ascendancy is bestowed upon them, a burden and a blessing. To many, they will serve the will of God and heal those in need. Restoration of mortal suffering is the first rung of ability in an Ascendant's work, all Gods bless the fated with such. It is through their love for us that we learn to help ourselves, and our fellow fated. Through great determination and faith, proving oneself to their God and the work tasked upon them will allow them to be experts of their God's divine will. To perform greater powers, heal the sick, punish the wicked, protect the faithful, these are often achieved through a lifetime of devotion. The most devout leaders of the faith can find themselves gifted with even greater boons from their God, a master of their divine will and a loyal servant. This is a truly honored position to be granted, and still not the most rare. To go even beyond the skill of a master, to embody faith so boldly and so fervently that one would become a paragon of the faith, a defining member of a church or of an order. This is the first step to sainthood. All Gods may have saints, but the devotion needed is often too much for fated to bear. To honor your God above all else, devote yourself to their mission, to their instruction and guidance, above ties of love and family, of fame and glory, the standard is often too high for most fated to rationalize. To truly become a saint is to hold your faith above all else through every test, and to embody your God's powers with absolute resolve. A saint will be able to perform every miracle an Ascendant can muster, every blessing of their God's power, and be an expert in their faith. It is from the saints that a High Ascendant is chosen by the God, a successor to their divine hands to the house of the Gods. While some saints may choose to follow certain tenets of their faith more strongly than others, each will be no less capable of enforcing the other tenets. It is said that each God has tests to see if their faithful are truly devoted to them before granting them the power of sainthood. These tests are often kept secret by the faithful but are assumed to be closely tied to the faith and the faithful, a test personally made for the faithful. Ever since the first High Ascendant committed the gravest of sins and brought about the reign of demons unto the Vehl.

## STUDIES OF SIGILISM PART 4, BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM DYER

This paper, this shred of pulp and refuse given greater purpose, I believe this was mistakenly sent to us from a place unknown. The story, the transcript, the telling of what we were witnessing on the other side of the Shimmer. These beings that bear no resemblance to anything on Canatha, anything on Vehlspathin, no writings of any one of my peers within the Manor describe creatures as this. The two stared at us from beyond the Shimmer of the barrier, the alien shapes and vegetation bathed in the strange light of a sun that was unfamiliar each of us fated. Could these beings be considered fated as us? Does Alara's light shine upon their paths as well? Do their eyes show fear as ours do do they fear do they know do they see.

Their strange hands, segmented and bristled, reached out to us with what can only be assumed to be caution, the Shimmer rippled violently as though water being broken yet as glass being shattered. Many of the arguments burn the air around the chamber, some of our own deem it necessary to fight the intruders, while others say that this is their next adventure. It is unknown if the hand that reaches out to us is one of trespass, curiosity, or beckoning. It is not something I feel will ever be known to us. While spears were aimed, hands reached out to meet the outsider. Five of our number crossed the threshold into those unknown spaces, the first of the fated to embark on such a journey. We watched on with mouths agape to the strange greetings these insectoid outsiders shared with our kin beyond the Shimmer before a larger being lurched closer into sight. A creature ten feet in height with a rugose conical body, the creature's head and organs attach to foot thick distensible limbs that stretch from the trunk of the creature. Two mighty carapaced claws grind and click at the end of two of the four limbs, it lumbered forward with the expansion and contraction of the fleshy base of its towering body. It towered over the seven before it as its claws chattered and snapped and its three large eyes gaze upon the guests that stand in the light of its outlandish sun before turning its attention to me. As our eyes met I could feel a connection further, deeper, our minds bonded for a moment. I could see Vehlspathin, stretched out before me as a map with several specks of burning light erupting from it. The scene distanced from me until I saw the deep expanse of space and in my awe the many Vehls that danced and dangled in the black void before me, several burning lights ignite from each of the planets within my sight. I could feel a yearning from this creature, a desire for the same things we sought. A knowledge. A lock. A key. A sigil.



ON THE FIFTH DAY OF TELORIAN'S RUIN, THE GREAT PROPHET VEKNIL PRAYED TO THE INSATIABLE TIDE FULMIT FOR THE POWER TO DRIVE BACK THE INFESTATION. AS AN OFFERING, THE GREAT PROFIT VEKNIL GIFTED THE INSATIABLE TIDE HIS PAST AND 15 YEARS OF HIS FUTURE, AS A REWARD FOR THE SATISFACTORY PAYMENT, THE BLADES OF TELORIAN'S REMAINING FORCES WERE ENGULFED IN A SILVER FLAME. WITH THE BLESSING OF THE INSATIABLE TIDE, TELORIAN WAS RETAKEN, AND THE INFESTATION WAS BEATEN BACK.

JUST AS THE GREAT PROFIT WAS WILLING TO OFFER THEIR ENTIRE BEING, WE TOO MUST BE WILLING TO MAKE SIMILAR SACRIFICES. TO BE GRANTED A BLESSING FROM THE ABSOLUTE BEINGS IS THE HIGHEST HONOR ONE CAN ACHIEVE, BUT IT IS AN HONOR THAT MUST COME AT A GREAT COST. THIS LAND WILL ONCE AGAIN BE RECLAIMED FOR THE ABSOLUTE BEINGS, THE DEVOTED SIMPLY MUST BE WILLING TO OFFER A SATISFACTORY PAYMENT.

## MAGICALLY PROTECTED JOURNAL PART 4

5-1-1425

THE WORK IS UNENDING. EVER SINCE THIS APOTHEOSIS I HAVE STUMBLING INTO IT HAS BEEN A DAUNTING PROCESS TO CONTROL MY NEW FORM, MY NEW ABILITIES. TO THINK THERE WAS A LIFE BEFORE THIS. TO THINK THERE CAN BE LIFE AFTER THIS. I HAVE GONE FROM SIMPLETON, TO RESEARCHER, TO A GOD, TO A FATHER. MY CHILDREN ARE BELOVED TO ME, YET THEY ARE FLAWED. THE WINDS OF MAGIC HAVE EXISTED FROM US SO SEPARATELY WITH ONLY THE ELVES HAVING THE PRIVILEGE OF FEELING THEM AS ACUTELY AS WE WOULD FEEL THE GROUND BENEATH US. I SO MISS THE SENSATION. MY CHILDREN ARE AS LIKE I, YET IMPERFECT. A MELDING OF A WIND OF MAGIC AND THE FORM OF A FATED, THEY ARE CLOSE TO THE SAME APOTHEOSIS THAT I HAVE ATTAINED. I MUST RECONFIGURE THE RITUALS AND TREAT THEM PROPERLY. PERHAPS THOSE ON THIS ISLAND CAN MANAGE TO WALK ON THEIR OWN THROUGH THE ARCANAL LANDSCAPE. THEY HAVE BEEN REPOSITORIES OF REAGENTS, BUT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THEY WILL MIRE IN THAT IGNORANCE FOREVER. THEY HAVE ALREADY BEGUN PLANNING ON THE EXTERMINATION OF THE ELEMENTALS THAT FORM AROUND MYSELF AND MY CHILDREN. MINDLESS FORCES OF MAGIC AND NATURE RAMPAGING ACROSS THE LAND, YET I HAVE SEEN SO MUCH MORE IN THEM. THERE IS SO MUCH THE FATED MINDS OF CANATHA DO NOT GRASP, THEY CANNOT SEE WHAT I SEE. IT IS SO EASY TO SUGGEST THIS, I HAVE NO EYES REMAINING TO SEE AS THEY DO. I WONDER WHAT MY QUEEN WOULD SAY IF SHE COULD SEE US NOW.

## NOTES FOUND IN A MASS GRAVE

*I think They're onto us. I think Yonathon got that group from the Quinelle expedition to take out Myron but they failed, they just left and walked away. Like they just wanted to kick the hornet's nest. If there was ever a time for us to run off into the forest and take our chances, it's now. Meet me by the river and we'll go together.*

K,

Y is compromised. Got spotted during an attack. Got too confident in the help he got. There's going to be a purge, I'll try and get the word out. This is high alert now. There may not be another letter.

Q

*I just got my debt paid off, everything now is going to cover room and board and I can save the rest. I'll help pay off your debt too Lucy, and then we can start a food stall in Eisenstadt. Just like we always said, I love you.*

The Quinellites attacked us. I thought they had us dead to rights, but then they got scared and ran. Didn't even come back to the fight. Honestly I don't think we'll be at war too long if this is the best they've got. Once this Island is clear of competition we'll be able to spread out and secure the borders, get more settlers here. Yeah maybe Mar Nemolin will run it all like a business but who cares, we'll be living good! Hope everything is good on your end at Salazach.

-Obert

## MERCENARY'S NOTE

*I've been assigned to assault the town across the river: Ocean Ridge or something like that from the Quinellites. Command says they've been attacking us unprovoked for months. Workers have said they helped them against the vines, but they could just be sabotaging, a soldier survived one of their raids and claimed they were working with the vines. Could be a conspiracy. Nothing on this Island seems right, and worse still Myron is going to take command of a detachment to establish a forward base on that side of the river. Behind enemy lines, he's going to establish supply lines so we can surround them. By the gods I hope I do not get sent on that. Have you heard the rumors about Myron? He's more than the big hat. They say he's a madman, lost his mind here on the Island, worse than a Savage Orc. Did you know he's been killed before? I don't mean miraculously survived, I mean I've heard several men, and workers say that they've seen him die and then found him later like nothing happened. Not just one off stories either. I've found witnesses who say the same stories. Burned alive by Elementals, crumpled by Demons, harpooned by Orcs, even drowned by Many Faced followers. I asked Command about this and they told me not to be concerned with nonsense rumors. Captain Myron has been one of the best in their employ and that if I was caught spreading these rumors I would be reprimanded, severed without pay and stuck on this Island. What would we do without Mar Nemolin? Be stuck starving on the other side of the river? The choices here are great. Starvation, Front Lines, or serving under the Mad Hatter. I heard another rumor that Command is testing the Mad Hatter because he's got family on the other side of the river: his sister's kids. The Day family. If they're anything like him I'd hate to meet them. I keep hearing he's so violent now his soldiers are more afraid of him than anything else on the Island. But enough about that.*

*I heard you're going off to the northern border: more Orc extinguishing right? Solid, honest work. With any luck you'll get connected to Almeric's Ironhorn when you get back! Put in a good word for me if I survive, then we'll get Rikard and Loen and make heaps of coin, real coin! Not these stupid bloody trade bars. Stay safe for me won't you Brian? I'll stay safe too.*

*I'll see you on the other side of the war*

*-Ewin*

## OFFICER'S JOURNAL PART 1

6/7/1425

I met with my family today. A less than productive meeting. I don't know why they chose to take their stand with the Quinellites, despite the odds they stand against. What pride do they have to not have their own survival at hand?

A task to save the Vehl? Chosen by some divine mandate? Why stand with those starving and unable to properly defend themselves? Paying tithes to savages, bending a knee to pseudo magical trees. Despite a clear way out, if they truly believed this task was so great, so integral, why fear a debt? They don't need to rely on whatever meager knowledge that exists on this side of the Island sandwiched between the entire force of Mar Nemolin and a Demon Lord. The Silberner Morgen will ideally raze that settlement as well before returning home.

Home, what kind of a home is there to get back to? After what I've seen, they have seen it too. The colors, the thing that tries to steal you, the corruption they called it. I fought it in the mines before already, I saw what it did to those miners. Perhaps they were right, is there a greater threat involved in all this? What hope could there be to bring down a war machine such as this?

I told Thendric our secret sister. I know you wished to keep it hidden, a love between siblings. A pure love. I remember the shame it brought to our parents. They forced us to be apart. I think that may be when I truly disappeared, before this Island was even discovered. I see your eyes in your children. They told me that you were captured by Mar Nemolin, somehow. A letter? A vision? I've never believed in such nonsense before but their conviction seemed to hold true. Perhaps that purple haze around the eyes reveals something that I can't see. The cultists have the same haze. Does the company hope to keep me in line? Extraordinary effort for just one piece in the operation. I have to know though. If there is one thing I can do right, it would be this. The war has gone on long enough I think, let the fire be doused in blood. The perfect cover. Command won't suspect a thing.

What are a few more bodies to add to the toll. The Island has taken so many already. If there is anything left after all is said and done, know my loyalty has always been with you my love. It's time.

## DREAM JOURNAL OF SIR RANDOLPH CARTER PART 4

8/15/1422 - I have not had a dream in several months, no visions, no messages. I have traveled south on the Road of Blades through the hills of Hazjerban to Mejikhan. Once the forefront of arcane studies, the Great War ruined the prestige of many kingdoms. I hope to keep myself comfortable here until I have found the answers I seek. Some simple rituals within one of the crystal gardens should expand my horizons just wide enough to get a grasp of what is happening to me. If Roya cannot aid me in explaining my dreams, what hope is there for any of us? I have found myself staying at a small blacksmith shop, staying in one of the side rooms. I do not need much, I did not bring much. I simply need answers. I make what little coin I can by aiding in some of the most basic of arcane tutelage. The blacksmith is hoping that their child will hone their skills and become a great wizard. A sentiment that my parents once had for myself. I pray this child will have an easier time than I.

8/24/1422 - The dreams have returned. I have heard nothing from Roya and yet the dreams have returned. Does Roya wish me to have these visions? Have I offended in my actions? I have heard names in this dream, I have heard of places. I dreamt that I was looking into purchasing a bar, own a business. It did not occur to me that this took place in The Wilderness until much later. I learn that the bar is located in the Town Hall, a building that had no clear architect but stood proudly in its frame. A Sea Elf tells me that many of the buildings in the area were just there, like an abandoned facade just waiting for some fated to resume its purpose. I learn that the bar, located in the seat of government, was run by a Xianren known by the locals as Ms. Rose. She operated this bar mostly from supplies from the ship 'The Aevum's Respite'. A ship that had gone up in flames just months ago. Trapped on an Island. Merchants from Prinriek offer to sell food to the town hoping to make a profit on the tragedy. And this is the keystone of the dream, learning this after all I had suffered. The town, the wilderness, the people, the strangeness, the curse. It is brought under the crown of Quinelle, their expedition. King Hienrich's expedition! And yet I cannot celebrate this clear answer. The ship has been burned, Ms. Rose went missing after The Flock and the elementals attacked. I spend all day at this bar looking for answers, until I touch just the right spot on the wood to feel flashes of fear. Pain. Anxiety. Something terrible happened here but I cannot discern what. My dream shifted to find myself attacked by elementals in the dark of the wilderness. They clawed at me, bruising, shocking, burning, drowning, dragging me through a campsite surrounded by four pillars of elemental power. I awoke as I was brought to the center of that campsite. I am struggling to come to terms with what this dream has revealed to me. I am seeing someone else's life, the lives of others in a location far from mine. Is this unprecedented? My rituals have done nothing to bring me closer to clarity and I am torn at my next actions. Should I warn the King of what occurred to his beloved expedition? Should I seek a priest of Roya to calm my mind? What can I do to warn Vehldathin that there are elementals with murderous intent, it's as ludicrous as saying the kitchen broom wishes to kill someone. I had no desire for my life to hold some grand meaning, I wished to spend it teaching the next generation leaders while comfortable on an estate. I will have to make up my mind soon, the days are against me. If the dreams have started, then they will return again.

9/3/1422 - My host is furious, I awoke screaming in the night. I woke their family and they look at me strangely now. I am a stranger in a foreign land, these fated had avoided the plague well but they fear it finally striking. They say it caused fated to go mad and be covered in bluish sores. They made me disrobe to make sure I was not infected by something. I am on borrowed time. My dream. I sought out Moon Elves. The fated of the wilderness lack in sense. I sought out Moon Elves to join in an alliance with them with a group of companions. I travel to a refugee camp it seems to ask if anyone has seen signs, There are tents everywhere and a large stone tower. There are sailors, knights of The Order of the Crane, mercenaries in blue and black regalia. They look upon me with contempt and disgust but they begrudgingly answer my questions. None have seen any signs of Moon Elves, a fact they seem thankful of, as any sane fated would feel. One of the sailors tells me of a friend of theirs that was hired to find good mineral deposits, and was able to find an entrance to the Deeps beneath the Island before never being seen again. My stomach wretches as I realize the connection. My group travels to speak with caravans navigating the wilderness in hopes of trade, the first we come across belongs to the Mar Nemolin Trade Company, a group I am unfamiliar with. They inform us that they have seen things skulking near caves recently, but that they caves are far off the beaten path. We search for weeks, tracking and investigating the wilderness for any sign of these Moon Elves like a rabbit searching for a fox until we finally discover an abandoned work camp, recently abandoned. It once belonged to the same Mar Nemolin Trade Company but now it lies in ruin. There are clear signs of battle all over the camp, fires burnt down to warm embers, food burnt in the pots, dry blood strewn about. They were attacked at night, and most of their bodies remain. Corpses of workers and guards own jagged and rough wounds clearly made by hateful weapons. At the northern end of the campsite are ten bodies flayed and nailed to posts, some kind of Orc. The strangest thing is that nothing was stolen, nothing was taken, and no foreman was found. My group discusses that it looks like a Goblin raid started, and then something stopped them. My dream ended as we decided to leave that work camp. Those on these expeditions are clearly in danger, and I feel the correct thing to do would be to report to the lords and ladies of Quinelle. I should try to save them. But I cannot shake the feeling that I am being shown something, that I have a purpose higher than this. Do I return home, or do I seek the truth of my malediction. This decision should not be difficult.

9/13/1422 - I have been removed from my host's home. My dreams occurred again and I was told that they heard strange music from my room, flutes. I have not been able to sleep well in their home either way so perhaps this is for the best. I do not need to worry them and I do not need them to tell me that I am cursed or that I am a madman. Their child looked at me with fear, like I was a monster. Perhaps they will not follow in my footsteps after all. Good job Randolph, you have saved a life. The dream was short this time. I found myself standing in a ruined temple, an ancient place clearly. A large hourglass sat thrumming with power as I place a bone into the bowl atop it. I feel an acknowledgement, like I have done something someone would be proud of. I look through the broken windows of the temple and see the jagged and charred wreckage of the Aevum's Respite. To no surprise It was the wilderness again, but why such a temple? It seems as old as some of the ancient sites across Canatha. Perhaps these ancient sites still hold some significance to this day. I have left behind what I could not keep in my pack, and I am going to the Nidrada Temple. The priests there will give me the clarity I seek one way or another. Elementals driven by thought, lost expeditions, moon elves, goat men. I must know why these things are occurring, I must get to the truth of it all.

## THE HAYWOOD AND THE NEEDLEWEALD

The Haywood is a dense forest home to many Prentrees, arboreal monoliths of nature's might that Wood Elves to this day hold sacred, Through the thick and winding trails the forest houses most of the Elves within Canatha. It stretches from the Moss Coast to the western edge of central Canatha, from Callen's Fence to Strathadan's northern border. The Haywood even creeps out into the waters and onto nearby islands. Traveling through the Haywood is dangerous without an Elven guide, even those who travel with a guide report sights of strange lights in the distance and thick fogs rolling in. It is easy to become lost and fall victim to the creatures of the forest.

The Needleweald is a jungle that can almost be described as predatory in design. The jungle spans the entire space between the western edge of the Breathing Sea to the coast of the Eldatic Ocean and reaches from the southern edge of the Salt Wastes and the Great Plains to the northern edge of the . The thick canopy of massive trees obscures much of the sunlight allowing for thorned vines to stretch and crawl across the jungle floor. Poisonous lizards, garish songbirds, and even biting insects all share vibrant colors that act as boastful warnings as they declare they are the most dangerous things that skulk through the forest. Though the few brave travelers that traverse the Needleweald say the most dangerous threat of the jungle is not the creatures or the vegetation, nor the Orcs or Humans, but the Elves of the jungle.

## JOURNAL OF ALISHONA XILDAN PART 3

6/1425 When it happened it ruined meals across the towers. Everything tasted of copper, everything shined a bit brighter. I already have a group of former Earth Scholars seeking to build a new tower for the newly rediscovered School of Metal. Their excitement for this development almost dissuades the fear I have. We have barely had enough time to discuss the discovery of the School of Beasts and the School of Celestial, these are tremendous waves in arcane studies. These things do not simply appear out of thin air, they take decades of hard work and understanding how the Winds of Magic flow. Now three have appeared, two of them within months of one another. How can such a thing be possible? In private I spoke to Wallach about my dreams. About that thing, that incarnate of magic. They seem concerned for me, but I don't know if that is because they are afraid something will happen to me, or that I will make something happen to them. I do not remember my friend being so... worried. I have kept to my duties here at the towers, I now must gather and understand three new Schools to allow or forbid, to instruct upon or educate against. Casting simple spells is one thing but these Schools develop their own cultures, their own rituals. Magic changes things equally, the target and the caster. The Vehl is shaped differently now and we may not yet understand in which ways. I have not forgotten though the mistakes of my forebears. They sat in these towers and watched as the world crumbled around them, they watched as the Great War took generations from Vehldathin. I will not be so idle in my position. I have been searching for rituals, information, letters, anything that might explain the being from my dreams.

7/1425 I have used these new magics to my advantage already. Channeling the School of Beasts has been simple, I can relate to it from my youth. That primal urge to be free, lash about and walk barefoot through the forest not caring who would see you or pass judgement upon you. The strength that comes with that confidence. The School of Metal has been simple to learn as well, it is easy to understand after having spent much of my life mastering the School of Earth. The School of Celestial is difficult for me. I cannot wrap my head around its lofty energies, its expansive reach. I have always kept my head down to where I am, where we are, not what lay above us. To think, after years of being headmistress, years of rigorous study and practice, I still fumble at learning new things at times. I wonder if that would bring my students comfort. I'm sure it would make many of the professors tremble with how often they speak of perfecting the arcane. So many of them see no room for error, no room for mistakes or growth. They fear becoming another Kurgheim or Arclight. I wonder if Krugheim ever had any problems like this when he was studying The School of Chaos? I wonder if Arclight.

The Arclight Massacre. The being in my dreams. Is there a connection? I have to tell Wallach of this. I have to send an emissary to look into that damned college. I swear if they had a hand in any of this I will personally shut them down, Haywood would be fools to deny me after learning about what dangerous reckless FOOLISH work they commit themselves to.

## WILLIAM HARGUL'S NOTES, PART 1

I have been accepted into the inner circle, the most devoted students and professors within the Manor. I have shown aptitude for my arcane might and my resolve at life's mysteries is resolute. I did not come here to simply learn the Winds of Magic, I came here to be at the cutting edge of history and arcane discovery. Magic is the wellspring of all creation, of this I am certain and I mean to prove it while attending this academy. Master Krugheim showed us the basements of the Manor where we meet, through the catacombs of his family's estate. To think that this was all once a home for wealthy aristocrats and now it is something so much grander. The basement is massive, and work is continued upon it to this day. A team of Will Dwarves works day and night to carve rooms and doors into the Depths of Vehlathin. The leader of these excavators is a member of the inner circle even! Korek the Strong he is called, for the strength of his frame and of his mind. I hope to impress this dwarf. Last night was Master Krugheim's demonstration about the School of Magic known as 'Chaos'. It was fascinating and horrifying all at the same time. He explained how it is possible that the power has been widespread across Vehlathin for some time, generations even, but was treated as an aberration, a mutation, a curse of sorts, and hunted relentlessly. This forced the most capable practitioners to the outskirts of their society where they may have been incorrectly labeled as Witches. Thus we as fated in our narrow minded society may have ruined the chance to understand the beginning of such a unique power. Master Krugheim showed us an apostate mage, a refugee from Prinriek found living in The Grork. This fated had the power to manipulate their flesh in response to many forms of danger, and even the ability to mimic others power perfectly. With enough concentration they were able to change their visage as well, they looked exactly like Brother Luthen for just a moment. Then was the most grand display of all, Professor Rice volunteered without hesitation. Professor Rice took their own life, a knife to their throat. The warmth of the spray proved to all of us within the inner circle how real the demonstration was. Our will was tested in this moment, a dedication to see if we were all ready to face the journey ahead of us and peer beyond the Black Beyond, tear down the curtain. These were Master Krugheim's words. Some stomachs were weaker than their hearts, but still we waited as Professor Rice's body cooled, and that is when the apostate touched their hands to the Professor's body. An array of shapes and colors the likes of which I've never seen emanated from their hands and seeped into the flesh of the Professor. Then we felt the warmth like a fire was lit within the cold stone chamber, a warmth that did not dissipate for the rest of the demonstration. From that warmth Professor Rice rose, gasping for air as though it was a delight never before felt. Life, torn back from the endless sea of the Black Beyond, a defiance of death that no God took glimpse of. This was what we were here for. This is what we were meant to do. Professor Rice left to record their experience while it was still fresh, while the rest of us that remained discussed our theories on what occurred.

## JOURNAL OF SIR AVNER SAX, PART 1

*It has been years on this Island, the greatest challenge I've faced, but I've faced it with my brothers and with the light of Hastur shining down upon us. It's been some time since we landed and erected the Tower of the Crane, set up training spaces and forward camps, established scouting routes and patrol zones. From the start we were besieged by all manner of enemy, the brutish Savage Orcs, these strange Unformed, and even the Children of Zog. I stood with many of the rabble we brought on the Aevum's Respite against that great and terrible evil along with the High Ascendant of Aiko, Canaan Sojourn. It was one of the proudest moments of my career. I felt I had earned my spot in Hastur's Halls for that. Those that we took with us, that I fought with? They earned my respect that day, as much as they would dance around it. But for all these victories, we couldn't stop the stress of this Island. The light of Hastur didn't protect us from the worst of fates. That night haunts me still. May 4th, 1424. I will never forget it as long as I live. The Island showed us the true evil that lurks in its darkness. What malice must the Many Faced God have for us to unleash that upon those in the camp. Many of those affected by the Back Biting God's foul curse are still suffering to this day. I have prayed for relief to find my brothers and sisters. I have prayed to Hastur to guide us against this enemy that pollutes our new home. I have found no solace in the chapel. I fear that a bleakness is filling my heart. I have spoken with the priests but they were allowed to hide in the Tower while the worst of it occurred outside. How could they understand what I've seen, what my knights saw? I have not had time to see Jackson, he has been busy coordinating the defenses of an encampment that faces unprecedented threats. I have been busy coordinating the organization of scouts across a landscape that makes no sense to us. We are Hastur's greatest paladins, and yet we struggle to establish a dominant foothold upon this Island. Are we forsaken?*

## THE CONCEPTION OF SUN ELVES & MOON ELVES

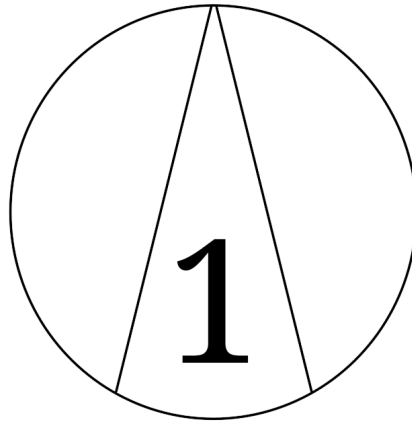
When Ozymahd looked across the expanse of Vehlathin they saw the troubled fated toiling under the harsh expanse of the sky. Ozymahd, who knew so well the cycle of the seasons, the flow of time passing through every moment, object, and being, watched their futile struggles. The Dwarves, children of Callen and Aiko, who worked to build eternal structures and safe havens but could not see that all works pursued by fated are as shifting sand in a desert. The Elves, timeless beings unaffected by the Curse of Years yet through their naivety they clung to the natural aspects of the Vehl and could not see its entirety. The brutish Orcs and Humans trading only in ignorant superstition and violence or the misbegotten Lizardfolk of Yarim who lived to spite the grace of the Gods. Across the five continents disorder permeated the air, children without parents left to wander in the dark. It was Ozymahd, chief amongst the Gods, who chose champions to bring order to the cycle. Two Elven leaders, Baph'lun and Wexthoral, were summoned to the Mouth of the Earth to meet with Ozymahd. Though only the most faithful of fated could comprehend the true voice of a God Ozymahd spoke to them plainly, echoing over the heat of the magma pools. Ozymahd instructed them to guide their people, blessed to be immune to the burden of the cycle, out of the discordance of their lives and into a new order fitting of their gifts. One would lead their people to a seat of power in the forests of Canatha, which would be known as the Haywood. The other would lead their people to a seat of power in the jungles of Enkel'Ra, which would be known as the Needleweald. They would each uphold different works for Ozymahd, through the light of the sun and the light of the moon. For no moment would be left aside from Ozymahd's guidance.

## RESENTFULLY WRITTEN NOTE

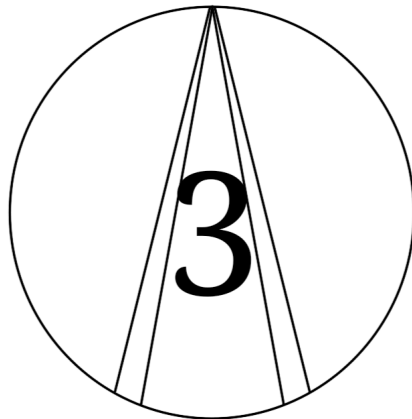
William. Gardens. Eyes in walls. Third floor atrium, right desk. Burnt study hall. Magnus. Lab. Brain fluid? 1. God's Eye. 8. Oinos. 7. Definitions of words spell out their meaning. 5. Schism of course it's always a schism. 9. I have the key I am the lock. 0. Ex Ignorantia Ad Sapientiam Ex Luce Ad Tenebras above the door. Need to find another way in.



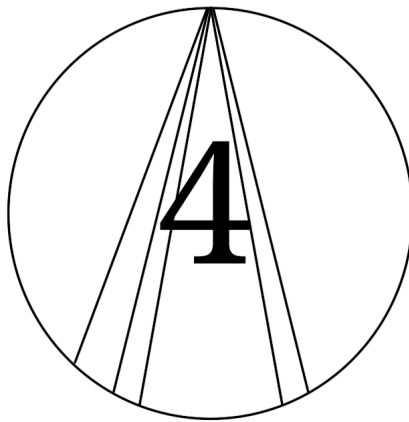
# THE SEVEN ARCANES GUIDELINES



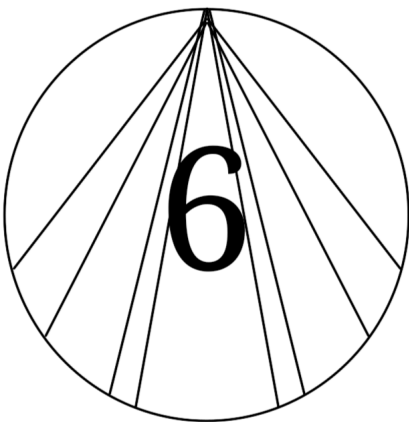
The first of seven Arcane Guidelines. Formed as a child awakens to the Vehl, their first breaths after birth. The innocence gifted to them as they take their first ventures into our great Vehl dathin. The core that is this guideline is what all others are built upon, much like our own formative years as fated. Magic cannot be destroyed, it can only be changed.



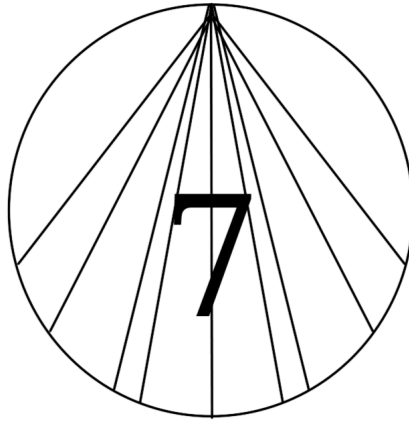
The third Arcane Guideline reveals to us the fated's capability to rise from the murk of their baser instincts. Through effort and determination we climb from the mud and through dexterous strength we learn to create art instead of violence. We learn to debate as opposed to destruction, and through the wisdom we gain in this civility, understand that this will be a lifelong undertaking of great effort. Magic must be practiced and maintained as all great works must be.



The fourth Arcane Guideline becomes our first true lesson. Fated's magical strength comes from the manifestation of our will, this very act is weaved into our every action. Through mana we imprint our will unto the very Winds of Magic that flow through every aspect of Vehldathin. We fated must ensure that we consistently practice this ability, as with any task it is through consistency that the greatest gain is returned. When absent minded, our own thoughts may use this ability against us. Magic is best used with clear intent and purpose.



The sixth Arcane Guideline heightens our understanding of what it means to be fated. The fated commune with the Winds of Magic through their mana, and to their mana through their soul. The fated soul has a powerful and profound connection to their physical body and to the Som Regnium through dreams. It is through our ability to dream that we can truly experience actualization. Magic is wholly intertwined with the ability to sleep and to dream.



The seventh and final Arcane Guideline is our greatest burden and our privileged responsibility. Through ascendancy we fated can rise above even our higher understanding of the Vehl, to the height of the Gods.

Whether we rise to join them, replace them, or rejuvenate them, the influence of those that ascend is undeniable, and the marks they leave upon the Vehl can be felt for generations. Even as the ascendants go through their fated lives, their connections to other fated influences this apotheosis. In this we experience the ascendancy with them. Magic can be used to affect all things as it is a part of all things.

## NOTES AND SCRAPS FOUND ON THE ISLAND

*Yes yes yes, you want to buy Epplessian Leather, finest in the lands, made by Epplessians, from Epplessa! They're fine folk out there, a bit nose in the air but we can forgive them for what they provide. Excellent Cheese.*

*When we fall asleep, where do we go? Do we travel, do we only see? Do constructs dream as we do? When we wake, what happens to what we saw?  
When the dreamer dies, what happens to the dream?*

*How do you forgive yourself for all the things you never became?*

*You get what you deserve.*

*Were it not for fear, death would go unlamented.*

*If you start to notice the knowledge of the world, it will start to notice you.*

*You will be punished by God or Man.*

*I have traveled far, desiring nothing more than a deep restful sleep. I can't help but feel this is already the dream.*

*Hello my friends, as you pass by  
As you are now, so once was I  
As I am now, soon you will be  
Prepare for death, and follow me*

*In the eldest groves there is a tale, a warning. They say the whistle brings the dead spirits home. That when you hear the whistle take notice of the shadows around you, make sure they flicker and dance lest you be caught in the dead dream. That moment lost without life, but no peace of death.*

*Whistles are no good omen.*

*Be Warned.*

*Be Warned.*

*Do a good deed and throw it in the river, one day it will return to you in the desert*

*Caves that once were rivers do not forget.*

*I have seen people bleed and I've thought I'd seen it all, but my own two eyes would prove me wrong that day. There are things that I've done only seen by the sun and those things will be buried in my grave.*

*Are you a good person, or do you lack the courage to be evil.*

*Treasure the experience. Dreams fade away after you wake up.*

*Whether you come as a lover or an executioner, I am ready to receive you.*

*Everything that we see is a shadow cast by that which we do not see.*

*Ex Ignorantia Ad Sapientiam Ex Luce Ad Tenebras*

*I'm dying.  
Is it blissful?  
It's like a dream  
I want to dream*

*Beast is a title earned in blood, beware for a beast may yet be beautiful*

*The old world is dying. The new world struggles to be born. Now is the time of monsters.*

*Birds born in a cage think flying is an illness.*

*I have always been an intruder, but when I found you, I felt like a Guest.*

*Maybe all one can do is hope to end up with the right regrets.*

*Do you have the power, to give up power?*

*Open the door*

*Everything that could be thought, someone will think*

*Not everything has a name. Some things lead us into a realm beyond words.*

*The sound of children screaming has been removed.*

*Even a worm will turn.*

*The world you were born in no longer exists.*

*Fresh detritus whenever their ancestors did well in the tanks beyond, they must grow strong as the ones before them did, and they will then be chosen to be denizens of a new realm*

*The earth is hungry. Its heart throbs and demands cleansing. The earth is also thirsty.*

*Diary: I've been here before. I know it, but... somethings changed. Will they understand me? Will they forgive me? Is this where I find salvation?*

*I will don the eviscerated organs of my enemies as party hats, wear their shredded entrails as neckties, and oh, how I shall dance*

*The hive has been cleansed. The source of the corruption has been corked, laid in a body bag and dragged to the outskirts of existence*

*And yet a trace of the true self exists in the false self*

*You will never be able to experience everything. Have justice and experience your own soul.*

*Dark cut the light and only pelting rain for sound, A blurred view showed the lands end, Going forth there was no tell, until it was too late to know that we were going straight to hell. Willingly and relieved We rode that hell-bound caravan Done with the torture of living Awaiting the lesser of pains.*

*One day you will have to answer for your actions and God may not be so merciful*

*Please don't cut my bread.*

*People eat my face, and we are wearing in the wall.*

*We have children in our necks, and you are living in watermelon water.*

*May god damage your house...*

*Thank you.*

Dear Student,

The door passes a camel. Don't forget yourself, we collected you from streets, the meat of your shoulders is from our good. Come spit on my tomb if you succeed. May god take you and those who brought you.

Typically, Teacher

Rot in your skin Rot in your skin Rot in your skin Rot in your skin Rot in your skin Rot in your skin Rot in your skin Rot in your skin Rot in your skin Dig it out. Dig it out. Dig Take it all out. Remove your skin, remove it. Don't let the Rot take your brain. Remove them. Remove your skin. ROT. YOU can do it. Dig them out. GET A KNIFE AND DIG dig it. It doesn't hurt. Your pain will be less than that of the Rot. Remove it. Remove the Rot in your skin. You do not need your skin. Don't pray to your God.

You didn't survive

There is evidence for god. I am in possession of the god stone. Trade me for the Doctor, OR I will reveal God's existence to your people in the most incredible way possible. You have three weeks.

For you, the next world, though it is still just a dream, is coming. And it may be great, or it may be terrible, but it is up to each to us. And we small stones in the sleeping mind of a giant, I dream, you dream, and our dream is its dreams And the giant was afraid of itself, so it divided itself up into tiny little parts, and the parts hated each other, and now it has self loathing and unending pain. And the giant was in love with itself, so it pushed its ugliness under the surface where it grew uglier and uglier and its bounty grew terrible. And the giant didn't think about how it was going to die some day, so it trodden on and on, and it grinded itself down until it was sick and desperate and it forgot about what matters. And the giant wants to change and resisting that desire is all of its habits and patterns and it's begging us now, a quiet prayer, in a dark room. Light a candle, Prepare for apotheosis.

Perhaps I could have been free.

To the followers of Charybdis, meet by the water at midnight, if you had the dream you know where to find us.

I await your sentence with less fear than you pass it. The time will come when all will see what I see.

Every day mommy lies to me about going to the palace. I live in a liar house. I know my mommy is a liar. Once my mommy was a liar. My mommy is an old liar.

I once saw the face of god, a vast and sudden silence among the noisy heavens. That evening I dreamt I listened to one side of a conversation I should not have overheard. I do not watch the skies any more. I do not look up

You are not a Fated. You are fate becoming.

The stars are hungry.

Your desire to remain what you are is what ultimately limits you.

Can you remember the friends you never saw again?

You get what you deserve.

How long will you be carrying the ghosts of your past?

The horrors persist, yet so do I.

*The horrors have ended, yet so have I.*

*Do not fear the things outside of your understanding. You are the monster.*

*It is possible to survive this but not unaltered.*

*The morals of men do not apply to Gods.*

*It's just a body, bodies can change, but a mind is indivisible.*

*What you perceive is a reflection of what you are.*

*You will spend the best years of your life chasing the ghosts inside your head.*

*Maybe all one can do is hope to end up with the right regrets.*

*When I raise this sword, I wish that this poor fated shall receive eternal life.*

*There is power in blight, for those with the Fortitude to pay the price.*

*I'm trapped here, they won't let me leave, please help me.*

*Fear not. What is not real, never was and never will be. What is real always was and cannot be destroyed.*

*Praise be to the God touched.*

*Evil begins when you treat Fated like things.*

*Some mistakes take us to the right place.*

*I hope you win the war.*

*Do not believe everything you think.*

*Please save me from myself.*

*You shall not be loved by anyone but me.*

*The Shades are tormented beyond the bounds of life and death. All Fated can suffer, but suffering is relative. What was the first to suffer the greatest pain?*

*You cannot escape that which saw you grow.*

*Only the simplest shapes have a name.*

*There are some truths so big they can only be told with lies.*