**The Reckoning**

**Prologue: The Fellowship**

After their most recent adventure and the death of their friend, Talon, the group parted ways. Father Helmut was recalled to the Bloodpools. Sister Anja was seriously reprimanded by her order and assigned to Ismoth and the Order of St. Gilla to help protect sailing ships. Antonio returned to his family to start his museum and study his artifacts. Torhack went with Antionio to work for his family. The monk spent a few months searching for the elusive Fire Mummy, but eventually returned to his order.

After nearly a year, each of the PCs receives a letter:

*Greetings,*

*I hope this letter finds you enjoying the blessings of the Mother and Father. I am writing you this day at the recommendation of my cousin, Antonio, with whom you traveled and bled through the northlands. I have news of great concern. Regretfully, the situation requires discretion, so I cannot discuss details in this letter, but I assure you that I would not trouble you if it were not gravely important. Thus I must ask, if this correspondence reaches you, would you honor me with your presence at the Terzani Manor in Ismoth. Once you arrive, I can explain everything.*

*United in the Service of God,*

*Father Patrik Terzani*

**Chapter One: The Beginning**

The Terzani Compound: The PCs arrive at the splendid Terzani compound. Marble buildings with classical architecture surround a serene courtyard dotted with statues of important historical figures including Michael, Erzan and Dovid. There are several points of interest that PCs might visit during the course of their adventures.

* Alchemist – Off to the side of the compound because of the smell. Guillermo runs the alchemy lab, lording over his cadre of apprentices. Guillermo can make about a dozen potions, all of which are utility effects. Potions are free for family business and are competitively priced for everyone else.
* Library – The Terzani library contains the notes and journals of all of the mages and priests that have been associated with the Terzani family. Though the library is small, it is one of the best geographical catalogs of Bostonia and the surrounding foreign lands. Also, topics such as rune sites, artifacts, mages and herbs are covered here. Any research on these topics would receive a bonus (probably +2). The library is not open to the public, but can be accessed with permission and a 50p donation.
* Smithy – Velli (vel – LIE) runs a full smelter and smithy providing tools and experimental equipment to the Terzanis and the surrounding communities. She does not often make weapons or armor, but would happily do so. Her assistant is a low cobrat named Herk.
* Vault – The vault holds the special possessions of the Terzani family, including artifacts that are not in any specific family member’s possession. Opening the vault requires two keys to be inserted in two locks simultaneously. The items held in the vault are mostly minor utility items (weapons and more powerful artifacts are usually held by someone).

The Meeting: The PCs that arrive early stay in guest houses and are permitted to make use of the facilities. However, neither Patrik nor Antonio are here to answer questions. Once everyone arrives, the PCs are invited to share dinner with their hosts, pleasantries are exchanged and then the meeting begins with Patrik addresses the group.

*“Thank you all for coming. I apologize for the mystery surrounding my request, but I felt that the situation required secrecy. I am not even sure if my fears are true, but if they are, I don’t think we can allow the news to get out. But here I am being secretive again. Here, take a look at this.”*

*Patrik pulls out an iron box. The light from the room’s lamps reflect off the metal, but there is something more. Extra pinpoints of light and shadow play across the surface belying the container’s magical nature. The priest takes a deep breath to calm his trembling hands and then he opens the box. You see a finely cut gem, about the size of a man’s palm. The gem pulses gently and glows in a deep purple light.*

*“Now a glowing gem is hardly news. Indeed, in terms of magical power, this bauble is probably one of the least interesting things in my family’s possession. However, in terms of history and importance, this is perhaps one of the most potent artifacts in all of the land.*

*You see, three generations ago (??? Timing), a young and foolish Terzani mage named Elliot stumbled upon a rune site and he bound the rune. The rune corrupted Elliot and he used its power to murder his siblings, raise an army, imprison the baron, and nearly take control of this manor and all of its secrets.*

*The rune was Lightbane and with its power, Elliot might have succeeded in whatever plan was stirring in his magic-addled brain – truly a testament to the power and grave danger of runes. He was only stopped by the efforts of the Church at the cost of hundreds of lives.*

*Baron Terzani sealed the rune site and collapsed the black tower over the Lightbane well. As an additional precaution, he placed a mystical alarm on the site. Twin gems – one on the seal, the other you see here.*

*Someone has disturbed Lightbane and we need to know who and why… and more importantly, have they bound it?*

If the group accepts the mission, Patrik will lead them downstairs, through a series of twisted corridors that ends in one of the family’s many vaults. This particular vault door has two locks. Patrik gets out his key and asks Antonio to do the same. The two Terzanis turn their keys at the same time and the lock clicks open.

Inside the vault, there are a number of books and documents organized neatly on several shelves. Patrik leads the group to one of the shelves, pulls off an ornate sealed box and sits at a nearby table. He takes a candle off the wall, checks the wax seal closely, then melts it and pulls out a parchment from the box. The priest looks as though he is going to go into an exposition about the parchment when he realizes…

The parchment is blank.

*Uh… I am sorry. I don’t know what to say. This box was supposed to hold Elliot’s map. It would have led you right to the site of Lightbane. I am not sure what’s going on. I checked the seal. It seemed to be intact and yet somehow the map has been stolen.*

**The Missing Map**

Patrik is taken aback by the missing map and without thinking, makes the assumption that someone must have stolen the document. If players think to investigate and ask a few questions, they may be able to get at the truth of the matter.

**Investigate** – Investigating the box will likely reveal (DL 8) that there are no signs of anyone tampering with it. It is unlikely that anyone but the PCs has opened this container for many, many years.

**Perception** – Any PC inspecting the blank parchment closely should be allowed a perception roll (DL 18) to notice that the map isn’t entirely blank. The parchment actually contains very faded markings that can be recognized as a map. A navigate check (DL 14) will reveal that it is a map of southwestern Bostonia, but few details remain.

**More Perception** – If the above perception roll is made, then continued inspection will allow a second roll (DL 14) to notice that the fading is in progress as the PCs are looking at the map – lines are literally disappearing before the characters’ eyes.

**Theology** – Most folks know about Michael’s curse on Lightbane, but a theology roll (DL 16) will allow a character to recall that Michael’s curse actually had two facets. The first is well known; Lightbane rune bearers seek each other out and destroy each other. The second facet is less well known; Michael asked that the location of Lightbane be forgotten for all time. Depictions of its location would fade over time and memories that could lead someone to the site are forgotten.

Once PCs realize that the map has faded due to Michael’s curse, they can focus on restoring the map, or obtaining another way to locate Lightbane.

**Alchemy** – Alchemy might provide a solution to the problem. The map could be restored to its former state with a *Renewal* potion. The recipe for such a potion could be discovered through research (DL 22), or the PCs could find an alchemist in Ismoth who could help them.

In any case, a Renewal potion requires a unique ingredient: the sand from an hourglass that has been keeping time since the date to which you want to restore the treated object. (See ***Obtaining the Sand***.)

**Navigate** – A navigator or cartographer can copy the remnants of the faded map, but there is no longer enough information there to lead them to Lightbane. The map is useless to them in its current state.

**Rune: First Equation** – A mathematician might intuit that his rune holds a potential answer to the map problem. It is possible that a spell could reverse time for the map and thus restore its markings. However, no such spell currently exists. (See ***The Mathematicians’ Solution***.)

**Obtaining the Sand**

Obtaining hourglass sand that is 50+ years old is possible. A theology or knowledge: church test (DL 10) will allow characters to remember the Church of Falling Sand in Seeker’s Watch. This church keeps time with a giant mechanical clock that uses falling sand as the driver. The sand fills small cups and powers a wheel that drives the clock’s hands. The sand then piles up at the bottom of the clock tower and townsfolk who need to climb the nearby hill are encouraged to fill a sand bucket and carry it to the top.

Another possibility is a Boston shop called the Timekeeper run by the watchmaker Anaan Olclaret. Olclaret is a collector of obscure timepieces. PCs might know of the Timekeeper, or perhaps Patrik will suggest it.

The Timekeeper is a small shop in the small merchant district in one of the upscale sections of Boston. It is a small store, crowded with a maze of shelves and pedestals, each one holding a rare clock. The whole store resonates with rhythmic ticks and tocks. Olclaret sits at the heart of this maze, working on a pocket watch.

*The thin, hawkish man looks up from his task, smiles and greets the PCs, “Welcome, what manner of mechanical marvel are you brining me today?”*

Olclaret is friendly and knowledgeable and will chat with the PCs and answer their questions. However, he is protective of his collection and will balk at giving the PCs a uniquely rare hourglass so that they can destroy it. The PCs will have to present a pressing argument and succeed in a persuade check (DL 16). Even then, Olclaret would like some kind of recompense for his lost piece.

*Well, I could be persuaded to trade you know – one unique timepiece for another. This hourglass is priceless, but I know of something that could make me part with it. I have a connection in the cobrat lands who speaks of an island in the middle of the sea, far from the normal Bostonian shipping routes. He says that on this island, exists a crystal that pulses in time, like a beating heart. I can only speculate what a miraculous timepiece could be made with such a marvel…*

Olclaret can provide navigational info, but the PCs will have to provide their own transportation to the island. If players pursue the crystal, go to ***The Singers***.

**The Mathematicians’ Solution**

If PCs head to the HQ of the Mathematicians, they will be met with the normal bureaucracy of Bostonian institutions. An administrate roll (DL 14) can get them a meeting that same day with someone who can help them. Otherwise, they will have to wait a couple of days to get an appointment.

Ultimately, they will be referred to Professor Zabrus Tureen, a fairly well-known mathematician who specializes in the study of time. He will listen to the PCs’ problem and nod his head.

*I might have something that can help you, but it is a bit of a stretch. You see, I know magic that can revert an object to a past state, but it is just a minor reworking of our standard Decay spell and is a fairly weak spell. The power that is erasing this document is strong and so I don’t think it will do. We’ll need something with a bit more punch if we are going to get you your map.*

*What I can do is create an enchanted lens. This lens will see through the streams of time, allowing you to see the document as it appeared when it was first written. Clever really, in that we won’t be working against the magic that is erasing the map – we will be working around it.*

*Now, to create this lens, I will require a bit of assistance…*

Of course, Zabrus will require a sample of living crystal, which will take the PCs to ***The Singers***.