



EN5ider Presents:

Diaspora

Part Two

A 5E-Compatible Adventure for 13th- to 14th-Level Characters



Act Two: I've Been Around the World

IN THIS ACT, THE PARTY RECOVERS AN ARTIFACT TO LET Kasvarina recover five centuries of memories from across the world.

Apocalypse Then

Exploration. Montage.

Eladrin weretigers and a clergy garrison are poised to replay an old battle of the First Victory, right where the party needs to find an artifact.

Several hundred miles north of Rumah Terakir, the *lost arc of Reida* lies at the site known as Ingatan's Refuge, located a stone's throw from the Clergy backed garrison of Vigil Longis. For years the Clergy have marched out from their fort seeking the lair of the weretigers, and recently they managed to kill the clan's elder, whose magic was responsible for keeping the weretigers shielded from divination. Now the Clergy garrison leader **Aulus Atticus** awaits reinforcements so they can stamp out the monsters in one strike, while the young and angry weretiger leader **Betronga Sidhon** riles up his people for war.

In Sentosa they should have learned that a clan of territorial eladrin weretigers—naturally born with their powers, not afflicted, and known as *bagheva* in the local tongue—have claimed Ingatan's

Holy Artifacts.

The *Humble Hook*, a relic sacred to the Clergy, gives any PC wearing it the clout to give orders to Aulus Atticus, as long as they don't do anything sacrilegious.

The *arsenal of Dhebisu*, by contrast, enrages Betronga Sidhon and his weretigers, who recognize it as the weapon that defeated their god. The PCs would be wise to keep it hidden unless they want to provoke a fight.

Refuge as their home. They do not revere the old god of memory and fire, but instead worship Hewanharimau, the forbidden god of savagery. They call themselves the Children of Hewanharimau, and see their powers as a blessing. Indeed, they refuse to share it with outsiders, and will relentlessly track and slay anyone not of their clan who survives a battle and might have contracted lycanthropy.

The people of Sentosa know the Clergy have been active in the area, but don't know any news more than a few years old. Ingatan's Refuge and Vigil Longis are barely a mile from each other, but it's nearly 40 miles more to the next settlement larger than 10 people. The next large force of Clergy is off to the east, exploring the Perpetual City.

Just how to get past all this and recover the *lost arc* is up to the PCs. While it's possible they might just sneak past the weretigers, it's more likely they'll have to pick a side in the conflict and help one group slaughter the other. Here we present some scenes that may occur on their mission.

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SPECIAL THANKS TO
my sister Aynsley and her five remaining eggs—thanks for helping Dad put up those awful Xmas lights, it gave me more time to work on this; to the hundreds of gamers who backed the original release of ZEITGEIST on Kickstarter; and to the over one thousand generous patrons of EN World ENSIDER whose support has made this Fifth Edition update possible.

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Watcher in the Dark.

This encounter should occur at night or during a dark daytime storm, probably while the party is still 10 or 20 miles out from Ingatan's Refuge. The PCs have attracted the attention of a young and adventurous scout for the Children of Hewanharimau, **Talios Valanar** (a distant relative of Athrylla, matriarch of Sentosa). She skirts the edge of the party's camp or travel formation, but remains in eladrin form. If spotted she flees into the woods, then transforms into a tiger and hides.

If somehow captured, Talios remains tightlipped about herself, refusing to give any information about her clan. Instead, she directs the conversation toward Vigil Longis, telling her clan's perspective of the "vicious Clergy soldiers who steal our lands and kill our youngest and oldest."

If convinced she can trust the party with a DC 25 Charisma (Persuasion) check, she offers to bring them back to the Children of Hewanharimau's camp to meet Betronga hoping that they can join the struggle against the Clergy.

Should combat erupt, Talios has the statistics of a **Bramblehome hunter** (page 9).

Holy Patrol.

About two miles out from Ingatan's Refuge, the PCs come across a contingent of Clergy soldiers—eight vindicators and two chaplains. These dour soldiers routinely patrol the jungle, chopping down trees that carry eladrin warding runes and planting copper rods that bear Clergy holy symbols, which make the weretigers uneasy. Within 20 feet of these rods, followers of faiths other than the Clergy take a -1 penalty to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws (atheists are unaffected).

Three of the vindicators and one of the chaplains are at half their maximum hit points, being pressed into the patrol at the behest of the garrison's commander. A lack of time and resources has prevented the Clergy from keeping the soldiers at top physical shape and the chaplains are currently down some spells.

The leader of the Clergy patrol is a junior vicar by the name of **Lionel Talbot**. Talbot is edgy and believes the tigers are waiting to ambush his patrol at any moment. He's been grumbling to the men under his command about how pointless and dangerous their daily patrols are. They have adopted a bit of a "shoot first, ask questions later" mentality when dealing with the strange and magical. If the PCs belong to any uncommon race, or have any non-standard animal companions, the patrol will attack at the first sign of hostility. If Talios is with the party, they attack on sight.

Otherwise, it's simple enough to convince Talbot to take the PCs back to the garrison—only a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check is needed. All the way back he grumbles and none-too-subtly implies the party ought to talk some sense into his commander.

Vigil Longis.

The Clergy deploys several garrisons throughout the colony Vigilia. Each garrison has the long-term mission to drive back the natives and claim territory. The soldiers and chaplains build an artificial hill fort, surrounded by a 20-foot high wooden wall and an outer fraise of sharpened pikes, then send forth patrols every day. Every few months, once they have cleared an area of all hostile



Aulus Atticus. Sent at a young age from his monastery to the jungles of Elfaivar, Aulus has spent much of his life battling the eladrin. Trained as a godhand by an ascetic order, Aulus rose in the ranks due to the heavenly power of his fists and the loyalty of his men, rather than any skill at church politics. As commander of a Clergy outpost, Aulus holds out against a growing tide of inhuman creatures that stalk the jungles and seek the blood of humans.

Despite his overwhelming combat prowess, Aulus is a quiet man who looks out for those under his command. He directs the camp orchestra, and himself plays a circumspect cello he has proudly lugged through two decades of deployment. He thinks it is important to maintain civilized practices even when one's business is violence, but civilization does demand order, and he demands unquestioning loyalty from his men.

As for the eladrin, he has no particular disdain for them, but he values protecting his people above all else. He has no sympathy for savages who are still fighting a war they lost five centuries ago.

indigenous people, the soldiers dismantle the fort, travel 10 or 20 miles, and build a new one.

Led by the stern godhand Aulus Atticus, Vigil Longis boasts a population of 70, most of whom have been on this mission for five years. Standard Clergy dictates would see the soldiers replaced after three years, but the turmoil between Risur and Danor has put Crisillyir on high alert, making them unwilling to redeploy troops outside the homeland.

Worse, the outpost has been stuck in place for half a year after coming under siege from the Children of Hewanharimau. There were originally over 150 able-bodied troops available to Atticus, but this number has now diminished to the current 70 battle-scarred survivors. A recent raid by the weretigers gave the Clergy soldiers a victory though when they managed to take down the druid leader of the weretigers.

Anywhere else these troops would be lauded as great warriors, simply by dint of how many battles they've survived. So far from home however, they feel unappreciated and foolish with only their



faith and Aulus's stern discipline keeping them going. Within a few minutes of seeing them, it should be obvious to the party that these are highly competent men—not to be attacked lightly.

ADVERSARIES

- 13 Vigil chaplains
- 57 Vigil vindicators
- Aulus Atticus, godhand

The Garrison.

For the most part, the rank and file vindicators of the garrison keep watch and launch patrols into the nearby jungle, supported by senior chaplains. It is the responsibility of the chaplains to maintain spiritual strength among the ranks.

Raised platforms inside the wall are manned by 15 vindicators at a time. Every day 17 troops (14 vindicators and 3 chaplains) are deployed in the jungles surrounding the garrison. The rest of the soldiers attend to maintenance, cooking, or are simply trying to grab some sleep between double shifts. Everyone here is male.

Several structures reside within the camp, each erected over time for the specific needs of the garrison. They are described as follows.

1. **Barracks.** Eerily empty, this building once could house 150, but now has fewer than half as many.
2. **Mess Hall.** The soldiers eat jungle meat and local vegetables, which they hate. Each day a handful of soldiers are allowed to eat food conjured by a chaplain, but only if they have any spells left for the day.
3. **Recreation Center.** Aulus hosts music practice here, and occasionally traders deliver books from abroad.
4. **Hall of Prayer.** The stained-glass windows for this sturdy wooden chapel have been carted hundreds of miles overland and set up in several different forts during the past five years, a testament to the piety of the soldiers.
5. **Commander's Quarters.** These sparse quarters contain only the barest of furnishings, with much of the building being given to a large meeting and planning table, along with rows of holy texts held on wooden bookshelves.
6. **Armory.** Most of the men wield maces, spears, and crossbows. The chaplains store their magical healing supplies here.
7. **The Pyre.** Outside the walls, the soldiers burn dead animals, as well as allies and enemies. Most of the men here believe a completely unfounded stereotype that eladrin exhume buried bodies to eat, which is why the soldiers cremate even their own brethren.

Vigil Chaplain

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral cleric (life) 10

Armor Class 20 (mithral plate, shield)

Hit Points 75 (10d8+30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws wis +7, cha +6

Skills Arcana +5, Intimidation +6, Persuasion +6, Religion +5

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Blessed Healer. When the Vigil chaplain casts a spell of 1st level or higher that restores hit points to a creature other than the Vigil chaplain, the Vigil chaplain regains hit points equal to 2 + the spell's level.

Channel Divinity (2/Short Rest). The Vigil chaplain can channel divine energy to fuel one of two magical effects.

Preserve Life. As an action, the Vigil chaplain presents their holy symbol and evokes healing energy that restores 50 hit points. The Vigil chaplain chooses creatures within 30 feet and divides those hit points among them. This feature can restore a creature to no more than half of its hit point maximum and it cannot be used on undead or constructs.

Turn Undead. As an action, the Vigil chaplain presents their holy symbol and speaks a prayer censuring the undead. Each undead within 30 feet that can see or hear them must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. Undead of CR 1 or less that fail are destroyed. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from the Vigil Chaplain as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of them. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

Disciple of Life. Whenever the Vigil chaplain uses a spell of 1st level or higher to restore hit points to a creature, the creature regains additional hit points equal to 2 + the spell's level.

Feat: War Caster. The Vigil chaplain has advantage when they are concentrating on a spell and have to make a Constitution saving throw from taking damage, they can wield weapons or a shield in both hands and still make somatic components for spellcasting, and they can use their reaction to cast a spell (maximum casting time: 1 action) at a creature that provokes an opportunity attack from them.

Spellcasting. The Vigil chaplain is a 10th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). They have the following spells prepared from the cleric's spell list:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, light, resistance, sacred flame, spare the dying*

1st level (4 slots): *bles, command, cure wounds, detect evil and good, inflict wounds, sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *aid, hold person, lesser restoration, silence, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *beacon of hope, dispel magic, magic circle, revivify, sending, spirit guardians*

4th level (3 slots): *death ward, guardian of faith, stone shape*

5th level (2 slots): *flame strike, mass cure wounds, raise dead*

ACTIONS

+1 Silver Warhammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 4 (1d8+1) magical bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage.

Vigil Vindicator

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral fighter (champion) 7

Armor Class 18 (+1 half-plate)**Hit Points** 59 (7d10+21)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws STR +5, CON +5**Skills** Athletics +5, Intimidation +2, Perception +4, Survival +4**Senses** passive Perception 14**Languages** Common, Elvish**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)**Action Surge (1/Short Rest).** On their turn, the Vigil Vindicator can take an additional action on top of their regular action and a possible bonus action.**Feat: Power Attack.** When the Vigil Vindicator makes their first melee weapon attack in a turn, they can choose to take a -5 penalty to their melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, the Vigil Vindicator can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after they use a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or scores a critical hit with it. The Vigil Vindicator can only use this feature on their turn.**Improved Critical.** The Vigil Vindicator's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.**Remarkable Athlete.** The Vigil Vindicator adds +1 to any Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution check they make that doesn't already use their proficiency bonus. In addition, when they make a running long jump, the distance they can cover increases by 2 feet.**Second Wind (1/Short Rest).** On its turn, the Vigil Vindicator can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+7 hit points.**ACTIONS****Extra Attack.** The Vigil Vindicator can attack twice, instead of once, whenever they take the Attack action on their turn**+1 Silver Halberd.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) magical slashing damage.**Light Crossbow (15 silver bolts).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.**EQUIPMENT****Possessions.** The Vigil Vindicator carries holy water, 2 *potions of greater healing*, and *antitoxin*.**Aulus Atticus, Godhand Commander**

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 21 (*Armatura Divinitatae* [+1 plate], defense fighting style, *ring of protection*)**Hit Points** 157 (15d10+75)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws STR +6, DEX +1, CON +6, INT +0, WIS +8, CHA +8**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Arcana +4, Athletics +10, Insight +7, Intimidation +7, Perception +7, Religion +4, Stealth +5 (disadvantage)**Condition Immunities** charmed, disease, frightened**Senses** passive Perception 17**Languages** Common**Challenge** 14 (11,500 XP)**Divine Smiting.** When Aulus hits a creature with a melee weapon attack or unarmed strike, he can expend one spell slot to deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 5d8. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend.**Feat: Power Attack.** When Aulus makes his first melee weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage.**Float Like a Cherub, Sting Like An Angel.** On a successful hit with his unarmed strike, Aulus can spend 25 points from his Lay on Hands pool to summon forth a celestial created from his belief. This summoned simulacrum has the same statistics as a [deva](#) but does not communicate, except to accept telepathic commands from Aulus. The celestial appears within 15 feet of Aulus, and does not act until the start of his next turn. The celestial acts on the same initiative as Aulus. On his turn, Aulus must spend an action concentrating or else the celestial disappears.**Lay on Hands (75 points/Long Rest).** As an action, Aulus can touch a creature and restore a number of hit points to it, up to the maximum amount remaining in this pool. Alternatively, he can expend 5 hit points to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it.**Purity of Spirit.** Aulus is always under the effects of a *protection from evil and good* spell.**Sacred Weapon (1/Short Rest).** As an action, Aulus imbues his fists with positive energy. For 1 minute, he adds +2 to attack rolls made with unarmed strikes. The weapon also emits bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light 20 feet beyond that. Aulus can end this effect on his turn as part of any other action. If he falls unconscious, this effect ends.**Sense Chaos (3/Long Rest).** As an action, until the end of his next turn Aulus knows the location of any creature with a chaotic alignment within 60 feet of him that is not behind total cover. He knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence he senses, but not its identity. Within the same radius, he also detects the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the *hallow* spell.**Spellcasting.** Aulus is a 15th-level spellcaster that uses Charisma as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15; +7 to hit with spell attacks). Aulus has the following spells prepared from the paladin's spell list:**1st level (4 slots):** *bless, cure wounds, divine favor, protection from evil and good, sanctuary***2nd level (3 slots):** *aid, lesser restoration, magic weapon, zone of truth***3rd level (3 slots):** *beacon of hope, daylight, dispel magic, magic circle***4th level (2 slots):** *death ward, dispel evil and good, freedom of movement, guardian of faith***ACTIONS****Extra Attack.** Aulus attacks four times, instead of once, whenever he takes the Attack action on his turn.**Unarmed Strike.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) magical bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage.**Cleansing Touch (2/Long Rest).** Aulus ends one spell on himself or on one willing creature that he touches.



Introductions & Negotiations.

Regardless of how they arrive, the PCs are directed to meet with Aulus in the Hall of Prayer, where the commander is in a moment of deep entreaty with the divine forces he believes in. Upon their arrival he mutters a final prayer to the divine and stands to greet them.

Aulus Atticus is a giant of a man, clad for now in a simple ascetic's uniform, though later they'll likely see him in his glittering golden plate armor, the *Armatura Divinitatae*. He displays no surprise at the appearance of outsiders, and in general his expression is hard to read.

Aulus offers them a tour of the camp, asking their business as he walks them through the weathered fort. Sure never to interrupt, Aulus responds to their story with simple nods or hand gestures, only occasionally filling a pause to ask a question. Even if told the full scope of the PCs mission, Aulus sees no issue with restoring Kasvarina's memories for the purpose of stopping the Obscurati. Likely, the PCs will not explain the full story of their mission, but as luck would have it Aulus does not quite care.

If the party mentions seeking Ingatan's Refuge, the godhand explains that he's heard the name before. The weretigers call their lair *Kanta Mahala*, or Bramblehome, but the ruins were originally called Ingatan's Refuge. Aulus describes the lycanthropes as horrific creatures of the night that are unwelcome even by the other

eladrin on the jungle. His group got lucky when they managed to kill several weretigers who were sent out carrying messages to other clans, and he had hoped his men's recent victory over the beastmen would cow them, but now divinations suggest the survivors are planning an attack.

Aulus won't ask outright, but he'll try to gauge whether the party seems willing to fight the weretigers. If so, he'll offer to coordinate with them, lending his men in a massive assault. He'll want a day to let his people rest and recover, and then they can attack at dawn the following day. After that, the party can do as they please in the ruins (with the understanding that they are, ultimately, controlled by the Clergy and the colony of Vigilia).

Should the PCs decide not to pursue a fight, Aulus offers to let the PCs spend the night to rest, but requests they leave the garrison in the morning. If he gets any hint that the party might be allying with the weretigers against his people, he take a deep breath to calm himself, gives them a chance to explain themselves or change their minds, and if that fails he'll order the entire camp to attack them.

Bramblehome.

An unnamed river is split in two by the natural awning of stone over a shallow cave, and the waterfall cascades on either side of a 100-foot



high outcropping. A switchback leads up the front of the outcropping to the long-abandoned holy site known as Ingatan's Refuge, a spacious temple hollowed into the outcropping. At the back of the cave, just visible from the outside, a massive statue of Ingatan sits, his four arms held palm-up, as if waiting to hold something. Erosion has weathered his face away, and looters have stolen the gold that once adorned him, but the temple's greatest treasure still remains.

The Children of Hewanharimau have built huts in a tangle of massive thorny vines that have grown up around Ingatan's Refuge. Known as *Kanta Mahala* or Bramblehome, the weretiger lair is difficult to assail by all but the most prepared of attackers. The mobility required to navigate the weretiger's home—as well as the numbers required for such an attack—is one of the major reasons the Clergy have not been able to mount a proper assault against the raiding lycanthropes.

The full weretiger cult of Hewanharimau has hundreds of followers, and clans around Elfaivar are engaged in hit and run tactics against the Clergy and other colonies. But here at Bramblehome, the seat of the cult's power, long months of fighting have whittled their numbers to only 32 warriors, plus a score of elders, pregnant mothers, and children too young to fight. The previous Raja of the clan foolishly sent out messengers to summon allies, then attacked Vigil Longis before they returned. He died for his recklessness.

The weretigers' newly-risen leader Betronga seethes with vengeance, but he knows he needs more warriors to drive off the humans. Suspecting that the couriers to the rest of the clan were caught, he has sent out emissaries to other eladrin settlements that are closer, but are not weretigers. If Betronga cannot get allies, he'll turn his fellow eladrin into lycanthropic brothers and sisters.

ADVERSARIES

- 23 Bramblehome hunters
- 8 Bramblehome shamans
- Betronga, weretiger raja
- 20 non-combatants

Clan Defenses.

Throughout the day, only a third of the weretigers remain awake, standing guard in their humanoid form. Once nightfall comes, the remaining 20 wake, forming patrols and strike parties. Those who remain in the lair stay in humanoid form, while those taking part in the hunt or patrols switch to hybrid or tiger forms. The shamans

One possible solution would be for the PCs to simply burn the weretigers out, but the nearby waterfalls make it impossible to *fireball* the vines and houses into ashes.

The (Were) Tiger's Den.

Located along the top edge of a 200-foot cliff, Bramblehome has one primary access point from the edge of the cliff. The vines that make up the den are as sturdy as solid wood, and have been fashioned as such in some places. Spells or magic that affect wood or plants will work on the vines, allowing spell casters the ability to manipulate the terrain if they possess such magic.

Terrain Perils: There are no railings or edges, and the slight curve of the vines means creatures are susceptible to falling should they move on any part of the growing vines. A creature performing

The Perpetual City.

Far to the east of the *Vigil Longis* lies the Perpetual City. A massive crater is filled with hundreds of interconnected stone buildings, and the deeper one goes into the earth, the closer the architecture resembles that of the early Clergy. The archaeologist who four centuries ago proposed a shared origin of the Clergy and Seedism was burned as a heretic.

The eladrin, by contrast, think the site is home to an ancient buried evil. Some eladrin wanderers live in the upper levels, but they refuse to explore out of sight of the sun and stars.

What exactly is inside the Perpetual City is up to you. It plays no role in the ZEITGEIST campaign, but if you want to hide clues to PC-related storylines or design a capstone Mega-Dungeon that no one has ever plundered, the remote wilds of Elfaivar ask you to consider them.

Aren't Lycanthropes Evil?

In traditional gaming, most lycanthropic creatures are evil (except bears for some reason... figure that out). So, why are the Children of Hewanharimau listed as Chaotic Neutral in alignment?

In the ZEITGEIST setting, the exact nature of the lycanthropic transformation that afflicts the Children of Hewanharimau is half-spiritual and half-curse. The affliction has been mostly overcome, though the weretigers still hold onto several bestial tendencies.

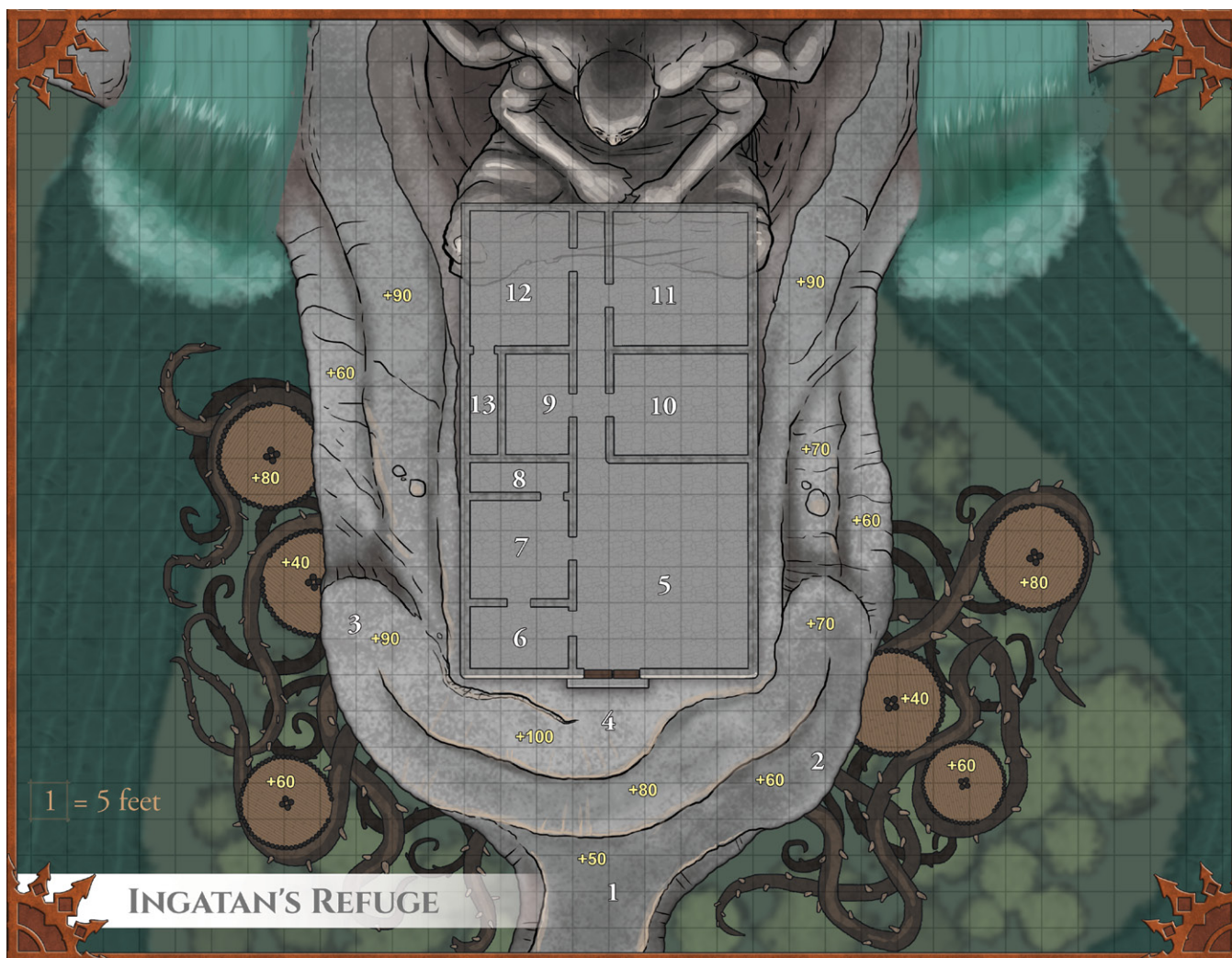
So there you have it, lycanthropes are not inherently evil in ZEITGEIST. Except bears. We're just going to assume werebears are godless killing machines.



Betronga Sidhon. A leader among the growing population of eladrin weretigers (called *bagheva* in the local tongue), Betronga seeks to unify his people and begin rebuilding the shattered eladrin nation. Betronga knows most other eladrin see his clan of weretigers as nothing more than vicious beasts, but he thinks spreading the blessing of lycanthropy will strengthen his race and help them reclaim their empire.

Betronga wishes only to cleanse his nation of the Clergy's remaining presence, and then create a true home for his people. If made to listen, he would ally with the remaining elves and try to build a true nation out of the ruins of Elfaivar. Prone to being overtaken by his animalistic nature, the desire to rebuild the shattered nation drives Betronga, and he is willing to make any sacrifice for his people.





anything more than complicated than moving through a square where the vine ends must make a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone as they slip to the ground. If the creature is next to the edge of a vine, a subsequent DC 15 Dexterity saving throw is required to avoid falling from the vine's edge to the rocks or jungle canopy below. The weretigers all possess a climb speed and are typically safe from the perils of tripping or falling, unless they are pushed by an attacker or moved by spells.

1. **Switchback.** A stone path carves its way up the outcropping to the entrance of Ingatan's Refuge. Several vines and huts emerge from the cliff face along the switchback.
2. **Hunters' Homes.** Scattered across the growing vines of Bramblehome are several two-story wooden homes, built with elegance and care outsiders might not expect of vicious weretigers. They have screens rather than full walls, though the roofs are sturdy enough to survive an 800-pound tiger dropping from above.

The eastern homes are occupied by the hunters, with the most successful ones given the lower homes so they are first to defend against intruders. Each building houses seven or eight weretigers, with the floors segregated by sex, though typically only half are indoors at a time.

3. **Shaman Homes.** On the vines growing from western face of the outcropping, two of these homes are each occupied by four shamans, while the highest hut at the rear is Betronga's own. He tried to claim the wife of the clan's previous leader, but she said she will stay with the noncombatants deeper in the cave until he manages to kill the humans who killed her last husband.

The shaman's huts are often used for rituals—one has a basin within filled with the blood of slain humans, while the other's basin holds the blood of slain animals. Prior to the start of any major skirmish or battle, Betronga leads his followers in a barbaric ritual where they adorn themselves in the two bloods.

4. **Entrance to the Refuge.** The old temple to Ingatan is described below (see *Raiders of the Lost Arc*, page 12). Further back, behind the statue of Ingatan, more homes house the noncombatants.

The Young Raja.

If the PCs trigger any alarms, Betronga is quick to emerge and take control of the situation. Despite his bloodthirsty nature, if he recognizes that the party are not Clergy he'll howl for a cessation of hostilities so the two sides can talk. A cornered Betronga



is a fierce fighter, but if the PCs manage to ambush the weretiger leader, he still offers to parlay.

Betronga is defensive of Ingatan's Refuge. Though his people do not worship Ingatan specifically, they know this place is holy. They believe that, though most eladrin reviled their god Hewanharimau, Ingatan respected history enough that he would know the truth. They hope that by guarding this temple, some day they will receive proof to exonerate their god. Betronga refuses to let anyone unworthy enter the refuge, but he readily offers a way the party can prove themselves.

The Children of Hewanharimau's guerilla war against the Clergy might currently be fueled by a desire for revenge, but the ultimate goal is to weaken the Clergy's presence. Betronga has heard rumors of wars elsewhere in the world, and of a black monster crashing through the woods to the south, visible only for the shadow it casts. Scouts say the monster heads for Crisillyir, and he wants to fight alongside it to drive away all the humans he can.

When the time is right, Betronga hopes to unite the lycanthrope clans throughout the jungles together into a new nation, a dream he believes possible for one important reason: the Children of Hewanharimau have the ability to breed and mature at rates far faster than normal eladrin.

With a fervent gleam in his eyes (and on his teeth), Betronga asks the PCs to help assault Vigil Longis, hoping to end the Clergy threat in the immediate region. If the PCs have already met with Aulus Atticus, then the weretigers would like the PCs to return and act as infiltrators for their final push against the garrison. In exchange for their assistance in defeating the Clergy, the weretigers pledge to give the PCs unrestricted access to Ingatan's Refuge, and offer their support in any future endeavors the PCs may have.

If the PCs refuse Betronga's offer, the weretiger is saddened, but then gives the order for his tribe to rip the PCs apart. If any PC seems sympathetic to the lycanthropes cause, he orders his followers to merely subdue that PC, so they can be converted, hoping they will see things better through the eyes of a tiger.

Bramblehome Hunter

Medium humanoid (eladrin, shapechanger), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (Constitution)

Hit Points 136 (16d8+64)

Speed 40 ft., 50 ft. in tiger form

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws STR +7, CON +7

Skills Acrobatics +5, Nature +3, Religion +3, Perception +7, Stealth +5, Survival +4

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Elvish (can't speak in tiger form)

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Danger Sense. The Bramblehome hunter has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that they can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, they can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Feat: Power Attack. When the Bramblehome hunter makes their first

melee weapon attack in a turn, they can choose to take a -5 penalty to their melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, the Bramblehome hunter can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after they use a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or scores a critical hit with it. The Bramblehome hunter can only use this feature on their turn.

Feral Instinct. The Bramblehome hunter has advantage on initiative rolls. Additionally, if they are surprised at the beginning of combat and aren't incapacitated, they can act normally on their first turn, but only if they enter their rage before doing anything else on that turn

Fey Ancestry. The Bramblehome hunter has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put them to sleep.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The Bramblehome hunter has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pounce (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). If the Bramblehome hunter moves at least 15 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. The Bramblehome hunter can then make one bite attack against that prone target as a bonus action.

Rage. On their turn, the Bramblehome hunter can enter a rage as a bonus action. While raging, they gain the following benefits if they aren't wearing heavy armor:

- + advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws,
- + when they make a melee weapon attack using Strength they gain a +2 bonus to the damage roll,
- + and they have resistance to all types of damage except for psychic.

The rage lasts until the Bramblehome Hunter is knocked unconscious. The Bramblehome hunter can also end their rage on their turn as a bonus action.

Reckless Attack. When the Bramblehome hunter makes their first attack on their turn, they can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives the Bramblehome hunter advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during this turn, but attack rolls against them have advantage until their next turn.

Shapechanger. The Bramblehome hunter can use their action to polymorph into a tiger-humanoid hybrid or into a tiger, or back into their true form, which is humanoid. Their statistics, other than their size, are the same in each form. Any equipment they are wearing or carrying isn't transformed. They revert to their true form if they die.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). In humanoid form, the Bramblehome hunter makes two greatclub attacks or two javelin attacks. In hybrid form, they can attack like a humanoid or make two claw attacks.

Bite (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with weretiger lycanthropy.

Claw (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) slashing damage.

+1 Greatclub (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+5) magical bludgeoning damage.

Javelin (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.



Bramblehome Shaman

Medium humanoid (eladrin, shapechanger), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 104 (16d8+32)

Speed 30 ft., 40 ft. in tiger form

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws INT +4, WIS +7

Skills Animal Handling +7, Arcana +4, Medicine +7, Nature +4, Perception +7, Religion +4, Survival +7

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Feat: War Caster. The Bramblehome shaman has advantage when they are concentrating on a spell and have to make a Constitution saving throw from taking damage, they can wield weapons or a shield in both hands and still make somatic components for spellcasting, and they can use their reaction to cast a spell (maximum casting time: 1 action) at a creature that provokes an opportunity attack from them.

Fey Ancestry. The Bramblehome shaman has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put them to sleep.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The Bramblehome shaman has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pounce (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). If the Bramblehome shaman moves at least 15 feet straight toward a creature and hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. The Bramblehome shaman can then make one bite attack against that prone target as a bonus action.

Shapechanger. The Bramblehome shaman can use their action to polymorph into a tiger-humanoid hybrid or into a tiger, or back into their true form, which is humanoid. Their statistics, other than their size, are the same in each form. Any equipment they are wearing or carrying isn't transformed. They revert to their true form if they die.

Spellcasting. The shaman is a 9th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). They have the following spells prepared from the druid's spell list:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, produce flame, resistance*

1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship, create or destroy water, cure wounds, detect poison and disease, fog cloud, longstrider*

2nd level (3 slots): *gust of wind, heat metal, hold person, pass without trace*

3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning, conjure animals, protection from energy, wind wall*

4th level (3 slots): *blight, dominate beast*

5th level (1 slot): *contagion*

Wild Shape (2/Short Rest). The Bramblehome shaman can use their action to magically assume the shape of a beast that he has seen before that has a maximum CR of 1. They can stay in a beast shape for 4 hours. The Bramblehome shaman then reverts to their normal form unless they expend another use of this feature. They can revert to this normal form earlier by using a bonus action on their turn. The Bramblehome shaman automatically reverts if they fall unconscious, drop to 0 hit points, or dies. This feature functions the same way as a druid's Wild Shape.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). In humanoid form, the Bramblehome shaman makes two quarterstaff attacks. In hybrid form, they can attack like a humanoid or make two claw attacks.

Bite (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10+1) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with weretiger lycanthropy.

Claw (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) slashing damage.

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (1d8+1) bludgeoning damage if wielded with two hands.

Betronga Sidhon, Weretiger Raja

Medium humanoid (eladrin, shapechanger), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 130 (20d8+40)

Speed 30 ft., 40 ft. in tiger form

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws STR +6, DEX +10

Skills Animal Handling +8, Athletics +6, Insight +8, Medicine +8, Perception +8, Religion +6, Stealth +10, Survival +8

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Bonded Tigers. Betronga keeps two dire tigers, Benci and Takut, with him at all times. These massive tigers have a spiritual bond with their master. While within 100 feet of Betronga, anytime Betronga takes damage, that damage is instead divided in half and applied to both tigers. If one tiger is dead, the full damage is transferred to the other tiger. Betronga may opt to suppress this trait once a tiger reaches 1 hit point; any remaining spillover damage instead being applied to him.

Favored Enemy. Betronga has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track beasts, eladrin, humans, and undead, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Favored Terrains. When Betronga make an Intelligence or Wisdom check related to the coast or forest, his proficiency bonus (+5) is doubled if he is using a skill that he's proficient in.

Feat: Superb Aim. Betronga ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and he doesn't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When Betronga makes his first ranged weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

Evasion. When Betronga is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Keen Hearing and Smell. Betronga has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pounce (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). If Betronga moves at least 15



feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Betronga can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Shapechanger. Betronga can use his action to polymorph into a tiger-humanoid hybrid or into a tiger, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than their size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Spellcasting. Betronga is a 15th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared from the ranger's spell list:

1st level (4 slots): *alarm, animal friendship, detect poison and disease, goodberry*

2nd level (3 slots): *pass without trace, spike growth*

3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals, protection from energy*

4th level (2 slots): *freedom of movement*

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). In humanoid form, Betronga makes two greataxe attacks or two longbow attacks. In hybrid form, he can attack like a humanoid or make two claw attacks.

Bite (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10+1) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with weretiger lycanthropy.

Claw (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) slashing damage.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d12+2) magical slashing damage.

Kuat Lengen (+3 longbow). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8+8) magical piercing damage. If the target has a chaotic alignment, it takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage.

Dire Tiger

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 126 (12d12+48)

Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +9, Perception +5, Stealth +10

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages —

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Keen Smell. The tiger has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pounce. If the tiger moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the tiger can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10+5) slashing damage.

It Takes Two to Tragedy.

You might make it easy on the players if you don't want to force them to make uncomfortable choices that result in slaughtering innocents. Or you can let them struggle with their decision, or perhaps risk their mission altogether to try diplomacy. Sadly, there are no Disney-style star-crossed lovers to bridge the two cultures (though perhaps Lionel and Talios could be introduced...).

This scenario can play out a ton of ways. The two sides are fairly evenly matched, and so won't attack unless the PCs get involved. If the party does agree to fight, have them lead the way, with either faction's leader (Aulus or Betronga) at their side as they battle the other side's leader, plus a combination of considerable foes. For optimal angst, include Lionel or Talios on the opposing side.

POSSIBLE WERETIGER ENCOUNTER

- 1 Bramblehome shaman
- 2 Bramblehome hunters
- 2 dire tigers (Benci and Takut)
- Betronga

POSSIBLE CLERGY ENCOUNTER

- 2 Vigil chaplains
- 6 Vigil vindicators
- Aulus

A Clergy assault on Bramblehome entails the party and Aulus storming up the switchbacks while the rest of the garrison rappels down from the overhang above, and attack from behind. A weretiger assault on Vigil Longis is more straightforward, with the party and Betronga being responsible for opening the gate so the other eladrin can surge through.

While the party fights, narrate other weretigers and Clergy members battling around them. If the party can defeat the opposing encounter above, that's enough to start a snowball effect so the rest of their side can kill half the enemies then force the rest to surrender. They'll have won the right to enter Ingatan's Refuge, and the winning side might be able to fight for them in later adventures.

More than One Way to Skin a Weretiger.

Aside from killing their way to victory, how else might the party win?

Not Our Fight.

Alternately, the party might trick the two sides into fighting, then bail rather than joining in. Betronga sends his dire tigers to wrestle the godhand while he fires arrows from afar. Unless stopped, the weretiger lord manages to pincushion Atticus, eventually felling the godhand, only to be impaled on the blade of a summoned angel. Betronga orders a withdrawal, having lost four of his people while the humans lose fifteen.

In the aftermath, the soldiers of Vigil Longis flee back to civilization, falling one by one as the weretigers harry them in the jungle. The Clergy never learns their fates, but word of the battle spreads among the eladrin and emboldens other weretigers throughout the nation. Within two months clans will rally around Ingatan's



Refuge to plan a full assault on the capital of Vigilia. When that succeeds, a new movement begins of eladrin seeking to become Children of Hewanharimau.

Cat Burglary.

Sneaking into Ingatan's Refuge isn't hard. If they wait until Betronga is away for something, or occupied trying to sire some more Children, the other weretigers aren't particularly attentive, and the roar of the twin waterfalls can mask the party's approach. The challenge is getting away once flames start appearing in the hands of the statue of Ingatan.

We Couldn't Think of Any More Cat Puns.

Avoiding a fight altogether is possible. While Betronga wants a victory to rally his people, he'd settle for seeing the Clergy leave (though his people would probably kill a few of them as they retreated). And although Aulus wants to carry out his orders, he cannot command a mutinous unit. The party might be able to heighten the discontent among the soldiers, or concoct some fake threat to the Clergy that demands they return. This leaves every side unhappy and likely earns the party no allies in the long run, but results in the fewest deaths.

Raiders of the Lost Arc

Exploration. Real-Time.

But we still had this pun up our sleeves.

The switchback stops in front of the doors to Ingatan's Refuge 100 feet up a rocky outcropping, a site plundered shortly after the Great Malice, then not breached again for centuries. The last priests of the temple altered its magic so that rather than evoking memories of wisdom and peace, it acts as a trap for intruders, throwing them back into dangers of their past, and even conjuring possible deaths from their future.

The refuge consists of a main meditation chamber and several rooms once used for training, sleeping, and supplies. Light within is provided by small windows carved through the walls. And by fire, but not just yet.

To acquire the *lost arc of Reida*, a visitor must pass four tests of past and future. Each test conjures a flame in one of the hands of the monolithic statue of Ingatan. But the tests have been altered from their original purpose. Now they simply seek to kill any intruders.

1. **Refuge Hall.** Prayer mats lie on the ground, still pristine, even smelling freshly washed, despite the ground around them being covered in flaky moss.

A fresco on the eastern wall reveals an idealized form of the god Ingatan, a rotund, four-armed figure flanked by elephants. He holds a flame in each hand, painted with a different color: gray, red, yellow, white. A successful DC 25 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that these represent the far past (gray), near past (red), near future (yellow), and far future (white). As the trials are passed, the flames here begin to glow, and giant fires appear in the hands of the statue of Ingatan outside.

If all four trials are passed, the fresco fades away into a fire-filled doorway which cannot be seen through. A creature who steps through the fire is unharmed, and emerges atop the temple right in front of the cross-legged statue of Ingatan. The *lost arc of Reida* floats within arm's reach, and once it is taken, all the fires go out.

2. **Dining Room.** Four low tables sit here, along with a tub holding fresh water.
3. **Kitchen.** A single banana sits on a counter-top beside old cutlery.
4. **Pantry.** Peppery breads here don't have any mold on them.
5. **Purification Chamber.** Warm air wafts out of this room. If someone steps inside, it bursts into flame, dealing 1d6 fire damage at the end of each round.
6. **Hall of the Far Past.** Cool fog floats in the doorway, and nothing can be seen through it until a visitor steps through. Effectively, the room beyond doesn't exist yet until a person enters, so most divinations fail. Once a creature steps inside, it experiences a vision of the far past (see below). Someone who enters the room while a vision is ongoing joins it.

If the creature or creatures survive the vision, they find themselves standing in a relatively bare stone room with a washing basin and clean robes fitted perfectly for them. The fog at the doorway vanishes, and the vision will not repeat for 24 hours.
7. **Hall of the Near Past.** As above, but with a vision of the near past. When the vision is completed, creatures find corpses, showing no sign of injury, of a dozen eladrin priestesses who perished in the Great Malice. Their bodies have been carefully placed with hands serenely folded on their chests, and they haven't decayed in the past five centuries.
8. **Hall of the Near Future.** As above, but with a vision of the near future. After the vision, an illusion shows the room is strewn with bloodied and burnt corpses identical to the PCs. In truth the room is bare (Will DC 20 to disbelieve).
9. **Hall of the Far Future.** As above, but a vision of the far future. Also, when the vision ends the creature finds itself in a cramped, bare room, which was once used for visitors to deprive themselves and meditate, so that they might leave behind unwanted pasts. The floor is worn smooth where visitors would sit on their hands and knees, with their forehead pressed to the stone.

Vision of the Far Past.

The fog parts to reveal the following scene:

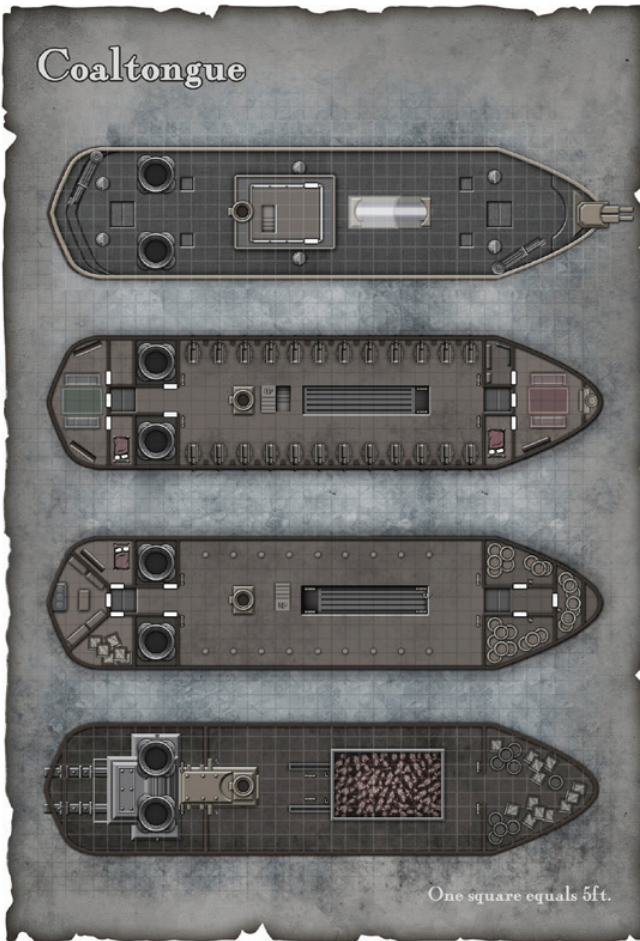
Everything is colored in monochrome. You stand on the deck of a great seafaring vessel, except the area has been converted into the site of a great party. Dozens of guests move about in amusement, sharing laughter and casual conversation alike. The familiar face of Stover Delft emerges from the crowd and he snags one of your arms.

"Do me a favor and go make sure the Duchess isn't 'sleeping through' the king's speech in order to embarrass her brother."

Suddenly, the back of the ship erupts in a great burst of gray and black flame. Eyes seethe with hunger as the fire coalesces into a two separate forms, both rushing down to consume those on the deck.



Coaltongue



The vision sets the PCs back aboard the R.N.S. *Coaltongue* from ZEITGEIST #1: *The Island at the Axis of the World*. The flame demons that have manifested are a representation of the engine sabotage the PCs (likely) stopped during the inaugural adventure.

ADVERSARIES

- 2 Coaltongue flame demons

Coaltongue Flame Demon

Huge fiend, neutral evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 190 (20d10+80)

Speed fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	23 (+6)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Arcana +5, Deception +4, History +5, Perception +8, Stealth +10

Damage Resistances acid, cold, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from magical weapons

Damage Immunities fire, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Magic Resistance. The fiend has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.



Benedict Pemberton. The dragon Gradiax, Lord of Steel, has almost never resumed his true form for the past two centuries, and until recently when he was outed by the party he maintained his eccentric alternate identity as a businessman and technologist. Though he only looks about fifty, and has the verve of a young man, he jokingly exaggerates his aged infirmities.

He speaks slowly with a deep, country-accented voice, and often leans back and tucks his thumbs in his belt loops as he talks. (Imagine a more laid-back Foghorn Leghorn.)

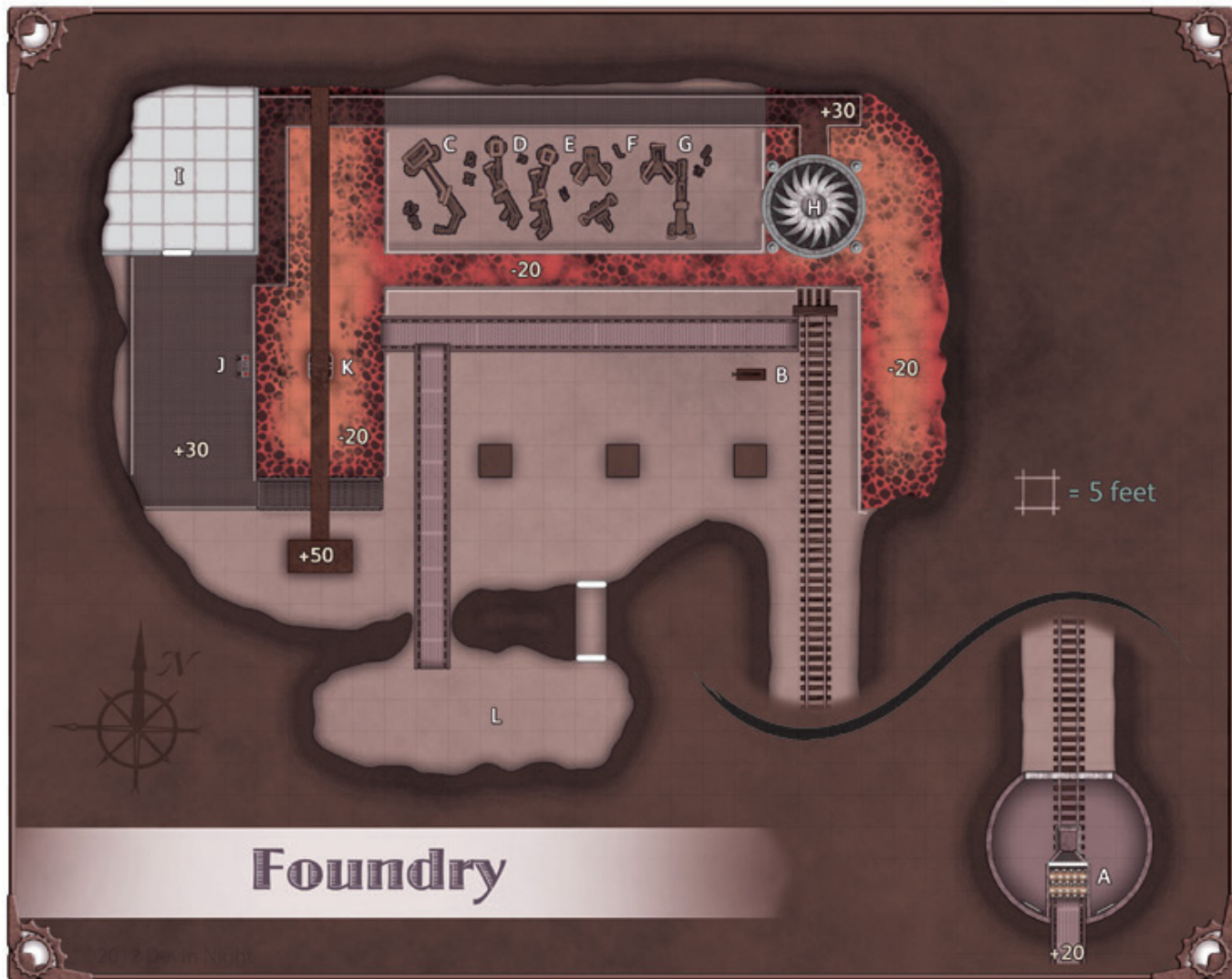
Though he likely disdains the party for thwarting his plans in ZEITGEIST #6, *Revelations from the Mouth of a Madman*, Pemberton has learned that the Obscurati might be a greater threat, and so he's devoting his resources—advanced constructs and fiercely loyal gnomish worshippers—to discover their plans. In a pinch, he might even offer to help the party.

Power Attack. When the fiend makes its first melee weapon attack in a turn, it can choose to take a –5 penalty to its melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, the fiend can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after it uses a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or scores a critical hit with it. The fiend can only use this feature on its turn.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 24 (4d8+6) magical bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) fire damage and 9 (2d8) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Death Throes (Recharge 6). When the fiend dies, it explodes in a 30-foot radius flash of swirling flames. Living creatures within the area take 18 (4d8) necrotic damage and 18 (4d8) fire damage (DC 16 Dexterity save halves). Fiends and undead regain 36 (8d8) hit points.



Foundry

Once defeated, the flame creatures shrink into a smaller form; a floating flame only a three inches in size. When the second demon is defeated, its fire joins with the first to create a larger hand-sized flame. Cool to the touch, the flame can be “held” by any creature willing to pick it up, the flame floating several inches above the hand holding it. Picking up the flame causes the vision to end.

Vision of the Near Past.

The fog parts to reveal the following scene:

Fog gives way to red steam, which blasts out from the cracked machinery of a foundry, nestled in the heart of a volcano. A large mechanical suit stands slumped and immobile at the top of the stairs, but enormous industrial mechanisms move along the walls. The temperature begins to rise to an unbearable level, and the steel platform separating you from the magma below starts to creak and buckle.

This vision sends the party to Oddcog’s Magma Emporium from *ZEITGEIST #6: Revelations from the Mouth of a Madman*. Luckily for the PCs, the memory-event recreated here includes no living creatures, just machines and magma. There are no steam-powered dragons or high-ranking conspiracy members in the chamber,

and Oddcog’s suit stands idle (the vision is accurate enough that Oddcog’s duplicant sits inside, but the real Oddcog is no longer controlling the duplicant). Instead, the PCs main concern should be the growing intensity of the heat in this chamber.

After the first round of being within the chamber, the heat rises to a point where it deals 1d6 points of fire damage to all creatures within at the end of each round. This damage increases by 1d6 every round thereafter, to 10d6 fire damage per round in round 11.

The party begins in the center of the main platform. After one round, three free-floating red flames appear—one above the turbine (area H on the map), one beside the beam cannon (area K), and one in the schematics room (area I). The flames can be picked up and carried, and while warm they cause no injury. If all three are united, the vision ends.

Depending on the party’s abilities, this could be a trivial challenge or life-threatening. Complicating matters is that the platform is breaking and sliding into the lava. To walk or run, a creature must make a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, and if they fail by 5 or more they fall prone. After 3 rounds, scatter a dozen 5-foot spaces where the platform is buckling. Each round thereafter all the buckling spaces collapse, and one space adjacent to each that collapsed starts to buckle. Of course the buckling should try to “chase” PCs.

Technologist PCs who reach the turbine (area H) can automatically shut down the machinery which stops the steam from becoming any hotter. Other characters can accomplish the same with a successful DC 12 Intelligence check. A faster solution might be to point the beam cannon (area K) at the turbine and blow it up.

Signals Crossed.

Inside the schematics room (area I), the vision has recreated Benedict Pemberton, or rather his duplicant, which somehow has rerouted the dragon industrialist's connection from another duplicant he's using. He's quite confused what's going on, but a quick bit of detecting magic later and he figures it's some sort of illusion. He's quite surprised to see the party, and can actually talk to them for a few moments if they spare the time. The heat doesn't bother him.

Pemberton asks what brings the party to this unusual situation, and whether it has anything to do with "our mutual enemy Nicodemus." He's still harboring a grudge against the party, especially if they killed his daughter Terakalir in this very room. He asks where they're headed next, and offers to send a few metal friends to "help" them. If the party is progressive enough to ask for his help fighting the Obscurati, he replies that's old enough to know how to walk and whistle at the same time. He thinks he's quite fine thwarting the conspiracy without their help.

When the vision ends, or if he's about to fall into lava, Pemberton severs his connection.

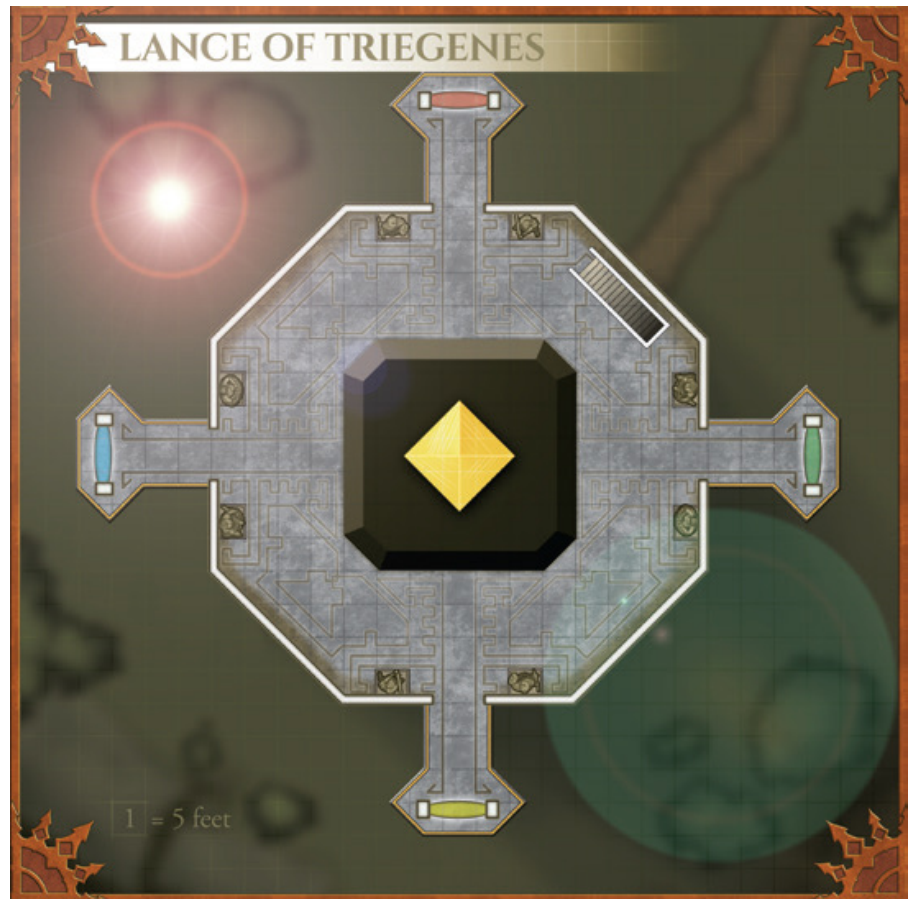
Vision of the Near Future.

The fog parts to reveal the following scene:

Fire again, blindingly bright. No, not fire, not quite. A magic portal sits within a platinum loop in front of you, and through it you see a vast golden dome reflecting the light of dawn, and around it the glint of the sun off silvery spears. You squint as your eyes adjust, and see above you a dark overcast sky, which has broken only enough to reveal the moon. Below you a city sprawls out to the horizon. You stand on a balcony jutting forth a nauseatingly high tower. Beneath you, the city's buildings are bone white. All you can hear is the scratchy flutter of the wind.

The light in the portal flickers, turns black, and then the wind is joined by another moan from within the platinum loop.

The PCs find themselves atop an illusory version of the Lance of Triegenes, the site of this adventure's final encounter in the ghost city of Methia (see above right for a map of the tower's summit.) They start on one of the balconies, but if they go inside they find a muscular figure wearing tattered rags lying dead in the chamber's



center. No matter what the party tries, the figure's features are shrouded in shadow, and no light source they possess can reveal who it is.

The portals on each of the four balconies activate to bring forth four incorporeal spirits known as Tragedies. Dim yellow flames cling to their wraithlike forms, and golden cinders burn in the pits of their skull-like eye sockets. Other wailing faces drift across their robes then vanish, like a drowning horde struggling to break the surface for a last gasp of breath.

They fly out and assault the party, and whenever one dies it vanishes but drops a yellow flame, which can be grasped like in the other visions. If a tragedy is destroyed while it is in the air, its flame falls 1,500 feet to the city below (150 feet in the first round, 300 feet the next, 450 feet the next, and then it hits the ground). If the flame hits the ground (4 rounds after the tragedy died), another tragedy moans its way through whichever portal is most advantageous.

Normally the tragedies swoop and make flyby attacks, ending their turns out over thin air. Smart parties will figure out to lure the undead inside. Once they collect four flames, they can combine them to end the vision. If they bring all four flames within 5 feet of the tattered figure in the center of the tower, the light pushes away the shadows on his face, revealing the visage of Andrei von Recklinghausen, whose body Nicodemus the Gnostic has been wearing of late.

ADVERSARIES

- 4+ tragedies



Tragedy

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 135 (30d8)

Speed fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	22 (+6)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Arcana +7, Deception +7, Insight +5, Intimidation +7, Perception +5, Religion +7, Stealth +10

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Ethereal Sight. The tragedy can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The tragedy can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Traitorous Madness. The tragedy can use a bonus action to stare into the eyes of an adjacent creature, filling the target's mind with images of betrayal and loss, distorting memory and perception if it fails a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, on its turn the target must attack its allies, as if it were under the effects of *dominate monster*. On a successful save, a creature is immune to the effects of Traitorous Madness for 24 hours.

Wailing. The tragedy constantly wails while it isn't incapacitated. Each creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the tragedy and can hear the wailing must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and rolls a d8 to determine what it does during its turn. On a 1 to 4, the creature does nothing. On a 5 or 6, the creature takes no action or bonus action and uses all its movement to move in a randomly determined direction. On a 7 or 8, the creature makes a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within its reach or does nothing if it can't make such an attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The tragedy attacks twice.

Incorporeal Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d6+3) fire damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Etherealness. The tragedy enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.



Vision of the Far Future.

The fog parts to reveal the following scene:

"Constables." Rock Rackus speaks with awkward solemnity. "Is that an asteroid I do spy?"

Through a gap in the forest canopy, you watch a white conflagration barrel through the sky, tumbling end over end as it streaks past you. The air roars with its passage. It disappears from view, but a moment later light flashes through the darkened forest from where it landed. The ground leaps beneath you, and only then do you hear the ear-shattering explosion of the impact.

"Son of a bitch!" Rackus abandons all attempts at civility. "There's more of 'em! Follow me!"

The party is witnessing a vision of what may occur in *ZEITGEIST* #12: *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*. To reach the graveyard of the multiverse they will have journeyed to the doomed plane of Av, which was once the Plane of Dreams, but is now being drawn into a massive constellation of cosmic gears that crush it and other worlds into fragments. The specifics don't matter here, and the illusory Rock Rackus won't stop to explain what the hell is going on.

More asteroids—drifting fragments of other worlds destroyed by the gears—fall from the sky, and within minutes the world will be annihilated. Rock leads the party and a mass of other people on a mad dash through the woods. The PCs know they recognize some of the faces of those around them, but the darkness and blinding impact flashes make it impossible for them to know just who.

The group hustles after Rock for a minute, and every 3 rounds an asteroid falls somewhere across the sky. The ground keeps shaking, and cracks begin to form—truly gaping, bizarre rifts that reveal that the ground is a massive hollow shell of crystal. Soil and trees tumble into the chasms, where they incandesce from the white-hot fire of the asteroids that have shattered the surface and ignited the interior.

Rock shouts that they're almost there, and through the woods ahead the fires of five torches illuminate what looks like a massive docked sailing ship. Other fires—these quite larger than



torches—become visible off to the party's right, like another group is running toward the same ship they are. Just then a rift opens up in front of the party, slicing an unknowable distance in either direction. Some poor fools in the faceless crowd trip and fall to their deaths. The PCs have to find some way to cross the 30-foot bottomless chasm.

While they're in the midst of navigating that obstacle, the golden legion attacks.

Egal the Shimmering.

In the final act of the campaign, several teased threats return to the world after being locked away by the Axis Seal for millennia. One is the golden legion of Egal the Shimmering, a general of Hell who clads his soldiers in loyalty-enforcing chains of solid gold. Eventually the party will learn that Egal's forces attempt to invade Av, but the world is pulled across the multiverse into the Gyre.

Now Egal's forces are trying to escape on a plane-traveling ship Rock Rackus brought here to try to save the woman he loves (well, one of them at least). To end the vision, the party must cross the 30-foot chasm, then reach the docked ship—200 feet away through the woods, which stop at the edge of the world (did we mention it's a flying ship?)—and gather the flames of the torches at the cliff's edge.

They are dogged by golden legionnaires, who teleport after them (no, gold doesn't block teleportation here) and try to ensure *they're* the ones who get to fly away to safety. The normal legionnaires resemble normal humans wrapped in hooked and barbed golden chains that dig into their flesh. Their commander towers over them, a four-armed glabrezu that had its flesh flayed and then wrapped in golden links to enforce its loyalty. Fiery crescents float behind their heads like broken, infernal halos.



ADVERSARIES.

- 4 Golden Legionnaires
- 1 Golden Legion commander

Golden Legionnaire

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (chain armor, shield)

Hit Points 91 (14d8+28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +4, Perception +7

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities fire

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Magic Resistance. The Golden Legionnaire has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Regeneration. The Golden Legionnaire regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the Golden Legionnaire takes radiant damage or damage from a golden weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn. The Golden Legionnaire dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Teleporter. The Golden Legionnaire can cast *misty step* at will.

Unnerving Gaze. The Golden Legionnaire targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see the Golden Legionnaire, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or look upon the Golden Legionnaire and see the face of either a departed loved one or bitter enemy. For the next minute, the target takes a -2 penalty on ability checks and attack rolls against the Golden Legionnaire.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Golden Legionnaire makes two melee attacks.

Armor Spikes. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage

+2 Golden Lance. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12+5) magical piercing damage plus Chain Grab.

The Golden Legionnaire does not have disadvantage when using its lance to attack a target within 5 feet of it and it does not have to wield it with two hands while unmounted.

Chain Grab. When the Golden Legionnaire hits a creature with its lance, chains from its armor spiral down the length of the lance and attempt to grasp the target. It deals normal damage and the Golden Legionnaire makes an opposed Strength (Athletics) check to grapple. If the grapple succeeds it pulls the target adjacent and deals 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage with its armor spikes. At the start of each of its turns, a creature grappling the Golden Legionnaire takes 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage from armor spikes.

~When the Golden Legionnaire teleports while it has an enemy grappled this way, the grappled creature comes along unless it succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. The Golden Legionnaire can only use Chain Grab to grapple with one creature at a time.



Golden Legion Commander

Huge fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (chain armor, natural armor)

Hit Points 184 (16d12+80)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	26 (+8)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws CON +9, WIS +12

Skills Deception +9, History +7, Insight +12, Intimidation +9, Perception +16, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities fire

Senses darkvision 60 ft., true sight, passive Perception 26

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The Golden Legionnaire commander's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 20; +12 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: *dispel magic*, *mirror image*, *seeming*

1/day: *power word stun*

Magic Resistance. The Golden Legionnaire commander has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Power Attack. When the Golden Legionnaire commander makes its first melee weapon attack in a turn, it can choose to take a -5 penalty to its melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, the Golden Legionnaire commander can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after it uses a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or scores a critical hit with it. The Golden Legionnaire Commander can only use this feature on its turn.

Regeneration. The Golden Legionnaire commander regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the Golden Legionnaire takes radiant damage or damage from a golden weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn. The Golden Legionnaire commander dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Teleporter. The Golden Legionnaire commander can cast *misty step* at will, traveling up to 40 feet (instead of 30 feet).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Golden Legionnaire commander makes two attacks with its pincers, two attacks with its claws, and one attack with its bite. It can replace any of these attacks with an armor spikes attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6+6) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d12+6) slashing damage.

Pincer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6+6) piercing damage plus Chain Grab.

Armor Spikes. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6+6) piercing damage

Chain Grab. When the Golden Legionnaire commander hits a creature with its pincer, chains from its armor spiral outward to grasp the target. It deals normal damage and the Golden Legionnaire commander makes an opposed Strength (Athletics) check to grapple. If the grapple succeeds it pulls the target adjacent and deals 9 (1d6+6)

piercing damage with its armor spikes. At the start of each of its turns, a creature grappling the Golden Legionnaire commander takes 9 (1d6+6) piercing damage from armor spikes.

~When the Golden Legionnaire commander teleports while it has an enemy grappled this way, the grappled creature comes along unless it succeeds on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. The Golden Legionnaire commander can only use Chain Grab to grapple with a maximum of two creatures at a time.

Aftermath.

Upon completing the four visions, the fresco in area 5 opens and allows a character to retrieve the fabled *Lost Arc of Reida*. The artifact is described in detail in the next chapter. Depending on how the party managed to get into Ingatan's Refuge, getting out and returning to Sentosa might be the greatest challenge of all.

The Lost Arc of Reida

Forged from a shard of silver that cracked off the shattered ring of the Plane of Time and fell to earth, this crown sits uncomfortably, its thin heavy edge pressing sharply into the wearer's scalp. Through its connection to the plane of time, the *lost arc of Reida* can cause events from the past to manifest whenever the wearer goes somewhere she experienced a noteworthy event.

Memory-Events.

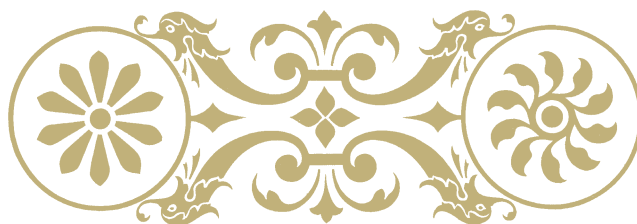
The manifestation is not merely an illusion, but rather a fully solid repeat of a past event. Moreover, this event is not just recreated from the wearer's memory; instead, the arc actually brings forth the past as it was at that time and place. This allows the wearer to witness things from a perspective she never actually had, or even goad people from the past to reveal secrets long-since forgotten.

This isn't actually time travel, though. Changing events in a memory-event has no effect on reality. However, since the event is manifested through the memories of the *lost arc's* wearer, changing things too drastically can harm her mind.

Manifesting.

Whenever the wearer hears a location where she had a major life event, she feels an uneasy sense of déjà vu. It starts as mild at a range of a few miles, but grows stronger as she gets closer. Once she's within 100 feet of the site of the memory, her mind starts to revert back to her past self (see *Caught Up in the Moment*, below). This may also affect other people who are here in the present and who were also in the memory.

If she keeps the *lost arc* on for a minute, the local area (typically in a 100-foot radius) reshapes into the time and place of the event. Some features of the present-day landscape might linger (a modern farmhouse in the middle of an ongoing battle from 500





years ago, for instance), but otherwise the affected area is replaced by the world as it was at the time, including whatever creatures were active there.

Manifested creatures and objects wink out if they leave the radius of the effect, and sometimes things will seem to appear out of nowhere as they cross into the area. The events of the past are somewhat obdurate, and they resist efforts to change them. Speaking to a manifested person who is walking from place to place will get him to pause and tarry a moment, but he'll try to keep doing what he did in actual history. Severe changes can have an effect, though, and after alterations reach a certain threshold, the event can rapidly diverge. Soon thereafter, though, the memory-event will fall apart. Precisely when things diverge and become unstable is a matter for you as GM to handle for the sake of pacing.

For example, in the Cold Matriarch event (page 21), Kasvarina sends Asrabey to become an agent of the Unseen Court in Risur. If the party tries to speak to Kas or Asrabey, they'll be annoyed at the interruption and continue reenacting the past. If a PC were to shove Asrabey, the conversation would change for a moment as Asrabey threatened the PC, but then it would quickly get back on track. Only something drastic like attacking him or trying to set fire to the building would actually force everyone "off script."

Multiple Memories.

If a place is the source of multiple memories, they occur in order from most recent to oldest. This in particular happens in Kasvarina's home town of Resal, Alais Primos, and Methia.

Ending the Memory-Event.

Once the memory-event manifests, the *lost arc of Reida* becomes inaccessible, so the wearer cannot take it off until the manifestation runs its course and a "scene" reaches a resolution.

However, if the wearer falls unconscious, or if the memory-event becomes unstable due to too much divergence, the manifestation collapses over the course of a minute. Repeated collapses will erode the wearer's mind, as they become more and more like their past self (see Mental Stability below). Careful parties will be bystanders, only interfering when their safety is in danger. They might assume that Kasvarina will be safe because obviously she didn't die in the past, but some memory-events might leave her severely wounded.

Dangers and Aftermath.

The memory-event is solid and real. Injuries that happen in the area of the manifestation are wholly real, and of course knowledge gleaned from it can survive, but normally physical objects will not endure, especially if the item in the memory-event still exists in the world somewhere else. (You cannot "farm" the past for copies of magic items.)

If a modern person is holding onto an item from the memory-event when it ends, he can make a DC 17 Charisma check to cause it to remain real. He has advantage on this check if the item is nonmagical, and a +5 bonus if it played no real role in the memory-event, or a +2 bonus if it played a minor role. He takes a -5 penalty to this check for each size category the object is larger than Medium. Barring a *wish* or similar magic, intelligent creatures can never be held onto this way. If creatures try to hold onto multiple



items in this way, make one check for each item. From a given memory-event, only the single item with the highest check result can endure.

Caught Up in the Moment.

The wearer might have her mind caught up in the past, being forced to reenact events as they were without any free will. The same can happen to other creatures in the radius, especially those who were here when the memory-event originally occurred.

When the memory-event manifests, the arc's wearer and other susceptible creatures must make a DC 17 Wisdom check, adding the wearer's mental stability (see below). Those who succeed can keep their own minds, but can easily slip "into character" in order to reenact events as they occurred, or come out of character to avoid danger or communicate with allies.

Those who fail are caught up in the moment, but allies can attempt to jostle them back in control ("*remember who you are!*" "*snap out of it!*" and the like) by making a DC 13 Charisma check. A successful attempt makes the character lucid for about a minute, but afterward he slips back into her past self. A check that succeeds by 5 or more allows the person to stay lucid until the end of the memory-event. Repeated attempts to snap someone out take a cumulative -2 penalty.

Those who fail their initial Wisdom check by 5 or more are firmly stuck in the past, and cannot be shaken free, though they do return to normal when the memory-event ends or if they leave the radius of the effect.

Occasionally even creatures who weren't here in the past might be drawn into the memory-event. Creatures with very close connections with or resemblances to figures from the past might need to also make a Wisdom check, but with advantage. For instance, the son of a man involved in the past vision might be compelled to take on his father's role.

Mental Stability.

Kasvarina desires to learn her past without being pulled back into it. You'll need to track her Mental Stability, which starts at 5. Collapsing memory-events cause her to lose stability. If she completes a memory-event while she's in control of her own mind, she gains stability. And after major events the PCs' interactions with Kasvarina can increase or decrease her stability.

Each memory event has an entry listing how much stability is at stake—1 for minor events, 3 for major events, and 5 for two critical



events. After each major or critical event, even if Kasvarina did not keep control of her mind or if the memory-event collapsed, if the party helps Kasvarina cope with the trauma or revelations of her past, she can still gain 1 mental stability at your discretion (instead of 3 or 5).

Kasvarina loses mental stability each time a memory-event collapses, but only gains stability if she succeeds her Wisdom check to keep her own mind *and* finishes the memory event. So if the party messes up and fails a memory-event, they can try again, but they run a risk of making matters worse. Kasvarina can lose stability multiple times from the same memory, but she can only gain stability once.

List of Memory-Events.

Below is a master list of the key memory-events of Kasvarina's past the party can witness with the *lost arc of Reida*. Memories marked with asterisks are presented in Appendix One: The Eladrin Diaspora, and will likely only occur if the party goes looking for them instead of following the most straightforward path. Feel free to adjust locations a bit if it helps with your players' experience.

KASVARINA'S MEMORY-EVENTS

Event	Date	Stability
Through the Breach. Breaching the walls of Alais Primos.	81 Summer, 1 BOV	1
Triage. Nicodemus's treatment of Kasvarina while she was injured in Alais Primos.	81 Summer to 15 Autumn, 1 BOV	3
Family Moment. Her last visit with her daughters in Resal before leaving with Nicodemus.	32 Autumn, 1 BOV	3
Arrest. Returning to Alais Primos with Nicodemus and being arrested.	59 Autumn, 1 BOV	1
Devil's Prayer. Learning the <i>Sacrament of Apotheosis</i> from Ashima-Shimtu in the Crypta Hereticarum.	67 Autumn, 1 BOV	3
The Great Malice. Causing the Great Malice atop the Lance of Triegenes in Methia.	91 Winter, 1 BOV	5
Srasama's Fall. Mourning a fallen eladrin woman outside Alais Primos.	New Year's Day, 1 AOV	3
Forsaking Grief. The oratory of Vekesh and the rite to forsake grief in Resal.	17 Spring, 1 AOV	3
*Miller's Pyre. Witnessing William Miller being burned at the stake in Pala.	31 Autumn, 17 AOV	3
*Ghostly Apparition. Nicodemus visiting after William Miller's martyrdom, in Ushanti.	84 Winter, 17 AOV	1
Founded in Secrecy. Founding the Obscurati in Methia.	14 Spring, 19 AOV	1
Epidemic. The leaders of the conspiracy gather again to discuss saving Jierre's new nation from smallpox.	5 Summer, 40 AOV	1
*Rejecting the Call. Nicodemus visiting Ushanti in 100 AOV to plead for greater commitment to their plans.	58 Summer, 100 AOV	1
Rescue Alliance. Kasvarina seeks help to rescue Launga from a dragon tyrant.	14 Summer, 111 AOV	1
*Betrayal of Rilego. The death of her daughter Launga in Seobriga.	15 Summer, 111 AOV	5
A Second Creation. In Methia, Nicodemus presents his plan to change the world.	32 Summer, 113 AOV	1
Skyfall. In Methia, the Ob leadership discuss their failed attempt at manipulating the planes.	77 Winter, 195 AOV	1
*Navras. Navras building an opera house in Flint.	15 Spring, 201 AOV	1
*Bhalu. Bhalu, one of Kasvarina's husbands, rejecting her in Trekhom.	42 Winter, 248 AOV	1
Cold Matriach. Sending Asrabey away to the Unseen Court.	78 Spring, 279 AOV	1
*Amielle. Kasvarina meeting in Cherage with Amielle Latimer, before sending her to fight the witches in Flint.	2 Autumn, 400 AOV	1
Puppet Mastery. The Ob's leaders meet in Methia to discuss plans for industrializing Flint.	50 Autumn, 457 AOV	1
*Chatwood. Chatwood, an eladrin skyseer in prison in Shale for refusing to help the Obscurati gain control of Axis Island.	8 Spring, 490 AOV	1
New-Borne Minion. Kasvarina discusses the colossus project with the other two heads of the Obscurati.	32 Summer, 493 AOV	3
Distributed Plan. The Ob leaders make final preparations for their ritual.	55 Spring, 500 AOV	1
*Mindtaker. Losing her memories when Alexander Grappa attacked her at the Cauldron Hill facility.	7 Summer, 500 AOV	3

Consequences at the Climax.

What happens next depends on Kasvarina's mental stability total.

- If Kasvarina is at 0 mental stability or below after the final memory of the Great Malice in Methia, she regains her memories and personality of when she was one of the three heads of the Obscurati. Though she might be sympathetic enough to the PCs to give them a chance to surrender, she will try to kill them if they resist.
- If she has at least 1 mental stability but fewer than 10 after the final memory, she struggles, with neither side of her self gaining dominance. She might attack the party one round then try to help them flee the next. This likely ends with her flinging herself off the tower to try to save them.
- If she has 10 to 19 mental stability, she keeps firm control of her identity and rejects the version of her that founded the conspiracy. She'll fight by the party's side.
- If she has 20 or more mental stability, she can easily "slip into character" as the conspiracy's founder. She'll spare the party a knowing wink, then distract Nicodemus so she and the party can flee.

Expectations.

We have designed things so that, if the PCs do “average,” Kasvarina will lose stability for Through the Breach, Devil’s Prayer, and Rescue Alliance, putting her at 0 stability going into the finale, at which point she might be interrupted during The Great Malice, losing another 5 stability. If the party hasn’t had some positive effect on her psyche, she’ll rejoin Nicodemus and attack the party. They’ll need to have put in some effort to keep Kasvarina on their side (10+ stability), and gone out of their way to help her to get her fully stable and able to trick Nic.

Return to Sentosa.

Social. Montage.

Several memories accessible in Sentosa point the way to yet more clues about Kasvarina’s past.

In Sentosa the party can use the *lost arc* to witness a few memory-events which point to other likely locations. Simply by talking to Athrylla or Asrabey, they might learn of Kasvarina’s home town Resal, where the oratory of Vekesh kept the eladrin people from falling apart in the wake of the Great Malice.

Also they can learn the location of Ushanti, the enclave Kasvarina herself was matriarch of, now controlled by an eladrin man named **Kedev**, and about the abduction of Kasvarina’s daughter Launga, who then died in the custody of a dragon in Seobriga. These two memory-events are presented in Appendix One: The Eladrin Diaspora.

Since these scenes can be reached so many different ways, we present enough information for you to handle them yourself, rather than trying to script every line of dialogue. We present them in the order we think the party is most likely to encounter them, but there’s no problem if they witness them in a different order.

Memory-Event: Cold Matriarch.

Location: Sentosa (or other enclave). **Date:** 78 Spring, 279 AOV
Stability Value: 1.

When Kasvarina puts on the *lost arc*, she feels drawn to a particular location—a guest house where she and several of her husbands stayed when they visited Sentosa. Once the party gets past the confused residents there today, the memory-event manifests, revealing lavish decorations befitting royalty. If Asrabey is with them, he is also drawn into the memory. Have each make a Wisdom check to try to keep control of their minds.

Kasvarina and Asrabey are returning from a diplomatic event, and begin to undress. Asrabey is frustrated with Athrylla’s desire to appease Crisillyir, and says he’s eager to be home to Ushanti. Kasvarina tells him that in truth she needs to send him on a mission—a long one. He is to travel Risur and offer his services to the Unseen Court as a warrior, and she might never see him again.

Asrabey suggests they lie together one last time, and he touches her face. But she withdraws. She announces she’s leaving the next morning for the ruin of her home town Resal, to pay her respects to her daughters. Asrabey begrudgingly gives her his space, and they lie down in separate beds. Then the memory ends.

This memory-event is intended to give the party an easy

Adventuring with Kasvarina.

Kasvarina’s stats are presented in this module’s Appendix. She starts the adventure with a –5 penalty to all d20 rolls, representing her missing memories. The first time she experiences each major or critical memory-event, this penalty is reduced by 1.



Sor Daeron. A celebrated war hero among the eladrin, Sor fought on the front lines during the *Perang Devar*. His arm was turned to animated salt during a battle with Prime Cardinal Richelmont during the siege of Alais Primos, and in the immediate aftermath of the war he coordinated the massive retreat of tens of thousands of grieving eladrin men. He served as military

advisor for the famed Triad of Endurance—three eladrin matriarchs who continued to wage war for nearly a century after the Great Malice. Every eladrin of Elfaivar today knows his name, and they believe he died in the Betrayal of Rilego nearly 400 years ago.

In truth, Sor survives in a small eladrin community in Ber, going by the name of Abuelo Juhu. He has not manifested his artificial arm for centuries because he’s been hiding from Kasvarina. He was complicit in the death of her daughter Launga, and he felt it better to fake his death. Though senility is taking its toll on this eight-century-old eladrin, he is the only living person who knows that the matriarch Latika was encouraged to enact the betrayal by a human with a habit of smoking leaf of Nicodemus.

introduction to how the *lost arc* works, and to name drop Ushanti and Resal as likely places the party can look next. If Kasvarina keeps control of her mind, she’ll gain 1 mental stability, and she’ll lose 1 stability if the party dramatically screws things up. If her mental stability increases, she explains that she can start to *feel* her other self, to know the boundaries between the two of them so she won’t become her again.

After this event, Asrabey will leave unless the party has convinced him to stay.

Memory-Event: Rescue Alliance.

Location: Sentosa. **Date:** 14 Summer, 111 AOV
Stability Value: 1.

This event occurs atop the central pyramid in Sentosa, and likely affects Kasvarina and Athrylla.

In the memory, Athrylla’s court is shaded by trees and cooled by magic to resist the summer heat. Kasvarina arrives accompanied by another eladrin matriarch, **Latika** (Kasvarina, Latika, and Athrylla originally formed the famous Triad of Endurance who rallied the survivors of Elfaivar for a century). Also with her are four eladrin men, including **Sor Daeron**, a famous general who led the retreat after the Great Malice, saving tens of thousands of soldiers.

Kasvarina is at her most austere as she explains that a dragon tyrant named Rilego has abducted her daughter Launga, and she is rallying allies to mount a rescue mission. Athrylla’s initial concern dies off, though, as she looks to Latika, sensing something amiss. Athrylla explains that while she will not abandon another sister in peril, she thinks it’s risky to send so many matriarchs into what might be a trap. So she offers to send soldiers instead. Kasvarina



diplomatically accepts, and says that they'll be teleporting to Seobriga within an hour.

Unbeknownst to Kasvarina, Sor Daeron and Latika arranged for the dragon tyrant Rilego to kidnap Kasvarina's daughter. They hoped to kill both mother and daughter, removing rivals so they could take control of Elfaivar. The party can learn more of these events if they go to Ber (see Betrayal of Rilego in Appendix One), which could lead them to find Sor Daeron and learn that it was Nicodemus who suggested the plot.

Interference.

If Athrylla is present when the memory-event occurs, have her automatically manage to keep her wits. She panics when she realizes what's happening, then rushes Kasvarina and tries to pull the *lost arc* from her head. Though she's unable to (because in the memory-event, Kasvarina's not wearing it), the changes cause the memory-event to collapse, and Kasvarina to lose 1 mental stability. Kasvarina is stunned and takes a few moments to recover. Again, this is mostly to show the party how the artifact works, and it can provide an in-road for Athrylla to explain herself.

For four centuries she has felt that Kasvarina blamed her for not coming along on the rescue mission. Kasvarina's daughter Launga died, and Kasvarina herself nearly perished too. Athrylla had suspected something was amiss, but she did not help. She's worried now that Kasvarina will regain fresh perspective and become hostile to her and her enclave. If the party wants to actually see the memory-event in full, they'll need to convince Athrylla to let them.

Ushanti.

Athrylla would both warn the party not to visit Ushanti, because it loyally served Kasvarina, and so likely is friendly to the Obscurati. If they go, the enclave is detailed in this module's appendix. Though risky, going there can lead to a revelation of Nicodemus's identity as William Miller.

You Can't Go Home Again

Exploration. Montage.

Visiting Kasvarina's home town of Resal helps cement her bond with her pre-Malice past, and shows a connection between her and Nicodemus.

Kasvarina wants to visit Resal, or rather the human town that has grown over it, called Airone Azzurro. Her last memory before everything was locked away is her leaving Resal to join the siege of Alais Primos. She knows she would have gone back there after the Great Malice.

Today orchards surround the human town full of Crisillyiri colonials, but of late the harvests have been feeble, and people have grown sallow and weak. Several mines in nearby hills have despoiled the area with toxic run-off. Kasvarina can't recognize any landmarks, but there are still a few old eladrin men who work here, having long ago lost the will to fight the humans. A few Crisillyiri soldiers wander the town, as there is a small fort a few miles away.

Pending Ambush.

Nicodemus suspected Kasvarina would return here, and so he has been waiting, ready to spring an ambush and try to reclaim her or kill her. He's locked up his primary body—Andrei von Recklinghausen—and for the time being is wearing an elderly eladrin, idly tending to red flowers along the thoroughfare. Knowing better than to tip himself off, he's resisting the urge to smoke. He'll likely wave good day to the party as they pass by and a DC 30 Wisdom (Insight) check is needed to tell something's off with him.

Memory-Event: Forsaking Grief.

Location: Resal. **Date:** 17 Spring, 1 AOV

Stability Value: 3.

While wearing the *lost arc of Reida*, Kasvarina feels pulled to what was once a wide field, and is now an orchard full of stunted mangos. Vetrtrigo grips her, and she begins to step in a light, dancing ring as the memory-event sweeps across the area, revealing a massed crowd of weary and bitter eladrin men.

Just weeks after the Great Malice, the retreat of the surviving eladrin reached Resal, Kasvarina's home town. At the time she was the only woman left in the whole army, and she had assumed the only one of her whole race. But in Resal she found her daughter Launga, who had already located a half-dozen other women and brought them with her to Resal. The group also includes Latika (who a century later betrayed Kasvarina), and Athrylla (who went on to lead the enclave Sentosa).

As the memory-event begins, the crowd of soldiers listen to a mass funeral service. At the edge of the crowd, Kasvarina, Launga, and the other women are speaking softly with Sor Daeron about how they each survived. Launga was gathering resources in the Dreaming, Athrylla was shape-changed into a dragon attacking Sid Minos, Kasvarina was teleporting across the world, and so on.

Sor looks completely bereft of any enthusiasm as he states that he sees no possible way for the nation to survive if so few women are left. He asks if he was a coward to retreat rather than redouble the assault and die seeking vengeance. Launga says that they all need time to grieve, and that there may be a way to survive. Latika responds that there is no use for grief. Grief is so the survivors can keep on living. The women start to argue about what course to take, while Kasvarina remains silent, feeling wracked with guilt.

The Song of Vekesh.

Then Kasvarina looks up as the priest finishes his rites and introduces the poet Vekesh, who will deliver the eulogy in song. Beside him, a musician strums a simple guitar. What follows is one of the most stirring performances ever delivered in the world's history, though much of it is lost on those who don't speak Elven or who are unfamiliar with Elfaivaran culture.

Laden with mourning and tragedy, the song weaves metaphors from other old Elfaivaran myths and history, and Vekesh draws heavily upon the three aspects of Srasama—maiden, mother, and crone. He seems to follow the traditional three-verse rhythm of eladrin elegies, singing of the maiden's joy and wonder, of the mother's comfort and strife; but when he should sing of the crone's burden of loss and death, he says nothing while the guitarist plays. Then Vekesh repeats the first two verses, adjusting his tone to show



that he is mourning not his nation's death, but Srasama's.

In his fifth verse he comes to his point: this is only a mourning song if it ends with death. The eladrin people are not defeated as long as they refuse to go with the crone to the afterlife. Vekesh pleads for the listeners to seek retribution, yes, but not to throw themselves to their deaths. They should grieve, and endure, and grow strong, and rebuild from weakness to prosper with strength.

This is the first time since the Great Malice anyone in the army has had the strength to sing, providing a hope that the soldiers here were desperately yearning for. It probably doesn't hurt that Vekesh's refrain is memorable and life-affirming to sing along with. By the time he completes the song, most of the crowd has joined in and men are openly weeping.

The Matriarchs' Dance.

Kasvarina doesn't cry, but she tells the other women to follow her. She walks into the center of the ring, thanks Vekesh, and addresses the crowd. She proclaims that many of her sisters have perished—one of her own daughters included—but *she* still lives, and others like her. No man here, she declares, will give his life for revenge, not until last woman of their people is found and safely returned home.

The crone, she says, would grow old with grief until she joined those who had died before her. So Kasvarina forsakes grief, and asks that those here follow her and her sisters, so that their people may never die.

She tells Vekesh to sing again, and this time she and the other women join in a traditional mourning dance. But like Vekesh's song, they avoid the part of the dance that would signal grief. The memory-event slowly fades with Vekesh's song, until Kasvarina finishes her dance alone.

Onlooker.

The performance has attracted people of the modern day, who watch with awe and start to ask the party what's going on. A few of the Crisillyiri soldiers ask whether they should report this, but they seem too amazed to be worried. Afterward Kasvarina wants to talk with the party, explaining how now she feels like she can at least understand how she became this other woman, after a loss so great. And already she feels a draw toward another site in the town. She thinks she now recalls where her home was.

Memory-Event: Family Moment.

Location: Resal. **Date:** 32 Autumn, 1 BOV

Stability Value: 3.

Kasvarina finds the spot of her old home, once along a river bank, now a barren shore stinking with toxic sludge from the local mine. A successful DC 26 Wisdom (Perception) check spots Nicodemus following them in the body of an elderly local, and unless the party confronts him he ends up close enough to be drawn into the memory-event.

In this memory, Kasvarina has recently returned home from the siege of Alais Primos, traveling with Nicodemus. Inside her house she talks with her daughters Launga and Dala while she packs her bags for another long journey. Launga is older (nearing 70 but still looks like she's 20), an experienced ranger, and closely resembles

her mother but taller. The younger Dala (56, but looking in her late teens) is rounder of face and is using cantrips to alter her hair's color, trying to inject levity to keep the parting from being sad. Around her neck hangs a three-faceted amber pendant, carved with icons of Srasama's three forms.

Launga can't believe her mother plans to go back to Alais Primos after she nearly died there. She offers to go with her, but Kasvarina tells her not to abandon her assignments. If the ranamandala (ruling circle of kings and queens) reject her and Nicodemus's request, she might be branded a traitor, and so Launga and Dala both need to show they are loyal. Dala jokes that a good start would be to tell the army that they're hiding a human in their house. Kasvarina gives her a very motherly glare.

Conversation and Invitation.

At that moment, Nicodemus walks in from another room, but it's the elderly eladrin who Nicodemus is wearing. He's smoking, and his features shift back and forth from eladrin to Nic's own salt-and-pepper human face. Nicodemus has managed to resist being swept up in things, so he watches with amusement as Kasvarina's daughters thank him for saving their mother's life.

Nicodemus—out of character—touches their faces and apologizes for not having been able to save them. Then he addresses Kasvarina, trying to snap her out of the memory if necessary (thus showcasing that with a DC 13 Charisma check the party can help people regain control of themselves).

He tells Kasvarina that he wants to help her, and asks her to come with him. When she (and likely the party) refuse, Nic clarifies that if she wants to learn her past, her options are come with him willingly, come with him as a prisoner, or be killed. As for the party, he'd prefer not to have to kill them, so he asks them to surrender now.

Nicodemus is in no rush to end the memory; he's a bit nostalgic of the whole thing, and will even hop back into character, encouraging the daughters to remember what he told them about the history behind the war, and why the everyday people aren't to blame. But if the party hasn't surrendered by the time the memory-event ends, or if the party attacks or tries to flee, he cups his hands and whispers a code word. Within moments purple light floods the area, and golems appear from the Bleak Gate, surrounded by a mass of undead.

Further Memories

If the party sticks around after Nicodemus's ambush, they can potentially witness memories further back in Kasvarina's life, including her husband's funeral, her children's births, and her marriage. Only use these if the party seems particularly keen to learn more about Kasvarina. There are no grand revelations here.

Lantern Ambush.

Action. Tactical.

The Obscurati hide in the Bleak Gate analog of Resal, ready to spring an ambush.

Though Nicodemus wants to intimidate the party, he didn't



actually have the resources to have an overwhelming number of elite troops just sit in this town in hopes the party shows up. So he had to make do with a half-dozen golems and a horde of undead.

When Nicodemus gives the signal, a *wayfarer's lantern* in the chest of each golem lights up, which makes a swath of ground co-terminous between the real world and the Bleak Gate. Additionally, two hordes of simple zombies—animated eladrin dead bodies that were drawn into the realm of the dead—stands among them, ready to swarm the party.

ADVERSARIES.

- 6 Bleak ambush golems
- 2 zombie hordes

Bleak Ambush Golem

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 119 (14d10+42)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons not made from adamantite

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Understands Common but can't speak

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Aiming Algorithm. The golem can use a bonus action to aim, doubling its proficiency bonus to its next ranged attack roll.

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The golem makes two melee attacks or one Integrated Cannon attack.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6+5) magical bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage from witchoil splashing out of the golem.

Integrated Cannon (Recharge 4–6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 100/500 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (6d8) necrotic damage and each creature in a 5-foot radius makes a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or takes 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

Zombie Horde

Gargantuan swarm of Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 162 (12d20+36)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws WIS +2

Skills Perception +0

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Understands Common but can't speak

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Horde. The zombie horde can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the zombie horde can move through any opening large enough for a Medium creature. The zombie horde can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points. When more than a single square of the zombie horde's space is in the area of an area of effect spell that deals damage, the zombie horde takes 50% more damage from the spell.

Horde Distraction. Casting a spell within the area of the zombie horde or within its reach requires intense concentration and a successful Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to 10 + the level of the spell slot being used.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie horde to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie horde drops to 1 hit point instead.

Vekeshi Vulnerability. The zombie horde will not attack or approach any creature singing the song of Vekesh, which stirs a flicker in their long-dead minds. A creature that succeeds on a DC 30 Charisma (Performance) check to sing the song of Vekesh can command the horde for 1 hour.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the zombie horde's space. *Hit:* 24 (4d6+10) bludgeoning damage and the target makes an opposed Strength (Athletics) check. If the zombie horde wins, the target is pulled 5 feet towards the center of the zombie horde.

Terrain.

The party will be fighting in a house and its adjacent riverside meadow if the memory-event is ongoing, or on a barren toxic bank otherwise.



**Tactics.**

Each golem has a lantern behind enchanted glass in its chest, which can be targeted independently (AC 22). The glass has 20 hit points. If the glass is destroyed, any further damage to the golem shatters the lantern. If a golem has no lantern and it moves farther than 30 feet from any other golem, it disappears back to the Bleak Gate. The zombie horde likewise must be in that area to attack the party. Note that blocked line of sight doesn't block the lantern's effects.

Aftermath.

If all the lanterns are broken, the ambush effectively ends. Nicodemus, if he's still around, blows out smoke in frustration and starts to walk away. If attacked he crumples after one hit and reminds the party that he's just using this man's body, and he would have let him live. He'll flee the man's body, leaving the dying old eladrin to gasp at the party in shock.

Kasvarina thanks the party. If nothing else comes of this, at least she got to see her daughters one last time.

From this point on, every few hours an Obscurati agent tries to scry on the party (DC 14 Wisdom saving throw negates). While we don't expect you to ambush the party at regular intervals, the awareness that people are looking for them should make them take precautions to avoid being discovered. If they don't, feel free to have invisible assassins try to poison them in their sleep, or the like.

The Siege of Alais Primos

Exploration. Montage.

Witness the aftermath of the Great Malice, and the first meeting of Nicodemus and Kasvarina.

Capital city of Crisillyir and the Clergy, Alais Primos is a place of libraries, sepulchers and churches. Divided by a series of canals, the religious hub rests at the base of Enzyo Mons, a vast volcano which the priests make monthly treks to in order to destroy objects of evil and sacrilege.

The party knows Kasvarina went to Alais Primos with the armies of Elfaivar, and that some time later she returned home with Nicodemus, but then went back to the city. So they should expect to see several memories. The only plot-critical memory is Arrest: her and Nic's arrest by the Clergy, which leads to them being sent to the Crypta Hereticarum. One other memory here is unnecessarily dangerous (Through the Breach), one can greatly affect Kasvarina's mental stability (Srasama's Fall), and one can help reveal Nicodemus's duplicitous nature (Triage).

Memory-Event: Srasama's Fall.

Location: Alais Primos, Victory Field. **Date:** New Year's Day, 1 AOV
Stability Value: 3.

Drawn to a hill that overlooks the farmland east of Alais Primos, Kasvarina is hit with desperation and grief as the memory-event begins to take shape. She's able to direct the PCs to a site where they have a breathtaking view of the city's edge and the crops, which were harvested over a month ago.

When the *lost arc* activates, its effect sweeps out nearly a half

mile, far wider than ever before. Its edges crackle with unstable power, and within that area farmlands change into the wreckage of a great battlefield, covered with discarded shields, broken siege weapons, and weather-worn battlements. Six bonfires gutter in a ring around you, and beyond them lie thousands of corpses, all of them women. Kasvarina falls to her knees and cradles one woman whose body has been charred beyond recognition.

Around them stands half an army, just the men surviving. At the distant edge of the manifested past, the edge of Alais Primos itself shifts. Shattered stone keeps rise from the empty crops, and beyond them a great translucent golden dome shields the city, shining where sigils of celestial script catch the light of the sunrise. The sound of bells toll constantly from within, and with them triumphant cheers of the humans, proclaiming their victory.

In the air above the battlefield, a shadow made of ash and soot hangs in the air. The wind quickly disperses it, but for a moment it resembles the shape of a six-armed woman 100 feet high.

The memory fades, and Kasvarina is left holding nothing. A handful of farmers and people near the edge of the city panic at the strange magic and run for the nearest churches.

This is the aftermath of the death of Srasama, and the body Kasvarina holds is her own daughter Dala, though after the memory-event ends she cannot recall who it was, just that it felt like her whole world had been destroyed. There's little for the party to do here, save perhaps rush to the bonfires, each of which is one of Srasama's six massive flaming swords (see this adventure's appendix for details if they manage to retrieve one.)

Memory-Event: Through the Breach.

Location: Alais Primos, the Old Wall. **Date:** 81 Summer, 1 BOV
Stability Value: 1.

This memory is perhaps best left avoided, as it's one of the few where the past will try to attack the party. If the party interferes at all, the edgy soldiers of either army notice them; eladrin attack if they see any humans, and the Clergy will target the party simply because they're with the eladrin. In a battle, the party can simply withdraw out of the *lost arc's* radius and be safe, but they leave Kasvarina alone.

Near the edge of Alais Primos's old wall, a memory-event manifests of when the eladrin manage to breach the city's holy barrier—a golden dome that could be conjured by prayers of those within, shielding the city even from aerial attacks.

When the memory begins, the shield is up, looking like a giant gold tortoise shell at this range, but faintly translucent so you can see the defenders inside. Kasvarina and other mages wait behind a row of eladrin soldiers holding heavy shields against potential arrows from the city. The army has left a wide opening in their ranks, and general Sor Daeron walks out, followed by a 100 human non-combatants held at spearpoint by soldiers.

Sor shouts to the army that this wall is made of the prayers of the humans, but that they will make those prayers falter. He turns to the wall and demands a champion of the Clergy meet him in open battle, then says that if the city's faithful are too cowardly to face him, he will cut down human prisoners 10 at a time.

No response comes for a minute, and Sor orders his men to begin. The massacre lasts five minutes, with the human prisoners



begging as spears pierce them row by row, while those inside the walls scream and jeer. The Elfaivaran army shifts nervously, but true to Sor's word the humans inside are not praying sufficiently, and the wall begins to fade.

When only 40 prisoners remain, the wall parts and 300 human soldiers emerge, led by Prime Cardinal Richelmont, a battle-priest who walks within a smaller version of the golden shield that protects the city. Sor begins a formal challenge, but the cardinal interrupts by summoning pillars of salt that spray up from the ground around him, killing every eladrin they touch. A fierce and bloody battle begins as the humans rush and try to pull the prisoners back into the city. Kasvarina is too far away to engage directly.

After a minute's battle, the cardinal catches Sor's arm in a pillar of salt, but Sor manages to strip away the priest's shield with a spell of his own. The surrounding eladrin launch arrows and spells, and the cardinal falls to a hail of other spells. The surviving humans retreat, and eladrin rush to treat the injured Sor, but an officer beside Kasvarina notices that a new opening has appeared in the dome nearby. He recklessly orders everyone to rush the opening, but only Kasvarina and four others manage to get inside before the opening closes.

ELADRIN UNIT

- Kasvarina
- 4 eladrin levy soldiers

CLERGY UNIT

- 25 clergy armsmen

Clergy Armsman

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 18 (breastplate, shield)

Hit Points 91 (14d8+28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws CON +5

Skills Perception +2, Religion +3

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Feat: Power Attack. When the Clergy Armsman makes their first melee weapon attack in a turn, they can choose to take a -5 penalty to their melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, the Clergy Armsman can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after they use a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or scores a critical hit with it. The Clergy Armsman can only use this feature on their turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Clergy Armsman attacks twice with their morningstar.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

Elfaivar Levy Soldier

Medium humanoid (eladrin), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 20 (mithral plate, shield)

Hit Points 90 (20d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws DEX +7, CON +3

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Feat: Superb Aim. The Elfaivar levy soldier ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and they don't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When the Elfaivar levy soldier makes their first ranged weapon attack in a turn, they can choose to take a -5 penalty to their ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

Fey Ancestry. The Elfaivar levy soldier has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put them to sleep.

Fey Step (1/Long Rest). The Elfaivar levy soldier innately casts *misty step* without the need for components.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Elfaivar levy soldier attacks twice.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.

+1 Longbow (40 arrows). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) magical piercing damage.

Once her unit gets inside, the opening in the wall closes behind them (but the wall only exists in a 100-foot radius around Kasvarina, so the party can easily go around if they get split in two). The humans overwhelm the eladrin with a rush of morningstars or crossbows, with four humans targeting each eladrin.

If the party doesn't interfere, they likely drop Kasvarina in a few rounds if she's caught up in the memory. When she falls unconscious, the memory-event collapses (causing mental stability loss). If she's controlling her own mind, she could kill everyone here with spells, but she remembers that she's supposed to be knocked unconscious, and thus plays along and feigns death, which lets the scene continue to play out.

The humans begin praying to bolster the wall, and two men draw daggers to finish off the wounded when a figure—Nicodemus, back when he was alive and cloaked like a healer—rushes forward and admonishes them. He tells them to spare the soldiers in case they're nobles who can be ransomed back for human prisoners. Then he enlists the group to carry the bodies to a nearby church where he's tending to survivors.

As the men get to work, he pulls a cigarette from his coat and lights it. Just on the other side of the golden barrier, eladrin bash at the barrier ineffectually, while others parade the dead body of Richelmont. The men around Nicodemus say prayers for the prime cardinal, which Nicodemus joins into half-heartedly.

If the party follows, they can watch the men carry the wounded eladrin to Nicodemus's small church, and immediately go into the next memory. As with most memory-events in Alais Primos, the



modern day bystanders panic and run for help, and within a few minutes authorities arrive to investigate. City guards while eventually give way to soldiers, then to priests and inquisitors. Even they might not be able to threaten the party physically, but they'll certainly disrupt any ongoing memory-events.

Memory-Event: Triage.

Location: Alais Primos, small church. **Date:** 81 Summer to 15 Autumn, 1 BOV

Stability Value: 3.

The church where this memory-event occurs still exists, though the party will want to be careful when they go in and trigger the manifestation, lest they get 100 church-goers screaming for help. A night-time visit might be safest.

In the memory-event, Nicodemus alone tends to two dozen injured eladrin. Instead of pews he has laid out cots and separated the survivors from each other with curtains that magically muffle the sound so each patient feels isolated. For safety he has chained the wrists of each patient to the nearest wall, and he keeps most of them semi-conscious with regular low doses of soporific drugs.

Where the church's rostrum is in the present day, Nicodemus has set up a small bookshelf and apothecary table. He gets visitors often enough that if the party addresses him he will treat them politely, but the magic of the artifact makes him easily ignore their presence so the party can eavesdrop.

Montage and Recruitment.

This memory-event flickers occasionally in an actual montage that spans nearly a month. Every day Nicodemus treats wounds and talks to a few of the lucid survivors to earn their trust. Eventually he asks them their own religious beliefs, their opinions on the war, who in Elfaivar might be sympathetic to a truce, and whether they have any family they care for back home.

He speaks to Kasvarina too, who at first hates him since he's a priest, and her husband died in the first holy war 50 years ago. Nicodemus explains that he was raised in the Clergy, but he no longer has faith in it; afterward he never wears his priestly robes when he tends to her.

One by one, the eladrin die or are carted away by soldiers. Careful attention and a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the eladrin only ever die if they express strong religious fervor, and only leave if they aren't particularly religious but are too injured to undertake travel. After a week (which passes in the montage in a matter of minutes), only four eladrin remain, including Kasvarina.

On the night of the 14th, when Kasvarina has mostly regained her strength, he removes her chains and they have a long conversation. It's clear that by now she's come to trust and respect him. He's done a masterful job making her rely on him while letting her keep her anger toward the Clergy and the war. And this night he finally makes his proposition: he wants to escape the city with her, then travel to Elfaivar and open a back-channel negotiation with the ranamandala (ruling circle of kings and queens). If they agree, they can come back and speak with some hierarchs he trusts.

After a long discussion of the risks and routes they'd have to take, Kasvarina agrees. But, she asks, what of his other patients? At this



point he shakes his head, and says that for several days she's been the only one left here. He gives her a bit of medicine and tells her to rest so she'll be strong in the morning, and soon she falls asleep.

Then he goes to the three other survivors one by one and gives them their "medicine." They drift to sleep, and he calls guards to dispose of their bodies. It took him months of sifting through scores of prisoners, but finally he has someone he can trust. While his mission might be for the greater good, he shows no qualms in killing unnecessary complications. Once the last other patient dies, the memory-event ends.

Character Assassination.

Even if Kasvarina is not in control of her mind during this memory-event, if the party tells her that Nic killed the other eladrin once they were no use, she gains the full 3 mental stability. This was information she never had the first time she experienced this event, and it casts all of Nicodemus's actions hereafter in a more selfish light.

Memory-Event: Arrest.

Location: Alais Primos, Jenevah Grand Librarianium. **Date:** 59 Autumn, 1 BOV

Stability Value: 1.

In this memory-event, she and Nic have snuck back into Alais Primos and are waiting in the city's grand librarianium. The meeting happened during daylight five centuries ago, but if the party wants to avoid being chased by inquisitors, it might be smart to come at night when the library is mostly deserted.

You might give the party a challenge to sneak in after hours, but even then inquisitors and bibliogeists patrol the library to ensure no one gets hold of any heretical texts. If any PC inhabited the



body of Ken Don in the previous adventure, they might remember the defenses and patterns of the patrols. No one here is a threat physically to the party, but a commotion will attract more powerful attention, and the party probably wants to avoid having to run from the authorities. Alternately the party might call in a favor with the Clergy, using Morgan Cippiano to get them in touch with the library's new head.

Bishop Betrayal.

Two bishops and a young priestess meet Nic and Kasvarina on the library's third floor, within sight of a 20-foot high rosette stained glass window. The priests seem quite happy as Nicodemus explains that Kasvarina will be representing her people in initial peace talks. He reiterates his reasoning for doing this without the archbishops' approval, cites scripture that forbids taking treasure from the dead, points out all the wealth being funneled back to Methia, and suggests the hierarchs be deposed. (He was a revolutionary even way back then.)

At that point, the young priestess casts a *light* cantrip, which shines through the window, a signal to the guards and inquisitors outside. Within a minute they have surrounded Nic and Kasvarina and begin tying them up. The two bishops tell the inquisitors that this is the man who tried to lure them into a plot against the faith. Clearly they've turned on Nicodemus to save their own necks.

Nicodemus tries to reason with them, but Kasvarina says not to bother; better to face death with dignity. An inquisitor takes delight in taunting them. They're not going to die, not yet at least.

Grandis the Eschatologist. The blood of dwarves runs deep, and Grandis traces her blood to the oldest dwarven warlords from before Drakr, before the Clergy, and before even the Demonocracy. Raised a common metalsmith by her bitterly poor father, she resented that poverty had denied her the birthright of power she felt she was owed. She studied magic so she could make her fortune, but only found work protecting merchants much wealthier than her on journeys into the northern mountains.

During one such trip, a massive storm trapped her caravan. She knew the spells to protect them all from the cold, but demanded more pay since she was saving their lives. The merchants balked, tempers flared, and one man attacked her. She tore out his tongue. The other dwarves agreed to pay.

But the storm intensified and trapped them for weeks, and as they huddled together Grandis read a book of the teachings of Vlendam Heid on the nature of endings. Her interpretation of his philosophy was markedly unorthodox. Several days into the storm she looked around and saw that the only thing standing between her and the wealth she deserved was her own morals. She left those morals in the mountains along with the corpses of the merchants. But she kept their money, and a single mute dwarf to be her manservant.

Wealth bought her more magical knowledge, which attracted followers to her, and she cultivated her own radical branch of eschatology based not on preparing for how things end, but in actively ending things. By delving into forbidden lore over the years, what was once mere greed and narcissism has been corrupted into a genuine insane longing for the end of the world. Since truly nothing is more important than her, and some day even she must die, it is merciful to make sure the world ends with her.



They're going to the Isle of Odiem, where they can live long, tormented lives with other heretics. Nicodemus keeps talking, his reasoned suggestions turning to desperate pleas, and then to angry curses as the two are dragged away and the memory-event ends.

Aftermath.

After this memory-event, Kasvarina doesn't feel any strong draw toward other locations in the city.

Return to the Vault of Heresies

Exploration. Real-Time.

In the Crypta Hereticarum, a memory reveals the most precious secret in the world.

The site of this memory-event is one the PCs are likely familiar with: Odiem, a cursed island located just off the shore of Sid Minos. The party likely made a trip to the island during ZEITGEIST #4: *Always on Time*, where they fought off the drowned dead and met the demon Ashima-Shimtu. Now the PCs return to learn more of the ritual the demoness spoke of during their first encounter.

The most likely method the PCs will use to reach the cursed island is by boat, though it is possible the PCs may devise some magical method of reaching the island. If the party has not already encountered the *Porteurs de Mort* at sea, you could use the naval engagement here to represent another attempt by the Obscurati to stop the party.

Arrival.

As soon as Kasvarina steps foot on the rusty shore on Odiem, she realizes the entire island is linked to a past memory. The party might decide to wait, but the Clergy has increased the island's defenses since the party was last here, and powerful wards likely prevent the party from entering the vault. Those wards will vanish when the memory-event manifests, but once Kasvarina puts on the *lost arc*, she'll be stuck in the same long memory-event until they escape the vault (or Kasvarina falls unconscious, which will damage her mental stability).

A Dwarf at a Lighthouse.

At the high northern edge of the island, the old and broken lighthouse looms, but a short robed figure beckons to the party from the ground floor entrance. The woman, a dwarf, gives the name **Serafima Saveli**. She claims to be an inquisitor who divined that the party would arrive here. She seems unfazed if the memory-event has manifested, but she does her best not to disrupt it.

The Clergy, Serafima says, has old protocols to detect when someone might learn forbidden lore in the vault below. While the Clergy no longer regularly maintains the vault and simply lets interlopers risk their lives, some incidents are too dangerous to ignore. The entrance to the vault below is now shielded by a *wall of force*, various heightened *glyphs of warding* (7d8 lightning damage in a 20-foot-radius, Dexterity DC 18 for half damage), a *hallow* with the silence effect, and an effect similar to *antilife shell* which requires a DC 22 Charisma saving throw to enter the vault doors.

Serafima asks to know the party's business, and if they manage to bypass the defenses (either by their own magic, or with the *lost arc*), she warns them that a fiend below was responsible for the Great Malice. She asks to accompany them and vows not to attack them, but promises to cast *silence* if the fiend tries to share the knowledge that could cause another great cataclysm.

She acknowledges that she cannot defeat the party in battle, but the Clergy will have noticed their arrival, and if she does not *send* to them her status, they will attack in overwhelming force. If the party agrees, she casts *sending* and says, "The divinations were correct. I will go into the vault with the foreigners, and will let them attend their business, but will protect the secret."

If the party refuses she says she'll stay at the lighthouse. If they attack she'll draw a bloody chunk of ice (a shard from an evil glacier) and crush it, creating frigid winds (see *Crowded Dance Floor*, page 31). In the confusion she'll try to run and use a *scroll of invisibility* to hide.

Wolf in Sheep's Clothing.

In truth, this dwarf is no priest of the Clergy, but rather a *simulacrum* of **Grandis Komanov**, leader of the radical eschatologists of Drakr. Grandis has divined that the party might learn the *sacrament of apotheosis*, and she wants to be present to take that power for herself. Averse to risking her life, she has sent her simulacrum. A permanent *telepathic bond* spell connects them, so Grandis will be able to learn the ritual even if her simulacrum is destroyed.

Grandis is normally a powerful cleric with the domains of loss and thought (darkness and knowledge), but her simulacrum—crafted of ice and the blood of ritual sacrifices, is just 8th level.

Grandis is a canny liar, has rehearsed her lies, and is enhanced by magic and shielded by *mind blank* so a DC 32 Wisdom (Insight) check is needed to determine she is being dishonest. She even has the proper badge of office—a platinum scepter, which she took off the actual grand inquisitor who was here when she arrived. Grandis and several dwarven allies slew the 50 priests who had come (after a tip-off from the Obscurati) to stop the party from even entering the vault. Now the priests and most of the dwarves have joined thousands of other drowned dead in the waters surrounding Odiem.

If the party looks inside the lighthouse before the memory-event manifests, they notice telltale signs of a recent battle, but "Serafima" claims that a group of priests fought here to stop another set of interlopers dressed in dark robes. (She doesn't actually know about the Obscurati, but "dark robes" is her best guess at how bad guys should dress.)

If the party won't let her accompany, she waits for them to leave, then uses a *scroll of invisibility* to follow them.

Memory-Event: Devil's Prayer.

Location: Sid Minos, Isle of Odiem. **Date:** 67 Autumn, 1 BOV

Stability Value: 3.

Once Kasvarina lets the artifact manifest the past, a thunderclap booms across the island, followed by a blinding flash. Darkness envelopes the party, and thick goblets of rain descend from dark clouds. Eerie flashes of golden light flicker across the island from some source outside the artifact's radius, each accompanied by the sounds of sorcery and theurgy.



Ashima-Shimtu. Once the seneschal of the old Demonocracy, Ashima-Shimtu was captured by the Clergy and would have been executed like thousands of other fiends, tossed into the volcano Enzyo Mons. But she knew the *Sacrament of Apotheosis*, a ritual which could give physical form to a belief, and the Clergy hierarchs greatly desired the secret. She was

unwilling to share, and they were unwilling to lose a chance to learn the ritual, so they imprisoned her in the *Crypta Hereticarum*, a vault of curses and heresies on the isle of Odiem, where she has remained for 1,000 years.

Initially vengeful, she has turned to meditation and detachment to endure her endless incarceration. She speaks as if narrating events, never referring to herself in the first person, and in general has little interest in the world, except when she senses a chance for freedom.

A score of soldiers and priests materialize around the group, carrying Kasvarina and Nicodemus in manacles. The lead priest urges them to hurry so they can get off this island before the Elfaivaran fleet spots them and strands them here. They make haste for a lighthouse. The crumbling structure dramatically rebuilds itself to its full shape, undoing five centuries of dilapidation.

Formally dressed soldiers come out to retrieve the prisoners, completely ignoring the party. They strip-search Nicodemus and Kasvarina, then give each simple gray clothes. The lead priest reads a formal declaration of their crimes—mostly variations of "heresy" and "opposing the will of the church"—and then the soldiers open the doors to the first vault chamber. They drag the prisoners to the pious mount that overlooks the circular "main exhibit" chamber, then stop and order Nic and Kasvarina to go forward and pass through the doors beyond.

Short or Long?

Depending on how much time the GM wants to spend on this memory-event, and whether the *Crypta Hereticarum* mini-adventure has already been used, the interior of the vault could be orderly and secure, or it might be the dangerous dungeon presented in the mini-adventure.

If the former, Kasvarina tries to find a safe place to rest, but Nicodemus tells her tales he's heard of the vault, and that the only possible way out is through the central chamber, past some ancient demon. They loot a few weapons that they hope aren't cursed, then reach the door Ashima-Shimtu's vault and spend an hour testing possible rituals to get through, before Kasvarina finally hits on providing a blood offering. They go inside and speak with Ashima-Shimtu (see *Seeking the Sacrament*), and then the memory-event ends.

Alternately, you can have the party, Kasvarina, and "Serafima" fight their way past a much more dangerous version of the dungeon. While the threats won't individually challenge the PCs at their level, they should wear them down.

Something is Different Here.

Outside the door to the final chamber, three stone statues stand along the wall. Tall figures of clergy protectors, they cover eyes or ears or mouth. The statues weren't here when the party visited a few months ago, though they could easily be dismissed as part of the memoryscape.



These statues are not in fact statues, but advanced constructs placed on the island by Benedict Pemberton. After the R.H.C. and the PCs began interfering in his affairs, the dragon took note of their previous exploits and traced them to Odiem. He had the constructs smuggled in several months ago, to keep tabs on who might show, and to kill the party if they ever showed back up.

The stone is a just an inch-thick façade, enough to block most divinations—a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check notices bits of magic through the seams at the joints—while letting the internal clockwork function normally.

The moment the party enters the chamber; their arrival is relayed to Pemberton, though it takes him a few minutes to gather gnoll minions to control the constructs like duplicants.

Seeking the Sacrament.

The moment the party arrives, any PC whose blood touched the water of the well beneath Ashima-Shimtu during *Zeitgeist* #4: *Always on Time* feels a cold flutter in his heart, then the sting of hooks digging into his back and limbs. The feeling passes quickly.

In the memory-event, Nicodemus and Kasvarina approach the well and look up to the demoness. A serpent-scaled female humanoid with an inhuman visage, she is held aloft by chains that end in hooks which pierce her legs, back, and arms. A single chain and hook passes through her lips, preventing her from speaking. She seems asleep.

Nic and Kasvarina discuss jumping in and swimming, at which point Ashima-Shimtu stirs. The chains jangle and she tenses with pain.

Nicodemus reads inscriptions along the wall that explain the

story of the Demonocracy, and of how Ashima-Shimtu betrayed them in order to save herself. But she did not share her greatest secret, and so the Clergy has imprisoned her in this perpetual torment until she shares it. Kasvarina wonders if the demon might have knowledge that could discredit the Clergy or perhaps assist them in ending the war. Miller is nervous, but doesn't stop Kasvarina as she carefully removed the barbed hook from Ashima-Shimtu's lips.

Read or paraphrase the following:

"For the first time in centuries, Ashima-Shimtu can speak. She is pleased by this change, and welcomes those who come to seek knowledge. Her wish may be the same as her fellow prisoners—to bring down the vile Clergy—but the Lady of the Forked Tongue does not so casually risk the deception of strangers. Already her voice grows tired from disuse, and so she would ask her visitors to share their tale."

The memory-event compresses Nic and Kasvarina telling their tale into a montage, interspersing their experiences with vignettes from the demoness, where she explains in her third person way how the Demonocracy used the *sacrament of apotheosis* in war, and how she gave it to the holy man Triegenes so that he might create a better world than one of demons. Triegenes went on to defeat the Demonocracy, but he never shared the ritual with his followers.

After he died, those same followers demanded Ashima-Shimtu reveal the secret their supposed living god would not. For more years than she can count she has hung here, meditating and seeking to understand the nature of evil so that she could reject it. With the ongoing holy war between human and eladrin, however, she is willing to share the ritual.

She instructs Nic and Kasvarina to, after she gives them the ritual, make their way to the entrance to the vault and barter the details of it for their freedom. Let the Clergy bring forth their god of war, and warn the eladrin to be ready to slay it. For each "god" created by the sacrament is invulnerable only so long as his attacker does not know his true name. Trick the Clergy into summoning a war god, she says, then kill it, and in so doing kill the impetus for war itself.

Details of the Ritual.

The ritual must be centered on an individual who represents the god or idea that is being invoked, and the power that person gains depends on how many followers that god or idea has, and how fervent. In addition to some archaic chants that take an hour, the ritual performers must sacrifice a lion, an eagle, a whale, and a dragon, then use their blood to adorn the subject with the name of the god or idea. Finally, the target must drink a cup of blood from a believer and recite the mantra, "*Before I was nothing but words. Now I am all that is believed. I am faith made flesh. I am flesh made a god.*"

The subject will rapidly transform into a physical incarnation, maintaining that form for a day. He'll gain unrivaled strength and resistance to injury, but anyone who knows the name of the actual person within the incarnation will be able to harm it as easily as they would a normal person. Also, once the effect ends, the subject is severely weakened for days or weeks. Finally, if the incarnation



dies, a backlash will strike the believers. How severe a backlash is relative to the intensity of their belief.

If the party manages to hear the details in the memory-event without it being disrupted by Komanov or Pemberton, they can now perform the ritual (assuming they can slaughter a dragon), though they're unlikely to be able to muster any great faith behind them at this time, so it would only provide effects equivalent to *enlarge/reduce* and *stoneskin*. Effects of a more potent version are detailed in the last act of the campaign.

Crowded Dance Floor.

As Ashima-Shimtu begins to explain the ritual, one of the Pemberton golems activates, removes the stone panel covering its face, and adopts the countenance of the industrialist. Then it and the other two golems walk to the final chamber of the vault.

Read or paraphrase the following:

A voice interrupts from the top of the stairs.

"I do say, this is all very interesting, but I must interject. While I installed these monitoring devices after I learned of your prior imbroglia here, I do admit, I never thought you'd return. What in the devil is that lady talking about? I am attempting to intimidate my rivals here, ma'am. Be a peach and stop talking a moment."

The demoness does not react to his presence, and continues reciting the details of the ritual just as she did five centuries ago. With a perturbed harrumph, the golem with Pemberton's face and two beside it hoist their heavy stone fists.

ADVERSARIES

- Serafima/Grandis Komanov
- 3 pemberbots

Tactics.

Pemberton here is quite ready to kill the party, but if they try to talk him down with a successful DC 21 Charisma (Persuasion) check (DC 30 if the party killed his daughter Terakalir), he'll pause long enough to perhaps be dissuaded from combat. After all, the Ob are a mutual threat. This is a fine opportunity for the RHC and Pemberton to make an uneasy alliance.

If combat does proceed, though, two of the Pemberbots close to melee, while the one Pemberton controls hangs back and readies to fire *magic missiles* at any PC who tries to cast a spell. If a golem gets a chance, it will grab a PC and hurl them into the well.

Pemberton continues to chat during the battle, and if pressed into melee his golem fights defensively unless he sees a chance to kill a PC. He casually mentions that he's not used to people getting away when he tries to kill them, certainly not more than once.

Serafima's Mission.

As long as Ashima-Shimtu and the manifestation of Nicodemus aren't damaged, they'll ignore the battle, as will Kasvarina unless she is in control of herself. "Serafima" tries to stay close to Ashima-Shimtu to hear details of the ritual. It takes 5 rounds for Ashima-Shimtu to finish describing the ritual. On the fifth round, the simulacrum concentrates and telepathically sends the details of the ritual to the real Grandis Komanov.

She then tries to shove Kasvarina into the well (Athletics +10), causing the memory-event to collapse. She turns to the party and proclaims, "*I am Grandis Komanov, bringer of this world's icy end, and you have given me the greatest weapon I could ever have.*"

Allow a pause for people to talk, especially if any eschatologist PCs want to harangue this radical cult leader. But if anyone makes a move to attack, Grandis draws a shard of bloody ice, hold it high, and proclaim, "*O glacier of blood, sate your hunger!*" She smashes the ice, releasing deadly cold (which she is immune to as a simulacrum). She'll then try to fight the party as best she can.

The whole final chamber fills with arctic winds that deal 7 (2d6) cold damage at the end of each round for one minute. After one round the floors become coated with ice (difficult terrain), and anyone in the well to become trapped (a DC 13 Strength check is needed to break free).

Pemberton is quite put out by this, and he doesn't appreciate others interfering in his vengeance. He focuses on killing the simulacrum, and then if the party wasn't already talking, he calls for a pause to talk about just who else wants the party dead. But if the party continues to fight, he laments not having installed a bomb in these constructs.

Pemberbot

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 119 (14d10+42)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities damage from spells

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Stone & Metal Shell. When reduced to 60 hit points or less, the Pemberbot loses its damage resistances and immunities. A *stone to flesh* spell negates its damage resistances and damage immunities until the end of the Pemberbot's next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Pemberbot makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (4d8+7) bludgeoning damage.

Magic Missiles (5/Long Rest). The Pemberbot creates five glowing darts of magical force. Each dart hits a creature of its choice that it can see within 120 feet. A dart deals 1d4+1 force damage to its target. The darts all strike simultaneously, and the Pemberbot can direct them to hit one creature or several.

Dazzling Lights. When reduced to 60 hit points or less, the Pemberbot can activate a system of high-powered arcanoscientific lamps and lenses built into its torso behind the stone façade. These rotate rapidly, filling the area with blinding and disorienting beams of light. Each creature within 50 feet that fails a DC 16 Constitution saving throw is blinded for 1d6 rounds.



Serafima/Grandis

Medium humanoid (hill dwarf), chaotic evil cleric 8

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 68 (8d8+32)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +8, Cha +5

Skills Arcana +6, Deception +5, Performance +5, Persuasion +5, Religion +6

Damage Resistances poison

Damage Immunities cold

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Primordial

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Aura of Forgetfulness (1/Long Rest). Grandis can emit a 30-foot-radius aura of forgetfulness for 1 minute. Creatures in the area lose all memory of their time in the area (a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw negates). In addition, at the beginning of their turn each round any spellcaster in the area loses one prepared spell or spell slot of their lowest level (starting with 1st).

Channel Divinity (2/Short Rest). Grandis can channel divine energy to fuel one of two magical effects.

Negative Channel. As an action, Grandis commands mystical forces to roil outward with baleful energies, dealing 36 (8d8) damage to all creatures within 30 feet. Half of this damage is fire and half is necrotic. A creature that succeeds on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw takes half damage.

Turn Undead. As an action, Grandis presents her holy symbol and speaks a prayer censuring the undead. Each undead within 30 feet that can see or hear her must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. Undead of CR 1 or less that fail are destroyed. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from Grandis as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of her. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

Dwarven Resilience. Grandis has advantage on saving throws against poison.

Feat: War Caster. Grandis has advantage when she is concentrating on a spell and has to make a Constitution saving throw from taking damage, she can wield weapons or a shield in both hands and still make somatic components for spellcasting, and she can use her reaction to cast a spell (maximum casting time: 1 action) at a creature that provokes an opportunity attack from her.

Spellcasting. Grandis is an 8th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following spells prepared from the cleric's spell list:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, light, resistance, sacred flame, spare the dying*

1st level (4 slots): *command, cure wounds, detect magic, fog cloud, protection from evil and good*

2nd level (3 slots): *darkness, detect thoughts, silence, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, dispel magic, protection from energy, sending*

4th level (2 slots): *confusion, ice storm*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Grandis attacks twice with her mace.

+1 Platinum Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) magical bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage).

EQUIPMENT

Possessions. Grandis carries a *shard of the glacier of blood* and the following scrolls: *divination, invisibility (2), guiding bolt, stone shape, tongues*.

The Last Word.

After Ashima-Shimtu finishes detailing the ritual, and the memory fades. Kasvarina collapses to her knees, knowledge washing over her. She explains that she remembers leaving the vault, and going with the Clergy to their capital Methia. She went there, and though what happened there is still a blank, soon thereafter the war ended, and the eladrin woman perished. She suddenly realizes what this means, but if the party can't figure it out she's too ashamed to say it out loud.

The demoness Ashima-Shimtu, no longer stuck reenacting the past, will simply say, "The prisoner of the Clergy remembers what horrors were wrought by her attempt to escape. She has accepted her punishment, and asks no others repeat her folly. She says this with no malice, only contrition."

If necessary, Ashima-Shimtu can let the party out of the vault. They must simply name a destination and dive into her well, and she can transport them to any shore within a few hundred miles. Make a note of any PCs whose blood makes contact with the well. Ashima-Shimtu will have power over them much later, in ZET-GEIST #11: *Gorged on Ruins*. 🐉