



## Aethel

SMP Lore

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### Authors

<A> Titan  
<B> Bam  
<O> Owl

### Glossary

**Major Arcs** follow the main storyline and give context to any new game mechanics that impact the universe in a significant way.

**Minor Arcs** document developments in-game that do not impact the universe in a significant way.

**Episodes** are individual moments that are self-contained and do not contribute to any outside plot in the universe.

**Supplementary** materials are supporting pieces of text in-game that gives context to a plotline or builds upon it.

**Origin Stories** seek to build upon the universe's history and its laws of nature without it being tied to any in-game event.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <a href="#">Melina's Invasion</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">Melina's Invasion P.2</a></li> </ul>
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### [m]inor Arcs (Side Plots)

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<b>BS2: Solace</b>	<b>BS2.5: Vellichor</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Origin of The Ender Dragon</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Solace Shenanigans</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Common Day</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Gold Crash</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Devout, The Sinners, &amp; Geogre</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Might &amp; Magic</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Better Days</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">A Chaotic Order to Things</a></li> </ul>
<b>BS3: Kalopsia</b>	<b>BS3.5: Mellifluous</b>
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### [E]pisodes (Standalone Content)

<b>BS1: Halcyon</b>	<b>BS1.5: Rebirth</b>	
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<b>BS2: Solace</b>	<b>BS2.5: Vellichor</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Cake Drops</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Water, Ice &amp; Fire</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Master Chef</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ghastardly Deeds</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Unbelievaboat</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Crystalline War</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Doll of Gluttony's Curse</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Headhunters</a></li> <li>• Bathed in Hellfire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <a href="#">Bathed in Hellfire</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">Bathed in Hellfire P.2</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">The Dragonfire Crossbow</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Mercurial Pendants</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Wolfsbane Vial</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Odysseus's Voyage</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sword of Infernal Flame</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Blood Gouger</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Swine Flu</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Destroyer</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Skysplitter</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Forbidden Forest</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">A Little Bit of Everything</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Chicken Slayer</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Organ Engine</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Bramblethorn</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Crown of Cinders</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rhinomane</a></li> </ul>

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<b>BS3: Kalopsia</b>	<b>BS3.5: Mellifluous</b>	
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### [S]upplementary (Plot-Related Content)

<b>BS1: Halcyon</b>	<b>BS1.5: Rebirth</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Book 1: Expedition, by Mobius Firm</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Book 2: Desert Temple, by Mobius Firm</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Book 3: Jungle Temple, By Mobius Firm</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Book 4: End Stronghold, By Willie White</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Book 5: Pillager Outpost, By Illager</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Book 6: Village II, By Villager</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Book 7: Jungle Temple II, By Cultist</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Book 8: Village III, By Cultist</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Book 9: Bounty, by Mercenary</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Book 10: Interrogations, by Unknown</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Books 1 &amp; 2 (Untitled)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Excavation Team Needed</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Howard Hallard</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Dr. Jessabelle</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Lang Morrison</a></li> </ul>
<b>BS2: Solace</b>	<b>BS2.5: Vellichor</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hellfire Cape I</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Hellfire Cape II</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Piglin Entry</a></li> </ul>
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### [O]rigin Stories (Worldbuilding)

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Dawn of Time</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rebirth</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Miracles Granted by The Divinity</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Chaos's Relation to The Universe</a></li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Orphanage</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Field</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Limbo</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Fate</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Chalice of Angels</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Pekora Corporation's Whereabouts</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">A Stone to Cast</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Project Snowbird</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Bull Gets the Horns</a></li> </ul>

- [Rise of the Juggernauts](#)
- [Souls Granted by The Chaos Deities](#)

### BS3: Kalopsia

- [Aethel Universe](#)
- [Aethel Classifications](#)
- [Pandoras Box](#)

### BS3.5: Mellifluous

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## BS1: Halcyon

### The Dawn of Time [O] <B>

With a few beats of her heart, Above All created the world of Halcyon. The stone was shaped by her hands and the oceans flowed forth from her tears. She breathed in life, and in each living being, she imbued a form of life essence that stored their previous lives' memories and experiences. She made the world nearly infinite, and nature was bountiful.

Seeing that it was good, Above All summoned forth the first humans to the land.

### Era Zero [M] <B>

The first humans were summoned few but willing in spirit. Bam, Owl, Vahl, and Human came forth to survey the land. A shroud of darkness enclosed above their heads, and it seemed like an eternity would pass before the dawn came again. During this reign of shadow, man's first campfire was erected, and the first mine accompanied it.

With a bare grasp of the land, starvation was rampant, and the few survivors scavenged for anything edible. Feeling adventurous, Owl and Human left the fireside gathering in search of more bountiful lands, leaving Bam and Vahl behind. There, the remaining two lived off mushroom stew scraped together from the nearby dark oak forest, known for its overgrown fungi. Even then, there was not much progress to be made in those lands. Vahl eventually left to seek his glory too, and Bam saw no reason to continue attempting to tame the starting lands.

After looting a saddle from the spawn's skeleton spawner found in the first mine, Bam went in search of a place to call home. He came across many biomes, but none were any he could feel comfortable settling. Of these many biomes, one was the open expanse of the plains, and there, the first horse was domesticated. The nomadic journey continued with mushroom stew running dry. Time passed, and having to resort to rotten flesh, almost all hope was considered lost.

On the last stew, as if by a miracle, the high peaks of future Wyrmtooth finally came into view. The ground ramped into an overhang of the mountain, and there was a wide opening on its side as if it were resembling a mouth. There, within the deepest parts of the mountain's overhang, Bam tore at the foundations to construct what would be the future site of the community storehouse. Feeling pity for his steed, he extended the warehouse to include stables where the creature could stay out of the freezing weather. Work continued on the mountain hovel, and he built a garden in front of the warehouse as well as a barn to house livestock.

Meanwhile, the other three humans settled in mesas, where the gold was plentiful, but the same could not be said about its food supply.

### Founding of Wyrmtooth [M] <B>

One day, Bam received a visitor while working the barren soils of Wyrmtooth. He was a strange fellow, setting himself directly along the walls of Wyrmtooth's barn. Despite repeated offers to move him inside, he said he preferred the open airs of the mountain. He built no walls and laid his bed in the dirt of the hillside.

The hillside settler, learned later to be named Dio, wrangled some sheep together and penned them. Seeing the value in the thorns of the naturally spawning berry bushes growing in the area, he planted them along the hillside slope of Wyrmtooth to function as a poor man's

barbed wire. He turned nature against itself, and it was surprisingly effective in keeping out the wild creatures of the night.

Eventually, there came another traveler named Baka who decided to follow in Dio's footsteps and prefer the open-air policy regarding housing. She settled on the opposite side of the hill slope to Dio. Baka took up the profession as a strip miner, excavating long tunnels down under to supply the settlement with precious earthly minerals. In the meantime, Dio had terraced the land into the first semi-automatic wheat farm whose purpose was to not only feed himself but also the others in the settlement and his sheep.

Another immigrant came to the settlement a few days later, in hopes of finding food and making a name for himself. To everyone's surprise, it was none other than Vahl. He had grown sick of the barren wastelands of the mesa, as no edible vegetation grew there, and the lands were wild and dangerous. Wyrmtooth took him in, and he was accommodated in a newly built inn, specifically made for travelers (little did they know that he would end up becoming a permanent resident). Baka and Dio took it upon themselves to build the first version of the zombie and skeleton grinder shortly after.

Elsewhere in the world, rising builders, Aero and Dia, laid claim to a savannah.

### **A Dance with Fire [m] <B>**

Nether portals were made, and multiple exploration parties were sent into them in hopes of discovering a Nether fortress, but none so far had yielded success. They either ended with Piglins slaying the scouts or Ghosts plunging the protagonists into the lakes of fire below. It was not until Bam was sponsored a diamond set from Baka that Halcyon would know its first Nether fortress.

Plunging into the portal once more, with memories of burning alive and succumbing to the Netherscape's various drops in heights, he trudged forth bravely, as if by intending through suicide mission to determine to locate a Nether fortress. Through fire and brimstone, he laid his mark in the landscape, marking behind the trail he had traveled. And hundreds of blocks distanced from his origin, he finally found a Nether fortress.

Sneaking around the interior, he had one mission in mind: acquire nether wart, defeat the blazes, and return the treasures of hell to the Overworld. Things were going well until they weren't. Supplies, as much as he had originally brought, were dwindling from the constant skirmishes he had with the blazes and wither skeletons. His armor was on its last limbs, and he sent a distress signal to Aero and Owl.

Literal hours passed, with Bam on his last stand, firing back arrows to corner side intruders and slashing at legs in between. Aero and Owl made haste to his position, taking heavy fire from ghosts alike as they tried to bridge to the Nether fortress. Eventually, help did arrive, and it came in the form of a way home.

Aero rendezvoused with Bam and guided him to the pathway to return. However, the only thing standing between home and Hell was a single bridge. While he was away, the bridge became perilous - a ghost loomed overhead and skeletons with bows guarded the other side. They were ready to claim victims to the hellish pits below. Carefully, block by block, Aero and Bam built a guard rail forward - until they couldn't anymore. The skeletons below, in their one-track mind to knock the heroes off, accidentally shot each other and started a small civil war. Bam noticed the opportunity that opened in front of him and jumped down into the fray. Aero cleaned up the bones, and Owl extended his hand to the two of them on the secured side of the bridge.

After marching for what seemed like forever, Bam finally arrived in the Overworld on Aero's side of the portal. In gratitude for saving his life, he gave him blaze rods and nether wart. It was a monumental save after all.

Owl, considering these incidents, founded the Nether blockchain and started the very first interdimensional travel routes between the settlements. The Nether blockchain was crude, rapidly built, and had the occasional one-block-wide bridges across open Nether, but it was

sufficient and faster overall than Overworld travel. No one could complain if it did its job of getting them from point A to point B.

### **The Beginning of The End [m] <B>**

With the foundations of the town set and its residents well-fed and well-supplied, the idea was proposed to rid the world of its looming threat - the Ender Dragon.

Vahl tracked the portal down to a village, and the decrepit stronghold was directly underneath it. Owl worked on building a Nether blockchain tunnel to the location, and Wyrmtooth's troops rallied to invade the portal.

Bam, Baka, and Dio answered the call. They marched to the site and tunneled down, setting up a base camp should one of them fall. Some prayers were then exchanged. Bam christened a blade for Vahl, rightfully named The Poonslayer, forged in netherite and inscribed with ancient runic descriptions to cut down any foe. The four then leaped deep into the End.

Time was against them, so they immediately got to work. Vahl's absent-mindedness cost him forgetting to bring a pickaxe, so he had to pillar up to some of the towers and tear open the jail bars by hand. Baka was busy at work sniping the low-lying crystals with a bow, and Dio worked to take out the tallest crystals. Bam provided a steady stream of splash potions to the group and kept them well-energized and full of strength to fight. Within the chaos, a stray arrow found its way lodged into Dio's armor, and it was just enough to tip him over onto the ground.

At the time, the world's memory was only 1GB, so it felt like the battle was fought in slow motion due to the overwhelming number of players online.

However, even with this handicap, the heroes managed to finally score a finishing blow on the Ender Dragon, and it cried its last breath of air before crumbling to dust. The return gate was lit, and the heroes said their last goodbyes to the void dimension before returning home.

### **The Dark Ages [M] <B>**

After the slaying of the Ender Dragon, the world grew massively in popularity, and there was much lag due to the number of concurrent players online. These interruptions would come daily, and frequently. Above All progressively upgraded the world's specifications to meet the players' demands, but even then, it still was not enough. From 1GB to 2GB, eventually going up to 4GB, she took it upon herself to also reduce players' render distances from 16 to 8 chunks render to help with lag. The world seemed like it had dissolved into a fog in comparison to its original state.

Ant began construction on the very first v-tuber pixel art in Wyrmtooth a bit of distance away and above Dio's sheep farm. Due to repeated accidents of falling as well as a constant shortage of building materials, the project was left unfinished for a while. It was even defaced at some point by an unknown graffitist. The graffitist made Amelia's being boings turn into asymmetrical lumps and left her looking male with their additions.

It was an overall unpleasant time as players fought each other for the right to play. Amid all this drama, one good thing did come out of it - the dragon egg was relocated right on top of Dio's hillside home, and his original spot became a pond.

The pond would house the very first mascot of Wyrmtooth: The Wisdom Salmon. The salmon had great power to it, and the citizens paid their respects as they passed it daily. It would provide the players with speed and give them advice on their meaningless daily lives. Another notable creature that emerged during this time was Stompy the iron golem, who guarded the Wyrmtooth garden tirelessly without the need to sleep or eat. He remained ever vigilant to his guard and never stopped for even a moment. He knew no fear, no fatigue, or bribery.

Night came along and built her home on the side of the mountain, close to the garden. She made a cooking station outside her stone home to feed the passersby, but the food supply was never enough. Newcomers' hunger exceeded the food production of Dio's wheat farm. To counter this, instant-grow crop stations were set up in Wyrmtooth for the occasional quick bite to eat. Potatoes were abundant and reigned supreme during the dark ages with the instant grow

machines supplied with bonemeal by the early version of the zombie and skeleton grinder built by Dio and Baka.

The Halconyians made a life for themselves in these times, some were natural explorers. Dio and Baka made many trips to the End, with some of them ending in tragic deaths as the lag ended their journeys prematurely, sometimes claiming their lives minutes later after they fell from any height.

Others were not. Tux got hopelessly lost in the wilderness as he tried to determine his location from his coordinates. Because of his constant absences, Tux was misled to believe his cat was slain by Ant.

Some settled close to Wyrmtooth. Kilia began work on her tree outside the town. Augurey settled on her nearby island and named it after herself. Clover found a petite home for herself in the mountain's belly. Robe took a nearby mountain range for her home. Vahl started seeding a Bastion in the sky with grasses and dirt. Orx pummeled the former in superior gear but would quickly be the receiving end of Vahl's harming magics, earning him the title of the first Wizard class.

And some cared not for neighbors. Squishy and Apex settled on a remote island, hoping to claim a reputation for themselves. Titan and Spartan started a life underground, far from town. Haydesly slipped into the Netherworld and established his residence in Hell. A gender changer station was built in the barn by the would-be supreme leader of The People's Republic of Ant, Ant.

Last but not least, a mysterious cuck shed appeared on Dio's wheat farm.

### **The Renaissance [M] <B>**

The passing of the dark ages was marked by the players' choice to restore glory to the Amelia pixel art. The defacing components were removed, and the build was completed and lit up with torches as if it were the coming of an idol to show the way of light.

During this age, Haydesly sneakily disrupted the Nether blockchain to replace it with a Nether highway system of his own, located near the Nether ceiling along the major axis for even faster, more convenient, and most of all, safer Nether travel. There were a few objections to the unfamiliarity of the tunnels at first, but they quickly subsided when the residents realized the value of Haydesly's work and renovations.

Likewise, Wyrmtooth received its fair share in renovations. Baka and Dio managed to finally mine enough diamond blocks to fully upgrade the Wisdom Salmon's power to Speed II, and it was able to cover nearly the entire town in its influence. The Wyrmtooth community received an aquarium shortly after, complete with imported tropical fish from Dia and Aero's side of the ocean. A money printer was constructed in Wyrmtooth's townhall, and it was efficient at what it did, bringing much wealth to the residents through the exchange of paper for emeralds. A mailbox system was first introduced to the town, and the residents were slow to utilize it at first, although quickly after many would appreciate its convenience. Neighboring the mailboxes, a town smelter was constructed. Powered by Nether imported lava buckets, it would supply a vast quantity of nether brick and glass for Wyrmtooth. Kilia was assigned to decorate the town's bridge between the mailbox and smelter with her custom-made banners. A suggestions board was started under the town's mass smelter but was rarely (if ever) used. Tired of the constant creeper terrorism, Bam decided to erect a wall around the town. It proved effective in limiting the number of hostile attacks on the town. A vertical wheat farm was constructed to replace Dio's terrace wheat farm, and the sheep farm saw some modernization in the form of automation for wool.

Squishy and Apex migrated to Wyrmtooth and built a bunker nearby, decidedly because they were too far away from civilization at first.

Dia and Aero managed the first villager mall for a while, but it was short-lived when villagers' pathfinding caused their stock market to crash. The pair's Nether portal was sculpted into an umbral blade.

Dio's sheep farm mysteriously disappeared, and there were no traces of any struggle. It was a great mystery for a while as to who - or what could have caused the sheep to suddenly be lost without a trace.

Vahl unleashed a swarm of foxes upon the town, in the hopes that they would guard the town against hostile creatures. It worked a bit too effectively, however, as many foxes capped the world's mob cap and didn't allow any other creatures to spawn. Their numbers were culled, but two foxes managed to find their way to Wyrmtooth's garden boat. They were nicknamed Jack and Rose appropriately.

Bam began breeding the thoroughbred horse line and constructed a facility to house and assess his specimens regarding their health, speed, and jump heights. He ran out of funding to complete his work until Titan supplied him with some golden carrots in exchange for an offspring of the best pair. A deal was made, and Bam went on to finish his work in genetics and supplied the town with high-quality horses.

Later it would be revealed in the local news that Titan and Spartan were utilizing illegal magics to game life essence from potatoes, and Above All put an end to it.

In appreciation of Baka's efforts in contributions to the town of Wyrmtooth, Bam personally built her a home. It was ill timing, however, as she had already considered moving out. However, she promised that she would use the home as a secondary one, a vacation home of sorts. A kiddie jail with cake appeared in front of Baka's house, and somehow, the cake was half-eaten despite the jail bars not being touched.

Overhead, the Bastion inadvertently became a mob spawner due to its many dark spots, and Vahl had to constantly fight off the intruders. Vahl would then trap and cure his first villagers in rat holes in his Bastion, becoming the record holder of the landlord with the highest vertical village. Bam sponsored him with a pathway up as well as lighting up the floating potato-shaped island. With the chaos going up there, it would not be too hard to believe that a zombie picked up a bow for a change. Perhaps he wanted to change his class?

A giant spruce wood tree was grown in the center of town, orchestrated by Augurey. It was short-lived, however, as it was later then cut down so that Bam could ask her to build an even larger one partnered with KiliaKit for the upcoming winter festivities.

Haydesly went End exploring but fell out of the world upon using a return gateway. It would be so our unlucky fate that the world's seed took anyone who used a return gateway to the void. With much consideration, Above All managed to partially restore his lost equipment.

The marketplace stands were given life by Bam's design and Kilia's color scheme. Ant created the first shop by selling totems of undying. Its success in the honor system inspired others to do the same and open their own. It was a time of prosperity for all.

### **Wyrmtooth's Civil War [E] <B>**

In the presence of peace came the period of boredom in between.

Owl decided to get rid of his life in poverty of the mesa and blew up his own home as a metaphor for leaving behind his former life. He moved into Wyrmtooth and established a sky iceberg above the market stalls for his future residence. Within his first couple days of moving in, he and Titan thought it would be funny to push Dio off the sky base to farm clout. This ended horrifically, however, as Dio survived, and took revenge on the two with a few swings from his blade.

This conflict would spiral into a chaotic mess with both parties' slowly escalating the issue to more and more violent events, which lead to their homes either burning or destroyed. Above All banished all three players for two days from Halcyon due to their carelessness to respect the peace.

Mysteriously shortly after, an illegal sword was found by Squishy, which prompted Above All to investigate. Before the offender's name was released, Above All, in her all graciousness and wisdom, allowed them to come forth, and she promised that if they were, to be honest with her,



she would agree to reduce their punishment and save their dignity to the community - who were rightfully curious and ready to out the cheater for their actions.

And so, a person did come and confess that the sword was theirs, and Above All dealt with them in private. To this day, no one knows who it was, or what was done to them. Perhaps they will never know, as because those who do know, are only she and them.

After the trio of troublemakers was released back into the world, they vowed to show more self-restraint, and two of the three proposed an arena for others to deal with future disputes rather than end up like them. Unfortunately, this idea never came to fruition.

Owl decided that perhaps the town life was not for him and packed his bags and moved to a world untouched by the Netherstate highways. He moved into the one place no one would look for him. He journeyed into the cold wastelands of the ice spikes.

Although not a participant in the civil war, Stompy's life was mysteriously taken, and a diamond block tomb was erected in his honor.

### **Year's Passing [M] <B>**

Time passed, and the wounds of the skirmish were still fresh in memory, but for the most part, forgiven.

The usual antics were afoot, such as a phantom being discovered to have been trapped in a boat in the Nether and put in the Nether hub on display for all to see.

Owl founded Prime Empire, the second known faction after The People's Republic of Ant. He started importing villager children to the Nether. It was very illegal and questionable as to the number of kids he had kidnapped. However, this was to justify grooming them into cleric professions for future mass exchanges in gold to emerald from his exclusive Overworld portal gold farm.

Squishy opened a villager mall with a very quality selection of enchanted books for trade, overtaking the void left by Dia and Aero's stock market crash. In addition to this, he built a roller coaster through town that had a glass aquarium tunnel and ended in the inn's basement. Nearby the rollercoaster, he built an auto chicken cooker to supplement Wyrmtooth's diet.

Oof found herself lost in her region of the world's mineshafts. Dio came to investigate and bring her back to Wyrmtooth, but she met her end before he could arrive.

The zombie and skeleton XP grinder finally received some much-needed renovation from Bam and Kilia and functioned much more efficiently than the old one - even going as far as to include options to turn it on and off.

There was quite a wealthy disparity in town, as when Dio built a new home outside of Wyrmtooth walls, and in this version, Squish visited it and dripped the flooring with precious mineral blocks such as diamond and netherite. Equally, Baka built the second pixel art in the world, Gawr Gura. This drew most people's attention due to the inclusion of diamond blocks in the tail, standing as a measure of Baka's level of wealth.

The townsfolk played Spleef, and the winner, Faker, was granted a zombie horse by Above All.

Christmas was coming, so a Secret Santa event was organized. The people who registered were assigned to another person as their giftee and would stylize their gifts accordingly. People rushed around securing gifts for their person until the very last minute. And as if by true movie-fashioned Christmas miracle, even those who did not even register for the event had presents under the Christmas tree. Was this by the unregistered residents in secret? Some speculated that this could have been the work of Above Santa. Perhaps these things are best off not knowing, as the townsfolk rejoiced in just the simple feeling of being gifted.

Haydesly and Bam attempted a renovation of the End, but then realized the high work to low pay-off ratio and ended the project. The attempt at the End's renovation did have some lasting effects, however, in the form of Squish's charitable donation of a permanent public beacon underneath the island. Taking advantage of this, Haydesly later came back to the End

and built a void enderman farm that replaced Owl's farm on the island. It was far more effective since the endermen spawning surfaces were more limited in the void.

With the topic of the End in mind, Bam decided to take it upon himself to also open 10 new End gateways and had the assistance of Squish for the final 5 for all 20 possible gateways to be completely unlocked.

Vahl took it upon himself to stop waiting for elytra to be gifted upon him, so he ventured into the End once more and got extremely lucky early into the run. He was able to secure a looting III sword and plundered The End happily, having acquired many shulker shells and elytra. A miracle came when he was able to encounter a return gateway home deep into The End.

Dia and Aero finished work on The Forsaken Brimstone's castle exterior and complemented it with a fox statue after Dia was able to import herself the fabled white foxes of the arctic. Vahl would find much joy in this too, replacing his original orange with tundra ones (so much so that he released another outbreak of foxes upon the world, all wielding iron blades). On another account, he managed to trap two ravagers in Wyrmtooth's barn, who like Dio's sheep, also disappeared without a trace a few days later.

The endangered species of pandas were found in the jungle and relocated by Bam to Wyrmtooth to proliferate and spread throughout the townsfolk. A clever idea to convince people to do this willingly was by opening the Adopt a Panda.

Oof was finally introduced to civilization and lifted out of isolation by being connected to the Netherstate highway.

A nether brick wyrm settled itself upon Wyrmtooth above the vertical wheat farm.

There was a small fad of multiple players getting involved with beekeeping - Haydesly, Baka, and Kilia all vied for honey.

An influx of cooncaine appeared in the town through the form of a vending machine.

After Night killed Stabby, Baka's pet zombie, they added another pet to their nursery named Bomby, the charged creeper.

The end of this period is marked with the chunk purge of 2020, where Above All reduced the world size by deleting unused and otherwise far-out chunks.

## **The New Year [m] <B>**

On the new year, the townsfolk celebrated in their different ways. There was a public celebration at the memorial built by Augurey and wired by Dio. Vahl's new year resolution began with blowing up the Bastion. Kilia raised an organic sky turtle to the side of her tree. Squish commissioned Owl to construct a gold arena for him, and Owl was generously compensated for his work, bringing him out of medium wealth status.

Meanwhile, Night made a giant cake in the sky to recognize Baka's birthday and all others willing to disclose their information.

Bam got tired of asking around if any of the Halcyon residents had pumpkins - and it appeared that no one either cared to grow them or had little to none, so he engineered automatic daylight sensor pumpkin and melon towers.

Aero and Dia moved out of The Forsaken Brimstone onto their sky base project.

Blaze's ocean monument farm overloaded the world, and Above All threatened to remove it if he did not change the system to an on-site kill. With a stroke of ingenuity, Blaze managed to alter the killing mechanism to the same dimension.

Squish was hired to kill Baka but ended up taking two other unrelated casualties instead. This would come to bite him in the ass later as he was ambushed while building by one of his unintended victims.

A pig turf war event was attempted to be organized but fell through since not enough people were online at the same time to start.

Tux's journey to bring back mooshroom creatures ended favorably. He boated a family of them from the biome to the fences of his Wyrmtooth home. The first social gathering for public cuck mask wearing happened on the same day.

The third generation of pixel art was added to Wyrmtooth in the form of Pekora (Bam), Korone (Bam), and Haato (Ant). The Albastian Empire declared independence from Wyrmtooth shortly after.

The Chooches of the Sea settled near their ocean monument farm.

Oof and Axe traveled to a woodland mansion to found their headquarters.

Spartan closed off the period with the fourth generation of pixel art in the form of Darth Vader.

### **The Rise of Factions [M] <B>**

The introduction of the Pekora Corporation to Halcyon took most by surprise. Not only by the timing but also by the drastic changes that would be happening to Wyrmtooth - or rather, by the lack of changes. Bam and Tux moved out of the town in search of the promised land to found PekoVille, Pekora Corporation's privately owned economic-focused modern town. Dio, the self-proclaimed NPC, appeared in PekoVille and assisted with land excavation. In the emergence of the Pekora Corporation, several other factions also sprang up in its wake - namely The Spartans' Vanguard, The Titan's Order, and The Royal Forsaken.

Amid all the recent developments, a wildfire started on Kilia's tree from a campfire relighting gone wrong. Above All blew out the tree like a candle, reversing all effects of the blaze.

In between this time, Augurey recruited Napoleon and moved out of Wyrmtooth to found her private builds. They had yet to declare a faction for themselves.

Kilia and Soul formed the Oakilians with their leaving of Wyrmtooth.

In Pekora Corporation's PekoVille, construction was coming along at a rapid pace. A subway was formed to link the Nether to the Overworld of PekoVille, and Konpeko Park and Peflora Florists were built alongside it. Home Pekot was built for the Usada construction company to utilize. Suisei Visitor Center opened to the public.

The People's Republic of Ant exchanged letters with Pekora Corporation for many books of binding to manufacture their signature novelty cuck masks.

Dio began creating quick travel locations around the world.

With PekoVille's InaOut gift shop's opening, Pekora Corporation declared their economy to be based on the gold standard. This prompted many other factions in Halcyon to question the legitimacy of using gold as a currency, but Pekora Corporation stood firm on their gold standard exchange due to the liquidity of the material. In contrast to this, Alibastian Empire established its currency system in the form of Alibastian dollars (A\$).

The Blisk Ocean terrorist group formed and immediately contacted Pekora Corporation for a land purchase in PekoVille. Despite ethical repercussions that could arise from housing a local terrorist group within PekoVille borders, Pekora Corporation offered Blisk Ocean a contract anyway with the incentive of capitalism. The Prime Empire followed suit, with a larger request for land.

The Spartans' Vanguard finished their raid farm, making their faction the very first to have one on Halcyon.

The Alibastian Empire attempted to annex Wyrmtooth, but Pekora Corporation and The People's Republic of Ant refused to recognize the legitimacy of the claim. The Chooches of the Sea and The Titan's Order later joined in to also reject their claims of the communal town.

Tux was reprimanded with employee parole for his absence and humiliation of Pekora Corporation due to his ignorance of company policies and standards. He promised to arrive to work the same day and make a sugarcane farm. He did not show.

Pekora Corporation invested in wood into the Prime Empire's creeper farm for an agreed-upon share of 25% at first, until Prime Empire negotiated more wood in exchange for 40%. Further renegotiations were made to include cobblestone, which netted Pekora Corporation shares in Prime Empire's creeper farm to 50%. Prime Empire also received sponsorship of leaves from Pekora Corporation in return for 25% shares into their upcoming trident farm.

The factions disputed the value of human labor due to Pekora Corporation defining workers as resources. Usada Construction waved off their concerns and completed work on Watame Textiles.

The undeclared Augurey and Napoleon faction had a civil land dispute with The Royal Forsaken over an island, claiming that The Royal Forsaken' ruined their dream. An agreement was eventually reached by the newly formed Augoleon Empire and The Royal Forsaken. They would split the island down the middle, with The Royal Forsaken claiming the north end, and the Augoleon Empire claiming the other.

On one fateful day, Titan was executed by Owl in the Prime Empire under the accusation that he wielded a crossbow against him. Titan made several baseless threats to take revenge against the Prime Empire but ironically found that someone had already made a move against him by laying End crystals in his fortress. Out of pity, Owl rectified the situation by compensating Titan's loss.

Meanwhile, the founder of Wyrmtree, Bam, returned to the town for some supplies from his Wyrmtree vacation home. What he came to find, however, was an assortment of disarray in the town's infrastructure and various utilities. These damages include but were not limited to, the defacement of Stompy the iron golem's grave (diamond blocks were taken out and replaced with cyan wool), Bomby the charger creeper being slain, the cake eaten from the kiddie jail (locked behind iron bars), a looted vertical wheat farm, waterlogged blocks in the automatic wool farm, water sources being removed from vital areas, and gravel missing from the walkways and essential paths. Since then, those had been repaired by the original builder.

Prime Empire, with generous help from Dio, started renovation work on the Overworld gold farm, with the goals of expanding it and adding a trident killer to it. Due to his clumsiness, Owl fell on the farm multiple times and even lost some of his equipment to the item sorter that disposed of non-gold related items and non-rotten flesh into lava.

Somehow, Blisk Ocean's honey production repository was sabotaged, leaving many bees left dead, beehives stolen, and one of their faction's swords gone missing. Alibastian Empire restored Blisk Ocean's losses. Feeling under threat of further damages, Blisk Ocean decided to expand their land purchase in Pekora Corporation's owned PekoVille to 4 x 4 chunks from the originally agreed upon 1 chunk of land. Pekora Corporation mysteriously did not decide to adjust the price for Blisk Ocean's purchase under the statement that, "Short-term charity comes often to benefit sales in the long term."

Bam made the statement that since Wyrmtree is a community area, the idea that any one faction could put a claim on it is as likely as someone to claim the entirety of the Netherstate highway. In other words, it was to belong to everyone.

Elsewhere in the world, The Advent Children razed their woodland mansion in hopes to construct something better from the rubble.

### **Factions' Growth [m] <B>**

A new generation of immigrants was welcomed into the server, growing several factions' populations.

The PRA was briefly terrorized by a rogue wither, but the PRA's hero of the people, Ant, swiftly defeated the threat. Not all was without loss, however, as the wither, with its dying breath, landed a cheap shot on the PRA's entrance book of laws.

Whether it be through magic or a natural affinity with nature, a trio of parrots teleported mysteriously to Bam's side. He was convinced that this one-time occurrence was an accidental trigger of his stand.

PekoVille sightings of a diamond-armored zombie disappeared as quickly as they were reported.

The different factions made several innovations. Prime Empire's engineers developed the first TNT bomber planes, with the other factions eyeing them suspiciously as to what they could be used for. Pekora Corporation's finest scientists made numerous innovations in concrete-making,

refining the process to an industrial standard. Capitalizing on these discoveries, Usada Kensetsu constructed the Hoshimachi Residential complex out of concrete.

Squishy called out to the sky, asking whether Above All had taken his End portal frames from him, but he received no answer.

### **The Konpeko Park Incident [E] <B>**

In a breaking news report from the FBK news station, a gunman has taken their life outside of Konpeko Park. The intruder was first reported to the Pekoville Police Department when an ambassador of The People's Republic of Ant spotted them outside of Peflora Florists. Shortly after, an officer from the Amelia division went in and attempted to de-escalate the situation. The officer, Bam6561, was patient with the assailant, going as far as to let them fire at the officer's Pekevlar vest, to no effect. Shortly after, a final shot was heard, and Officer Bam6561 confirmed the death, despite never laying a finger on them.

In a statement from the PvPD's Police Chief, Bam6561 says that the loss of a potential customer is a grave act, and despite what he tried, they refused to listen to reason. Furthermore, he comments that the officers do not solve all cases with violence. This has been the FBK news station, signing off.

Audio clips between the gunman and the officer have been recovered from the Officer's Pekevlar vest, and are as follows:

G: Pekora Corporation is a threat to all societies and people by its aggressive monopoly over the natural order.

B: ...

G: You've started something akin to a war, without realizing it.

B: ...

G: Do you not see the evils in your company, forcing these poor people under your facade of a commercial town to only support themselves using your products?

B: ...

G: My god, you're dense, all of you folk, I can see that nothing is being done about it.

*Multiple gunshots are heard.*

G: W-why.... why are they not doing anything to you? Are you a man or a monster? I unloaded at least 6 magazines of arrows now... I... I can't fathom what kind of power this is, that you would so willingly, despite knowing this entire time that you had such an advantage over me, stand there, and let me rant on endlessly. Is this what powerlessness feels like? I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!

*A final gunshot was heard.*

The ambassador of the PRA is seen rushing over to inspect the remains of the gunman, as the police officer is seen exchanging his helmet for a construction hard hat, to continue work at Usada Kensetsu.

Shortly after the incident, a lawyer from Prime Empire attempted to defend the gunman, accusing Pekora Corporation of fabricating the incident with the premise of the gunman not being able to turn the bow around to shoot himself. From pictures taken on the scene during the situation, it was shown that the officer had only a totem of undying and cooked porkchop in his hands, clearing him of guilt. Pekora Corporation later performed an autopsy on the gunman, revealing to the public that the gunman was a part of Pekora Corporation's recognized terrorist group, Akukin Kensetsu.

### **Faction Industrialization [m] <B>**

Pekora Corporation exchanged their highest security prisoner, Houshou Marine, with The People's Republic of Ant in hopes of rehabilitating her. The PRA reported that they would have a specialized cuck pit for her handling. With funds free from the prisoner upkeep to be allocated elsewhere, pooled money into Usada Kensetsu displayed a brilliant combination of science and

construction with the completion of their rapid item transit pipeline, nicknamed the Holozon Delivery.

Elsewhere in the world, The Titan's Order conscripted Dio to dig out his basement. Improper explosion insulation led to the faction's fortress being sunk below ground. Attempts at repairs were successful, but Titan insisted that Above All reversed the damages himself. Titan then tried to dictate the lore, but a collective wave of downvotes washed over his comment. With the clearing of The Titan's Order, the infestation of slimes in their basement grew to an all-time high, so he vowed to counter them with iron golems.

The partnership between Pekora Corporation's redstone engineers and The Alibastian Empire's construction workers allowed Halcyon's Nether hub to have a community mail center. An elder guardian was transported to the area to safeguard it. Although the intentions of adding an elder guardian meant well, the community quickly despised the 5-minute mining fatigue, so Above All intervened and replaced the elder guardian with a mining fatigue mist that only affected those in the Nether hub area and wore off as soon as they left.

PekoVille was hard at work on its economy, infrastructure, and military. Pekora Corporation dug several rabbit holes in Pekoville, claiming that it was an emergent technology to take advantage of. Usada Kensetsu, in collaboration with Roboco Robotics (both divisions of Pekora Corporation), built Halcyon's first mech - christened the Pekodam. Pekora Corporation CEO's office was revealed to be dripped in gold. Hoshimachi residential facilities were completely furnished around the same time the Royal Forsaken completed their faction's logo pixel art. The Rosenthal Orchard as part of their eco-friendly resource-gathering projects. The Watame Textile riots ceased in PekoVille when appeasement to the factory workers was given in the form of Watame pixel art.

The other factions were also making their advancements. The Oakilian Druids brainwashed villagers into their cult of tree hippies and promptly locked them in cells. Pekora Corporation and the Alibastian Empire mapped out their territories. Prime Empire tinkered with a mass kelp farm to couple with its super smelter. The empire also built a complete map art of a Texan flag, only to realize it was not aligned with chunk borders. Following this discovery, they then used a mixture of manpower and TNT to destroy the old one and shifted over to a new one properly. Several renovations were made to Prime Empire's Nether hub, improving their quality of life.

A corrupted rift in the world kidnapped some of the Alibastian Empire's villagers. Squishy witnessed his kingdom's subjects phase into solid stone, effectively suffocating them.

### **The NPC Chronicles [m] <B>**

Dio wandered the world, in search of a purpose for his existence. Upon his journeys, he discovered incorrectly aligned End portal frames. Above All came and willed them back into their correct orientation. After this, he meditated in open darkness for 2 days and nights, channeling the life flow of local grass around him, looking for a breeze to take him onto his next adventure. His body was beaten down by several wild creatures in the area, but his will was so strong that his enemies killed themselves in overexertion.

Dio took up several mining contracts, visiting The Spartans' Vanguard and The Titan's Order. Things went as planned at The Spartans' Vanguard, but at The Titan's Order, a gas main was dug into and leaked flammable gases that mixed with the nearby lava. A large explosion collapsed The Titan's Order into a sinkhole.

Dio created a trade embassy with the resident Nether Piglins and secured an income of soul speed magics for Pekora Corporation. In thanks, the Pekora Corporation sponsored a much-needed upgrade to Dio's closet in their subway.

In terms of nature-related events, the Oakilians started growing their world tree. Baka and Night moved out of their country manor into new lands. They seeded a new tree, but it started wilting, so they burned it down in favor of attempting to grow a healthier tree.

The Titan's Order's leader was tricked into opening a wired chest, which dropped them into a pit of pufferfish. There was nearly a casualty, but they consumed a god apple to avoid death. To this day, they still assume it was the leader of the PRA's doing.

Dio then sought to quell his thirst for destruction, so he took it out on the main End Island. The island was deleted and molded into a halo ring around the outer End gateways. Unsatisfied with only the main End Island, he went out further and visited several End cities. He reverted them into End plains. During an otherwise fatal falling in the destruction, his life was saved by a good luck charm he carried in his pocket. He fell butt-first into the ground, with a Pekora plush doll absorbing the impact. He was alive, but at the cost of the doll being ruined.

Seeking a more artistic purpose in life, Dio traveled across Halcyon to collect unique relics from around the world in the form of books and trinkets.

The partnership between Prime Empire and the Oakilians allowed them to establish a building for spawn's Nether portal. During their visit there, they found a rather offensive sign decorated with netherite blocks. It was destroyed and melted down into ingots for further evaluation.

### **Lilith's Deception, Chapter 1: Captive [M] <B>**

One fateful day, Above All usurped Discord ownership from Bam. He was quickly restrained and taken away to an unknown location - broadcasted live to many of the denizens of Halcyon. Several heavily armed wither skeletons and a wither could be seen guarding his cell. Above All made an appearance and announced to the world that Bam was being detained for secretly working on a highly dangerous project known as The Planet Cracker, a device capable of splintering the world in two, with his motives being that if the world was put into poverty, then his Pekora Corporation could be left as the only one left in power to restore and assume order.

Much to everyone's surprise, few could object to Above All's authority except the Alibastian Empire's Squishy, who refused to believe the sudden news. Moreso, he claimed to have seen through Above All as a fake. With his proclamation, he was ridiculed and mocked by many of Above All's believers.

In Bam's absence, Owl shoplifted from Pekora Corporation's gift shop.

The Titan's Order experienced an overgrowth of shrubbery, covering it entirely in grass blocks, and a prankster graffitied the local atmosphere with a pixel art pufferfish. The Titan's Order developed an automatic tunnel bore in an attempt to show the public they were competent in light of recent humiliating events.

The Spartans' Vanguard launched the very first space mission, sent the first man to the moon, and settled among the stars. An unexplainable incident caused one of The Spartans' Vanguard's space probes to explode, sending some dust into Squishy's face, startling him.

Strange magical fluxes within the world erupted, opening a rift for a flock of more than 270 Ender Dragons to terrorize the land. Above All blinked them out of existence. Strangely, due to this, an Overworld End portal appeared outside of Wyrmtooth's gates.

### **Lilith's Deception, Chapter 2: Treachery [M]**

#### **Book 1: Expedition, by Mobius Firm [S] <B>**

What would otherwise be a non-distinct mailbox seems to have one of its walls slightly jut out of place. To the common person, they would not think much of it. Fiddling around with the walls reveals that it hid a small compartment, with which there is a letter crammed into the space.

To: Pekora Corporation  
From: Mobius Firm

Dear Mr. President,

I am pleased to inform you that our team is ready to set out on our expedition starting tomorrow. As requested, in this letter you'll find the details of our staff and the procedures

involved in the operation. With us, we have eight men and women, all highly capable in their respective professions:

Howard Hallard (M, 45): Expedition Leader

Alan Turner (M, 53): Historian

Patricia Millerson (F, 23): Historian

Patrick Martini (M, 24): Workman

Scott Edwin (M, 31): Workman

Willie White (M, 27): Security

Lang Morrison (M, 17): Medic

Carolyn Nera (F, 16): Scribe

We'll be heading east of the world's origin to a desert temple on foot. Locals in the area have already been evacuated to secure the worksite from prying eyes, and we'll be there for approximately three to four days to uncover any historical relics we can find. If all goes well, you'll hear from me within a week.

Sincerely,  
Howard

## **Book 2: Desert Temple, by Mobius Firm [S] <B>**

There are a few papers and a logbook strewn on the floor here, as well as a put-out campfire.

### Expedition Logbook

#### Day 1

Howard here. We're almost there to the desert temple. Seeing as how quickly night was to come, I've decided it best that the team set up camp in the mesa so that we can continue tomorrow. The team seems in good morale and is fresh and healthy.

Carol is a bit nervous since it's her first day on the job, but I've reassured her that we're completely safe with the capabilities of our security crew. Although I'd rather worry that our weeks' worth of rations might disappear soon given how much that kid Lang eats. I told him if he eats like that, he'll have to sit out the next night. Alan is a bit angsty to be out in the field, he's complaining about how much walking there's been already. Guess that's what happens when you get old. Can't imagine that I'll be his age in 8 years. Don't want to use any more lantern fuel. I'll continue reporting tomorrow.

#### Day 2

We reached the desert temple safely. Other than a bit of sand and rocks in our shoes, we are intact and well. Patricia found several strange markings on the walls that she said doesn't belong to any civilization she's studied before. Alan investigated it too. He shrugged and joked it was probably a typo when they were carving it. Doesn't make at all any sense to me either. For all I know, it's just a bunch of carvings on the wall. I've had Patrick and Scott work on excavating the lower levels of the temple a little. Lots of rubble caved in some of the entrances.

#### Day 3

Howard fell ill, he was bit by a poisonous rattlesnake today when he was trying to climb over a statue that had fallen over. I, Carolyn, am writing in for him today. Lang's taking care of him now, but he's said that he doesn't have anything in his first aid kit to cure this type of wild snake's poison. Says that the two of them will have to go back to town and get more professional help.

Leaves the six of us now to our own accord. Alan's the new head. I don't know anything; I'm just supposed to write and document anything I see. Lower-level excavation by the workmen



found a strange room of pure obsidian. In the center was a single jar carved with a depiction of a demon, by Patricia's guess. Scott, one of the workmen, walked up to it and tried to haul it out of the room. During his fidgeting, some smoke or ash of some sort came out of it. Luckily, he was wearing a mask, so none of it got into his lungs. Who knows what that could have done?

Day 4

Alan found a connection between this temple and another ruin carved by the same civilization. However, this one's to the south in a jungle somewhere. He's determined to find out what the markings mean at this one, so he's deduced that if he has enough of the hieroglyphics in his research, he can decipher the language. Patricia is a bit hesitant, as she's only been hired for the week, but Alan convinced her that Howard wouldn't have given up such a great lead either, even in the scope of the original mission to only investigate this one.

Me? I'm just paid by the hour, so I couldn't care much less. We leave tomorrow. I'll leave this logbook and the other documents here so that when Howard and Lang come back, they'll know where we went.

### **Book 3: Jungle Temple, By Mobius Firm [S] <B>**

In the same scene as from the desert temple, there's a similar setup of papers and a logbook on the floor - only that some pages from the logbook are missing.

Days 5 - 8 have been torn out.

Day 9

Whatever we've found here, it's not human. It's not human, it's not human, it's not human. While Patrick was moving some of the stones - something black came behind him and twisted his neck. As if we're delving into forbidden knowledge now... I fear that it's too late to turn back. Alan's gone quite mad, giving a lunatic speech about how if he drops his lead now, some other explorers will investigate, and they'll claim the fame and fortune from him. We can't exactly leave him to his own devices either. Truth be told, he's the only person who knows the way back home. We have to follow him to this path's end. It's a miracle that we are still alive, as the naturally grown melons have extended out expedition's rations by a few days.

Days 10 - 12 have been torn out.

Day 13

Is it just me? The air in this temple has been getting colder the longer we stay here. I want to go home. The others do too. But Alan wants to go further. He deciphered the writings on the walls and found something alien. He called it the find of the 21st century. The writings tell of a hole. A hole in the world that lets you go to a different world than ours. It all seems so strange to read that from crude drawings buried under centuries' worth of moss and cobble. The next journey we take is further south.

### **Book 4: End Stronghold, By Willie White [S] <B>**

There's a cassette tape here in the hands of a dead man. It takes a while, but you eventually find a device to play its audio. What comes out is a man whose voice seems to be on its last breaths.

"W-willie. My name is Willie. If you're listening to this, I'm bleeding out. W-we, our expeditionary crew, were attacked. They came from behind. I hardly heard them at all. Then came a single grunt. Then several. An arrow flew past my ear, straight into Patricia's back. It went straight through her... by the time I turned around, an arrow hit me too. Right in the chest. I didn't even have time to pull out my weapon. I played dead for a few minutes, I had to lay headfirst

into a puddle of my blood as it formed around me. I heard several more screams and arrows whizzing by. Then it stopped. And I heard sobbing. It was Carolyn's. Her sobbing grew quieter and quieter. She was being taken away from me. When I thought it was finally safe to look up, I could see her kidnappers. They wore leather garments and had a greyish tint of skin. They tracked sand with their boots. If you find this message, you can... save her. She's just a kid. God knows, what they will do to her... "

His voice fades away.

#### **Book 5: Pillager Outpost, By Illager [S] <B>**

In the chest are attack formation plans. They detail where each wave will attack a village and from what direction. There's no indication as to where this village is, other than some crude markings of a flat terrain battlefield, a highly dense and tall canopy of trees nearby, and that the village is on the coast. An unfamiliar marking of an eye is marked in green.

#### **Book 6: Village II, By Villager [S] <B>**

It's a drawing from the perspective of a man gazing upon the sky, at a great deity. He's surrounded by several others, standing atop an ancient stone structure in the jungle.

#### **Book 7: Jungle Temple II, By Cultist [S] <B>**

Here, there are several blood-stained pages, and many skulls litter the floor. The table is littered with occultic runes and covered in dried blood. From what you can make out, this was a sacrificial site. There is a single readable page left that was carefully left unstained:

"For our creator, from whence we came from dust. For our mentor, from whence we knew nothing. For our savior, from whom tragedy saved us. Deliver us from our suffering, for we plead upon you these lives you have requested. Your benevolence knows no bounds. As your final wish, we shall set out upon a neighboring island village, and take the lives of the nonbelievers. Give us strength, give us mercy, give us repentance."

#### **Book 8: Village III, By Cultist [S] <B>**

A body of a dead man clutches a scroll tightly in his right hand. It opens easily, revealing the following text:

"We were deceived. There is no God. The witch has twisted our view, and we, in our blind ignorance, have slaughtered the innocent in hopes to appease them. Only then, on the darkest hour, did the skies grow red. We had unleashed something beyond our comprehension. Hell has frozen over, for it failed to contain such a demon. Our god, who we had previously considered Above All, was no benevolent creature. It never intended to bring us to Heaven. My final warning to the elder, before my strength gives out - Lilith is here."

#### **Amidst Treachery [m] <B>**

Elsewhere in the world, Pekora Corporation opened Aloe Records in PekoVille. Complementing the records shop from across the street, Usada Kensetsu constructed the Sora Concert Stage. In memoriam of the importance of their feline friends protecting the Home Pekot from rogue saboteurs, PekoVille commissioned the Okayu Scratching Post to be built. The Moona Observatory was founded for entry-level sciences in astronomy a street away from the Okayu Scratching Post.

The Titan's Order, in a collaborative effort with the Prime Empire, opened a mall and museum in their basement. The Titan's Order commissioned a smeltery from Prime Empire, and they built the Elysian Bazaar together as well.

The Alibastian Empire announced both the opening of its third marketplace and the Pornhub logo as their map art.

The People's Republic of Ant engineered a public Piglin Gacha on the Netherstate highway.

### **Lilith's Deception, Chapter 3: Flames [M] <B>**

A bloodied man arrives at the Nether hub, coughing up blood and stumbling over his steps. With a weak grin, he looks at you and hands you a scroll.

"Figured you'd want to know about this. If she would betray me, then it's time I got a little help in my revenge."

His knees give out, and he collapses, unresponsive. Peering at the parchment, it's ripped in several places, but the headline is clear: PRISONER TRANSFER. The smaller words on the scroll are written in ink, but extremely smeared. At the bottom are the coordinates. `350, 750 NETHER`. It's signed by Lilith.

Four heroes, Dio, Owl, Titan, and Spartan went to the prison in the Nether and traversed its bridges across the lava. There, they fought 2 garrisons: the piglin conscripts and the skeleton legion.

Upon their assault of the piglin conscript fortress, Spartan accidentally emptied a batch of harming arrows into Owl's back, slaying him. Owl came back to his bearings after a while, and they reached a portal after defeating its two highly armed guards.

On the other side of the portal, there was a single bedroom with a neighboring open book lectern. Inside the chest beside the bed, there was a journal, and on the open book lectern, there was a logbook.

### **Book 9: Bounty, by Mercenary [S] <B>**

"Lady says she wants him brought back alive, I does so. She says she wants him restrained, I does so. But when I ask for my payment, she says I'm grateful to be alive. What kind of horseshit answer is that? The cult ain't give her enough already? I just want a split of the power I was promised, nothing much. Says she's not comfortable with keeping him here now, huh. Got a scroll yesterday about some transfer to another prison. After this job, I'm done. I'm not doing anything more for her, and I'm going to announce my leave to her tomorrow.

### **Book 10: Interrogations, by Unknown [S] <B>**

The subject has just arrived in my care. Naturally, he's unwilling to cooperate. I'll break him somehow.

Trial 1:

The subject was simply offered a choice of whether to answer the questions and be let go or refuse and stay here longer. I approached the subject and proceeded to prod him for what he knew about the Chalice of Angels. The subject gave only brief, irrelevant answers to my questioning or refused to comment. Trial inconclusive. No progress on anything we already didn't know.

Trial 2:

The subject was threatened with physical pain with the torturer's choice of blunt object. The torturer was advised to choose something not too life-threatening. The subject was questioned once more about what he uncovered about the Chalice. He spat at me and said he didn't know anything. I instructed the torturer to break one of his fingers. He screamed in pain, and I asked again. He said he didn't know anything once more, so I instructed the torturer to break another of his fingers. I told him he'd be down an arm if he didn't cooperate. He said something about The Depths after this. I will need further evaluation on this part. I ended the interrogation early today to look into the matter.

Trial 3:

The subject was waterboarded to pry for more conclusive details about The Depths. He was drugged asleep and bound to a large wheel hanging above a water trough, slowly spun by a

third man besides myself and the torturer. He didn't say anything for about half an hour. At that point, however, I lost my patience and dunked him into the water for a few seconds longer than I should have. He lost consciousness for a few seconds until the medical team restored his health.

Trial 4:

The subject was set in a room that slowly increased in temperature the longer he stayed in there. He mocked me and said that I spent my last few days on a false premise, but I know better. The Depths have been a long-time topic in my research of the Chalice, but I've yet to see anyone living with the knowledge of it outside of written stories. The air in the room nearly reached a boiling point before I was interrupted by a subordinate. The prisoner was to be moved to a different location, by Lilith's orders. Begrudgingly, I instructed the staff to take him out before any further progress could be made.

### **Flames P.2 [M] <B>**

From beyond a double set of iron doors, there was a heavily armed guard of 4 wither skeletons, which the four heroes, Dio, Owl, Titan, and Spartan, defeated.

Lilith laughed at their small victory, and commented, "Did you think it was going to be this easy? That I'd just give you him? You're all fools for being so gullible. You've walked right into my trap, and now I can get rid of all of you rats at once. This is the end of the road for you."

The ceiling above collapsed, and two withers dropped down. Having fast reflexes, the heroes were able to dodge their initial explosions. After an intense fight, it turned out that it wasn't the end. Lilith herself, unsatisfied with the withers being unable to defeat the heroes, fought them herself. Much physical combat as well as magical spells were thrown around in the battle. Deadly magics such as tipped arrows, lingering potions in harming, poison, and wither variants were used.

Lilith seemed nearly invincible, with the four tag-teaming her into corners and she just as deftly dodged their traps with her teleportation. The bedrock floor melted into magma, and Dio set multitudes of explosives to weaken the demon. In the ensuing chaos, Titan fell in the battle, despite being the sponsor of such a deadly mission. The final three carried on the fight, and through a battle of attrition, were finally able to slay Lilith.

The day was won. For now, Bam was finally let loose from his prison after Lilith's magic weakened, and his soul was sent back to the Pekora Corporation.

## **BS1.5: Rebirth**

### **Rebirth [O] <B>**

Since the world had become heavily corrupted from the outburst of chaotic energies left over from Lilith's awakening, Above All took notice and decided to recreate the world for the better. She began seeding in new life and vegetation, leaving behind ruins of advanced technology for the people of Halcyon to discover, with the intent of preserving the people's culture while also building upon it. She reabsorbed the life essences of the players back into her being and took a total of two days to finish her work.

On the first day, she experimented with new genomes and machinery to leave behind for the world's denizens to use, and on the second day, she reshaped the world as it originally was, and grafted their constructions back to their rightful places. Satisfied with the work completed from day two, she deemed the world as hospitable and inserted the players back into the environment.

### **Life in The New Old World [M] <B>**

Many were left in awe at the new majesties that came with the rebirth of the world. Several others went deaf from the new addition of whales. Some fought barehanded with buffalo, and others got poisoned by cobras. The world was as deadly as it was beautiful.

The factions quickly got to work utilizing the new features Above All had provided them. Prime Empire dug into the earth with their new mining drills and began automating their crop harvests. Blisk Ocean started cataloging the new creatures. The Royal Forsaken tamed several foxes. The PRA started employing ogres to patrol their natural swamplands.

The rebirth was so new, the land was still forming, and Vahl fell through the world in his explorations. He was then lifted back up while falling through the void by a mysterious entity and given a plane to pilot. Being that he had never received pilot lessons before, he was initially confused about how to steer the vehicle, but with a bit of stubbornness, he managed to lift off the ground. He started by visiting several villages in the area, and at the last location he visited, villagers took control of his plane. On the side of the world, the number of car high-jackings rose to an all-time high. Before this rebirth, Halcyon had never experienced so many cases of vehicle theft.

The old Netherstate highways had collapsed in the rumbling created by the continents being shifted above head, so Above All compensated for the lack of Nether infrastructure by gifting the peoples of Halcyon a divinity crystal imbued with the essence of Space. Its powerful gravity-warping properties allowed it to wrap large physical distances on top of each other as if it were cloth and laid each of its physical planes' entry and exit points in the same space, allowing for what most would call teleportation.

Ant discovered newfound powers in compacting the life force gathered from endermen that would grant him superhuman qualities upon consumption, akin to what one would relate to Thanos. He would be referred to as ThAntos by those close to him, and eventually, the nickname caught on.

Titan's desire for an Ender Dragon egg led him to delve into The End and slay the Ender Dragon with Ant, only to find out that this world's Ender Dragon was male. It had no eggs of its own, and Titan had a long walk home in silence.

Upon returning to his base, Titan encountered Dio and got sent to the NPC Dimension. Immediately giving up hope to escape, he decided to take his own life and respawned at home to tell the tale to those who would listen. Ant later heard about Titan's testimony of the rumors of the NPC dimension and decided to investigate what he would later nickname "The Chest".

Remarking on Dio's supernatural abilities, Ant later invited Dio to resummon and slay the Ender Dragon with him to showcase his abilities when he took the form of ThAntos. The two made quick work of the dragon, and Ant placed down a plane to train his piloting skills on the now undefended End island. Shortly after, he mastered the flight controls and found an End city.

A ravager king was spotted in the deserts of Pekora Corporation, and Gummy, Axe, Ant, Dio, Bam, Spartan, and Vahl went out to hunt it. It was physically abused. Dio set off a small warhead underneath the ravager, and while it was effective in killing the creature, it also destroyed its drops. By a miracle, two more had spawned nearby, and the group was able to subdue the two of them with the loot intact this time. Gummy was slain by Dio for getting in the way before teleporting the rest of the group to his pocket dimension.

Little did anyone know, Vahl carried a pocket plane, and he flew this contraption around the space for a while before everyone returned home to clean off the blood from their swords and armor.

Several deaths were involved in the divinity crystal's space warping, so water was placed at the exit points of each warp to ensure maximum rates of survival.

### **The Divinity's Gift of Miracles [M] <B>**

Above All took notice of the god-like powers the pearls had granted ThAntos after he absorbed most of the blows from three King Ravagers and took a volley of explosives to the face. Fearing for his long-term health regarding prolonged consumption of the endermen essence, Above All drastically reduced the concentrations contained in each pearl to a safer, more stable level.

Anomalous properties started to emerge in the residents of Halcyon. Different people would report visions of Above All coming to them within their dreams and asking them for a phrase only they could remember. When these phrases were written on simple pieces of paper, they were imbued with divine powers. After being thrown, the user would be able to wield limited control of the essence granted to them by her Divinity. It was from this source that Dio was able to send himself and others to The Chest. These divine gifts were called miracles by the Halcyonians, and they rained upon the new world for five consecutive days.

Vahl was meditating on the first night. He closed his eyes and thought of nothing. While his eyes were closed, they embraced the darkness. He felt as though he was a part of this world, closed off from the rest. In this meditation, he received a power in which he could absorb the surrounding light and leave his enemies around him blinded by the absence of light. His form took upon a transparent mist and was practically invisible to the naked eye. Only those who were attentive enough could see the refractions of the little light he reflected, or that the landscape seemed to have a slight gray veil wherever he stepped. He would reappear whole again after a few seconds, thinking about how he could use his newfound ability. He was given the essence of Shadows.

Dio was approached again to have the second gift of his miracle, the essence of Space. With the new vision, he was taught how to wrap the space-altering properties of his miracle around more than just people, extending to creatures he could bring back with him to a second layer of the dimension, nicknamed the NPC's "sanctuary". Here, the normal laws of physics applied, but the air was much denser, and he discovered that there was already an established ecosystem when he tested his ability for the first time. The second space gate dropped him from the sky into a deep lake that was surrounded by grass. Leading down from the surface there was a wide cave that had a magma pool and more habitable space. There, he found several cows and sheep and named one of the cows Ooga. He showed several other residents of Halcyon his second gift, and they made a sheep pegging machine in the cave.

On the second night, Aero woke up with a burning sensation left over from his nightmare that he was sinking into lava. He could feel all the molten rocks brush against his skin, yet they didn't hurt. It even emboldened him a little, but he didn't think much of it until later when he began to cook but felt no sense of heat from the furnace. He later found out that he had dreamt of the essence of Flames.

Dia rolled around in her bed, fell off one of the sides, and hit the ground a lot gentler than she should have. She woke up from the light impact and walked down the stairs, gently gliding off each higher step onto the next. She tried jumping, but her feet made no sound when they hit the ground. She waved her hands several times in the air, but she too seemed to not generate any breeze she could feel when she did so. She was imbued with the essence of Air.

In Spartan's dream, he was flying in the sky alongside the birds. However, it was unlike any other dream of flight, as he was flying alongside them - vertically. He dove to the ground and realized that wherever he went, he could cause objects around him to float upwards. He shot up dramatically into a nearby cloud, and sat there for a while, reflecting. He sat upside down, without a sense of blood rushing into his head. He was given the essence of Gravity.

Tux shivered in his bed with several blankets over his person, but he was still cold. He put several coals into the fireplace, but they kept being snuffed out whenever he touched the fire poker. He felt the fire poker with his other hand and realized that it too was cold. A sudden idea came to him, and he ran outside and breathed in deeply and breathed out. A solid block of ice formed in his breath of air. He got creative, took off his shoes, and concentrated. He formed ice from beneath his feet. He was given the essence of Ice.

Elsewhere in the world, someone woke up with the ability to recall all their past lives with perfect memory, down to the finest detail. They could remember their birth, their childhood, every single offense that was done to them, as well as every single conversation they'd ever had. It was near nightmarish, yet also calming to them that they could seemingly step inside each memory and alter the way they remembered it. A dangerous quirk, they decided, and

fearing the misuse of such a trait, kept their properties unbeknownst to the public. They were given the essence of Time.

Kilia was downstairs in her world tree taking a bath. She soaked in the water, and several past visible scars healed nearly instantly. She felt over her body where she remembered past trauma, but they too seemed to have disappeared. In the places where she had healed, her skin took on a rough texture, like bark from trees. She sunk deeper into the water and felt as though she could take on the world with her newfound strength. She was given the essence of Life.

Blaze was coming home from a long haul from his ocean monument when a sudden storm came and rained heavily. He was pushed by several strong winds into a lake and he closed his eyes to brace for the water's impact. He found himself sinking and screamed - but no sound came out. He opened his mouth yet again and felt that he could breathe as normal. He opened one eye, then the next. The dark lake he had seen from the surface became clear as day underwater, and he then swam up to the surface. The darkness of the night had disappeared as well. He was given the essence of Depths.

Owl was fumbling around in The Titan's Order's storage room cleaning out the regularly accumulated trash when his hand brushed up against a sapling. It grew and grew and then began to wilt. Puzzled by this, he touched some leaves, and they began to grow bright green. They then slowly faded in color, started to dry, and the plant they were connected to withered into a dead bush. Whatever he touched, he figured, lived the full extent of their life cycles. He was given the essence of Aging.

On the third night, Human dreamed of a charred wasteland, one littered with bodies and the stench of war. He walked amongst the rubble of bombs left behind by mankind and couldn't help but feel the heaviness of the air left over from the still-burning pieces of trash and smoke. In the dream, the reaper came to him and offered him his scythe. He was given the essence of Death.

Titan's dream was much happier. He imagined a full banquet to feast upon, with all his friends and family sitting at different chairs of a table that seemed to stretch into the horizon. He had an endless feast, and yet he never felt the need to eat. Whenever someone would want seconds, they asked Titan to bring in another dish, and Titan clapped his hands twice for a waiter to bring it to the table. Unbeknownst to him, however, the food wasn't free - it was taken elsewhere in the world to the mouths he had fed. He was given the essence of Sustenance.

Apex was out studying the stars in hopes of discovering new developments for the Alibastian Empire. He pointed towards one to measure the distance to another and a tiny spark of what seemed to be electricity shot out from his hands. He stumbled backward, unsure of what happened, and then tried the same thing several more times. Apex had the bright idea to clap his two hands together, and the sky boomed with thunder. Lightning came down and struck a nearby tree, setting it on fire. Seeing the potency of this, Apex decided it was best to go out of his wooded area into the plains to study his strange discovery some more. He was given the essence of Storms.

Oof hurried home as the evening turned to night. She heard several groans from the tree line, signifying the presence of nearby zombies. She was caught unarmed by them, and she fell to the ground, shielding herself with her arm to keep them from clawing at her. However, as they came to lunge at her, she heard a thud. One of the zombies had hit an invisible wall that surrounded her, and several more tried to crowd around her, but couldn't. She got up and found that they were repulsed by the same distance she kept on them as she was when she fell over. She then realized this opportunity and used her invisible walls to press several of them into a tree. She then began to repeatedly punch the zombies until they no longer resembled their original forms. She was given the essence of Constitution.

Augurey was reading a book at this time when her vision started to stretch far beyond what she was used to. She put her book down and took a step off her bed. The bed covers seemed to almost blow off. She took another step, and the same thing happened. Curious, she walked

around her room, and several things flew off the shelves and their furniture as she passed them. She decided to test the extent of this new development and ran outside. The wooden floor nearly came with her as its nails were almost pulled out by her burst of speed. She was given the essence of Motion.

On the fourth night, Axe was eating dinner when he bit into a piece of meat. It was still moving. He remembered he had cooked it thoroughly, as well as that it was frozen in the fridge from the night before. He spit out the squirming meat and bit into another piece. It also became animate. These pieces of meat reformed into the shape of a pig, pristine, as though it was perfectly natural in the wild. He touched the pig, and the pig became aggressive and grew larger and larger on top of his dinner table. Its flesh melted in some places and then began to attack him. He took a nearby kitchen knife and subdued the creature. He took all the meat he had cooked and dumped it outside, vowing to find some control over his new ability before touching any meat again. He was given the essence of Flesh.

Killer was up at night, studying the blueprints of the next build he and Blaze would build together when suddenly he heard a squeak coming from the water. He came to investigate it, and his eyes met a guardian's. He could read its thoughts, and it could read his. It told him of a great treasure that lay beneath the depths, and that only a courageous hero could obtain it. The guardian sank deep beneath the waters and Killer followed it. He was given the essence of Mind.

Napoleon sat under the Augoleon Empire's portal, looking around and seeing empty houses. They had just built a village with no inhabitants to fill the homes. She sighed and looked down at her feet. Immediately as she did, however, she heard humming from one of the homes. Looking in that direction, she saw that the house's lights were on, and smoke billowed from its chimney. There had to be someone inside. She looked down at her feet once more and several other homes experienced the same effect. Curious, she ran to one of the windows and peeked inside. Several villagers were relaxing by the fire that was just made. She was given the essence of Humanity.

On the fifth night, the last miracle was delivered. Squishy was busy developing a group healing spell, but after some time of playing around with the practicality of it, its effects were deemed too similar to more readily available splash potions of healing. The Alibastian Empire scrapped the project. Squishy, unhappy with the blueprint for the ineffective regenerative group spell, flipped over the table with his research documents and made a mess on the floor. As he was picking up the papers to throw away, he found that in place of where the original healing aspects of the spell were, they were replaced with his handwriting for a poison that could do the opposite. Intent on learning more about this, he collected all the papers and ordered them as they had been originally for the healing spell and studied them. He grinned and rubbed his hands together menacingly. He was given the essence of Disease.

#### **Miracles Granted by The Divinity [O] <B>** (In chronological order, **Active**, **Affinity**, **Passive**)

<b>Essence</b>	<b>User</b>	<b>Type(s)</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Abilities</b>
<b>Space</b>	Dio	Activation	Manipulation	Defensive, Utility	<b>A1: The Chest</b> Teleports entities to a pocket dimension <b>A2: The Sanctuary</b> Teleports entities to a pocket dimension
<b>Shadows</b>	Vahl	Activation	Self-Buff, Group Debuff	Offensive, Defensive	<b>A: Shadow Madness</b> Grants Blindness to entities and Invisibility to self



<b>Flames</b>	Aero	Passive, Affinity	Self-Buff	Defensive, Utility	<b>P:</b> <i>Flameborn</i> Fire Resistance <b>Af:</b> <i>Heatseeker</i> Grants Absorption in lava
<b>Air</b>	Dia	Passive	Self-Buff	Defensive, Utility	<b>P:</b> <i>Featherweight</i> Feather Falling
<b>Gravity</b>	Spartan	Activation	Manipulation	Offensive, Utility	<b>A:</b> <i>Zero-G</i> Grants entities Levitation
<b>Ice</b>	Tux	Activation	Creation	Defensive, Utility	<b>A1:</b> <i>Frost Prison</i> Surrounds an entity in ice <b>A2:</b> <i>Cold Feet</i> Creates a path of ice
<b>Time</b>	Ant	Activation	Manipulation	Utility	<b>A:</b> <i>Memory Recall</i> Teleports to Time Anchor <b>A:</b> <i>Time Stop</i> Entities & projectiles cease movement
<b>Life</b>	Kilia	Affinity	Self-Buff	Defensive	<b>Af:</b> <i>Rootjuvenation</i> Regeneration in water
<b>Depths</b>	Blaze	Passive, Affinity	Self-Buff	Offensive, Utility	<b>P:</b> <i>Wet &amp; Bright</i> Night Vision and Water Breathing <b>Af:</b> <i>Harpoon</i> Grants Strength and Speed in water
<b>Aging</b>	Owl	Activation	Group Debuff	Offensive, Defensive	<b>A:</b> <i>Hourglass</i> Grants Slowness and Weakness to entities
<b>Death</b>	Human	Activation	Group Debuff	Offensive	<b>A:</b> <i>Perish</i> Grants Poison and Wither to entities
<b>Sustenance</b>	Titan	Passive, Activation	Self-Buff, Group Buff, Group Debuff	Offensive, Utility	<b>P:</b> <i>Twin Stomachs</i> Periodic Saturation

					<b>A1: Feast &amp; Fill</b> Grants entities Saturation <b>A2: Gutdrainer</b> Grants entities Hunger
<b>Storms</b>	Apex	Activation	Creation	Offensive, Utility	<b>A1: Storm Channel</b> Summons lightning <b>A2: Cloud Vacuum</b> Clear weather <b>A3: Stormcaller</b> Thunderstorm weather
<b>Constitution</b>	Oof	Passive	Self-Buff	Utility	<b>P: Never-Die</b> Periodic Absorption III
<b>Motion</b>	Augurey	Activation	Self-Buff, Group Debuff	Defensive, Utility	<b>A: Velocity-Verse</b> Grants nearby entities Slowness II and self-Speed IV
<b>Mind</b>	Killer	Activation	Creation, Self- Buff, Self Debuff	Offensive, Defensive	<b>A1: Mind Zen</b> Grants self-Weakness and gains ramping Strength <b>A2: Ocean-Speak</b> Summons a guardian
<b>Flesh</b>	Axe	Activation	Creation	Offensive, Utility	<b>A1: Pork Plate</b> Summons a Health Boost V pig with Slow Falling <b>A2: Flesh Beast</b> Summons a zoglin with Health Boost and Strength
<b>Humanity</b>	Napoleon	Passive, Affinity, Active	Creation, Self- Buff	Offensive, Utility	<b>P: Favorite of the People</b> Hero of The Village <b>Af: Protector's Will</b> Gains Strength near villagers <b>A: Commoners'</b> Commune

					Summons a villager
<b>Disease</b>	Squishy	Passive, Activation	Manipulation, Group Debuff	Offensive	<b>P:</b> <i>Blood Dilution</i> Immunity to poison <b>A1:</b> <i>Fatal Dose</i> Fatally poisons entities <b>A2:</b> <i>Sensory Disorient</i> Gives nausea to others

### A Punishment by Purgatory [E] <B>

Not all accepted the Divinity's miracles – it was those without them that grew jealous of the sudden introduction of powers. A warmonger named Gummy cried out to the heavens for Above All to grant him a miracle, swearing upon his life that he'd collect the heads of the existing users to prove himself. The sky, however, fell silent to his requests, and from this, his disdain for mankind only grew.

Gummy's multiple attempts to ambush different miracle users all ended poorly, setting him back to zero several times. In one instance, Gummy was sent to The Chest by Dio and sliced in half. In another, he participated in a cage match that wagered all or nothing and lost, losing his belongings to Blaze. The match was decisively in favor of Blaze from start to finish.

Above All took pity on Gummy after seeing his desperation and intervened in affairs for him to have a second chance in the world. To this, he agreed to be a better person for the people around him but then broke his promise shortly after. He resumed harassing people again, and this time, a crowd gathered around Gummy to teach him a lesson of peace. Any time Gummy would respawn back to his bed, there would be someone already standing there to beat him to unconsciousness. He called out for the Above All to intervene once more, but she saw no merit in giving him a third chance, and his plea fell on deaf ears.

Gummy's overlord from The Titan's Order cut ties with him, and Gummy was thrown on the streets with nothing to his name. He swore revenge, and so he went to Blaze's villager mall and manipulated several of Blaze's villagers into anti-consumerist trade offers. They never sold anything worth their products' prices, and Blaze then banned him from the mall. Gummy trespassed anyway, and Blaze beat him away each time to discourage Gummy from returning. Having enough, Gummy threw a tantrum and murdered the villagers inside the mall.

In defense of Justice, Above All decided to deal with Gummy for the last time. She began by setting Gummy's spawn point in a clear expanse of the Aether, and this fate perpetually hurled him toward the ground. While he was falling through the sky, Above All made one last attempt to reason with him, but Gummy refused to stop his predetermined intentions, so Above All sent Gummy into Purgatory.

Purgatory was a pocket dimension where neither the state of life nor death was determined for living things. This indecisive anomaly created an existence of a death loop within its borders – those within it would be constantly respawned, only to die at the same time.

While Gummy was in Purgatory, Above All toyed with him for her amusement. She broadcasted the event directly to everyone's consciousness, deciding it would be best if all could learn how she would deal with those who disturbed her Order's peace. Gummy was first placed into a containment chamber labeled SCP-1, and its plaque warned not to feed the jar's contents or tap on its glass. When Gummy lashed out against the jar, he was taken out and placed into a different environment. Here, he was forced to dodge constant barrages of arrows fired by skeletons. The skeletons stood on ledges slightly too far to jump to, and Gummy made several futile attempts starving to death falling into a bottomless pit as he tried to reach them. Above All then offered a more comfortable room for Gummy, to which he then was teleported

into a room with blazes. Unfortunately, he suffered several tenth-degree burns from the "room temperature" heat.

As Gummy died several times from the flames, Above All created her version of sky block. She offered Gummy a chance to play, and just as he was about to start his playthrough, however, he was sent into a state of constant death. Above All then switched positions with Gummy on the sky block and manifested an avatar of herself to play. In between deaths, Gummy taunted her and said that the original Skyblock was 3 blocks deep instead of 2, so Above All responded with, "I'm playing Skyblock, you're playing command block."

Gummy's many deaths started to litter the conversation feed of Halcyon, so Above All decided to silence the death announcement messages. Gummy vowed to "lag out" of Purgatory, but his empty threat never came to fruition. Above All mocked him by throwing several stacks of diamond and netherite blocks onto him, stating they had no worth here. Gummy used these blocks to attempt to escape Purgatory by building upwards towards an opening in its roof, but he then quickly realized that this was a trap and that his escape had been blocked by an invisible barrier. Above All laughed at his attempt and commented that the hole was only there to give him a false sense of hope. There was nothing he could do to affect his predicament, and he had no chance to escape Purgatory in the first place.

After a final look at Gummy's defeated face, Above All left him behind in Purgatory creating a setting for him to endlessly die in infinitely unique ways, across different timelines, forever punished and condemned for his sins against Halcyon. "There are some fates worse than a ban," Above All murmured as she left. Gummy begged to be banned, but it never came. All that came of his request was the sensation of several thousands of millennia passing by for him, constantly being barraged by different deaths. He never aged, and eventually, he stopped thinking. The denizens of Halcyon resumed their daily tasks, never stopping to spare a moment to remember Gummy as he was sentenced to oblivion.

### **Lives of The Meta-Humans [M] <B>**

The meta-humans decided to present their miracles to each other, so they threw a party at The Titan's Order. Forming a stack, they rode each other's shoulders with Augurey at the base of the tower. As she ran around, she almost created flames in the grass from the sheer amount of friction she caused.

As the meta-humans struggled not to fall off Augurey, Dio, however, lost his balance and accidentally opened a warp that sliced the pile in half. Several bodies were found eviscerated in the aftermath, and Dio was charged with multiple accounts of involuntary manslaughter.

On the other hand of the legal spectrum, Oof ran around the world with murderous intent, slaughtering a dozen people before she was taken down by authorities.

Above All heard Blaze's prayers for a second awakening of his miracle, and she granted him permanent night vision and enhanced strength within any body of water. While she was adjusting his miracle, she tripped on a command block and flooded the world with survival mode messages for half a minute, causing what would be known as the March 6th Gamemode Survival incident.

As the PRA completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Ender Ender, Pekora Corporation donated several supplies and furniture to accommodate it and expanded upon the Ender Ender's standing platform.

Owl dissolved the Prime Empire and asked for Dio's permission to live in The Chest. Wishing to reform his faction with new principles, Owl founded the Prime Brotherhood from the salvageable ruins of his old empire. He built a shrine in the NPC Dimension and set his spawn there, remaining untouchable except by only those that Dio chose to bring back with him.

Dio attempted to trap Blaze and Human in his dimension, but luckily Blaze had a single stone on him to replace the button for the warp home. Blaze sought revenge for his attempted kidnapping, so when Dio decided to build an over-glorified fish tank, Blaze took residence in this element and skewered Dio in the tank after it was constructed.

### **Chaos's Relation to The Universe [O] <B>**

Before Above All, before the universe, there was only Chaos. Chaos had always existed, and it had no age, for it transcended the concept of time. Chaos is akin to a storm – it rages fiercely in some areas, has calm spots in others, and in fewer and between pockets, did not exist.

The importance of knowing this is that without Chaos, the known universe of Aethel would not have come into creation, for it is because of it, that Order borrows its structure.

In the simplest terms, Chaos is energy. It is fuel, it is substance, and it can be shaped into matter. It is the very building block of reality itself. Constantly moving and shifting here and there, occasionally its mass will condense at a certain location, and by some infinitesimally small chance that it gets arranged just right, a bubble will form, and within it, the concept of time begins. Other concepts known to mankind such as speed, mass, and gravity are created later, but eventually, the chaos within that bubble will settle to form a system of Order. In Order, miracles emerge in the form of Life. Thus, can we be fast-forwarded to the event of Above All creating Halcyon inside their territory of Order.

### **Severance to the Divinity [M] <B>**

One fateful day, a particularly fierce Chaos storm penetrated Above All's Order. The hole it created in Order's boundaries splintered the realm and caused otherwise stable creations to become corrupted.

Although Above All reacted quickly and was able to shield most of her work from the raw Chaotic energies, there were still fragments that landed in Halcyon's Rebirth and left several oddities upon the world. Of these oddities, The Spartans' Vanguard's quartz temple was perfectly cut to floor level, The Titan's Order's dragon egg and ink sacs went missing, Vahl's shulkers spit out dust, Kilia two golems disappeared, Apex's shulker of XP bottles phased out of existence, and a large chunk of rock rose from the ground and floated above Blaze's villager mall. Menacingly.

Strangely, when the Ender Ender 2.0 was swallowed by a wormhole, another reality's Ender Ender was spat back out hours later. The Halcyonians investigated the strange contraption and upon seeing that it utilized a cooker system composed of netherfire and magma blocks, they dubbed it the Ender Ender 2.0 2 - "The Endcinerator".

As the Chaos storm intensified, larger portions of Order's bubble were breached. Since Above All required her full strength to contain the corruption and reseal Order safely, she took back the Divine powers she had lent to the Halcyonians.

### **Gummy's Parole [E] <B>**

Following the events of the Chaos storm, Gummy was taken out of Purgatory and his soul was bound to the divinity crystal above Halcyon's warp hub. The crystal was then expanded to accommodate adequate living conditions, and Halcyonians would regularly visit him in his confinement.

Seeing that Gummy had behaved for quite some time, Above All further furnished his cell and gave him a nonphysical leash originating from the divinity crystal to wander the world. To keep Gummy in check, however, Above All installed a public control switch for his prison. At any time, a Halcyonian could recall him back to his cell, restrain him, or place him back into Purgatory. His house arrest became more lenient after two days of good behavior, but then Gummy became too overconfident in his freedom given, using his extended permitted distance away from the divinity crystal to secretly poison locals and loot their shulkers. He was immediately punished with solitary confinement after.

### **Prime Brotherhood's Dragon Egg [E] <B>**

"The egg is no longer safe in our hands. The Prime Brotherhood must find a suitor to pass it on. Our only wish is to keep it safe. If the egg shall be with you, then you must be strong enough to carry the burden as its new protector. As for us? We will continue our work in the shadows."

This cryptic message was scribbled on letters sent to mailboxes across the world and two books relating to it was found in Gummy's cell, urging Vahl and Aero to investigate.

Figuring out the clues and arriving first to the scene, Vahl fell victim to Owl's harming arrows in an ambush. Vahl lost many of his belongings, and this began a long feud between Vahl and Owl.

Aero, being second to the scene, fared better, fighting fiercely until he eventually overcame the dragon egg's protector. Receiving many cuts and bruises from the skirmish, he limped forth to the cage that held the dragon egg and kicked down the door. The dragon egg oozed an eerie glow of purple from underneath its shell, and Aero's eyes gleamed in excitement. Pocketing the egg, he made his way home to show Dia, albeit with a limp and several dents in his armor.

### **Book 1 & 2 (Untitled) [S] <O>**

Book 1:

The Brotherhood cannot trust itself. They're all liars. They only want to use the egg for themselves. Find the egg's hiding spot before the rebellion gets it. The chamber holds the info. I can't write more. They're here.

Book 2:

They ca-  
199 60 is where it should be -  
The society -

### **The "Hell Has Frozen Over" Incident [E] <B>**

Needing to gather some glowstone, Aero packed for the usual trip to the Nether and made a portal at the Frozen Ocean warp. As he stepped to the other side, however, he discovered something particularly unusual. The nether's sea of fire had been replaced with water. Its netherack was replaced with stone, and it resembled something like an expansive cavern rather than its usual hellscape.

Seeking confirmation of what his eyes were seeing, Aero invited Tflame to come along with him for a second trip. The two were both certain this was real, and they walked around a bit before noticing something even stranger. The landscape was devoid of any life, and it was as if the entire Nether had been converted to a mooshroom island biome. Tflame collected some Nether stone for his collection, and the two went home to share their weird findings with the other Halcyonians.

Upon a third trip back to the Nether, however, the Nether had been restored to its usual hellscape, filled with Ghast screams, piglin grunts, and lava flowing from overhead. Not wanting to waste any more energy on figuring out the oddity, the two scratched their heads, simply accepted it, and called it a day.

### **The Chaos Comet [M] <B>**

Unbeknownst to Aero regarding his discovery of the Hell Has Frozen Over incident, a comet originating from the past Chaos storm crashed into Halcyon the night prior. The comet buried itself so deep into Halcyon's bedrock that its bottom side was exposed in the Nether. As the Chaos energies infused in the comet dissipated, it also warped reality in the Nether around it, causing the stone ocean phenomena Aero witnessed.

Seeking redemption for their failures from their previous Desert Temple expedition, the Mobius Firm undertook research of the Chaos comet as their next big project. They enlisted a scientist

named Dr. Jessabelle to help with research and then gathered as many eyewitness testimonies as they could to help triangulate the location of the comet's impact.

When the Mobius Firm arrived at the crater, however, the destruction left behind presented much more hazardous conditions than they had originally projected, so the group's leader, Howard Halls, reached out for outside help.

**Excavation Team Needed [S] <B>** A single poster is plastered on one of the columns of the warp hub as you pass by them today, with the graphic of a huge crater, and the headline and body that reads:

HELP WANTED

To the fellows that this medium may reach:

I require a requisitions crew to investigate the crash site of a celestial body that completely wiped out the population of a nearby village. Your directive as the task force is simple. I only need a sample of the core to study. My team and I have currently camped a safe distance away from its impact and are unable to proceed due to the hazards presented by both terrain and inadequate equipment. This is where you come in. I will arrange paid transportation by horse carriage should you be willing to help me in my plight. The first wagons will begin to leave at 5 PM today.

Historically Yours,

Howard Hallard

**The Chaos Comet P.2 [M] <B>** Kilia, Dio, Titan, and Apex got on the first wagons, and Owl trailed them closely on a reindeer. They were dropped at a campsite, where they had the opportunity to converse with each member of the Mobius Firm.

**Howard Hallard [S] <B>** Now, you may not remember me so clearly, given my early departure from my previous expedition for Pekora Corporation, but honestly, it couldn't be helped! You know how it is, scraping through ancient ruins and whatnot - you never know what kind of nasties could be lurking around the corner or even beneath your feet. I've been better, honestly. It's still a bit sore where that snake bit me, but Lang says I'll be fine, that it's been weeks since then, and that it's all a state of mind. How glad I am to have received all of your company today, you have no idea. I sent the invitation for outside help since all my previous attempts to contact Pekora Corporation were ignored or sent to voicemail. They're still a little peeved about funding a failed expedition... well, that, and the loss of personnel, may their souls rest peacefully. I've been sitting here for God knows how long, staring at that thing that fell from the sky! I'd want to get closer, but Dr. Jessabelle advises not to, as there could still be potential radiation coming off the damned thing. So, here's the deal that I'm offering you all, right? You get up closer to the comet, find out what's inside, and bring it back here for me and the others to study. In exchange for your help, I'll even let you all have it, whatever it is, afterward. I'd appreciate your help, because frankly, as a historian, you can't do much archiving history by staring off from a safe distance. Safe travels, young adventurers!

**Dr. Jessabelle [S] <B>** This thing - the comet - it's something otherworldly. Normally, when bodies as small as this enter the atmosphere, they'd burn up before they get to the surface, but this, this is something different. It's extremely dense, from what I can tell. Even stepping several hundred meters within its range nearly took my breath away. It's giving off a field of gravity, and I'm almost certain that it gets heavier the closer you get to it. If I could just scrape a sample off that thing, I could be renowned in the scientific community for something truly extraordinary.

**Lang Morrison [S] <B>** While Howard and Dr. Jessabelle weren't looking, right - I snuck off to visit the comet up close and personal. As I got closer and closer, I felt weaker and weaker. It was as if my mental state lost its will to keep moving forward, but I persevered and was able to touch

one of its edges with one of my hands... it's hard. But nothing like stone, or diamond hard. This hardness is something outside of our comprehension, I almost knew it from its texture. It's scaly. When I touched it, several of the shards of its shell splintered into my skin, and its exterior started to grow bright. The land around it started behaving differently... deadly creatures started popping up, so I ran back to camp and since then bandaged my hand. Now if Howard and Dr. Jessabelle ask about what happened, you tell them that I wasn't wearing gloves when I picked from the berry bushes.

**The Chaos Comet P.3 [M] <B>** Being that the Mobius Firm had no further information to provide them, the group started to walk towards where the comet had landed. They stopped at the boundary of the safe zone, and Dio managed to catch a wandering phantom with his bare hands. Peering over the safe zone's edge for the first time, they witnessed the true trail of destruction the comet had left behind. It was a massive crater that could easily have drained a sea. The group descended towards the impact zone cautiously, and Owl charged forward with his reindeer. The reindeer instinctively sensed the danger it was being led towards, and it bucked Owl off its back. Owl attempted to calm it, but it ran off into the horizon. Despite this setback, Owl continued to take point for the group. As they approached closer to the comet, they felt themselves getting heavier and heavier through the influence of the meteor's gravity field, and this made movement in their armor increasingly difficult. Once they reached bedrock elevation, hostile creatures started materializing around them. The group became engulfed in a sea of enemies, and each member got separated from the others in the conflict. Owl made a beeline to the comet but quickly found himself completely isolated. Blazes, wither skeletons, witches, vindicators, and evokers swarmed him, and he attempted to barricade himself, but he soon fell in battle without any others' support. Although disorganized, the group was able to push the waves of creatures back and made steady progress toward the comet. Titan managed to strand himself in a corner, where he summoned several iron golems to assist him in the battle. The group received reinforcements in the form of Blaze and Ant, and the two quickly joined the fray. Kilia made it to the comet and began drilling into it. Dio and Apex watched her back and kept the creatures at bay from interrupting her work. A king ravager emerged from a cavern linked to the crater and locked its eyes with Apex. Dio attempted to weaken the beast with TNT, but it shrugged off the explosions and chased after Apex. Blaze and Ant arrived to safeguard Kilia, and Kilia became disoriented while inside the comet's core. Dio, seeing that Kilia was properly guarded, went after the king ravager that had challenged Apex. Blaze was bombarded by skeletons and ganged by husks, but he stood strong against their never-ending numbers. Ant joined Kilia in drilling the comet's core. Ant broke off the crystal at the comet's center, and he sounded a global retreat since their objective was completed. The retreat was sloppy since each member was still engaged in their battles, but they managed to slug back through the never-ending waves back to the safety of the campsite. The comet, with its primary crystal removed, started to wane down in the intensity of its gravity field and anomalous properties and eventually lost all its heat. At the campsite, the group discussed what they had found to the Mobius Firm, and then argued about what they should do with it. Dio, Kilia, Titan, and Apex voted to destroy the crystal, as it had brought them entirely too much trouble to retrieve it in the first place, and Owl and Human argued to use its properties for themselves. Ant, the possessor of the crystal, decided to use its power for himself and disappeared with it. Titan, seeking the opportunity to ensure that he possessed the crystal and that he could destroy its power for no one's gain, started to massacre his former allies, starting with Dio. While Dio's back was turned, Titan shot several harming arrows at him. This erupted in a conflict with the remaining survivors of the excavation crew, and they attempted to bring Titan down. However, Titan managed to kill Human and Blaze, and he finished with Kilia. With the remaining three survivors left, Ant, Apex, and Titan, Titan devised a truce with Apex that they would team up against Ant, one that they believed would abuse his newfound powers from the crystal. There were multiple skirmishes across the world of Halcyon as Titan and Apex chased Ant, but each time, Ant



managed to elude them. Titan, in his lunacy, attempted to lure Ant out by terrorizing Ant's Aether portal and monkey barrel. Ant's response to this was "Those can be rebuilt, but you can't be." With each battle, Titan and Apex's supplies drained, and their morale began to falter. This was what Ant was accounting for, and their final skirmish led them into Ant's trap on a mooshroom island. The ambush fell apart, however, and Titan and Apex continued their hunt for Ant through the island, its neighboring waters, and a cavern. In this cavern, Ant was completely cornered. Titan walked around a bend in the cave, and Ant unloaded a volley of harming arrows into Titan, ending his killing spree. With only Apex left, Apex panicked and ran away from Ant. During his retreat, Ant screamed towards Apex, "This is what you get for upvoting the Among Us Mobs add-on and then changing it to a downvote." Apex shouted back, while still making distance away from Ant, "It was a mistake, I misclicked." These words would fall on deaf ears, however, as Ant had already made a hit list of those he needed to enact justice upon. The two soon engaged each other from parallel giant mushroom tops, and Apex threw an ender pearl to engage Ant at close range. What happened next requires some understanding of the nature of how ender pearls work. The pearl manipulates space around the user to fold it into the space the ender pearl contacts, and knowing this, Ant watched the trajectory of the ender pearl and reached his hand out. The ender pearl contacted the ground, and Apex teleported right into where he'd expected. What he didn't expect, however, was Ant's hand grasping Apex's heart. The two spaces had merged, and Ant predicted Apex's anatomy so precisely that he was able to preemptively put his hand there to deal his final blow. With one tight squeeze, Apex fell limp, and the conflict for the Chaos comet's crystal was over. Ant crushed the crystal with his other hand and absorbed the essence contained inside.

**Reawakening Memories [M] <B>** In the following days after Ant's absorption of the chaos crystal, strange occurrences started happening in the world. Occasionally, shot and thrown projectiles would stop mid-air and lose their velocity. Things such as arrows and tridents would "stick" in space. Creatures would stop moving and if they were carried, they would stay floating, and vehicles fell victim to becoming immobile regardless of whether they were on the ground, sea, or sky. TNT and End crystals refused to explode. The milder of the supernatural phenomenon such as the sky flickering between day and night caused many of the creatures and people in Halcyon to be thrown off their circadian rhythm. Looking for answers, Halcyonians wandered the world to see if this was happening elsewhere. Soon, after much trial and error, they figured out that it only seemed to happen in the spaces Ant occupied, so they followed him closely to see if any of his behaviors had changed since he absorbed the chaos essence. Nothing came to observation until the likes of Dio came too close to Ant, and even with multiple witnesses, Ant somehow managed to vanish into thin air. He was found at other sites in the PRA, and each time someone would approach him to ask a question, he vanished time and time again. His official response on how he was able to transmit himself across the world so freely was, "You need to think of a place, right, and focus only on that, and then imagine yourself going there." It was the compounding clues together that led Vahl to figure out what the chaos crystal had done to Ant. The chaos crystal wasn't a true essence, nor did it grant abilities. It reawoken them, refined them, and granted the user their most deep-seated wish. And in doing so, Ant had reawakened the essence of Time and gained the counter to his most hated weapon - multishot harming arrows. Without time, there is no speed, and projectiles, creatures, vehicles, and even chemical reactions cannot move. Any place he had been before, he was able to recall those memories and bring himself back to them. The daylight cycle was a proponent in the passage of time, and he had gained free manipulation of it. The only reason that Halcyonians were immune to the same effects of Time was that they could log in and log out at any time, making them the masters of their own time. And with the full truth revealed to the public, one could only hope that Ant would use his powers responsibly.

**Church of Above All [E] <B>** A church was constructed for the worship and following of the teachings of Above All in the savannah by the self-crowned Pope and reverAnt of the PRA. There, its first sermon was held before two witnesses, a local drowned and Dio. After the procession, confessions happened upstairs, and the drowned admitted to several defining sins. According to the reverAnt, the drowned had confessed to the pursuit of a specific pink-haired baby, to which they had promptly kicked out of a window. Unfortunately, the pink hair baby had survived, and to absolve the drowned's sins, the reverAnt instructed him to finish the job. After this, Dio stepped into confession, but went stone-faced and had nothing to say. A surprise guest, Owl, emerged into the confessionals and started to spill his sins, but then got impatient and shot the reverAnt. He ran outside the church, only to be smitten by the powers that be for murdering in the holy land. Owl's autopsy report revealed that he had suffered a massive heart attack upon taking the first step outside the church. His body was buried nearby, and he went to \$1500 in debt for the burial and gravestone (which he has not yet paid off). Above All ultimately did not forgive his sins.

**The Living Bombs [E] <B>** Owl, now comfortable in The Chest, commissioned Dio to dig a medium-sized underground area to house a local forest and its inhabitants. Human showed up to help excavate the area, and the three captured the attention of Above All. AA decided to grant them their desire and turned Dio and Owl into living bombs. Wherever they would step, the earth quaked underneath their feet and the ground gave way to bedrock. The ensuing cavern that resulted from the destruction was twice the size Owl had envisioned, and they were able to complete the task ahead of schedule.

**Howard Hall's Manor Estate Banquet [M] <B>** Several letters are addressed to various people, all of them being delivered to their respective mailboxes.

Come one, come all, you are cordially invited to my manor in the middle of the countryside. Food, drinks, and fun will be provided. I'd like to discuss with you all the events of last week, provided you are not busy. I will once again, pay for your travel fares as a host of honor.

Signed,

Howard Hallard

*More than a dozen people arrived at the banquet and greeted Howard at the main gates.*

Howard: Welcome to my humble estate, adventurers. Come, walk with me. It's been only a couple of days, but all too long to see your faces again. Now, you can imagine the look on my face when I saw you all emerge from the crater, only to then fight amongst yourselves for God knows what reason, I would have destroyed the damned thing given how much trouble it's caused and put you all through. But that's beside the matter, I invited you all here today to formally induct you to a guild I am forming, to seek more artifacts and rare occurrences like the last one. Being so... understaffed as I have been recent, I'd think it'd only be only fair to hire skillful people of your caliber to do the dirty work for me. I'm but a simple man who wants to document and make sense of our world, but I'm sure my youth has escaped me for all the shenanigans I could be put through in obtaining these things. I'm sure we can discuss this more over a meal, the trip must have made you all hungry. My servants have prepared some soup and other meats for us to enjoy.

*The group headed to the dining room, where they were met by Lang already sitting at the table.*

Lang: Wow, you've all arrived. So soon? I thought it'd take a little longer, but I guess time slips my mind now. We've much to talk about.

*A butler brought out food from the kitchen and laid it on the table, and people began eating.*

*It's only when Howard took a sip of his water, that he began blanking out and staring at the wall.*

Lang: Are you okay, Howard?

*Howard fell face forward into the soup and remained unmoving. Lang rushed to Howard's side and began checking his neck.*

Lang: I can't feel a pulse, oh my god, someone's poisoned him!

*The whole room falls silent, and the servants stop moving between the kitchen and the dining room. Dr. Jessabelle walks around the corner to witness the scene. Outside, the gardener is happily trimming the hedges, completely oblivious. All members of the Hallard Estate are called to an emergency meeting in the entrance room, and there are as follows: Lang Morrison, Dr. Jessabelle, The Butler, The Maid, The Chef, and The Gardener. Immediately, The Chef raises suspicion.*

The Chef: I can swear it, I hadn't done anything to the food, or the drink. I didn't even touch the drink, that wasn't my responsibility. I only made the stew as it always had been prepared, just like he requested! I wouldn't poison him, the only joy I find is in the cooking! If anything, The Butler is to blame, he's the one who brought out the drinks!

The Butler: And you are so quick to accuse me? My only job is to serve the whims of the estate's lord, I've no time nor room to slip something into the water when I am as busy as I am. The Gardener is at fault, I had gathered it from his reservoirs.

The Gardener: I am a simple man. My job is to tend to the weeds, gather and purify the water from the lake, and fertilize the flowers now and then. I am not even here every day, as my job does not require it. For you all to think that I, of all people, would know that you are hosting a banquet on this day just to poison the estate's lord is frankly, absurd. I think you should pull your heads out of your asses and realize I did my job, and I did it properly.

The Maid: Then who could have done it? Who poisoned Howard? He seemed healthy this morning to me, I made sure of it! I brought him some flowers freshly trimmed from the garden as I usually do, and he was just stretching in his room at that time, fit as a fly!

Lang: Dr. Jessabelle, do you have anything to say?

Dr. Jessabelle: I wasn't even in the room. I just emerged from my room, working on some projects of mine. Now if you're so hasty to interrogate me, what about you, Lang? Weren't you with him last, before he met with the guests?

Lang: I was, but I have no intentions of poisoning him, especially since I was the one who saved his life from snake venom a few weeks back! Would it even make sense to you why I would try to take his life now, during something as important as this? It has to be one of you here, I'm sure of it. No crime committed is truly clean, there's gotta be some hints around the manor.

*The manor's residents stood in the main hallway while the guests searched the manor grounds for clues. In total, there were 15 pieces of objects of importance found.*

1. Lucky Coin
  - a. A coin that one of the servants identifies to be The Chef's favorite coin is found in the fountain water.
2. Torn Out Flowers
  - a. There is a patch of what used to be flowers here. Their flower heads are taken from the stems, and you cannot make out what was originally here.
3. Maid's Duster
  - a. There is a dust sweeper at the docks, near where The Gardener usually fetches the water for the manor.
4. Medicinal Syringe
  - a. A used medicinal syringe is found at the poolside table, one prescribed to Howard Hallard, and confirmed to be administered by Lang, the medic.
5. Fingerprints
  - a. There are fingerprints left on the window from where someone pressed against it.
6. Finely Crushed Black Powder
  - a. A black powder of an unknown substance is found in one of the mortar and pestles lying on a table.
7. Butler's Blade
  - a. The butler's blade has a light scent of freshly cleaned blood. It looks like he didn't clean off the blade thoroughly enough.
8. Camera Footage

- a. Footage of several camera angles of today, leading to Howard's poisoning is shown. (The timing is unclear, only the order of events for each member is shown.)
  - b. Howard: Howard's Room -> Pool -> Living Room -> Entrance -> Fountain -> Garden -> Dining Room
  - c. Lang: Lang's Room -> Pool -> Basement -> Library -> Bathroom -> Kitchen -> Dining Room
  - d. The Chef: Servants' Room -> Entrance -> Fountain -> Library -> Garden -> Porch -> Kitchen
  - e. The Maid: Servants' Room -> Docks -> Living Room -> Kitchen -> Dining Room -> Training Room -> Sunroom
  - f. The Butler: Library -> Garden -> Fencing Room -> Porch -> Bathroom -> Docks -> Dining Room
  - g. The Gardener: Statue -> Pool -> Library -> Sunroom -> Living Room -> Docks -> Garden
  - h. Dr. Jessabelle: Jessabelle 's Room -> Library -> Garden -> Sunroom -> Kitchen -> Docks -> Porch
9. Black Petal
- a. There is a single black petal on the floor near where the flowers are usually washed.
10. Organic Poisons
- a. The page that the book on the study table is left on is about the effects of withering, a slow-acting decay that can potentially kill someone if they were to come in contact with any source of it, or near instantly if it were concentrated.
11. Dirt Trail
- a. There are several boot marks in the living room, indicating that someone has been tracking dirt from being outside.
12. Logbook
- a. I don't know how much longer I can keep stalling their pay. I'm running out of money, and I need to find a big hit soon for the exhibition. Perhaps those adventurers I was able to bring in last week can help me obtain something of value I've been tracking for the last couple of weeks. Otherwise, I'll have to resort to the things Lang found at the comet for a quick source of income before I go bankrupt.
13. Chef's Cookbook
- a. The book's title is, "Explosive Delights from The Orients". There's a bookmark crammed into the book for a page that involves the use of gunpowder in stews.
14. Botany Book
- a. On Jessabelle 's shelf, there are several brewing stands for brewing ingredients of invisibility potions, yet the book's page on her table is turned to a mysterious black flower. All the text is written in another language, so no one can make sense of what it means.
15. Bucket
- a. There is a bucket of water on the floor here. It smells like cleaning detergent.

*After the search is completed, the guests adjourn with the manor's residents once more to discuss the evidence.*

The Butler: Well, what did you find? Anything peculiar that we can finally put that stupid gardener to be tried by the jury?

The Gardener: If I'm not at fault, then I have no conscience.

The Maid: *(She starts sweating.)* Oh, it's moments like these that always put me on edge.

Dr. Jessabelle: We'd better find the culprit soon; I think my brewing stand is about to boil.

Lang: Do you guys have an accusation ready?

The Chef: *(He stays silent in the corner, blankly staring at the group.)*

*The group accused Dr. Jessabelle of poisoning Howard by harvesting wither flowers and crushing them into a fine powder to put into the manor's drinking water supply.*

Lang: *(He's astonished but convinced by the surmounting amount of evidence against Dr. Jessabelle.)* Wow, you've solved it. I can't believe it. We JUST hired her last week, and things go down south like this, I don't know what happens now. Why, Jessabelle? Why did you poison Howard?

Dr. Jessabelle: He's the only one with the keys to the basement... after what you've stolen from me, the prospect of my research. Said it's too dangerous and immoral to be allowed, I had to act. As he is a historian in his career, I am a scientist to mine. Do you realize how wealthy we could be if I was allowed to touch the specimens you brought back with you from the comet?

Lang: Things aren't always that simple, Jessabelle. What I found back there - what I told Howard, was that some things are just better off untouched, and you are a prime example of what I want to safeguard the eggs from...

Dr. Jessabelle: And I would've gotten away with it too if it weren't for your meddling guests! Jessabelle was then taken away by The Butler and The Gardener, presumably, to the police station.

Lang: *(Still in a bit of shock and disbelief, he turned to the guests and bowed his head.)* Now I'm sorry to inconvenience your visit today, but I think it's only fair you knew the whole story of what happened last week. When I told you that the comet felt like scales... I wasn't lying. What I didn't mention, however, was that the comet unearthed an ancient dragon's nest... and by either dumbfound luck or miraculously unlucky fate, it had killed the mother dragon at roost, leaving behind its eggs. I had originally thought the larger mass was part of the comet, but it was the corpse of the dragon, and I'm assuming the meteor somehow absorbed the dragon's corpse into its being, causing the glowing essence found on its surface after I "awakened" it. In the rumbling that came after and the creatures that started appearing, I'd assume it was the combination of the dragon's dying wish to save its brood, that merged with the chaos energy contained in the comet. And thus, I think it's only justified now, that I hand them to you. They're not safe here. More will come to hunt them down, the longer they stay here, people like Jessabelle. I will unlock the basement door now, please take care of the younglings. And... one last thing, before you go. About Howard's proposal, for the artifact hunter's guild... I've been with him while he talked with his network of people since I've had to be by his side maintaining his daily medications, and I think I can arrange for you folks to meet his contacts. We'll speak soon enough.

*Lang unlocked the basement door, and there, in the center of the floor, was a roost of dragon eggs, with the younglings inside just preparing to crack open their shells.*

The adventurers who attended were given one egg each to their name to protect and nurture from the dangers of the world outside. Due to their close exposure to the chaos comet, their maturation cycle was greatly accelerated, and their original genes were scrambled. The adventurers hatched different colors and strengths of dragons, but all were as mighty and loyal as their siblings. What fate could befall the younglings under new extensive care now? Only time could tell. Elsewhere in the world, Axe's father, a prevalent banker, immediately claimed the Hallard manor after the bankruptcy and gave it to his son to inherit. The property title was changed to Axe's Estate Manor.

**The Time Inbetween [m] <B>** The Spartans' Vanguard constructed a Greek pantheon in the sky. Owl experienced a dimension rift while traveling between Nether portals and got sent to 100k, 100k in Nether but he was able to quickly craft an ender chest and jump inside it to arrive at The Chest. Squishy's sudden disappearance left a power vacuum in The Alibastian Empire, and Apex was left confused as to what to do. Tux honored his favorite Hololive girl, Rushia, by naming a trampoline after her, and is promptly murdered by the same girl. The Alibastian Empire opened a butcher shop and stocked selling mystery meat that oddly smelled like the arctic. Tux flirted with Kilia's dragon and was viciously rejected. Vahl then proceeded to steal Kilia's crocodiles from

her nearby swamp while she was distracted. With the help of some divine intervention, the PRA experienced a glow-up phase in their country. Several acres of land was flattened, the old Aether portal location was excavated and converted into a lake, the monkey barrel was upgraded to an orangutan barrel, the comet and dragon were set on display over their warp pad, and the country finally got electricity to light their pathways and homes, their top scientists invented drowning in lava for iron golems at the iron farm, they hired a Shrek police force, and finally, the link to the Aether was reopened. Dio was busy at work creating obsidian pillars to the sky limit near the warp hub for current motives unknown. Some sources said that he was attempting to recreate an Ender Dragon fight in the Overworld. The Prime Brotherhood opened their boat shop in the PRA, sporting many different makes and models. Afterward, The Prime Brotherhood announced that they would host a mounted race event, and their official statement on completing the track was, "This track is going to be very gay when it's finished." Aero, to the confusion of many, replied, "Why did you build the track out of me?" It is currently unknown whether this was about the flames on the Nether portion of the track or that he was commenting on the proclamation of the presence of homosexuality on the racetrack. Tux forged a set of netherite armor, and deciding to test it against Mother Nature, got his ass completely torn apart by a water monitor. It was almost a massacre. If Tux had not decided to flee, he would have ended up being cremated. In a desperate act to get Above All's attention to restore his miracle, Blaze committed himself to a self-sacrifice ritual involving virgin blood. Above All looked at him in disgust, telling him that she was the type to be preferring chocolates, roses, or a church and statue built in their honor instead. Seeing this reaction, Blaze put down his sword and became a monk that swore to rival the reverAnt's church. Axe proclaimed to the world that he would one day reawaken his miracle to properly take vengeance on his flesh children's deaths, and to "wreak havoc on those who wronged them, to march bravely into the offenders' homes, and show them what's good, G". Vahl labeled Axe as a delusional lunatic, and Axe responded by adding Vahl to the hitlist. By mysterious circumstances, a sperm whale had found itself in the old Prime Empire's trident farm and was quickly executed by Tux. He showed no remorse for his actions.

**Religious Patrons [m] <B>** Following a new purpose in life, Blaze took up ministry and constructed The Southern Chapel of the Depths with a budget of \$4. Having professed devotion to Above All, the reverAnt, pope of the worship, promoted Blaze to the title of priest. Elsewhere, Axe founded the worship of Below One in his inherited manor's basement. A mysterious structure is built across from Robe's abandoned home, serving an unknown purpose. Owl donated the Axe Manor forty vehicles and devastated the grass with car tire marks, plane landing skids, and noise polluted the lake with the constant humming of motorboats. Augurey and Napoleon went searching for dragons and found a stray velox. After feeding it fish, Augurey attempted flight but ended up mostly hitting treetops. She decided to protect her new friend with a shoddily built shed, and named it, "I don't know yet Bam". The reasons behind the name were shrouded in mystery that only a cryptologist could figure out. Blaze's alter-egos were quickly revealed when he left his church, showing both a priest and pimp side to him. "A priest in the religious meets, a pimp on the low-income streets." Unbeknownst to all, Bam traveled the world in hunt of the various chaotic beasts. He was successful in most of the hunts but had to have a second wind to finish his encounter with the King Ravager. He gathered the trophies from his hunt and continued his journey with unknown intent. Augurey decided to rename her velox Nemo. Human went to the underworld and back after accidentally stinging themselves with a lethal dosage of harming arrows. Ant claimed responsibility for the self-murder, claiming it to be the gift of Above All's essence of Time.

**The Black Labyrinth [M] <B>** As promised, Lang contacted the Halcyonians and introduced them to one of the contacts Howard met with before his untimely demise. The contact was a tall and lengthy man, dressed finely in a suit and tie. He seemed middle-aged and of Italian heritage. His

signature gold earrings shone a little bit as the sunlight reflected off them. He spoke with a strong accent, but his words flowed from his mouth surprisingly smoothly. He spoke to them in a way as though he's sold a sales pitch. "The name's Luca. Luca Russo. You see, Lang here, he's been telling me about you and your crack shot team of - what do you call yourselves? Eh," he said and looked from their shoulder to feet. "I'll call your group, 'hands for hire' for now. A little about myself, I knew Howard like a close friend, it's a shame what happened to him. And like Howard, we shared the same goal - I wanted to find these 'artifacts' just as much as he did. But the thing is, he wants to preserve 'em. I want to make money. And for me to make money, my boys gotta do their job. We found an ancient labyrinth of some sort of hidden deep underground while digging up a few fossils in the area, and it looked profitable, so I sent my boys to go bring me back something special. But see here, they haven't come back in several hours, and I'm thinking, they're in trouble. I sent a rescue group after the first ones, but they haven't come back either. This is losing me money, you see? So, what I need your hands for hire to do is, locate whatever survivors you can find on my site, and tell 'em to come back here, so I can fire them personally. And if your hands are free, carry me back whatever's at the center of that labyrinth. I'll make it worth your time." Luca smirked and walked off. The group could tell that he knew something that they didn't. As they made their way deeper into the tunnel, one of the employees called out to them. "Wait! There's something you should know... I, I found this recording in one of the corridors of the structure. I didn't venture too deep, so I could follow my line back to the entrance." He played the recording, and the adventurers leaned in closer to listen. The recording started, "I've seen it, with my own eyes, once you're in there, it's almost like they start to close in on you, the walls... they become your warden. Whoever we've sent - hasn't come back out, and I'm afraid to say that whatever lies deeper inside this jumbled mess, isn't anything natural in this world. I can almost feel it from here, where we stand! We've been here before, have we not? Junior, what happened to the rope leading to the outside?" The recording stopped suddenly. "Best of luck to you, friend," the worked said weakly. He grinned and waved them off. From here, it's just the forever darkness ahead. The adventurers headed into the labyrinth, some armed with carpets, some armed with torches, and some armed only with ambition. Blaze and human charged forward, but quickly got lost in its winding passages, enough so lost that they found themselves at the opposite entrance of the maze. Axe walked in naked, drank an invisibility potion, and found his way into the center of the labyrinth. His gaze met a minotaur, but it didn't meet his. He took out several poisonous mixtures and began throwing them at the creature. However, to the minotaur, this was the equivalent of experiencing a slightly irritating rash. Spartan found his way to the center of the labyrinth as well and the minotaur immediately noticed his presence and charged at him. Spartan and the minotaur exchanged several vicious blows, with Spartan parrying several axe swings, and the minotaur headbutting Spartan in the chest. In the minotaur's furious rage, it left itself open to outmaneuvering, and Spartan rolled past one of its axe swings and dug his sword into the minotaur's back. He pressed it deeper and deeper until the creature finally gave out and collapsed. He pulled out his sword and was about to finish it when the guardian screamed out, "Wait! Before you finish me, I must tell you, that these objects of power, were never fit to be wielded by Men. I've been here for so long, and many have come and tried to take it, but all have failed before you today. I believe that you have what it takes to wield it properly, but I must warn you, it will change you." He pulled out a small crystal from a compartment in his chest and handed it outward. The crystal swirled with chaotic energy inside, wanting to be let out. "Please, be wise with how you treat it, for it may either develop you or consume you -" And just as he nearly finished his sentence, Luca broke into the room and fired a crossbow bolt at the guardian's neck, ending its life, muttering, "Followed your boot prints. But it's good that now you've disposed of it. Hand the crystal over, I've lost much time and many of my men in this job, and I don't think I can stomach a profit loss too."

[A] Hand him the crystal

[B] Refuse and keep it for yourself

[C] Destroy the crystal

Spartan chose to keep the crystal for himself, and Luca scowled, "So, it's like that, huh? I see. After all, I've been put through, this is how you treat me. I've lost men, money, time, and frankly, patience in this operation. I'll remember this, and mark my words, you do not want to make an enemy out of me. I know people, and -" His men held him back, afraid that he would do something he will regret later. He shoved them backward and finished his sentence. "You will regret this decision." With that last statement, he walked off, and Spartan was left with the crystal. He crushed it in his palm and inhaled deeply. The energy shockwave from the crystal's consumption spread throughout the labyrinth and knocked all still in it unconscious. In their state of dreaming, they stood in a large grassy field. Facing every individual was a horrifically warped creature they were told stories of in their childhood. Each engaged in combat with their respective opponent. Ant, with the essence of Time, was able to change his memory of the story and froze the massive creature in place. He then proceeded to embarrass it in ways a mother would not want their children to see. Blaze, on the other hand, was scared shitless and fainted several times. When each creature was conquered, the illusion faded, and Blaze and the reverAnt suggested that they all go to church to bless the group with protection from further chaos magic.

**Sunday Mass Blast [E] <B>** Arriving at the Church of the Depths, people signed the visitor's logbook and took their place in the underwater pews. When Blaze opened his mouth to speak, several harming arrows were shot in his direction. Using his street instincts, he was able to duck under the podium and narrowly dodge them. Vahl stepped up to atone for his sins but ended up bombing the church. Several people's lives were taken, and Dio covered Augurey and Napoleon from the explosion with his own body. A second bomb was set to explode, but Dio defused it in time. After the mass, the Buried Faction made its first appearance out of the underground. Axe and Dio were haunted by supernatural events. Axe was pelted by ghost snowballs, and Dio encountered ghosts looking through his shulkers. Axe, in his confusion, nearly lit the manor on fire.

**The Brotherhood's Mount Race [E] <B>** A large showing came to the Prime Brotherhood's hosting of a mount race, and several riders lined up on the starting line. When the race began, the racers made their way down the track to encounter rows of cobwebs and fire. There were many casualties, and none made it to the end. Spartan's strategy of being the slowest to race and winning by last man standing condition bore fruit and won him first place - a wyvern egg. A second race was held, and Vahl took second while Blaze took third. The two decided to switch their prizes, and Blaze adopted a velox named Enis. Vahl received several minecart loads of minerals from the Prime Brotherhood treasury. Shortly after the prize distribution, however, things started floating. Creatures, people, and even boats began to gently lift into the air, and Spartan was at the center of it, with his feet planted firmly onto the ground. He smirked as someone tried to charge at him to shoot a multishot-harming crossbow, but the arrows also lifted into the air. His control of gravity had reawakened from the chaos crystal, and he demonstrated his mastery to the public. He was no longer subject to normal gravity, and he could distort gravitation fields around himself to lift himself - and others. While this was going on, unbeknownst to anyone, Ant had activated his miracle. Vahl tried desperately to bring his monkey down from the air, but it kept getting pushed higher and higher, still in place. It would nearly ascend to the heavens before time resumed. After these events, Spartan completed construction on the Sky Temple of Above All. Axe befriended a wyvern while shopping for magical books, and got his bum rushed by an orc warlord as it fell from the sky on top of him. After the deed was done, the orc warlord fled, nowhere to be found.

**Empires, Dragons, & Races [m] <B>** Following the mount race, Owl forfeited his The Chest citizenship in exchange for an AE citizenship. Apex, seizing an opportunity, decided to annex former Wyrmtooth lands, otherwise known as a ghost town by its former population. Tflame and



Devi founded a congregation known as The Acolytes of the Dragon Lord. Shortly after, Tflame began construction with help from Axe and Kilja to construct a tavern for fledgling new adventurers to gain a foothold on the world, in exchange for one condition: that they may never intentionally harm any dragons and help it in its needs. Following this, he began also sketching out the building plans for a fortress of dragons. Elsewhere in the world, others were not as productive – Tux tested his luck against a minotaur and left with a tusk-sized horn where his buttocks would be on the backside of his pants. Tflame and Owl began an enterprise for a marketplace around the world hub and planted grass and constructed walls around the fortification. Offered an opportunity by a mysterious race tycoon, Tux was enlisted to draft a design for a racetrack, of which his first designs were left with many holes in the blueprint. Ant and Human were joined by Bam in constructing a private underground railroad to ferry bodies across the sea.

**Mechamen [E] <B>** A science fair was hosted in Halcyon, and an invitation was issued to all its residents. The goal in mind was clear – to have the most fantastic contraption do the simplest task: light a single bulb. Many submissions were judged, those that included a lag machine that failed to function properly, a cuck swirler, and a glorified sheep suicide vest. Judging by popularity, the cuck swirly was chosen as the crowd favorite, and their engineers were awarded a medal and a How Its Made episode on their Rube Goldberg machine. During the afterparty, Ant was hurried away by a frantic-looking scientist, who asked him to choose between two of his experiments as a gift. Ant picked the veiled showcase on the left, and he was handed a device of experimental technology that was able to convert chemical energy from food into a small impact shield. The shield wrapped around his skin and concentrated upon any impact to less its effect on him. Being experimental, it would fizzle itself out every 5 minutes to reboot itself. Blaze, his partner, was not so lucky, being the second to choose. Blaze was abruptly assaulted and knocked unconscious, only to be dragged into a van to be operated on. He awoke in an alleyway, confused as to how he got there, and looked up at the sky. It seemed like a day, yet he could tell that the stars and the moon were out. Reaching up to feel his face, he could notice that one of his eyes had a metal casing over it, making it clear he had been operated on.

**Rowing Championships [E] <B>** The time had finally come for Tux's racetrack to be unveiled, and many crowds from all over Halcyon had gathered to witness the spectacle. The contestants likewise eagerly ripped off the veils on their vehicles, revealing them to be painted boats of assorted colors. Slickly scrubbed on the bottom, the lack of friction on their boats allowed them to glide along the ice track. With a firing of a bow, the racers were off. Scattered along the track were assorted weapons and distractions of all sorts, which included cobwebs, slowness and speed potions, wooden swords, bows, arrows, blocks of obsidian, and flint and steels. Vicious infighting occurred on the track, of which much blood was shed, and Human ultimately stood the victor. Spartan came second, Tflame and Owl tied for third, and Vahl came fourth. After the race, Human was awarded a comically large cup for his efforts and the race organizer handed him an envelope with Chaos crystal dust. Sensing the need for speed, Human found a private corner under the racetrack bleachers and snorted the dust in one sniff. The chaotic energies were delivered straight to his bloodstream, and he gained better control over his ability to control death and decay.

**The Lair of the Hellhorned [E] <B>** After extensive excavation funded by The Alibastian Empire, Squishy and his team were able to discover a series of labyrinthian tunnels leading to a Greater Demon's den. Guarded by demonic fel magics, adventurers were unable to bring their existing equipment into the den and found that it fell off them upon attempts to do so. Brave pioneers ventured forth into the dungeon and found gear off the premises that had soaked in the demonic magic entirely, making it immune to the den's mysterious effects. Seeking out the

greater demon was like seeking death itself, and many fell in pursuit of its treasures. However, to the brave few that did make out the expedition alive, they were rewarded with the greatest commodity one could obtain: the relic of a greater demon's heart. Legends stated it would grant its wielders powerful strength and resistance to fire, but surely, it was just a myth, right?

**Crete's Underbelly [E] <B>** Finding that these types of artifacts were scattered around Halcyon, Squishy and his team sought out more power, and his right-hand, Owl, was able to locate another relic of power. This time, it was closely guarded by a Cretian minotaur, whose army numbered in the hundreds. Death and decay littered the halls everywhere that the mercenaries were sent to explore. Bones of the dead threatened to bring them to their side as they clashed furiously in the halls, dodging ancient traps, and coming closer to death with every breath. They suffered burn wounds, and necrosis in some limbs, and their equipment was battered to rust under the conditions of the maze. In the end, however, they found their target – he who guarded the relic of power, he who would see to their suffering. The room echoed with its roar, and it charged toward the adventurers, calling forth its swarms of minions. Knee deep in zombie guts, acupuncture by arrows, and simultaneously on fire, a few managed to overcome the great beast. They took its horn as a trophy and were granted a sense of ease over their accomplishments. Of this, they felt a greater resilience to their future quests as well as a greater stride in their steps.

**The Homarian Gallery [E] <B>** With the recent news of the dungeons' defeat by the adventurers spreading worldwide in Halcyon, a rich art enthusiast held a contest for drawings and paintings to commemorate the moment in his private gallery. Of this, he was most fascinated by Ant's ability to translate any and every topic to Homer (Simpson). In the wake of this revelation, he took all of Ant's art in great admiration and decided to reward him with one of the art collector's most prized possessions. Ant was granted a small Chaos crystal that the art collector had mistaken for a regular jewel, and Ant decided to gift it to Tux.

**Glacial Suppository [M] <B>** Tux, unknowing of his gifted Chaos crystal's capability, mistook the crystal to be a suppository, and he promptly nested it inside his Nether tunnel. What happened after that was a nearly indescribable chain of events that ultimately led to the world freezing over. The crystal became embedded within his garden that no sunlight would reach, and he had, over many days, experienced unfavorable restroom experiences. This clog had consequently generated much-compressed chaos magic inside his body and coupled with the power of his already existing miracle that allowed him to control ice, led to disastrous effects when it was finally dislodged. Out from his chimney came a seemingly never-ending blizzard storm that raged over Halcyon for multiple days, lowering the global temperature by 80 Celsius. Some areas of the world froze to a glassy texture, while others were buried in snowfall. The world was frozen still, and the world, colloquially, was "frozen in time". Above All, observing the awkwardly unfortunate chain of events decided to not intervene this time and instead watch the events play out when the world had finally thawed.

## **BS2: Solace**

**The Thaw [O] <B>** Seeing as that there was no activity in the world for quite some time, Above All began to slumber. And in time, the world did finally warm again, but what was left of the world in the absence of its heat had forever changed the landscape. In some areas, when the ice thawed, there were major avalanches that toppled trees and life. Glaciers had scraped out new continents and lakes, and the deep freeze killed much of the old wildlife. Miraculously, however, life found a way to persevere, and in their place, new life sprouted. Huge mountains towered over the landscape, deep grooves in the land were carved, and the remnants of The Great Ice Age showed themselves in form of an abundance of ice spikes. Slowly emerging from their glacial prisons, humans began once more to take in all the sights and capture nature's

bounty. An age of uncertainty had arisen, and the first newcomers were going to take advantage of it.

**The First Settlements [M] <B>** The land was new, and the people were eager, but danger was always afoot. Due to the increased hostility of the creatures in the world, survivors of The Thaw banded together for safety and prosperity. Raiding and infighting between survivors became commonplace during the expanse. Owl and Titan agreed to live together, but overnight Titan found himself drugged and woke up in a ravine with little supplies left. Dave became a furnace philanthropist and invested in Dio's Simps settlement with his assets. The same settlement was plagued with sightings of the Ender Dog, a fully void-born canine whose origins were a mystery. Exploring the world, Bam found the remnants of the Titanic wedged into ice spikes and a mysterious Flying Dutchman lodged into a spruce forest. He looted their contents and went in search of their buried treasure. Gummy and Pierce attempted to raid Dio's Simps settlement, but they became outnumbered, and they were promptly jailed and executed. Kilia said hello to the local tribes, and one of the natives, Oof, performed a fatality on her. Dio's sheep became the victims of a fatal terrorist attack by the local creeper fungi. To counter this, fences and walls were built to keep out the nocturnal dangers. Many fell victim to the new world, and it was not showing any signs of going easier on them. Dave, seeing the conditions that people were living in, decided to take it upon himself to alleviate the struggles of daily life. He fronted an assault on the Ender Dragon by the second day and freed The End for safe passages through. Tflame obtained the first elytra and shulker shells and promptly lost them afterward. Owl was found the culprit in allowing four creepers to spread their spores in Dio's sheep pen, and several zombies made their way inside. Aero and Dia began construction on their industrial drill, hopeful to extract new mineral-rich rock from the earth. Axe suffered repeat nightmares of hundreds of his deaths. The Royal Forsaken, composed of Aero and Dia, decided to rebrand themselves as The Cerulean Imperium. They finished work on a bone marrow extractor from a local spawner with the help of Owl. Elsewhere in the world, Super drank empty potion bottles and pretended he was buffed. Super, in his superstitious inebriety, killed Owl's bees and accidentally started a war. Augurey took it upon herself to own dozens of pets and Dio adopted a lost baby piglin. Super named it El Yapó, and it chewed on his legs and feet several times, causing internal hemorrhaging. Dave and Super found the cure to zombification, and Owl made a makeshift village to grow the cured villagers' population. Dio's Simps' villagers grew to a healthy population and Super got bloodthirsty and corrected that benefit. Dio, Owl, Aero, Axe, and Dave dug a new Nether highway. Baka sewed together strips of zombie flesh to make a putrid leather flesh suit and showed off to Dio that it was harder to obtain than iron. Ant set a bounty on Human for Bobux, and Dio collected the bounty. Human attempted to assassinate Dio but was ultimately unsuccessful and had to go into hiding (twice) for fear for his life. Kilia saved Tflame from the clutches of The Nether's lava oceans when she extended her hand from an edge as Tflame was about to fall off. His feet did touch the lava's surface, however, and he suffered minor burn injuries. Dave constructed an industrial spider silk machine. Tux wandered the world until he settled on a Mooshroom biome. Vahl took up an occupation as a human fisherman and took out several eyeballs with some casts. Ant became the victim of irony after telling a story of how creepers explode when you open a chest, after opening a chest. Ant erected a monument to honor his suspicious gods, and it stood ominously over the landscape. He was commissioned by another Solace resident to paint the Nether hub's roof like Michelangelo with suspicious scripture. Human and Owl found a quiet place in Dio's Simps settlement and started fisting each other. Vigorously, dangerously, and loudly. One of the local zombies got a loan on Augurey's diamond armor when it decided to murder her for it. Several local law enforcement officers were killed while trying to apprehend the suspect. Another incident occurred shortly after where a drown bludgeoned Augurey and robbed her of her armor. Vahl and Baka kindly put it down with violent and excessive force. Axe found a tiny desert biome in his travels but thought it to be a beach instead due to its small size. Digging his

feet into the sand, he went off to find a bigger desert instead. He was taken in with great hospitality at a local village with a 20% off sale. While in the area, Axe desecrated several ancient ruins and looted many pharaohs' corpses. He profited off the dead and walked away wearing their jewelry. Vahl started building his bone throne using The Cerulean Imperium's bone marrow extractor. Axe got thrown into a zombie mosh pit and Vahl had to pull him out of the mass of flesh. Night, determined to see what was at the bottom of the void, dove in. She was not heard from again until she fell out of the sky weeks later. Vahl finally got a successful human catch when he reeled in a Dio. Dio made a satisfying thud sound as his body hit the ground. Dave imagined himself to be a Conquistador when he saw, arrived, and conquered nine End cities without much resistance. Owl became a victim of Dave's wrath when he mined down Dave's furnace tycoon. Aki was asked to get some hoes in her free time, so she came back with a netherite one. Dio had a very profitable mining trip that ended up with him dying in a cave. This incident cost him over two stacks of diamonds. Aero and Dia forgot to bring supplies of drinking water into the Nether and suffered overheating, causing them to pass out with many valuables on their bodies. Vahl went spelunking and found himself lost in The Cerulean Imperium's cave system. He found no signs of life or food source, but he did manage to find bamboo shoots growing out of a ravine. He attempted to eat it but found out it was not edible. Owl went to take a hot bath in the Nether lava but was quick to find out that it was not room temperature. Axe and Dio tended to his 5<sup>th</sup>-degree burn injuries. Titan swore eternal allegiance to Dave after Dave equipped Titan with throwaway loot from his End city adventures. Axe got split in half when he fell straight on top of the stalagmite Vahl had placed at the bottom of the Nether hub. A deadly pillager raid occurred at the Dio's Simps settlement, but Baka, Axe, Dio, Aero, Night, and Tflame managed to cull their numbers.

**The Great Cakery [M] <B>** With the chaos of the new world's dangers mostly handled, the settlements decided to have a great bake-off to celebrate their newfound wealth and prosperities. Ironically, however, fierce competition between the groups lead to multitudes of sabotaging and bloodshed. A great battle was fought for cakes between a new alliance of powers and Dave. Dave, unsatisfied with his opponents' battle prowess, left on a pilgrimage in search of stronger foes. Titan was conscripted by The Cake Alliance to sabotage Aero's progress, and his efforts were nothing more than an insignificant annoyance. Baka managed to milk a single cow so many times that it reverted to its baby form. Others could nickname this incident "Baka Cow Deflation R34", with the R34 being the rate at how many times the cow was milked per second. Enraged at the lack of milk production, Baka force-fed the cow back to its adult form, and created a secondary tag called "Baka Cow Inflation R34". The Cake Alliance's first lab was found by Vahl, and Vahl was bribed not to leak its location. Frustrated with its lack of secrecy, the Cake Alliance founded a second lab. Apex managed to sneak into the second lab and set fire to its facilities, slaughtering all its chickens and cows, and burning its wheat and eggs. This prompted them to construct a third lab at a new undisclosed location. At the end of the cake war, Baka stood victor atop a mountain of cakes, and the top bakers received magical chef's hats that could restore their hunger freely over time.

**The Cake Drops [E] <B>** The neutral villagers watching the cake war happen decided to chip in as sponsors, leaving several cake drops within the world to be claimed. One of the craziest ones decided to leave a bunch of supplies in The End. What he didn't expect, however, was that The End's cake drop would be home to shulkers and endermen in the vast expanse of space after he left on his flying machine. After hearing of this news, he was quoted as saying, "If they want it bad enough, they can go get it." The Cake Alliance was alerted of this cake drop's position and homed in all its military might towards it. Dio was the first to arrive and was battered repeatedly by a barrage of shulker bullets and endermen punches. He slowly chipped away at the stationary enemies with a hail of arrow fire and found himself to be staring face to face with a host of phantoms. The original donor who had left the cake drop saw that Dio was alone in the

perilous fight, so he dropped off a shield for him on a nearby platform as he was passing through. By now, the rest of the Cake Alliance had arrived and was facing off the remaining foes. Tflame zoomed by in an airstrike and left the cake drop in a mess of fire. As the fire still raged on, Axe rushed through the flames, grabbed the contents of the chests, and took a leap of faith into the void after banking them in his ender chest. Negotiations were made for his ill-gotten goods, and he decided to donate them to Dio, who had always treated him kindly. The Cake Alliance had discovered that these items were nothing as they had seen before. They had rare and unique properties not known to any existing human magic – they were foreign, yet familiar. It was not of miracles, but it was of their substance. Book bindings coated in different frequencies of Chaos energy yielded different effects. As to those that were looted from the cake drop, they had the power to replant crops as they were harvested and the power to pull items closer to the user. The Cake Alliance used these to great effect to increase their cake production.

**Water, Ice, & Fire [E] <B>** The mysterious donor from before, seeing that the adventurers were willing to go to extreme lengths for these cakes and books, decided to hold a death game for them. The first event was organized in an empty ocean temple, with one of the contestants to be seeking out hiders. Aero managed to slay Baka, Human, and Owl, while the others remained hidden. Titan drowned when he realized that the water-breathing magic of the temple only applied to its interior. The survivors of the first event, Aero, Dio, Apex, and Axe, went onto a second round, which involved a game of Spleef high over the ground. Aero and Axe ultimately fell through the thin layers, and Dio and Apex faced off against each other in the inferno round. Apex, with a fly in his ear to take the fall, decided to sacrifice himself to allow Dio to win the death games. Dio was given the first choice in the rewards, between Water, Ice, and Fire. He chose Fire and received a chaos frequency (CF) bonded pickaxe that had a chance to smelt the blocks they mined. Apex chose Ice and received a CF that froze the metals on his sword, leaving a chilling blow to his enemies. As quickly as he had appeared, the donor left as the rewards were given.

**Master Chef [E] <B>** With the stakes of the cake war rising, the neutral villagers demanded a feast to compensate for their farms being raided and their livestock being stolen directly from their homes. A feast was organized, and the entirety of Solace pitched in to provide the most variety of foods and ingredients they could muster. Meats, vegetables, stews, and flowers were all prepared, and ultimately, Dio's Simps' kitchen prevailed over Bam and Axe's. They received a Michelin star for their efforts.

**The Eye of The Abyss [M] <B>** Amidst the chaos of Solace's new world, a powerful cleric claimed to have the ability to purge all the evil creatures from the land. All he needed, however, was time to cast the spell. He sent a letter to every able-bodied man and woman's doorstep and begged for them to provide him protection from those who would obstruct the spell's cast. As he had described it, a final spell, to dispel all the evil magic from the realm. His legitimacy was questionable, but it was clear to all that he knew more than most - he began chanting and started brewing a vile mixture whose ominous vapors wafted high into the sky. And as if by cue, the once clear skies darkened. Storm clouds formed around his position, and from within the densest clouds at its epicenter, a massive eye opened. The eternal night had begun. Legions of creatures began to assault the fortification the cleric had built to protect himself and his clergy. Zombies swarmed the walls, skeletons fired upon its defenders, and creepers blew several decisive holes in the battlements. The defenders fought off wave after wave and covered themselves in bountiful amounts of blood. But the night was never-ending, and soon, wither skeletons joined the fray. Man and woman were slaughtered indiscriminately, as the creatures of the night continued to pour in through chokepoints creepers had opened. The walls began to weaken and crumble, and the defenders slowly lost ground. They lost the walls, they lost the

keep, and ultimately, they had even lost the upper-level battlements the cleric was casting his spell from. The cleric fell with a grin on his face, knowing that his job was complete. As soon as the spell had been cast, the creatures dissipated and left the remnants of the fortress. Augurey, the sole survivor, looked atop the ruins of the chaos and saw a shadowy black figure emerge from the mist. It was heavily armored and didn't look by any means, friendly. While she was sitting atop the walls staring, a purple-misted arrow flew past her neck, shot by the creature. She dove into combat with it, landing several decisive blows to its limbs. It slashed at her and left several dents in her armor, withering away some of the steel it was built with. In a final pull string, she let loose an arrow that found its way through the creature's helm visor, ending its apparition in the mortal plane. It burst into black mist, and its sword and crossbow fell to the floor. Augurey took these with great stride, promising to find the origins of these weapons. Above the fortress, The Great Eye of The Abyss blinked and faded out of reality. The countdown had begun.

**A Wish for A Brighter Future [M] <B>** Scavenged from the battlefield were great messes of colorless slop where the creatures had fallen. When these messes of slop were amassed together, however, they were able to form physical objects and perform great bits of magic. Tflame used this to his advantage and wished for a fountain that would give him special powers when he bathed in its waters. What emerged into the physical plane, however, was a fountain that gave him two minutes of "night vision". Baka wished that Dave would come back, and so, Dave did. Augurey, sitting atop her mound, didn't know what to use her chaos sludge on, so she instead found it very bouncy and jumped on it several times. On one jump too high, her weight collapsed into the pile and people struggled to pull her out of it. When she finally re-emerged, however, she found that she knew more about the world. More than what an ordinary person could even dream of knowing - thoughts, possessions, and ideas coursed through her every second, and it was at first too much to handle. She collapsed under the stress. After having a good dream, she awoke tucked in her bed and rose, understanding that she had been bound with The Soul of The Oracle.

**Ghastardly Deeds [E] <B>** Once it had become known that Ghosts' tears had powerful regenerative properties, adventurers were hired to poach them. It became a contest among them to see who could wrangle the most prey. Some took the Ghosts out of the skies where they flew, some went to their breeding grounds to slay them as they spawned, and a select few others decided to mass breed their own ghosts since the tears could not be synthesized. Tflame piloted several elytra squadrons to dogfight with the ghosts in the Nether. Baka led her group to seek and destroy younglings at their nest. Dio and Dave became head scientists at the Ghost farm facilities, and Titan's property was sabotaged by Aero and Dia. Ultimately, the ghost breeding facilities grew to such a number that it became sustainable and even more profitable than poaching them in the wild.

**Unbelievaboot [E] <B>** A traveling circus made its way through Solace and challenged several of its residents to a few games. The first was Pincushion, where the participants would pick a partner and shoot them with cotton-tipped arrows, slowly taking steps back until one had missed. The second game played was Bumper Boats, where competitors attempted to sink each other's boats with passes by of axes and bows and arrows. Dave reigned supreme in the first two games and was given a totem of great power. But the greatest game of all, however, was the Block Hunt, which pitted entire groups of people against each other as they scavenged for multitudes of variety in placeable blocks and items. The ringleader ultimately handed off the medal to Bam and Axe, congratulating them on their ingenuity.

**The Origin of The Ender Dragon [m] <B>** Seeking to study the great power of the Ender Dragon, Bam sought to collect research samples for his studies. He enlisted Dio, Dave, Owl, Tflame, and Tux to help him study them. With the slaying of each Ender Dragon's revival, a new gate in the

End was freed, and Bam learned more about the creature. Judging by his findings, he deduced that creature wasn't native to the End at all, but rather was a prisoner herself. This information, supported by the backing of the native colorings of the End portal and ender chests being built on green tints rather than purple, leads to more questions than answers. Perhaps this correlates with a connection between the Ender Dragon to the endermen, where both creatures' eyes glow bright purple. Speculation as much, the studies were inconclusive, but one thing remained clear – the End was tampered with.

**The Crystalline War [E] <B>** Meanwhile, in the Overworld, Juan took it to his responsibility to spread moss to the mossless, and the world quickly became engulfed in the lifeform. Kilia prepared the land for planting her world tree, carefully tucking the soil with her hands, and monitoring its nutrient level. Vahl began his expeditions to search for a lush cave which yielded great success. He took his findings to the global market and expanded his business opportunities. While this was going on, several chaos meteors landed in Solace's backyard. A legion of soldiers came to check out its landing site and noticed its powerful wafts of magic spawning hostile creatures to the surface. Tasked with eliminating the enemy, the legion got to clear the breach. Many fell to the undead, as when the living would fall, the undead took up after the living's equipment, making excursions into the crash site exceedingly difficult. What didn't help, however, was also the increased gravity field in the area, making operations near impossible to proceed and enact. Dio attempted to challenge the meteors directly but got crushed to death by his weight. Tflame mined large chunks of the meteor fragments that emanated chaotic magic and lifted them to the surface to be sealed. Tux, Axe, Augurey, and Juan lead the vanguard into the battle, sacrificing themselves to the undead mob. As slow as progress was made into the site, progress was still being made. The last of the chaotic fragments were secured and the meteors themselves were cracked upon to reveal powerful chaotic frequencies that were the root cause of the issue. However, inside the core of the meteors also was an array of crystals that were radioactive to the touch. Some claimed that certain crystals had bestowed greater power than others, and a great war was fought for the crystals of power. Owl and Tflame returned to the site to excavate for more crystals, and nearly eviscerated Titan when he approached. Juan was slain on the spot. Dave flew into the crater site and claimed to have gotten a crystal that gave him haste, and Owl and Tflame chased after him. Their chase led them to The Subterranean Federation's base, where Owl assaulted Apex during Apex's patrol. Apex's vampiric blade allowed him to keep up with Owl's prowess, and soon Tflame arrived intending to finish the fight. Unbeknownst to all, it'd be far from over, as while Apex was fighting off the two, Titan was busy sounding the drums of war, and Dave answered the call. A mysterious wish rang out in the world for Totems of Undying to be banished, and all those who possessed them saw the dolls crumble to dust. Dave, wielding the power of lightning, split open the sky onto Tflame and Tflame negotiated his freedom in return for abandoning the fight. Owl, left alone with Titan on the chase, quickly escaped out of his clutches by dodging him into the Nether. After the skirmish had settled, it was found to be fake news that the crystals gave anyone unique powers, and the factions made peace.

**Solace Shenanigans [m] <B>** On one fateful night, Oof called everyone to bed and found Dio sleeping in hers. Finding this awkward, she just decided it was better to sleep on the floor. Augurey found herself jailed in bones by Vahl, and Joe was fed to a mosh pit of zombies. Human and Owl became unwilling participants in a death machine which skyrocketed the number of fatalities that day.

## **BS2.5: Vellichor**

**The Migration to Vellichor [O] <B>** After the Crystalline War, more research was done into the amethyst crystals, and it was found that the crystals were great conductors of chaotic magic. Knowing this, the factions knew of greater abundancies of amethyst existing in other lands, so

they sent expeditionary groups to search for suitable places to settle. Of these candidates, Vellichor was the most capable to sustain a growing empire. Word spread throughout Solace that such a place had been found, and there were waves of volunteer settlers to establish a foothold in Vellichor. The higher-ups of the factions gave them one week before they would send additional supplies and military equipment to Vellichor, and so, in that one week they were given, they struggled.

**Deadman's Fissure [M] <B>** As the newcomers settled into Vellichor, Owl immediately found himself impaled by a stalagmite in a bad place to be impaled. Small encampments were set up, and the groups sought out the deep expanses of the world. Of these locations, a huge cavern system nicknamed Deadman's Fissure was brought to their attention. It contained riches of immense quantity, but it was jealously guarded by a host of its hostile inhabitants. An army was quickly put together by the combined might of the new Vellichorians and they marched together to assault the cavern. Swordsmen took to the front and axe men followed closely behind. Archers and crossbowmen supported them with arrow fire from a safe distance. They were continuously flanked by creatures that seemed to have emerged from crevices in the cave walls and even found themselves at one point, surrounded. Yet, they persevered. As they pushed deeper into the cavern, the danger got more intense, and at the root of the cavern's wealth, sat one Death Knight upon his skull throne. This one, unlike the previous one they had faced, was nearly completely manifested into the world, granting it unbelievable reserves of power. It took an entire regiment of soldiers to lock it down and weaken its physical grip on the physical plane. As the day was won, the casualty count was taken. Hundreds died in the fight that took down thousands of enemies. It was a pyrrhic victory and one that would not be forgotten any time soon. Scavenging the remains of the battlefield, Dave came upon the Death Knight's set of armor that it had left behind when it was sent back to where it had come from, and upon contact with the chest piece, Dave felt a strange presence transfer over to his soul. It whispered in his mind dark and evil things that one wouldn't dare dream of – but Dave was able to resist the voice. His hands began to glow a vibrant purple. When he would raise one forward, it became engulfed in a void, and he could feel something nudge against his fingers on the other side. Reaching his arm deeper, he grasped at it and pulled it out. It was a shulker box from his ender chest. Joe witnessed this and ran up to touch the Death Knight's gauntlets. He waved his hands around wildly to see if they would do something, but all he could wave at was air. What appeared in front of him, however, was a spectral anvil he could summon at any time...

#### **Classifications of Magic [O] <B>**

<b>Enchantments</b>	Concentrated energies of life essence bound to an item to give it its magical properties, also known as Human magic
<b>Miracles</b>	Portions of Above All's chaotic power, also known as gifts of The Divinity
<b>Souls</b>	Chaotic energy imbued into one's life essence, originating outside of Above All's Order
<b>Chaos Frequencies (CF)</b>	Chaotic energy on different wavelengths gives an item properties that cannot be replicated by Human magic
<b>Artifacts</b>	Unique items formed from feats of great power that is usable equipment
<b>Relics</b>	Unique items formed from feats of great power that empower their holder
<b>Curses</b>	Unique items formed from feats of great power that bind themselves to victims and inflict negative effects



**Wands of Wind & The Mountain [M] <B>** As the Vellichorians dug deeper into the earth, they found evidence of previous civilizations that lived on the lands before them, and in one such excavation, they found a scripture that talked about 3 artifact wands that could control the winds themselves. Legends fated that when the wands were brought together, a great new power would emerge from their fusion, challenging the order of the world. And so, the Vellichorians searched high and low for the resting places of these wands. One was buried deep in the open caves, another buried deep in an underground river, and the last was hidden away at the top of a snowy peak. Different parties of men and women went searching, and the wand in the cave and the wand in the river were easily recovered. The last was the wand at the top of the peaks, and all converged upon its location. When they arrived, a fortification of pillagers had secured the wand. Dave, Dio, Owl, and Spartan attempted to sneak their way past, and they were successful after many failed attempts. They secured the third wand at its resting place at a nearby peak. Dave rose all three wands together into the sky, and lightning struck down, merging the three wands of wind to form the Tempest, one juiced up medium to channel the force of a small tornado at the wielder's hands. Meanwhile, Vahl, blissfully unaware of the events, charged at the fortification long after the wand's location was stolen right from under the pillagers' noses. Underequipped and covered in snow, he shed so much blood it was indistinguishable from his own and the enemy. Bohl, one of the chaos deities vying for control of Above All's Order, took notice of Vahl's singlehanded efforts and blessed him with unholy might to smite down his foes. He went into a blind frenzy of rage and chased down every single survivor of the episode. Impressed, Bohl made an apparition to Vahl and asked him personally what Vahl desired that Bohl could grant him in return for the show. Vahl stated that he wanted to smite down the avian that plagued him, and ironically, Bohl, having gone deaf in one ear, only heard the phrase, "plague". Bohl did a small motion with his hands, and a book titled, "The Plague of Flesh" appeared in Vahl's hands. The book itself was made of unidentified leather and bound by a rather gruesome display of fungal growth overtaking the pages. Wherever Vahl would carry the book, the fungus quickly spread onto his surroundings, covering any living life form in the obnoxiously rapid-growing mycelium into their skin.

**The Doll of Gluttony's Curse [E] <B>** Dave called out to the stars and wished for the prevention of elytra from ever being combined with chest plates, and it was answered with a crackling boom across the sky. Whenever new smiths would attempt to combine the two, it would both heavily burn the elytra and damage the chest plate from the welding. Augurey wished for a relic that would allow her to turn invisible, and she awoke with a small dazzling jewel on her nightstand that allowed her to disappear when she contacted it. Market, a foreign warlord, traveled to Vellichor and started to gather an army with the intent to conquer it. Underneath their feet, an ancient story unwound itself. Buried in the caves below were the remnants of a scene long past that contained the dining table of a nameless noble.

There once was a nobleman whose only satisfaction in life came from tasting the world's finest cuisines and dishes his chefs could prepare for him. In his vanity, however, his diet started to take a toll on his appearance. After bearing much malice towards how he had let himself go from a young and slim man to the decrepit and obese he had become, he finally decided that enough was enough - he had the money to buy anything he wanted, so why not buy himself a shortcut? He visited many wizards and witches to see if they could help him, but he was turned down by all, as they claimed his request to be too in vain, and that their magics would only affect his appearance temporarily. Desperate, he turned to darker powers for his ego. He hired a witch to make a voodoo doll of himself and instructed her to take out cotton from the doll to reflect it upon his appearance. She warned him not that it was dangerous, but he, like the tyrant who knew no no's, demanded her to do so, lest she is executed for treason. And so, she did. She took the cotton from the doll slowly, and the nobleman felt himself thinner and thinner. But she didn't stop. He started to panic and called for the guards. She continued. His limbs, once ham-

sized, shrank to twigs of what they used to be. She cackled menacingly as he pleaded, telling him that his arrogance would be the end of him, to threaten mystics he had no control over. And with one last cotton puff pulled from the doll, the witch had satisfied his eternal appetite. Vahl and Night went in search of the cursed doll and found it in the hands of pillagers. They fought off the guards and Bam eventually arrived, distracting the guards while Night burned down their settlement. Night eventually found the cursed doll while rummaging through the pillagers' supplies and then decided to bind it to Market. Market was plagued with hunger for nearly three days before the curse subsided and he could eat normally again.

**Headhunters [E] <B>** A museum curator who arrived in Vellichor was very much interested in cataloging all its wildlife and the creatures it sustained. However, this curator was not like others – he was not interested in models, nor was he interested in artistic depictions of them. He had a cruel satisfaction with his collection of creature heads. And so, he made out a broad statement – “Collect me as many heads as you can, and I shall grant you some from my collection.” Hearing this, people sought to collect them for him. Being that heads had to be decapitated from the body, sometimes, the cut wasn't right, and the collector refused to accept it. Hence, only some heads were to the quality of the collector's expectations while generic ones lopped off weren't. Night and Baka went on a genocide rampage, killing many villages worth of inhabitants. Augurey roamed the plains, collecting the local wildlife. Dio traveled the world, cataloging every death and cut he had made. And in the end, when the collection was complete, as mysteriously as the head curator had emerged into Vellichor, he left as quickly while leaving his end of the deal. Juan, on a lighter note, found a tree floating above water away from its peers that he dubbed the Jesus tree.

**Bathed in Hellfire [E] <B>** Something was wrong. One of the Nether expeditions didn't come back. We sent out a search party for them. That one didn't come back either. We went to the location ourselves where we had sent them, and a black bastion appeared before our very eyes. It was a massive structure, with cracked bricks, chiseled in areas that didn't make sense – run by Piglins, without a doubt. At its entrance, one of our scouts' bodies lay with the journals he wrote of the outcome...

**Hellfire Cape I [S] <B>** I've tracked it to this location. The piglins guard it endlessly, and I don't know how much I have left... My fellows entered a while ago to negotiate with them, but I haven't seen them return yet. They've been too long, I fear...

**Hellfire Cape II [S] <B>** IT'S GONE BAD, IT'S GONE BAD. They're hunting me, I know it. I'm the last of my group... I don't know how much longer it will be until I collapse here. An arrow has pierced through my abdomen, and I'm bleeding out, let this be a warning – the Hellfire cape won't come easily. Learn from our group's mistakes, and stay away...

**Piglin Entry [S] <B>** Human. Try to take cape. Die. Cape no burn. Safe keep. Forever.

**Bathed in Hellfire P.2 [E] <B>** Nodding silently at my compatriots, Augurey, Owl, Vahl, and Tflame, we broke open the barricade that held the demons at bay. What we didn't expect, however, was the host of piglins that vowed our doom. Ghosts bombarded our position, but I was quick to my feet to destroy their breeding grounds. Many soldiers of the platoon fell as they engaged in battle with the piglins, swinging their blades and axes this way and that. Vahl fell in battle, so I grabbed his trident and threw it back at the foul creatures, only to have the trident return to my hands after. Neat. We fought them floor by floor, wiping the structure of pig kin systematically. What was the greatest resistance, however, was founded by an alliance of piglin brutes and magma cubes at the bottom. Bam arrived at the scene at this point, and he flanked them as we attempted to push forward to secure a foothold deeper into the treasury. With heavy losses,

we managed to prevail. Inside the main treasury was the location of a cape whose fabrics were of legend to be threads of fire themselves. Forged by a powerful piglin lord long ago, it was lost in one of the crucible pits when a jealous relative of the piglin lord pushed him off the bridge to overthrow him. Now that I have its location, I head there now. I drank from a flask of fire resistance and dove deep into the magma. It's warm, akin to the temperature of a hot tub, at the very most. Feeling along the floor, I find it. The Hellfire Cape is mine. I surface and throw the new garment over my battered armor. Seeing if the legends were true, I threw the cape into a campfire I lit. The cape absorbed all the flames, leaving but ashes on the wood. Captain Dio of the Dio's Simps, concluding report.

**Chaotic Deities (Mehr, Bohl, & Krowe) [O] <B>** With Above All slumbering in the cosmos, there is no one to guard the gates to her pocket of Order. Mischievous and prying eyes seek to usurp this section for their own and find themselves waging war against each other for followers, as it is through their followers' beliefs and emotions that empower them in this Order.

Mehr (mare), the entity whose alignment falls with prosperity in development, believes in progress as a collective. The group benefits from every individual's talent. If an individual must be sacrificed for the collective, then so be their unfortunate fate. Individuality and selfishness are not concepts she understands. The ends would justify the means after all. Her colors are gold, turquoise, light blue, and white.

Bohl (bull), a strong proprietor for self-dedication, believes that no mountain is too great to climb, given the right amount of fuel for their willpower. They are willing to reach the top by any means necessary, whether it takes righteous diplomacy or a throne of skulls to do so. Determination and perseverance come first before others around him. What's a little blood to be spilled if it's done for the matter of glory? His colors are gold, red, orange, and brass.

Krowe (crow) doesn't speak much. His actions speak for him. To know when to intervene is simple enough. If someone is suffering, it's their problem. Krowe knows that the most resourceful deserve to thrive. If it must take befriending a neighbor to use them tomorrow, then it will be done.

Manipulation of others to achieve one's goals is just a steppingstone to survival. His colors are purple, magenta, pink, and violet.

**The Dragonfire Crossbow [E] <B>** Long ago, when dragons still flew in the Overworld skies of Order, there was a corporation whose technologies were unparalleled to any others. Seeking to create "the perfect weapon", they captured some of the beasts and harnessed their flames' heat to forge such a myth. Months of research and dozens of dragons were sacrificed in the process, but eventually, their efforts yielded fruit. Sporting a smooth, glassy artisan craft of a pure obsidian barrel, diamond foregrip, and limbs, and a single strand of an angel's hair (obtained from unknown origins), Pekora Corporation was able to manufacture one Dragonfire Crossbow. The pure obsidian barrel prevented its bolts from wearing down the crossbow so quickly as opposed to its iron-forged cousins, and the diamond limbs, being so sturdy, kept the arch's curvature perfect each release. This crossbow, unlike any other, boasted near instantaneous reload times due to its super-heated angel hair pull string granting the user strength upon contact. Due to its magical properties, the crossbow emitted a paradoxical warmth around it – enough to warm its user's hands, but more than enough to melt the materials it was made of. Yet, it did not burn. Once the project was completed, its blueprints were destroyed, and it was held in Pekora Corporation's deepest sublevel basement for fear of it going into the wrong hands. But even the most secure sublevel measures could not stop Pekor-X. Pekor-X, an organization built upon demolishing the work of Pekora Corporation for the fear that their research had gone too far, broke into Pekora Corporation headquarters and stole the Dragonfire Crossbow. A great war broke out between them, and the crossbow exchanged hands several times before it was ultimately lost in the pits of the Nether during one skirmish. Both sides blamed the other for the loss of such a great weapon, but eventually settled for a ceasefire, seeing the loss on both sides of personnel and that the weapon was ultimately sealed

in a fire. Nearby piglins watching the skirmish witnessed where the crossbow fell, and they hurried back to their fortress to report the news to their lord. Fearing that one day the humans would come back for their ultimate weapon, the piglin lord cast great magic that would divide knowledge of the crossbow's location across 3 different piglins, and when those piglins died, they would be buried at the fortress. The final incantation was of its defense – for that when the time arose, spectral protectors would rise from their crypts to defend The Three's corpses from tomb raiders. Time went on, the freeze and the thaw happened, and generations of humans lived and died without ever knowing of the ancient crypt. Eventually, however, the Nether explorers of Vellichor would find it. A brave legion poured forth, and seas of blood washed the halls anew. New bones were decorated on the Nether crypt's floor, and the fortress, left in ruins from beyond its timed decay, found new victims in its cursed halls. Bloodied but victorious, Dave eventually became the next heir to the Dragonfire crossbow.

**Sanguine Sands [M] <B>** Bohl, in his hubris, felt particularly bored one day and cast the mortals of Order into a desert globe to fight for their entertainment. Of those he found the most exciting, they would be rewarded with the greatest treasures – and those who he found underperforming were ousted from the pocket dimension. The sands were stained red that day, and out from the rubble and chaos of the pitched battle that raged on for hours, Augurey and Dave stood atop a mountain of corpses. They were sent home with the looted gear of their foes. Tflame was defeated, but Bohl, seeing that he was not boring in his efforts, was given a package. Augurey found that she could sense the mana (life essence) of those around her, Dave worked upon his Soul of the End to where he could confine space manipulation to shaped snowballs, and Tflame absorbed flames to empower himself with the Soul of the Nether.

**Common Day [m] <B>** While the battle raged on in the desert bubble, Juan won the lottery twice when he was able to befriend several iron golems on the first try. The combined swords of Bam, Dave, and Dio slew three withers, and Dio used three Bam heads to attempt to summon a Bam wither. Although unsuccessful, he was able to capture its representation in a painting that was shared with the world. Tux managed to tame a polar bear named Gerald, and Tflame fell upon his sword, impaling himself in the process. Most mysterious of all, however, was a wish that drained Aero and Dia's claim to the ocean.

**Clipped Wings of The Seraphim [M] <B>** Divinity's status often comes with the most devout responsibilities - to eternally stay at your post, vigilant, and unyielding is, to say the least, something highly demanding of you. Such as with the fate of Lilith, whose disposition of delusion grew greater and greater until she abandoned her duty. Rejecting the natural cycle of the world, she rebelled, questioning the order of things - who decided those in power? For it was not her choice to have been tasked with the forever watch of the Eternity Orb. An orb, whose sole purpose was to guide the destiny of mortals in the realm, fell onto her shoulders to protect. Above All reminded her of its importance, for without it, the realm would crumble into devilish actions of free will - that which would tip the scales of balance. In this realm, there were always pushing factors to another's pull - life and death, and master, and disciple. If she were to accept these terms, she'd be at rest, knowing her actions were worth everything. But to her, she thought these words to be empty. Seeking to be equal herself, she began her rebellion against Above All. And so, she tore off her wings as an act of defiance. Where her wings ended up staining the earth with foul magics, for her intentions were nothing short of revenge. Devilish crops of undead and corrupted villagers flocked to the site, becoming guardians to the site of the no-winged angel's memories of servitude. Vellichorian spelunkers found the site and it became a spectacle to behold but never venture into. Eventually, however, those greedier than most stepped past the boundary, and into the fray. This time, however, the mortals received divine intervention from their chaos gods. Mehr smote the creatures to oblivion, Bohl enhanced the boldest amongst the wanderers with blessings, and Krowe made specters of the dead for them to be

able to retrieve their belongings. With the guardians of the site dead, the adventurers were left with a page of Lilith's memoirs against Above All. Confused at where the no-winged angel's wings were, the mortals looked to the gods above for guidance. Krowe whispered to them that only the last one standing would be able to receive its inheritance, and Bohl urged the mortals to be determinant and vigilant in their desires for power. Mehr remained silent but kept a subtle grin spread across her face. Owl, thinking that the god's instructions were to kill the others, kept a shaky hand on his sword's hilt, ready to strike them down. Tflame urged that they do not turn against each other as an act of defiance to show the gods that they would not fall to Chaos. Baka interjected, saying that perhaps the riddle was to all leave, and leave one standing at the center. Collective indecision lead Krowe to burn the wings in Netherfire, and all could do nothing but watch Lilith's wings incinerated. Disappointed and feeling defeated, they all left their separate ways. However, one remained at the center, after all had left. It was Tflame, and Mehr dipped her fingers into the Netherfire and pulled forth Lilith's wings, whole once again, to hand to him. "Congratulations. You were the last one standing," Mehr said as she smiled warmly. Tflame, gripping onto the wings tightly, felt weightless and found himself floating higher and higher. Seeing that the magic in the wings so was great, he separated them and gave one of them to Augurey.

**The Death Knight Invasion [M] <B>** As Chaos's grip on Order grew stronger and Above All's protective seals weakened in her absence, the restrictions of traveling between the realms lessened. And with this knowledge, Melina sent forth her death knights to invade Order. Thanks to one deceased cleric from Solace, she was able to manifest her death knights in Order with greater strength than ever. The expeditionary party emerged from rifts in space-time to dig through Vellichor for knowledge of where the Eternity Orb could be located, but it was quickly confronted by Vellichorian armies. The Vellichorians, having never faced such an incredible threat to their soils, had to fall back from the initial skirmish to recuperate their losses. More death knights emerged from the rift as they regrouped, so one of the human generals decided to use End crystals' explosions to destabilize the rift into closing. The death knights fought fiercely to keep the rift open for their numbers to pour through, but their weakened manifestations were not enough to hold off the greater numbers of Vellichorians. As they faded into mana, the death knights warned that this strike force would not be their last and that they would be coming to claim lives once more until their master's directive was complete.

**Bam in Limbo [O] <B>** When Bam was returned to Order after Lilith's defeat, he was never the same. He found his form to fade between physical objects occasionally and sometimes not. Whenever he would die, his mana would not return to the mana stream. In methods unknown, he effectively became a lost soul, unaccounted for in the system of Order. His consciousness was there in the physical bodies he inhabited, but his spirit was not. His mana, trapped in Limbo, made the bodies an empty husk of his sense of self.

**Auction Entropy [M] <B>** Mehr paced back and forth in the room as she thought. Krowe leaned against one of the walls. Bohl sitting at the long table that flanked both, boasted, "Let them fight! Let the champion and warrior spirits residing inside them receive my blessing!" To this, Mehr interjected, saying that they had already gone through with one of his ideas, and to do so again was unnecessarily violent. She'd seen the suffering Bohl had put the mortals through in the desert globe, and to feel all that once again dread her thoughts. She paused for a bit, and announced, "I think I have a solution that will benefit us all..." Bohl rose out of his chair, excitedly. "... that doesn't involve bloodshed," Mehr finished. He sat down just as quickly. "I propose we hold an auction - that who is the most dedicated within their ranks can sacrifice their material wealth for some of our gifts," Mehr proclaimed. Krowe's ears perked at hearing the last word, and Mehr, frowning, added, "Or curses." Krowe smirked. And so, the global auctions in Vellichor began. Baka received two CFs, a vampiric blade, a suspicious-looking portal, a book for

spelunking in the dark that granted her haste, a blessed riptide trident, and a piece of bedrock, and a Soul. Axe cursed Owl with nausea for three days. Dave received rockets, a one-day blessing, a CF, a zombie army, a death knight summon, an extremely sharp sword, a ticket to the End, and a Soul Mastery. Vahl received a one-day blessing, a spell book of lightning, End crystals, and a Refined Soul. Dio received a CF, a maxed set of armor, and a Soul. Owl received a fire resistance relic called the Orb of Flames that formed a bubble of fire around its user to protect them from flames, a charged creeper summon, an exemption to the totems of undying disintegration, a curse nullification coupon, and a Soul. Augurey received four soul binds. Titan received three elytra. Tflame received a spell book for fireballs. Kilia received a Soul. Mehr also threw in a round or two of reverse auctions where she gave the Vellichorians a small gift of her compassion for them.

Baka invoked the Soul of the All Mighty, with a thin layer of metals magnetizing just above her skin, granting her increased constitution. Vahl constructed the Soul of the Ram, which increased his pain tolerance when facing desperate measures or whenever backed into a corner and allowed him to charge short distances and erupt in a fit of vengeful anger at the end. Dave mastered his Soul of the End, disappearing in and out of space through rifts in the void. To this mastery, it is said that if you were to ever feel a presence watching you from an empty room, that was Dave's presence in one of the walls. Dio drew strength from the Soul of the Wither, eternally remaining youthful and immune to decay. Kilia found satisfaction from her Soul of the Druid, allowing her to sprout new life from dirt in a blink of an eye. Owl learned from Krowe the secrets to maximizing the efficiency of gunpowder through the Soul of Destruction.

**Mercurial Pendants [E] <B>** From tales of old, came a merchant whose shipment delivery times were unheard of. He had messengers fly in and out of his shop, at breakneck speeds, and the local merchants around him would always ask how he did it. How did he train such efficient workers, that they seemed to never take breaks? And he smiled. And then, he laughed. "Oh, they're normal workers, and they take the same number of breaks just as your fellows!" the merchant said as he laughed. The local merchants were puzzled by his response. To which, the merchant continued, "I smuggled a fragment of a chaos crystal of Time, crushed it, and gifted them pendants for their bonus. I instructed them to wear it during work hours, and now, time for them progresses slowly! I'm paying them 8 hours of work for something they experience for 12!" The local merchants gasped in amazement at his ingenuity and sought to acquire the pendants for their workforce. Scheming against him, one of them broke into his shop after hours, killed the owner, and stole the three pendants. Seeking to take a shortcut home, he attempted to dive into the End portal to take him home, but he made one fatal mistake... as he looked forward at his getaway, his eyes locked with an enderman's, and his fate was sealed from there. The pendants were eventually buried in The End's sands over time, and their secrets were forgotten. Pillagers came across it during one of their expeditions, and they loaded it up on their ravagers, thinking it was simply just ordinary jewelry. Their end base was raided by several Vellichorian officers for a string of unrelated crimes, and a lockbox with a riddle was inscribed on it. "Show me the place, and I shall fill it. I have no form, but I am restricted in my movement. I send death as easily as I sustain life." Vahl answered light, Augurey answered air, and Dave answered water. The lockbox's chains opened upon all three of their answers, and they were given the three pendants.

**Melina & Tephys [O] <B>** In a tale almost as ancient as time itself, there were deities in their infantile stages of godhood, ever present in a universe of Chaos. Melina, in her version of Order, felt that it was because of the Chaos Deities' lack of sense of time that they never experienced anything brand new. And so, she attached an expiration date to all living things. To establish time from an immortal's perspective is unheard of, but with this new acknowledgment, they could finally base how time had passed through the creation, the development, and the deaths of their machinations. She, the originator of the mortals' concept of Death, found herself at odds

one eon when she found interest in one mortal's timespan. Tephys, a simple man who led a simple life, found no interest to progress himself further than to sustain what he had held and those he valued dearly. Melina came down to his level in a form of an attractive young female to see if he would change his ways, but he merely shut the door on her when she tried to make advances toward him. She was so appalled at his stubbornness that she just was equally amazed to find that she could not tell how much time had passed from him because he lived such a mundane and ordinary life. If he never changed his livelihood and never grew more or less of himself, then he was always at a standstill, a constant, a rock that withstood her sense of the passage of time. Outside of his aging, Melina grew more and more interested in his philosophy of why he stood so still against Time. Eventually, she came down to his level in the form of an elderly woman and asked why he spent his youth never experiencing life's variety in the form of joys and despairs. He answered calmly, "It is because I despise life, but I do not look forward to death. I know that if I bear sons and daughters, then they shall grow old, bear their sons and daughters, and die, only to have repeated the cycle once again. In my lifetime, I shall never continue anything beyond it. In a way, my mortality traps me in my development. I did not choose the skin I wear, the fortitude I was given, or the conditions I grew up in. My stagnation is my sin to bear, but I can never achieve my true goals if I simply work harder. For fault of not my own, say, if I were to be born in a noble's household, I'd be given the chance to work for the council, but they do not accept low blood such as I. And for one man to overthrow the shackles of his societal conditions, is but a fate I cannot alter." Melina, seeing Tephys's pitiful condition, went to Above All's Order to discuss what could be done for him. "You must intervene for his sake, for he has purposefully chosen to stay still where he stands until he dies, and this Eternity Orb, you talk about... you say it determines a mortal's fate in life and death before they're even born?" Melina clamored. Above All nodded softly, stating, "It is nothing personal. Order is maintained this way. For there to be a societal pyramid, there must be some structural foundations at the bottom to keep them up. It is sad to accept that some are destined to become servants for another, but also equally incoherent to make all equal. That is not the natural order of things to -" Melina interrupted Above All, nearly bursting at the seams of tears, "You've no heart for those below you, they deserve free will and not the illusion of it! Let them decide where they end up in life, and not by a system outside of their control!" Melina shouted angrily. Above All, resolute in her judgment, calmly added, "A system where all the variables are free to be where they want, is a dangerous proposition in which Chaos is the only benefactor." To this response, Melina stormed out of Above All's Order, vowing to take vengeance on Above All one day for their injustice against Tephys...

**Lucid Dreams [M] <B>** Happening alongside the many conflicts of Vellichor, extensive research was done into the usage of amethyst crystals to channel chaotic energy for human usage. All attempts failed at containing the energy long enough for suitable battery-like sources. Consequently, it was found that because they were such great conductors of chaos magic, they were also proportionally excellent conductors of human magic – albeit for short bursts. Knowing this, wizards and sorceresses developed a branch of alchemy they nicknamed almethy, which allowed its users to carve symbolic sigils into the crystals to capture chaos magic within a moment in time and combine it with human magic to condense into almost any material they desired. The technique was ultimately refined to what it is today and demonstrated to the public as a show of good faith between the lords and their servants, passing down its methods to even the simplest of folk. It became so widespread that it eventually was adopted into schools as a basic practice due to the Vellichorian country's abundance of amethyst geodes. A special property of the crystals allowed them to manifest to its user the perspectives of others to an eerily accurate degree. Due to the nature of this, some likened it akin to entering another's dream.

**Wolfsbane Vial [E] <B>** Some things, by existence themselves, are cursed in nature - the very material they're composed of and substances they excrete can have a deadly effect on living things. In the case of Wolfsbane, a deadly flower whose toxins can cause nerve poisoning and nausea, this is just the beginning of its symptoms upon consumption. Such a strain of Nightshade was found deep in the mineshafts underneath Vellichor, and the mineshafts were abandoned for several reasons. Rumors were passed along that the tunnels themselves were cursed, leading to many deaths of the miners, losing some to misdirection, others to starvation, and even occasionally being haunted by their past buried. Venture forth into these cursed mines, and you shall seek out the only place in Vellichor that they grow.

**The Deities & Their Many Faces [O] <B>**

**Krowe**

Beast



Humanoid



Knights



**Bohl**

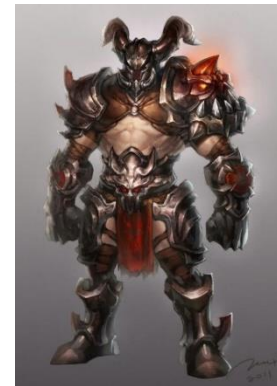
Beast



Humanoid



Knights



**Mehr**

Beast



Humanoid

Knights





**Melina**

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Death Knights



Humanoid



**Above All**

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Key to The Eternity Orb



Creating Order



Maintaining Mana Stream



**Krowe's Idea of Fun [M] <B>** "Krowe, what's going on down there?" Mehr asked puzzled. "Nothing much, what's your concern about it?" Krowe asked nonchalantly as he brandished a dagger at his waist and watched it gleam joyfully as the sunlight hit it. Uninterested in glancing in Mehr's direction, he continued, "And what makes you think me to know?" "Well, you're not doing yourself any favors of secrecy by calling it 'The Krowe Games'." Mehr placed her hands on both her hips, displeased. "Nothing shy of anything they're not familiar with, right?" Krowe looked up, showing a weak grin. "They die if they lose." "So, you've found out about that..." Krowe trailed. "Well, at least we get a show of it, right?" He chuckled. Heavy footsteps could be heard outside the room, ending with a loud thud as the door slammed open. "Where? Where is

he?" Bohl, furious, charged straight at Krowe and held him up by the collar. "You're dramatic today, Bohl." "What have you my warriors doing? Red light, green light, build games, and barrier walking? Have you not any respect for their time? Children's games! They should be sharpening their blades, polishing their armor for the next battle!" "A little tight on your grip, I'd be happy to explain if you'd let me down." Bohl huffed and loosened his grip. Krowe caught himself with his knees and looked upwards at the towering man over him. "Now, as I was saying – while you two had your games, I figured I'd have my own, you know, sense of fun." "Oh dear, what did you have them do now?" "Mehr, doll," Krowe laughed confidently. "They don't know it, but I've sent them on a goose chase for wishes to be granted." "Cruel and unusual scavenger hunts, Krowe." Mehr shook her head. "Do you have anything at all that doesn't waste my worshippers' time, bird?" "I do. Look for yourself." The three peered into Order and watched as the Vellichorian Winter Olympics he organized unfolded. "That wasn't half bad." "Glad to find it fitting of your satisfaction, bull." "I'm only saying that because of the snowball fight event." "You're ignoring the Spleef tournament and ice sculpting? That was quite wondrous." "I'm not interested in spectacles, Mehr." "And you two ignored the sled races?" Krowe asked, almost as if he was offended by the idea of them not acknowledging his work. "Certainly not my favorite," Bohl and Mehr answered in unison. "Suit yourself." Krowe turned his back to them and held his head high as he hummed a tune, leaving them as he walked down a hallway. Mehr raised an eyebrow. "He's certainly pleased with himself." Bohl scoffed, and added, "Cheap tricks are all he knows."

**Odysseus's Voyage [E] <B>** And what becomes of tales that are buried with time? Take the example of the great Odysseus, his lost journey in the unknown, and the great trials he had to overcome. The accounts of it were recorded in a grand tome and were ferried across the sea. It came into some difficulty for distribution when the vessel carrying it was attacked by pirates. The ghastly pillagers laid chase to the ship and drove it into a coral reef where the book sank along with the rest of the caravel's treasures. Over time, they lay low for the fear of retaliation, and they built their fortress in a nearby sea cave of the wreckage. The book was never able to be copied due to the nature of its loss, and it became nearly lost literature to the denizens of Vellichor until one day, a passing coral reef research vessel went missing. When a rescue team was sent to the location, the coral reef erupted into a clash of steel and spine as the team met the reef's denizens. Decayed corpses of sailors past and fresh swam to meet them but were eventually overcome, and their sources were cleaned up. As the rescue team-turned-clean-up crew scoured the sands for more hostiles, they came across a peculiar outcropping in the reef that signified outside tampering. Striking a pick at it, one of the team found that the rock was hollow, and they dug themselves straight into the pirates' underground cove. After what seemed like an endless tide of pirates washed over the crew, they eventually managed to arrest the captains at the head of the mass. With their captains in chain, their cowardly subordinates fled. What they left behind, however, were all their plundered loot and one of Odysseus's Voyage left in pristine condition.

**The Gold Crash [m] <B>** The pillager watched in horror as the madman stared at him. The maniac armor-clad in his resolution didn't even stop to blink. He laughed, even, as the pillager unleashed another volley straight into his chest. "Are you done yet?" Axe grinned demonically as the pillager loaded his last arrow. Elsewhere in the world, Dio had started a gold printer, and at first, although the results were good, inadvertently he had destroyed the gold economy by its overabundance, causing a gold value crash. Historians to this day have nicknamed the event Dio Inflation. Colloquially, "google it for more information". Spartan studied his old notes from his past control over gravity and found that although the effects were indeed magical, they could be reasoned with by science, so he concocted an experiment to develop a null gravity suit to tamper with the electromagnetic fields around him. What he developed was a successful prototype. Augurey, on the other hand, studied mana and found that small amounts drifted

through the air which could be separated from its composition to be channeled into inorganic materials to repair them.

**The Piglin Hierarchy [O] <B>** Many have heard tales of the piglins, several have encountered them and lived to tell the tale, fewer have escaped piglin brutes, and only a handful dare to study them and their behaviors. Hidden deep within the libraries of human archaeology, one can find references to their fascination with gold and warrior society culture. Most of the piglin population within the Nether stick to their small tribes as they occasionally gather to hunt hoglins and gather mushrooms for food, but every so often whenever one tribe conquers another's chieftain, the two tribes are merged as a larger group for increased military might. Quickly, these tribes grow into massive warbands due to their oppressive nature in numbers, and they establish a form of societal hierarchy to govern the masses. Of these, we've come to identify three visually distinct social classes from one another. The most obvious of these are the common piglin, dressed in simple cloth, armed with golden swords and crossbows, and occasionally bringing their young with them on hunting parties to teach them the ways of their culture. The next in the ranking is the brute, specially trained piglin soldiers whose fascination with gold has been washed away by their sense of duty through their rigorous doctrine, wielding sharpened golden axes and a devilishly strong swing to bear behind it. They're equipped with gold chainmail underneath their monstrous figure, allowing them to survive even the ghastliest of wounds. Commonly employed in piglin fortifications, these warriors have known little defeat and put fear in the hearts of their enemies. And what of those higher than brute, you may ask? For every soldier, there is a captain, and above the captain - is his general. A single piglin lord stands at the top of the chain of command of the warband, maintaining an imposing influence over all his underlings with the simple fact of them knowing that he earned his position to the top by slaughtering all those above him. It is a brutal and merciless caste system, and he has earned the scars to prove it. These piglin lords, varied in equipment and stature, have known zero sense of sympathy for their fellow kind, and their love for gold has been replaced with their thirst for power. Commanding their massive legions of piglins to acquire more territory through any means necessary, it is not hard to believe that they may possess several powerful artifacts that have fallen into the Nether from mankind's constant warring...

**Sword of Infernal Flame [E] <B>** "More steel, Mason! The flames aren't hot enough! You've got to move faster when you're hammering it!" The smith barked at his son. Mason, young, and inept at blacksmithing, desired nothing more than to make his father proud, for he was a small boy, and his father had told him on many occasions, that if he had the chance, he'd try again with his mother for a stockier son. Every morning, at 4 AM, Mason would be awakened by his father to begin the flames for the forge, as the afternoon would come for customers to look at their wares, and they'd have to be ready to have stock or constantly be at work on a client's specifications to be in business. Mason knew this, but he felt like he was doing all he could, and his father was still thinking inadequately of him. His sweat dropped onto the steaming anvil warmed by the hot metals being brought from the furnace as he brought his hammer up to crash down onto the steel. As he labored, his vision became hazy, and his overexertion led him to blink. But this was no ordinary blink, for when his eyes opened, he came face to face with a throne room supported by pillars of pure flame. Flanking the center throne, dozens of heavily armored men and women stood stiffly as if they were toy soldiers waiting for their next command. Atop its seat, was a massive man of proportions, with a bull's head at his pinnacle. He grinned and snapped his fingers. The bull's head fell away into flames and revealed a fierce sculpted red-headed man. "I don't like long conversations. I'll tell you as it is. You want to impress your father, right?" Mason nodded weakly. "Hand him this." He extended his arm out from his horizontal, and a sword of pure flame burst into existence, exquisitely molded to fine edges around his grip. "The price is your allegiance to me. Bend your knee, Mason." Mason stammered for words to say, but he could not help but feel an unbearing sense of unease in this

confrontation. He did so as he was told, and the sword was lowered to his height as his head was bowed. He extended his hands forward and received the blade. The flames engulfed the edges of his hands, but he felt no pain or heat. The man laughed heartily, and just as how fast Mason had blinked before, he was back to his anvil, with the sword he had envisioned laying on it. He rubbed his eyes to see if it was real, and the flames disappeared. It was a grim-looking blade, with an exquisitely fine-tuned hilt and the head of a bull as its hilt. He lifted it gently, and his father entered the room. "Mason, there are customers outside - what have you been-" His father stopped in his train of thought. "Did you - did you make that?" Mason tried to tell the truth, but all that could come out was a weak "Yes". "Mason, it's... beautiful. I - I can't tell you how proud I am right now." His father hid his face, but not before Mason caught the look of a tear streaming down. With his father's face still aimed at the ground, his father muttered, "If only your mother were here, I could tell her how fine a boy you've grown into, but for now, this will do..." He looked up and wiped away his single tear with his apron and pat his son Mason on the back. "You've done good, son. You've done well." Mason felt a sense of warmth in his heart as the presence of his father's hand lay on his back. His father took Mason into his arms, and they stood still for a few moments. The silence was broken when a customer at the front shouted for his father to come to the front to sell his wares, and his father released his grip and went to attend to the customer. From the corner of his ear, Mason could hear his father say, "My son. A new blade for you. It's all yours."

**The Giant's Belt [E] <B>** In an age distant from our own, giants used to roam the world. Everything used to be larger from the flora to the fauna, so their life and generations could be sustained. However, as the climate went through its ice age, there was less food for everything since the plants died in droves as well as the ones who ate them. Predators which depended on their prey to survive dropped off, and of these, giants were hit the hardest. Due to their size requiring so much caloric intake and the length of their pregnancies lasting well over a year, they simply could not recover from this massive blow to their ecosystem. Giants, unfortunately, became a victim to their circumstances, and of those species which could survive the ice age, they evolved to become progressively smaller, requiring less food to sustain their numbers. An excavated cavern believed to be an ancient giants' den was found in Vellichor buried deep underground. A small group was sent to investigate it for any historic finds tied to learning more about the giants' past. What they walked into, however, was an ambush. The cavern became home to a contingent of Melina's forces during the giants' absence, and they poured from every angle unto the unsuspecting crew. A death knight captain leading the force was in the process of resurrecting giants from the dead to add to their army numbers, but he found his task incomplete when one of the adventurers lobbed his ghoulish head off his body. With the giant's lifeless body standing upright, but inanimate due to being incompletely filled with life energy, Dave was easily able to bring it down, and Baka took home its comically large belt as a prize. The belt buckle, being so large, could easily fit and overlap the entire upper torso of an adult man, and so, Baka wore it under her main chest piece as an extra layer of resistance.

**The Devout, The Sinners, & Geogre [m] <B>** Owl began hearing whispers from Krowe to give up his material belongings for greater power, and without hesitation, he "monked" himself to Krowe's favor. In response, Krowe granted him two gifts. One to ignite mana in the air to spontaneously explode, crushing nearby creatures with the air pressure that came after, and the second to condense mana in the air to mend wounds. He left Owl with one last whisper, "Group up guys, let's heal." Elsewhere in the world, Taco was caught in 4k being in questionable positions with other men in a hot tub. That is all the context you need to understand the situation. No further details are necessary. In a rather unfortunate accident, Vahl dropped his lightning spell book into his turtle aquifer, and it lit the poor fuckers up like a toaster in a bathtub. Oof exhausted herself into finally finding a mesa, and putting a flag on the land, only to discover

others already living there. She gave them the gift of smallpox. Ant shook hands with Geogre, Dio's resident piglin. Geogre JFK'd him while he wasn't looking.

**The Worldbreaker [E] <B>** Everyone knows what happens when a chaos comet hits Order. Even a fool can tell you the story. What happens, however, when a comet hits an inhabited area? Such was the fate of Horrivar, a fortress in the sunflower plains of Vellichor. The comet tore through the fortress walls and buried itself deep into its palace grounds. Knights were sent to investigate the occurrence, and they brought back the rock to Horrivar's king. The king, fascinated with the comet's magnificent purple hues, ordered tools made of the material. The local blacksmith decided to start on a pickaxe first, to represent Horrivar's prosperity. Spending several days and nights over shaping the comet into a pickaxe's head, the blacksmith started to feel strange, and have visions of his impending doom. Thinking it to just be telling of his old age, he ignored them and presented them to the king. "Marvelous, wonderful work, I must say. What do you call it?" The King asked jovially. "Seeing as how the comet tore through our fortifications and the nature of its purpose, I ensign it 'The Worldbreaker', m'lord." "Brilliant." The king ordered his men to take the pick away from the blacksmith, currently kneeling and offering the pickaxe over his head. However, the blacksmith coughed, and he dropped the pickaxe onto the ground. "Is everything alright, blacksmith?" "I... no, no, no – get back, I can feel something co-" The blacksmith croaked, and from his mouth, erupted a shadowy hand that anchored itself onto the ground. Several more hands followed suit, and out from the blacksmith's body crawled forth an eldritch horror of miseries unknown and limbs uncountable. The king, closest to the blacksmith, attempted to run, but he became rooted by the hands, and the evil crawled into him. The knights, unsure of what to do, raised their weapons, but could not bring themselves to strike down their king. The king's skin grew pale, his form became sickly, and his stature shrunk in size. "We desire sustenance. You are compatible." The king emitted a shockwave of shadowy magic that took over the palace room, corrupting its guards, and crept outside the castle onto the ground. The peasants who didn't live in the castle learned of the commotion and fled their homes before the darkness could consume them. News of the event spread throughout Vellichor, and an army was dispatched to deal with the threat before it could spread. A siege on the castle commenced that lasted several days and nights, and many good men and women fell during the assault on the keep. Once the walls were breached, they discovered that what lay inside was unspeakable madness that would drive a man mad from the exposure. Blight, skulls, and bodies littered the palace room from the ceiling to its floor. Worst of all, however, was that the bodies refused to stay down. They just kept coming and lunging at the soldiers. Leading a vanguard through the mass of undead, the assault captains eventually met the source of its corruption – the king himself, with a peculiar purple gleaming pickaxe embedded into his back. The king let out a horrific screech that forced the soldiers to cover their ears, and the real battle had begun. The combat tore apart the fortress from the inside out and collapsed its foundations. Dave cornered the evil and landed several blows on the figure, only leaving dents on its corporeal form. After much effort, the army finally weakened the creature to where it could be sealed away, for its resistance to conventional weapons proved far too great to kill. Needing an object to bind it to, a powerful sorcerer thought it best to store it in the pickaxe that caused its manifestation, and he ended its terror of the world by sealing it in The Worldbreaker.

**Self-Refilling Goblets [E] <B>** Mankind is a fickle creature, never satisfied, and always wanting more than what they already have. A direct result of man's greed, three magical cups was made for an unnamed king, queen, and their prince to drink out of that would never be empty, refilling directly from their castle well. Naturally, however, as wants to lead to jealousy, jealousy leads to war, and wars lead to destruction, the castle in which the three resided was besieged, and its defenders were cut down to the last man. In an act of disrespect, the conquering warlord decided to defile the keep's legacy by throwing the heads of its heads into the center

well. Naturally befitting for those who constantly lead a life of war, that warlord too, was eventually conquered, and his treasures were taken from him. In a skirmish in the Nether, the cups being transported from one place to another were dropped onto its soils, where a magma cube swallowed it and grew to massive proportions. The hate that surrounded the cups eventually corrupted their original purpose and stained their once bountiful and clear liquids to a slower-refilling red...

**Melina's Invasion [M] <B>** Melina's full-scale assault preparations are complete. She's rallied her forces and marches upon Order with her seemingly endless undead armies. Between her and the hidden whereabouts of The Eternity Orb, lie all her enemies - Above All, Mehr, Bohl, and Krowe. The chaos gods don't particularly agree to work with Above All's followers, but to repel such a massive force of all those who have ever died before, it will take the entirety of living Order to stop Melina. Elsewhere in the chaotic plane, Krowe meets with Melina in her war tent to discuss rather private matters...

Krowe: Yes, and I'll strike where they are the weakest - you guide your forces through this point, and I will have mine sandwich them between.

Melina: And you're sure of this? How can I trust you to go through with your plan?

Krowe: Because a world where I fight alone, is an outcome I'd not live to see, those two, and this one, in particular, are far beyond what I can accomplish to handle by myself and my followers...

Melina: I see. Do you fully devote yourself to the cause?

Krowe: I shall if you promise me the second in command...

Melina: Then so be it. I'll allow your forces to see to their destruction.

*Krowe smirks, fingering his poisoned dagger before driving it into the war map.*

Krowe: On with it, then.

-

Bohl: And where is Krowe? He is late.

Mehr: I have not seen him.

Bohl: If it is what I expected of him, then I will show him and his flock no mercy in their execution...

Mehr: We've at least to give him some benefit of the doubt...

Bohl: You may be blinded by his treachery, but I am above it. I know a pigeon's lie when I see it, and his absence now, in a time such as this, proves to me he could never be trusted.

*One of Bohl's captains rushes into the clearing.*

Bohl's Captain: Sir, the banner of Krowe flies with the war host!

*Bohl slams his fist on the table, splintering it into half.*

Bohl: What more evidence do you need, Mehr? I grow impatient of this faith you put in him, and I will have no more of it. Leave me, I shall gather my forces to battle.

Mehr: And I shall, mine.

*Mehr casts a veil over the battlefield, creating an instance of void time where the living's essence can return to their bodies nearly instantly if they were to collapse in battle.*

-

*Melina swirls the wine in her cup, watching the liquids settle and level. Krowe pulls and ducks under the tent flap, careful not to make too much noise.*

Krowe: You're celebrating a bit early, aren't you?

Melina: My victory is near absolute - for every fallen, another to my ranks. What better time to celebrate than off the field than on it? Would you to celebrate after, when you'd rather be busy looting their broken and beaten corpses instead?

Krowe: I suppose you're right.

*He eyes the glass carefully.*

Melina: Are the preparations complete? Are the portals ready for the armies to enter?

Krowe: At your leisure. I prepared their rites myself. It was quite easy to break down the barrier, given that their precious Above All sleeps longer than an eon.

*Melina sips from their glass, making eye contact with Krowe as she does so.*

Melina: We strike in two days. My necromancers are pulling out the buried out their graveyards as we speak. Your warriors, I trust, are ready to take the flanks?

Krowe: I've informed them.

Melina: You've done good, Krowe. I'll see to it you're properly treated to a portion of Above All's Order. Pour me some more of that wine, will you?

-

Bohl: What are we to do with followers whose deity sleeps?

Mehr: They've just as much right to Order as we - if we recruit them in our ranks for this upcoming battle, then the survivors will see our mercy and switch sides from their sleeping God after.

Bohl: A sphere of influence whose denizens are all undead and rotting scum is not my ideal place to rule over. I'll accept their numbers in my ranks under one condition.

*Mehr looks at Bohl inquisitively.*

Mehr: And what would that be?

*Bohl lets out a hearty laugh.*

Bohl: They wear MY uniforms.

Mehr: Okay, I won't fight with you on that, but is it REALLY that important?

*Bohl, indignant, pouts his lip.*

Bohl: It is to me.

-

*At the Bohl camp, overheard from AA followers being fitted into Bohl uniformed armors.*

Ahleruhnd: Why is this set of shoulder pads so damned heavy? They wear nearly my body weight and they're twice the size!

Malinum: Stop being so fussy, you'll grow into them.

Ahleruhnd: I'm a grown man, Malinum! What is there more to grow! Look at these... barbarians!

Ready to die for their blood god, if this isn't a cult, I don't know what is.

Malinum: Well, I suppose the ones at the Mehr camp are doing better off...

Ahleruhnd: Look at their armor's shine...

Malinum: And the polish...

Ahleruhnd: Light, and simple.

-

*At the Mehr camp, overheard from AA followers being outfitted into Mehr uniformed armors.*

Jeshrah: What the hell! I can barely fit an arm in this thing.

Ragnivir: Relax, you've put on too much weight since the feast. You'll work it off.

Jeshrah: Am I a warrior on the frontline or a nun in armor? These plates are too thin!

Ragnivir: The protection is in their magic.

Jeshrah: Could their "magic" come in men's size?

*Jeshrah mocks and sticks his tongue out.*

Ragnivir: My armor itches.

Jeshrah: It's probably all the chemicals they put in the armor to make it so shiny.

Ragnivir: Starting to think I've been assigned to the wrong camp. Look at Bohl's warriors, they've got proper shoulder pads, unlike all this bubble wrap armor they've "fit" to me.

-

*At the Krowe camp.*

Wilvhem: Is it true?

Paisely: It is.

Ervho: I don't care who it is we fight against. I'm just in it for the pay.

Paisely: Surely, you can't be that stonehearted.

Ervho: I am alive, I am well, I am paid, I am fed.

Wilvhem: I don't feel comfortable standing next to an 8-foot-tall, charred skeleton for an ally.

Paisely: Krowe knows better than we, he's always got a plan.

*Ervho takes a bite of his drumstick, warming it on the fire some more.*

Ervho: But is it always the right one?

**The Orphanage [O] <B>** "Say goodbye to your friends, Quill," said the woman in white. Quill looked back at his pseudo brothers and sisters, with tears in his eyes. "I'll come back one day. I'll find you all again, and we can all play again!" Quill's hand was led out of the hall by his new foster parents and out of the Pennhold Ministry for Abandoned Children. The mass of children watched as another one of them was adopted and thought to themselves that their day would come soon enough. At noon, as it was routinely done, the children lined up at the soup kitchen to be given their daily portions. In a corner of the room, one of the kids sat alone. "Hahaha, Caullin is sitting by himself again! What's the matter, loser, you've got no friends?" barked the largest of the orphans. His number two joined with him, mocking Caullin. "You'll never be adopted. You're weird, you're ugly, and you smell bad!" Caullin kept his head down and didn't make eye contact. His food was untouched. "Come on and say something, what is it? You scared?" The bully rose out of his seat and walked over to where Caullin was sitting. "I said, say something! Weirdo!" He pushed Caullin's head into the mashed potatoes and had his number two tie Caullin's shoelaces together. "Now, you're weird, ugly, smelly, AND you're messy too!" Caullin felt a fire burn within him, but he held it back. If he did fight back, all it'd end up with was him being beaten on and picked on more. "Let's leave him. He's already a mess." Lunchtime ended without a single adult to intervene, with them behind their office walls handling paperwork for the children that did get adopted. Caullin, after making sure the coast was clear, cleaned himself up from mashed potatoes on his face and untied his shoelaces. He sighed and decided to go to bed early. He dreamed a wonderful dream but woke in the dead middle of the night. One of the windows was open, and the cold flew in. Shivering, as he tiptoed to close it, a bird flew in and landed on the windowsill. "Evening," the crow croaked. Frightened, and shocked, Caullin reeled back and fell backward onto the floor. "You, you can talk!" "Course I can." The crow hid its face with one of its wings, and Caullin blinked, revealing a pale unsightly man in a hood. "You, Caullin, right? I know of you. I've been watching." "Who... who are you?" "A friend." Caullin opened his mouth to scream, but nothing would come out. His muscles tensed as the man approached closer. "Don't be afraid. I bear gifts." He smiled eerily and held out his hand. "What, what is that?" "Something to even the odds." He opened his hand, and in his palm, a flower or herb of some sort, Caullin couldn't identify. "The next time they pick on you, you put this in their drinking water." Caullin took the herb carefully. "We will meet again, Caullin. Not here, not now, but the next time I see you, you will be under my banner." Caullin waited for a while and came out of his ball. He looked around and saw that the open window was now shut. He crawled back into bed and covered himself with the blankets, unable to sleep with the fear he had been instilled. The next morning, he did as the strange man said, and put the weird flower into his bullies' drinking water as their backs were turned. He watched them drink from it, and they started to scream. "THEY'RE EVERYWHERE! THE BUGS, THEY'RE ON MY SKIN. NO, THEY'RE UNDER IT!" Adults were quickly called into the commotion, and they saw two boys scratching at the air. The nurse took them away, and everyone, unsure of what just happened, eventually went back to their normal activity after thinking it was some incident out of the ordinary. Caullin, watching from the corner of his eye, couldn't help but laugh a little bit at their predicament. The next day, when the bullies came to his seat again, they were about to taunt him again, but when they opened their mouths, their lips fell closed just as quickly. Caullin, taking advantage of the opportunity, stood up for the first time since their harassment. "What's wrong? Bird got your tongue?" The bullies moved to push him, but they found themselves unable to balance properly and tripped over nothing. Caullin stood over them. "What have you got to say now?" Fearful of Caullin, thinking he had hired some witch to do his bidding, quickly found themselves to their feet and backed away, screaming.

Mehr: What the hell was that?

Krowe: My sense of justice.

Bohl: I said, let him confront his bullies, not poison them.

Krowe: The underdogs gotta fight dirty.



Mehr: You scarred all three of their childhoods!

Krowe: They won't dare to mess with him again, will they?

Bohl: A coward's medicine to the problem.

**The Field [O] <B>** The soldiers marched to the door and knocked aggressively. "Have you grain this month for the lord?" Its homeowner yelled back, "I haven't, you've taken all of the last month's harvest, how've I any seed to plant this time?" The soldiers kicked down the door and held him against a wall. "I said, have you, or haven't you got any grain? I won't ask again." "I haven't." "All you had to say." The regiment pilfered his fields, taking every bit of remaining wheat he'd planted. He watched them trample over the seedlings as well. "You can't! There won't be any food left for my family during the winter!" "And if the enemy marches upon your door, with hungry soldiers to defend it, you will not have a family to feed!" they barked back. Triumphant of their harvest, the soldiers loaded their horses and rode off the beaten path. What remained of the farmer's house was but a shadow of its former self – its crops stomped on, its livestock sickly, and a fence that served no purpose by having multiple holes and breaks here and there. "Daddy, is it safe to come out now?" "Yes, daughter. It's safe to come out now." He stared out to the land, ablaze with smoke in the distance, a victim of constant warlords laying claim to this and that, with the farmers the real victim of the constant power struggle. He caught sight of a neighbor, limping down the road, and ran to offer him support. "What's wrong, are you wounded?" "Just a stray arrow in me gut, don't matter none too much to me, I've got only a few minutes left anyway." "Nonsense. Let me take you inside." The farmer carried his neighbor in and set him on a chair and examined the arrow wound. "It looks bad." "It feels bad." Just then, the farmer's daughter ran into the room, tugging on her father's robes. "Daddy, daddy, daddy, look, an angel at our door! An angel, an angel!" "Nonsense, Fretta. There's no such thing as -" And then he saw it. The radiance glossed over the room, and he got up to answer the door. "Hel-" "Quite awful, what you're living with here." The "angel" invited herself in and examined the place. "What a mess." "Well, since the missus died, I've had to take care of -" "I understand." She glanced over the room once more and noticed his neighbor, slumped over on his side, with an arrow sticking out. "Poor thing." She waved her hands gently and motioned the arrow out of his wound. The neighbor rose to his feet, patting himself down, and lifted his cloth. His wound was gone, it was as if he had never suffered the arrow, and his eyes lit up. "No way..." "It's true, I am quite wonderful, darling." "Are you an angel?" the little girl's eyes made contact with the woman's, and the "angel" blushed. "No, I'm not an angel. Just a visitor. I saw your crops were trampled, so I grew new ones in their place. And don't worry about the fence. I replaced it too." "What kind of person are you? No, what are you?" The farmer blinked in disbelief. He wandered outside and found himself a new orchard of apples, a vineyard of growth, and a new bramble gate where his broken fence once stood. "I am not someone, but rather - something. You can just call me Mehr." "Blessed be the lady!" The farmer heard his neighbor yell, and when he turned around, his neighbor was already facing flat on the floor. He took a knee too and instructed his daughter to do the same. "I am forever in your debt; I will have food to feed her tonight." "Remember me." And when he rose his head, she was gone as quickly as she came.

**Might & Magic [m] <B>** "I am but a vessel, for your grace, take my reins." Axe bowed deeply before the shrine for Above All. A magical needle appeared before him when he rose, and it was inscribed with the phrase, "Sew me flesh, and I shall live once more." Testing it out, Axe found that it reanimated zombie hoglins, and he was pleased to have been granted his powers once more. Augurey realized that if she could gather mana from the air to bind to many to repair at a time, she could also concentrate it to repair individual items rapidly. Tflame, upon inhaling some smoke vapors from a nearby fire, saw that he lost his appetite, and started to feel quite full. He started to ironically, make the areas around him colder by following the heat trails in the air to consume them. Owl, studying under Krowe, learned how to mimic others' voices to

fool those around him. Juan, stubbing his big toe one day, accidentally crushed the table in half when he reached to move it out of the way.

**Melina's Invasion P.2 [M] <B>** The time had come, for the armies of darkness poured forth into Order through rifts in subspace between Chaos. A united band of Bohl, Mehr, and Above All's legions stood to confront them at the gates, holding back legions of undead and subjugated living for what seemed like hours. For each warrior that fell, Melina would try to steal them away from Order, corrupting them into her army. Mehr fought back but couldn't keep up with all the lives being stolen, so she only kept the most important essences to relive. Bohl, arrogant as he was, charged his vanguard forces into the portal that the undead came from, and held them at bay on the other side. Some did slip through, however, and that was what Above All's and Mehr's forces fought. The territory was slowly being lost as the hordes of undead grew more numerous and powerful. The initial waves of Melina's forces were but fodder to tire out and weaken the defenders so that her lifeless captains could run through and crush the survivors. Krowe's forces were nowhere to be seen on the battlefield, neither fighting either side. Melina, in her concentration, failed to see Krowe appear behind her and deliver a crippling blow with his dagger. "Did you think me to accept to be your subordinate?" "Krowe! You fiend, what do you think you're doing?" "I am but enacting my own will, for I think yours to be short – I am a man of my own, and not your plaything." Melina shuddered and collapsed. Paralyzed, she was able to shout for her guards, but Krowe had already enacted his master plan. "Men, it is time." Krowe's soldiers removed their cloaks from the shadows and appeared on the sides of the portals. Krowe used his magic to remove Bohl's men from Melina's realm back to Order, and Krowe's knights sabotaged the portals to collapse while Melina's elite forces were trying to cross. The portals started to fizzle out, and at the end of their lifetime, violently exploded into shards of obsidian. As for what was traveling through the portals during that time – they were gracefully bisected. "You'll pay for this; I'll have your head!" Melina screamed in agony. "And with what ARMY?" Krowe laughed maniacally. Melina's guards finally arrived at the pair's location, and Krowe stepped backward into a veil of smoke, but not before flipping one of his own birds as his body faded away. Meanwhile, in Order, Melina's forces quickly depleted without additional reinforcements pouring in, and eventually, whatever was left fled to the corners of the world. Dave, one of Melina's worshippers, charged at the defenders' fortress and slew so many that Mehr had to teleport him away from the battlefield to avoid further casualties. "Krowe, what the hell was that?" Bohl erupted in fury. "A carefully calculated plan. Do I need to explain myself further?" "If you and your knights had fought with us directly, we would have had fewer casualties!" "Nonsense, for even if I had poured my men into that bloodbath, you'd have no way to stop her from just resurrecting more of your 'warriors' to fight against you. Had you considered it? Or has your stubbornness blinded you?" Bohl raised his fist to strike Krowe but managed to restrain himself before landing the blow. Krowe continued, "And to slay a snake, do you chip at its scales, or go for its heart?" "And why didn't you tell us of this treachery you planned?" Mehr asked, irritated. "Because. The bull has a big mouth, you would never allow me to sacrifice some of your men to buy my mine time to set up the countermeasures, and lastly, I prefer to work alone." Krowe folded his arms and laughed confidently. "And what of Melina, pigeon?" Bohl roared. "Wolfsbane. High concentration. Melina was paralyzed and writhing on the floor when I last saw her. In her wine, I slipped the mixture, and in my dagger, the catalyst to begin its symptoms." "You really are a dastardly man," Mehr frowned. "And sometimes, the world needs them," Krowe finished.

**Limbo [O] <B>** Limbo is not a place, but a when. As creatures come to die, their life essence is either returned to the mana stream or absorbed by others. Humans call this occurrence of beings' passing as experience, for the stories of that creature's lives are carried on through their new masters in the form of the equipment they carry. A swordsman who's slain thousands of beasts fights with the ferocity of such when he swings his blade masked in the enchantments of

their life energy. And when the day comes that swordsman falls, he and all his rivals he's conquered shall return to the mana stream. It is the undisputed cycle of reincarnation. The soul finds a body, and that body guides the soul through the many hardships it will live to endure. But what becomes of the souls that cannot find a suitable successor? They are stuck in Limbo, far from the matters of Order or the likes of Purgatory, they are considered to be in the lost universe by the Chaos Gods. Unable to reincarnate, they wander the plane of existence while not existing at all, stuck in the past, the present, and the future, their state is unknown. In ways to describe that are the easiest for mortals to understand, lives, in a destiny-controlled world, are a straight-line chronological order of events. But in a free-will environment, this timeline becomes jumbled, and messy, and takes the form of a web. Each strand of the original destiny timeline becomes another alternate reality had they taken this choice or another. Those who are stuck in Limbo, see the entire web of their life that has not happened yet and will not happen, because they cannot exist. They are an error upon Order. Limbo is not a place, but a when.

**Fate [O] <B>** "And those of you who are the most qualified shall be given a chance to govern for this section. No ifs, ands, or buts about it." The instructor stared sternly through the crowd, gazing at two of her students whispering to one another in the back. "Do you two have anything to share with the rest of us that is so important to interrupt me and your studies?" The surprised duo perched forward in their seats closely and made apologetic faces. "We do not." "Then remember where you are, and not where you wish you were!" The instructor continued, and the rest of the lesson was slow, to say the least. It would almost seem like a millennium passed before the class ended. The two caught up with each other at the door and walked with one another to their next lesson. "What's on your mind?" "Nothing, it's just... what are we learning all this for? It's boring, and useless, all of it. How many times do you expect to use what that coot's taught?" She tensed up and made a face. The other put a hand on her shoulder and relaxed her. "She'll say what she wants to say, it's just playing by the rules now until we get out of here, and we'll be free to go as we want. Just, please - for me, stay quiet? We're already in enough trouble as is, she threatened to expel me if she caught me with you again." "And she, to play God over my life and yours, right?" The pair laughed, and they looked each other in the eyes. "At the least, I'll have you." "Of course. Always."

Years passed, and it was with this partner-in-crime dynamic that the pair would become inseparable. However, it would come one fateful night of their final project to graduate that things would change, forever.

"Do you have the final piece?" "No, I thought you had it." "What?! I strictly told you to bring it today so I could piece it into the final prototype." "Well, I don't, so what now...?" "We're already late, so we'll have to take it to the display now before anyone finds it incomplete." "After you, then." They made their way to the stage where the other final projects were hidden underneath the cloth and carefully mimicked the presentation for theirs the same way. "There. Tucked neatly. All that remains, is to show it to the universe."

And so, the day came faster than they could anticipate, as they were still in the convention center as it rose, dressed in their pajamas. "Docked points for your informal dress, but what might be hiding under there?" The girl scoffed, and explained, "A project that will change the fate of the world as we know it." "Show me then." She pulled the cloth off gently and revealed a magnificent sphere of sorts, whirling away at its configurations and contraptions. "Who's to credit for this?" The girl pointed towards her partner, and stated, "She was responsible for its conceptualization and engineering, and I for its magic and design." "What do you call it?" The other girl stepped up. "We hope it lasts for an eternity, and it ended up, after many failed designs, in the shape of an orb, so I guess we'll call it The Eternity Orb."

**Better Days [m] <B>** Juan grew to resent his increase in strength whenever he got hurt, but it all peaked when in one altercation, he became so vengeful he refused to die, no matter how wounded he became. Spartan modified his gravity suit to have better control and

maneuverability using magic, and it allowed him a wider range of zero gravity as well as made him nearly weightless. Ant remembered when he used to have control over the miracle of time and tried to recall the techniques he had done to use them. Fuzzy, but still remembering one of them, he was able to utilize anchors in time again. Dia was working late at night in her workshop, and she forgot to lock the front doors after hours. A group of zombies waded in, pulled her out of her seat from behind, and began assaulting her. She raised her arms to protect herself but found that no pain came to her, for she had manifested a glass chrysalis to form. Baka took in more chaotic energy to turn the thin plating around her skin to become thicker and developed multiple layers of plating to hover above her skin. Vahl's leg muscles tightened and gave him much more traction in his steps, accelerating him to ridiculous speeds and smashing into targets equally as deadly.

**White Peaks Solstice Star [E] <B>** It is said that at the highest peak of The White Peaks, a legendary snowflake of never-melt ice forms every millennium. The White Peaks, having never been explored in its entirety before, has been protected historically from explorers by frequent snowfall and avalanches covering its sides. A climbing enthusiast-turned-philanthropist has instead, proposed a different idea to tackle the challenge. He would invest in a team to travel up to just below the point of no return on the mountain and set up a series of explosives that would trigger upwards, careful not to have the mountain collapse. This way, instead of tackling the weather conditions on its sides, an expeditionary team could be sent upwards from the inside. In return, however, he would have the first explorer to the top bring to him one of the legendary snowflakes of never-melt ice. There were surely multiple snowflakes at its peak, with the mountain being as old as it was. And so, the Vellichorians began their ascent. After much trial and error, as well as slips and falls, Dio was able to reach the top, where he secured two of the snowflakes, keeping one for himself as a souvenir, and the other to give to the philanthropist.

**Dorsal Fin [E] <B>** "Every man is born equal," or so, that's what they teach. The reality is it couldn't be further away from the truth. One particular child, named Adolphian Shizler, was born with hypertensive psychic energy manipulation he couldn't control. In his childhood, he was bullied for his outcast nature, and he unintentionally unleashed his powers upon his bullies. They were washed away in a wave of his tears and drowned consequently from the liquid he encapsulated their heads in. The authorities, hearing of such a powerful psychic, knew that Adolphian was far too dangerous to let roam the world. They lured the child in with promises of sweets, and when he got close enough, the head of the force jabbed a needle into his neck that sent the child into an extended state of sleep. Now normally, they would have executed such dangers to society, but it was because of Shizler's young age that his appointed executioner proposed that they choose to lock the child away in a place no one would go looking for him instead. Pitying him, the council handling his case agreed, and he was locked several leagues underwater with many guardians to oversee that he never escaped. With time, the boy matured into a man, and he, vengeful of his involuntary capture, vowed to break apart the runes of his prison that sealed him. He started to cause rumblings above him and shook the earth's plates as he concentrated more and more. Eventually, his tampering with the earth could not be ignored anymore, as the rumblings started to wash entire beaches away, so ironically it was that same council that had chosen to spare his life, that would order a team of assassins to take him out. They dubbed the mission "Operation Based Schizo" and debriefed the team to believe that they were taking on a globally declared terrorist instead of a child they had wronged to avoid attracting public backlash themselves. "Based Schizo is a psychic who threatens the safety of the world – he's gone rogue and has begun imagining himself fighting invisible demons, so do not take him lightly," the assassins were told. The assassins arrived at his prison and fought the guards that prevented his escape and revealed a trapdoor of sorts underneath his cell. One by one, they jumped down, and they met the broken man, Adolphian Schizler, "The Based Schizo". Adolphian, thinking them to be his rescuers, came out in open arms

and went to embrace them, but the assassins confused his wide stance for an attack and struck him across the chest. Schizler, seeing no other option, unleashed his full potential. The room shook with incredible force as thousands of gallons of water poured in, and the battle for the survival of both sides ensued. A few assassins drowned in the psychic's attack, but repeated attacks on Schizler made him lose control of his water manipulation, and he eventually fell to his own greatest weapon. When his body rose to the top of the water, the room drained, and the only thing that was left was a pool of blood in its place. Having one last sense of good in him, he smiled one last time, thanking his killers for ending the headaches, and manifested a trident that could imbue them with the remnants of his powers over water.

**Blood Gouger [E] <B>** As violent as mankind is, nothing could come close to the individual cruelty that was done to the gladiators in The Nether Pits. Enslaved by piglins to fight against each other for the piglins' entertainment, the gladiators of the pit used several weapons for their survival, but nothing could come close to the brass knuckles dubbed as the "Blood Gouger". Carefully molded into barbed versions of normal knuckles, each punch they inflicted would tangle into the flesh of its victims, tearing its way out when the attacker would pull back their punch. The series of wounds left by the knuckles were more than enough to kill a man just from the bleeding alone, ignoring the fact of the impact strength and broken bones left beforehand. The Nether Pits were kept secretive from any humans so that the piglins' source of entertainment could remain captured, and the fighting pits took place over a thermal vent that would occasionally rise and fall lava zones, conveniently cleaning up the messes afterward bloody matches. Despite the piglins' best efforts, however, they were eventually found out, and a force of investigators was dispatched to deliver them their just punishment. The piglins, fearful of retribution, fled in all directions, and fed all the evidence to their pet magma cube, growing to immense proportions. The magma cube was put down with extreme prejudice, and the lead investigator, Baka, pulled out from it, one of the Blood Gougers while Axe found the other.

**Swine Flu [E] <B>** When one of the kingdom's princesses was captured by a piglin invasion force, the humans launched yet another crusade against the piglins. Dave led the charge into several bastions, looking for her highness, killing off countless swine in the process. The original kidnapped princess was never located, but for his numerous honors in battle, he was absolved of any crimes under Melina's invasion and granted the title of Warrior Priest. He was taught how to use holy rites in combat to purge the undead by the revered Pope himself. Aki, on the opposite side of the spectrum, lead many skirmishes against piglins in the crimson forests, flushing out guerilla-fighting warriors where they hid. She was awarded a beautiful black thoroughbred horse she named Nyx, and she bonded with the horse so well, it was as if the rider and horse were one.

**The Destroyer [E] <B>** Of forces mighty, none could compare to the strength of a man named Donovan Strel, a man who stood 9 feet tall and whose muscles resembled an ox's who regularly pulled wagon carts around. Strel used his momentum to regularly slam into his enemies, usually crushing them under his weight and nicknaming him The Destroyer. He served two decades in the Vellichorian army before he deserted it, finding that the army had abandoned its original ideals from where it had begun. If the army's purpose was to protect people, how come they left their men carelessly out to die? Strel believed that if he were to protect people, he would not need the order to do so, for in his servitude in the Vellichorian legion, he thought it a waste of life to retreat. Leaving those on the battlefield bleeding out to die while those alive lived freely did not sit well with him. The scars on his massive dark-skinned body showed proof of his determination, as many times over, he had refused higher orders to retreat to a better position. He had made it his vow to never leave his fellows, not this time, not now, especially in their greatest need. Those he saved looked up to him as if he were a big brother of sorts, and they trusted him with their lives, for without him, they would not be still standing. Disillusioned with the

countless losses the army was taking to achieve their later victories, he broke off and formed his own band of men and women who would live for themselves and defend the people as they saw just. Seeking the ability to defend those who cared about, he sought out the ultimate blacksmith to forge it. He traveled far and wide, seeking blacksmiths who could forge him what he sought, but none had it in stock... except one. "I seek a material that is lightweight, resists the turning of time, and does not tarnish with its use," Strel boomed. "And you think me to be a miracle worker? Please!" The blacksmith began to laugh, until his eyes met with Strel's, and saw that Strel was deadly serious about his conviction. "... didn't realize..." The blacksmith stammered. He perked himself up and corrected his posture, and headed towards the back of his shop, only to reemerge hours later at the front with an ornate shield made of pure dragon scale. Strel knocked on the shield several times to check its sturdiness, and the blacksmith grinned. Strel took out his massive war axe and told the blacksmith to hold his creation tightly if he trusted his handiwork, and the blacksmith, looking up at the 9-foot giant, gulped, and held the shield tightly for his life. Strel brought the axe down with such force onto the shield that the vibration of the shockwave shifted all the trinkets and small pieces in the blacksmith's workshop an inch. The blacksmith, with his eyes closed, opened one at a time and peeked, seeing that the shield had not even dented, and that Strel's war axe head had broken instead. "I'll take it." "E-e-excellent."

**A Chaotic Order to Things [m] <B>** Tflame had spent so much time around fire, that he practically lived in it, bathing in lava as his regular shower, and it didn't bother him when the rocks were incompletely molten, as they did scrub his back occasionally. Juan saw the suffering of those around him, so he took it upon himself to bear their pain. Spartan received the final tier to his gravity suit to make it complete, and that was the blessing of a Divinity. He pieced together technology, magic, and divinity to form the ultimate control over gravity. Axe, in the meantime, thought, what if he had used the divine sewing needle on himself, and he erupted to become a monstrosity of writhing flesh and sensation for a couple of minutes. He collapsed on the floor in his normal form as if it was all just a bad dream for the entire experience, and said to himself, "That was kinda awesome." Owl gave up some of his lifespan to give in to his previous husk urges and saw that with his influence, he could weaken and slow those around him. Steve's patron infused him with chaotic darkness that shrouded his appearance to those around him. Aero thought that his human form was too restrictive in motion, so he came to Mehr to ask for one that could fix his joints. Mehr thought for a bit and finally gave him the answer. Augurey came to Mehr also and simply asked for a piece of heaven. Mehr granted the request. Dio walked along the roof of the Nether until he accidentally stepped onto "impostor goo". He couldn't exactly get his boots out of the goo, so he attempted to call out for help. Aki came to check up on him but was careful not to step into it. Ant commented on Dio's plight, "The pretender is quite questionable". Bam emerged from a rift in Limbo and cleaned up the mess, apologizing that he had spilled some substances out in the world that he had lost track of, and quickly hopped back into Limbo as he had come. Dio, scarred, can still remember the magenta goo he walked into to this day. Axe and Owl spent most of their afternoon fighting with a piece of dirt, and they canonically went 0 – 1 with the block. Kilia spoke with her tree, and she said that the tree's roots couldn't breathe, so she asked Tflame to help her free them. Hesitant at first, he eventually let up and began excavation under the tree.

**Skysplitter [E] <B>** A powerful mage, Grimmwald, seeking to harness the wrath of the elements, found that binding them into tools to use rather than spell books to channel their energy was a far more effective medium. His first set of experiments involved electricity, and his colleagues likened his research to the impossibility of catching lightning in a bottle. Grimmwald made a breakthrough when he found that instead of capturing the entire bolt, he could just simply store parts and pieces of it to reconstruct the whole later. He had many mages doubt his magical prowess, and so, to prove his success, he consequently used them as test subjects. With no one

else to challenge his advancements in elemental weapons further, he gave the lightning prototype to one of his closest friends, an archmage who specialized in death magics. The archmage was working hard to reverse engineer Grimmwald's work until Greybloods (anti-magic sympathizers) found out about Grimmwald's murders and sent a force to confiscate the murder weapon. Naturally, the death archmage resisted, and a fight broke out in his lair. Much of the archmage's research into the weapon was destroyed unintentionally, and his lab was burnt down after the Greybloods finished him off. However, Baka decided to keep it for herself seeing the value in such artifacts and reported the weapon was missing instead.

**Worldly Wares [m] <B>** "Don't you ever get tired of toying with them, Mehr?" Bohl asked curiously. "In what way would it be toying?" Mehr shot back defensively. "You put these things for auction and make them fight for it no better than I to have put them in the arena." "You shed blood." "And you shed their sweat. Do you know what I'm getting at? You know you do not need all this wealth they offer to you in prayers." "What point are you getting at, Bohl?" "We are but the same coin, albeit on different sides." Bohl chuckled to himself and left Mehr to her thoughts. Ant received two wishes. Augurey received a moldable essence that could replicate any Soul. Baka received an instant kill. Dave secured a number one position in future contests by purchasing long-yielded luck and a scroll to steal a soulbound item. Dio received three elder guardian eggs, five chaos frequencies, a stack of every ore, a symbiote slime that could replicate any artifact, and immortality for a day. Steve won a lifetime supply of inhalable Cheeto dust that kept him fed throughout his settlement. Tflame was allowed to write one future entry into the Vellichorian timeline. Titan managed to convince others of a make-believe scandal, harming Augurey's efforts in a future contest. Vahl invoked the powers of the deities to summon several slime leviathans beneath his dragon skull and received blueprints to an ocean monument that detailed how they were built directly in the water.

**The Forbidden Forest [E] <B>** In Vellichor, there is a certain forest that even the greediest of merchants refuse to take shortcuts through. "You'll have to wait for the shipment to arrive in three days." "I need it in two days, though. Can't you just do me this one favor and tell the carriage to cross this neck of the woods here on the map? You'll save a day's worth of trouble." The man pointed at a spot on the map surrounded by heavy vegetation with sparse landmarks in the area. "No can do, there's a reason why we take the long way around these woods. You're lucky that you're a foreigner around here because frankly, the locals can't sleep at night due to the rumors." "Rumors? About what?" The merchant leaned in closer to the man's ear and checked if there was anyone seated near them in the tavern. "Anyone who's ever tried to be a hero and cut through that edge of the woods hasn't been heard back from. It's mostly foreigners like you who ignore the warning signs at the entrance and enter anyway, and the townsfolk can't help but shake their heads knowing you're a goner," the merchant whispered. "Quit trying to scare me. I'm paying you a lot for this already," said the man, clearly irritated. "I'm not though, if I were a liar, all those people wouldn't have been plastered on the walls of the tavern." The merchant waved his hand to the far side of the tavern, and the man squinted at the edge of his shortsighted vision. There were about four or five poorly drawn faces with a 'MISSING' header over their portraits. "Looks like children's drawings to me. I think you've wasted enough of my time; I'll head over to the neighboring town myself and pick up my errands." The man huffed and stood up from his chair. A few tavern customers glanced over at the commotion, and the merchant could only help but give a concerned look accompanied by a shrug. "It's his death wish." The man, already outside of the tavern, looked curiously at the taboo forest the locals tended to away from. He shook his head, blaming superstitious and uneducated commoners being the reason the town was struggling. With a swift pace, he strode closer to the forest's edge. At its entrance, he found several hastily written warning signs to 'KEEP OUT' and 'STAY AWAY'. Normally, he'd take these signs seriously, if it were not for the still-fresh paint buckets used to write them nearby. "They knew I was coming," he thought to himself. "I

can't believe they almost scammed me of good coin by telling me they should handle the delivery directly to me," he muttered. Annoyed, he took his first steps into the woods. It was eerily quiet, as normally there'd be the sound of the occasional critter skittering about, or a bird chirping now and then, but for several long moments, he heard nothing. And then, something broke the silence. He heard a child's laughter come from behind him, and he tried to turn around to face the sound, but he felt the force of something sharp hit his back. His consciousness faded to black, and he could remember his body giving out to hit the ground. When he awoke, he was face to face with a little girl dressed in clean clothes, asking him, "Are you lost, mister? Or are you here to play hide and seek with us?" "U-us?" he asked weakly. "Yes, us." She grabbed one of his hands, excitedly pulling him in her direction. When he rose his head up to squint again, he saw five other children holding hands and singing a nursery rhyme. "I recognize that one. Used to sing that too, when I was a kid." "Mister, you've got to get up, you can't lay on the ground like that, you'll get your clothes all dirty." The man realized he was still chest to the ground and groggily pushed himself back up to his feet. He brushed off the dirt collected on his torso and asked the little girl where he was since he passed out. "We're in the forest of my house, silly. The other five are my siblings." She waved over to them, and they all wove back cheerfully. "Do you know which way I can go to get out of the forest, little girl?" "Of course, just take this path here, and you'll be on your way!" He thanked her and took her advice. After walking for a few minutes, he saw the forest clearing, but something felt oddly wrong. He felt his mind racing, as he remembered the forest was much thicker than the map the merchant had. It couldn't have been this thin. He looked back and around him, but there were no signs of... well, anything. Same as how he had walked in, it was quiet, and he could almost swear his breathing was the loudest thing in the vicinity. Trying to calm himself to make sense of things, he continued walking towards the clearing. The forest started getting sparse, and he could see the other town he was ordering a courier from. He chuckled, laughing at the foolishness of the merchant's attempt to trick him. He strode forward proudly until he hit the wall. A wall? He reached out and felt it. At the last step of the forest clearing, there was an invisible wall he could feel and run his hands across. He tried to force himself further than where he was, but he could not advance further. Then, he heard it again. It was the little girl's laughter. Hoping to find answers, he turned around, but as he came closer to the source, it started devolving into screams. They got louder and louder, even as he backed from them, and he started to realize that whatever was doing it, was honing on his position. In a cold sweat, he tried to muster the courage to cry out for help, but all that came out was, a weak "Who's there?" No response. He rubbed his eyes to try to convince himself it was but a fantasy, but when his eyelids rose, he found himself surrounded by the skeletons of six children. "No, no, no. This isn't right. I just saw them..." And erupted from the quiet, came drums, no – footsteps. The forest floor thud in a rhythmic beat and the trees shook. He started whispering prayers, but deep down, he had already accepted his fate. Out from the masses, appeared an ogre, wielding a dastardly huge axe, and carrying a man's body. The man tried to shield himself from its wrath in hopeless vain, and he waited for his demise to come. But it didn't. He looked up, and the ogre passed right by him, oblivious of his presence. Then, he saw it. The body's face that the ogre was holding... it was him.

**A Little Bit of Everything [E] <B>** "We should host a flea market to raise funds for the town. You know, those types of open stall places where you don't know what you're going to see until you get there. Changes by the daily type thing." Baka was still confused by the description, so he translated the whole concept to her through Genshin Impact gacha lingo – he motioned that instead of loot boxes, it was random assortments of stalls anyone could open and sell whatever they wanted. Baka immediately nodded her head in understanding and walked off to think about what people would buy. Juan, passing by and overhearing the conversation, thought he should also capitalize on the idea. If he hosted it earlier than Dio's, then he'd have less time to collect a variety of wares. If he hosted it later than Dio's, then everyone would have been



already satisfied by whatever Dio was offering. But if he held his own on the same day as Dio's, then the people would have two sources they could go and purchase from. Excitedly, he went to go gather his share of supplies. News spread fast about the twin flea markets, and Aero puzzledly looked at the plasters of posters on the Nether tunnel walls. He sighed, as he too, had plans to host his flea market, except he had mentally planned he would host one, ages ago. Shaking his head, he went to inform Dia of the news. With all of the news spreading quickly about the now *three* flea markets being held in the upcoming days, Spartan nonchalantly announced to the world he would too. "What, why? The market's diluted enough!" Baka said. "You can speak English?" Juan was genuinely confused. "Oh, I just wanted something to do. I don't even need the money," Spartan said, as he pointed to his territory's bank." And finally, on the quadra-flea market's opening day, Owl, last minute, decided to *also* capitalize on the situation by selling some rather suspicious-looking items in an alleyway near Dio's. Aside from the goods still having their store tags on them, does it matter where it comes from if it's sold cheaper?

**Cock Hunter [E] <B>** Kilia wiped the sweat off her brow and held her hands at her waist, staring at the new sign she put up outside her tree. Baka came by with a few freshly picked fruits for Kilia, and as Kilia was putting them inside, Baka read the letters, "KFC." Thinking of the next best gift for Kilia, Baka spread the news throughout Vellichor that Kilia was opening a new KFC, and that they should all help her with supplying the new restaurant with plenty of meat. Making sure to keep it secret from Kilia, Baka began to start breeding chickens in Baka's basement. Since Night lived with Baka, it wasn't long before she was woken up at night due to the constant clucking noises coming from downstairs. When she opened the door, she nearly drowned in a flood of chickens as they poured out from their cramped prison. "Baka, what's all this?" Night asked angrily, but her attention was quickly diverted when she saw the baby chicks running around. "Chickennnnn..." Night scrambled after one to hold. Inconveniently, however, as Night grabbed the baby, it instantly grew up in her arms. She threw it down in disgust, yelling, "Ew, you're old and not cute anymore! Baka, come down and kill it!" Baka lifted one eye open in bed from all the noises Night was making and saw that one of the hens was sitting on her chest, so she picked it up and laid it on her eyes, using it as an eye cover. Night's screaming eventually became unbearable, so Baka annoyingly climbed out of bed, grabbed a sword, and started swinging at all the loose chickens. By the time the sun rose, the house was stained in a fresh new red paint, covered in feathers everywhere, and several closets were filled with chicken meat (this was Night's idea, as she had believed storing chicken meat in a bathroom was dirty, the garage would be too cold, and the basement would be too wet). And so, when the afternoon came, Baka brought several mules worth of chicken meat to Kilia to welcome her new restaurant. Kilia looked at her long train of mules and asked her what this was all about. Baka excitedly pointed at the sign and noticed something odd. Her smile quickly disappeared, as the sign now read, "KFC – Kilia's Friendly Chickens: Adopt One Today!". And at that moment, Baka had realized what happened. Kilia wasn't done with her sign when Baka came by the day before... Baka blushed and looked around for something to cover up her error. She saw a flower nearby, picked it, gave it to Kilia, and took her mule train hastily home. To this day, it's said that Kilia still wonders what Baka was doing with all that chicken meat.

**The Organ Engine [E] <B>** As there are taboo activities in commoners' society, there are also taboo practices in magic. Such that which deals with flesh is often seen as unsightly, unprofessional, and repulsive. Most mages abide by these standards and stray away from experimenting with anything that deals with biological processes. In their words, they're leaving those investigations to scientists and the miracle of God, knowing that magic is already volatile enough. But what becomes of those who dare to defy the norm? These sects of rogue mages first need fuel for their experiments, so they typically subjugate isolated villages to use the local populace as a resource.

### *Greyblood Report 45A-7J2901 "The Organ Engine"*

The object is described as a fleshy, bulbous, and pulsating pink box that measures half a meter in length, and a fifth of a meter in width. It weighs next to nothing but is deceptively dangerous. When exposed to any nearby non-plant biomass, it will attempt to absorb it by extending fiber-like strands of cilia to merge it into its being. After a few minutes have passed post-ingestion, the box will split open like a chest and reveal a healthy and functioning organ based on the flesh of the species it was fed. The results of its production are never the same. Throughout feeding it various sizes and species of meat, the organs it produces have been found to become directly proportional to the mass it was fed. If it was fed a significant amount of meat, then multiple smaller-sized organs may be "printed" or a larger complete one, and an "unfinished" one may be the product. If it was fed multiple species of meat, then it will use the biomass for the corresponding individual species' organs. Particularly disturbing was when one of the researchers' cats went missing, and we found numerous amounts of cat kidneys in the chest. Attempts have been made to breach the chest during ingestion periods, but no matter what is used to poke, prod, fire upon, or even burn the chest, the objects all get absorbed, described by test conductors as if they were thrusting something into an infinite ocean. Non-fleshy biomass consumed by the box does not produce anything. Observers of the box's interior report it to be leatherlike and feel an uneasy sense of nausea looking into it for extended periods. The object is, for now, kept in a trusted Greyblood's vault. If it ever became necessary to move the box to another location for whatever reason, individuals tasked with the responsibility are advised to wear steel-plated gauntlets during handling.

**Bramblethorn [E] <B>** "Boy, can you come here?" Grimmwald called for his apprentice. "Yes, master?" Grimmwald handed him a sword. "I need you to cut off my arm." The boy stared back in bewilderment, trying to make sense of what he just heard. "You need me to do what?" "Cut off my arm. It's part of something I'm working on. He drew a line with his fingers where he wanted to be amputated and motioned the boy to swing. The boy held the sword shakily, lining the edge with where Grimmwald marked. "Go on then, we don't have forever." "I – I hope you're sure about this," the boy commented before finally raising the blade and bringing it down with full force. Grimmwald let out a small yelp of pain, and he clenched his teeth, throwing his head to his right shoulder. With his eyes still closed, he told the boy to grab the object on his desk. "The plant, boy. Bring it to me." The boy did as he was told and handed it to Grimmwald's remaining arm. As Grimmwald's fingers contacted the plant, his amputated stump began to rapidly regrow into a new limb. The boy could only watch in amazement with his mouth open wide, unsure if what he was watching was happening. Grimmwald chuckled and asked if he wanted to try. The boy shook his head rapidly, not wanting to experience a first-hand amputation. "Suit yourself," Grimmwald said with a grin. "It's part of my latest work, I call it the Bramblethorn – it's powered with life magics to heal any cut or wound, given time. But the process isn't free," he explained. He pointed over to a few wilted plants and the carcasses of several dead animals nearby. "I had to charge it somehow," he said with a shrug.

**Crown of Cinders [E] <B>** Like most of humanity's accomplishments, there's always someone to attribute the credit for discovering or creating something. However, this object may stand as the first paradox that stumped three sects of humanity in its origins. Carbon dating the crown states that its material composition is the oldest thing in this Order. However, there's a problem with that statement, being that it's older than Order itself. Arcane examination fielded a report that locked deep within the crown, past its charred black exterior, there exists an impossibly hot heat burning from within inside it. If such heat were to exist, however, it would have melted itself already into not even a liquid, but a gas immediately. Sent to spiritualists to look over for any traces of the Divinity's tampering, even if they cannot find any proof that it was created by Above All. So where did it come from?

**Rhinomane [E] <B>** Legends of the Rhinomane say that the helmet's padding is so thickly layered with toughened and dried rhino skin that it's capable of protecting its wearer from even headshots fired from ballistae. No soldier wants to test this theory, however, given the size and speed of each bolt fired from a tower ballista. Even if they were to survive, the leftover undissipated force from the impact could cause them a concussion that's going to stay with them for weeks!

**Zoo For All Ages [E] <B>** Feeling sorry for what she did to the chickens by misinterpreting the KFC on Kilia's sign, Baka decided to open a zoo to make up for the pain and suffering she caused in her basement slaughterhouse. Carefully trapping each creature and luring them into methods of captivity, she eventually gathered just about every creature in the world, give or take a few missing entries. She then invited Kilia to come to view her new attraction, and what Kilia saw there would remain with her for the rest of her life. Various animals were stuffed into compact pens with barely enough space to breathe, hostile creatures were nailed to the wall, flying creatures were weighed down with anvils, and the sea creatures' fate was the worst of them all – the freshwater fish were put in plastic jugs, while the saltwater fish were swimming in jasmine tea water. "Err, this is nice," Kilia said. Baka leaned in closer, and put a hand near her ear, indicating she didn't hear her. Trying to speak over the menagerie of howls, screeches, screams, and roars of the trapped creatures, Kilia yelled, "It's nice, but I think they could use a little more room in their pens!" Baka then proceeded to lift the lid to one of her phantom jars, and both Kilia and Baka watched as the phantom flew into the sun and disintegrated. "Oh," Baka said softly. "Yeah," Kilia added.

**Raiding Party [E] <B>** Baka decided that perhaps the life of a butcher and a zookeeper were not the life for her, so she became a doctor instead. She visited a nearby village and noticed all of them were coughing. To stop the pandemic, she visited each of the villagers' homes one by one and "dealt" with the infected. By the time she was done, she realized that there were no villagers left. Since there were no more sick patients, she decided to move on to the next village. They were coughing too, so she dealt with them also. She started scratching her head, thinking that this was oddly widespread, considering the distance between the two. The more villages she visited, the more she found out how common this had become. It wasn't until she came to the sixth village that she saw they hung up a banner with the words, "National Cough Day". "Oh," she said to herself.

**Pharaoh's Bandages [E] <B>** "And when the time came for it to bury the noble Amun, we made sure that he'd pass on with his full body intact, and that it'd remain that way for centuries to come." So says this inscription on the pharaoh's sarcophagus," proudly announced the lead tomb raider. "Is it time yet to unbox this mummy? I want to see what jewels he's buried with," said his second in command. "I hate that you phrase it like that," detested the third raider. "Well, it is what we're doing, isn't it?" The second snapped back. "The two of you! Stop arguing and help me with this. The lid's heavy." The three men took their respective corners of the sarcophagus and began to pry it open with their crowbars. The lid made a clicking noise as it was finally separated. "We've done it! Just a bit more..." keened the lead. As the lid gave way, the three's smiles were drained from their faces. "It's... it's empty." "What? How? This lid hasn't been opened in ages. There's no way someone got to it before us." "Wrong sarcophagus, you fools," bellowed an ancient voice from behind the three. Hesitantly, and carefully, the three raiders twisted their bodies to face the noise. They were face to face with a magnificently adorned behemoth of a mummy. Its golden armor shined as if it were untarnished for centuries, with only but a few scratches to mark its history. It started to move his hand to point at the lead, slowly rising at first and speeding up, as if it were an engine whirring to life. "You came here to pillage my afterlife." "Common misunderstanding you see, we were looking to –" "Relocate your body and preserve it!" interrupted his second in command. "Yes, yes, that's what we were going

to do," spoke the third. "Your lives are forfeit," the mummy boomed and slammed his hand against the walls of the pyramid. The ground rumbled between the bricks underneath, and the three raiders made their escape out of the desert temple. Outside, a sandstorm brewed, and the wind carried the sands to form fiercely shaped militants of the pharaoh. From there, the tomb raiders became as much history as the landmark they tried to defile.

**Flesh Hook [E] <B>** "So, you never told me, Lang," Marc said in between bites of his sandwich, "Why did you buy out this workshop anyway?" "Well, it's a long story, but I'll spare you the details. I was hired on an expedition to serve as the team's medic, but before anything got done, our lead historian got bit by a rattlesnake, and I had to carry him to the nearby town for a proper cure. While we were gone, our team managed to get themselves all killed by God knows what, and by then, it was just the two of us left when we got back. Mission failed, right?" Lang chuckled and took a swig of his mug. "Anyway, I took such good care of him while he was poisoned that he named me his lead caretaker when we got back home, and I saw his day-to-day medications. I quite enjoyed my job until some doctor bitch had to go and ruin it by poisoning him. It was pretty much at that point that I realized how frail the human body was. We're just piles of squishy meat!" "And so, you bought a workshop." "Precisely." "What's the connection here, Lang? I'm not getting it." "In light of man's downfall, he does, however, have some form of redemption through using his intellect. Fire overcame his predators, medicines overcame his diseases, and prosthetics overcame his disabilities. Now usually, when a man loses a limb, they give him a prosthetic. Others not so ordinary – can choose to overcompensate for their loss." Lang grinned widely before he went into the back of the workshop and reemerged with an arm-sized harpoon, made to fasten around the forearm. "Behold, my greatest creation! The Flesh Hook." "What - exactly is it?" "Allow me to demonstrate." Lang aimed at a can, made a fist, and squeezed. The expansion of his forearm's muscle triggered a spring mechanism that let loose the harpoon to dig into the can, and he released his fist's grip. The pierced can went flying towards Lang, and he used his other hand to remove it from the harpoon. "You're crazy," Marc uttered in disbelief. "I'm just the right amount of crazy to help people then," Lang added.

**The Chalice of Angels [O] <B>** "It's a nice day for a walk, isn't it?" Grimmwald stopped and stooped down to examine a mushroom growing from a thick tree stump. "You know what these feed on, right?" "I don't, sir." "If you'd paid attention to your botany classes, you'd know better – but I shall tell you, to save the both of us time. These wonderful things, fungi, feed on the waste of the world. Through a process of decomposition, things dead and things rot are recycled back into nutrients for this little thing to survive and grow. Here, have a closer look." Grimmwald motioned the young boy to come closer and dug away at a bit of dirt to reveal the mushroom's mycelium. "Looks like string." "Similar to how plants have roots, they have these to absorb their food from the ground." "That's incredible, sir." "Ah, the things you'll learn from your journeys with me." "Sir, if I may ask?" "Yes, young one?" "Why do the other mages hate you?" Grimmwald sighed and took a seat on the stump. He patted the spot beside him, and the boy sat close to him. "Questions like that, that's the type of things I'm still dealing with the repercussions myself. They called me mad, they called me dangerous to challenge the natural order of things." Grimmwald paused and wondered if he should continue. After what seemed like forever, he began again. "I was exiled from the High Mage Council because they deemed me too much of a liability for the general public's liking. The things I worked on – mind you, under their supervision... were taboo projects no mortal man should ever wish to see in his lifetime. It was only when the design documents of what my team and I were working on leaked to the public, that they decided to brand me as a maniac to cover up the High Mage Council's mistakes and delusional desires to become more than men." Grimmwald patted the boy's head. "When you're in such a high position and have everything you could ever want, you grow bored and tend to... try to push the limits. We had nearly infinite resources at our disposal, and I was at the forefront to go where no other mage had ever dared to before. In my pursuit of this terrible goal,

I was working with flesh, I was reanimating life, I was even throwing together volatile elements together just to see what would happen for the sake of morbid curiosity. In a way, I was like a child in a sandbox." The boy made eye contact with Grimmwald. "What was this project then, that made you lose your position?" "It was a project called the Chalice of Angels. Its purpose was to rival the power of a Divinity, bending the energies of raw chaos magic to the user's will. It allowed the user to transcend concepts such as life and death, time and space, and even traverse the infinite Limbo between Orders. The only catch was that it required souls to charge its massive battery reserves," Grimmwald spoke with a heavy heart, visibly guilt-ridden. "And... you were successful in this?" "No. Not even close. Our research yielded minimal signs of success. What's horrific, however, is the number of lives we sacrificed in vain for it. Entire city centers have gone missing for this experiment." The boy's head dropped and stared at the ground. "You... you're a mass murderer." "I am." A moment of silence was held between the two before the boy opened his mouth again. "Thank you for your honesty, master," he said quietly.

### **Don & Ralph: Dude This House Is Ass! [E] <B>**

"Mic check, one, two, three. Okay, sounds good. Can you put me in focus now, Ralph?"

"Yep, sure thing, Don." Ralph fidgeted with the camera for a second before he gave Don a thumbs-up. "We should be good to go now."

Don cleared his throat, brushed his hair back, and fixed his collar. "Perfect. HELLO, all you folks at home!" He exclaimed as he pointed towards the camera, holding the microphone near his chest. "Boy, do we have an episode for you today! Welcome back, to another episode of...!" Don raised his hands high up into the air, and the show's title as large balloons came down to rest above his palms. "Don and Ralph in: Dude, This House Is Ass! Today, we'll be touring Vellichor to see which homes make your eyes bleed the most. We'll be handing out door-to-door prizes for the worst offenders. I hope you've brought your blindfolds, kids, because this episode may contain some graphic content! Parents, be advised." As he finished, Ralph walked over to Don, and Don stomped his foot, adding, "Can you make it look like we're launched from a spring to the first house later?"

"Yeah, I can."

Don brushed off the dust on his vest, and he turned to face the house a few meters away from them. "Oh my god, what IS that?" Don said, making sure to show an exaggerated expression of shock toward the angle of the camera before he continued closer.

Every surface of the house was covered in Among Us and George Floyd posters, and there was a certain stickiness to the ground as the two walked around the place.

"This is certainly... something, Don."

"Well, Ralph, we're got a few more houses to go, but we're starting strong with contestant Owl. Onto Baka's." Don reached into his pocket, unfolded a piece of paper with a black circle on it, and laid it on the ground. The two pretended to jump into the hole and walked to the next house.

"God, that looks terrible. Are we sure we can even show that? What kind of reaction do you want for this one?" Ralph questioned.

"We should be fine? Make me like, dissolve in editing or something for this next one." Don shook from side to side before Ralph pointed the camera towards the house. It was a random assortment of blocks that didn't belong together and formed an oblong creature of nightmarish proportions. The arms formed ghastly tentacles with rakes at each end. Its torso was distorted horizontally, stretched beyond what could be confirmed roadkill. As for what terrible fate befell its head, it was unlike anything ever seen before, with a coral reef for its hair and a long bright blue tongue, forever haunting its visage.

Don pretended to wretch in horror before unbuttoning his vest and holding one of its sides open. Ralph pointed the camera towards Don's open vest side and ran forward into it. He kept the camera steady in the cloak as they walked to the next house.

"Alright, folks, welcome to Augurey's submission," Don announced, as he pulled back his vest and buttoned it. Ralph took a few steps back in anticipation of admiring the terrible craftsmanship but lost his words when he saw the LACK of it.

"W-where... where is it, Don?" Ralph stammered.

"What?" Don responded, just as surprised. "It's... it's gone? Huh? We were literally here yesterday - what the hell? There's just a crater here now!" Don stomped his foot. "I've never seen anyone more ashamed of their work that they'd take it back after it's been built!"

"Well, that certainly says something about the submission," Ralph retorted snarkily.

"I-I suppose it does. Watch your footing, Ralph. There's shards of broken glass and still smoldering rocks on the ground everywhere. If we had only been here earlier for the shoot... damn!" Don sighed and covered the camera lens. When his hand came off of it, Don was shown in front of another house.

"Are you- kidding me? Steve's doorway starts two meters from the ground!" Don shouted. He gave an annoyed look to the camera as he jumped and caught himself with his hands on the door's first step. He motioned to Ralph to hand over the camera when Ralph proceeded to do the same, and he pulled his partner up to the ledge.

"We're not done yet, either. Watch your head, Don. The doorway's short," Ralph chuckled.

The two squatted as they came through the front entrance, and came to a horrifying realization that the room's height forced them to crawl under the ceiling.

Don jabbed Ralph playfully, smiling, and chuckled, "What kind of sick maniac would live in these types of conditions?"

"It's not a house, it's like, an attic on the ground floor..." Ralph remarked.

As they made their way up to the second floor to film, the stairs collapsed behind them, leaving a mess of rubble and nails.

"Well, any ideas on how we get out, Ralph?"

Ralph pointed towards an open window on the second floor, adding, "You know what to do."

Don leaped out, and shouted, "Make it look like I'm jumping into an ocean then!"

Don's jump broke into a roll as he hit the ground, and Ralph followed, hopping down undramatically, holding the camera over his shoulder. The two made their way to their last house for the episode.

"At long last, folks, the final entry in this episode! Juan's ugly house!" Don dramatically announced. The camera panned over to the right and revealed a house whose patio steps were facing all the wrong directions. In place of walls were see-through leaves, and the furniture seemed to be thrown aside to the walls by an internal tornado. The second floor was in worse shape, having holes in between the floors where you could lose your footing or get stuck, with the entrance to the balcony lined with unsecured nails at the top which required you to duck.

"I think... I think this is definitely the worst house, Don."

"Yeah... you know, I could almost see myself living in this place."

"Really?" Ralph scratched his head.

"Yeah, if I was a drug addict," Don joked. "This definitely wins the Ugliest House award. And that's all the time we have for today! See you next time, folks!"

The two waved to the camera and breathed a sigh of relief. Ralph's eyes lit up as he made an unwelcome discovery.

"Uh, Don?" chipped Ralph.

"Yeah, Ralph?" Don raised his eyebrow.

"I... forgot to hit record," said Ralph, smiling sheepishly.

"YOU WHAT?"

**Don & Ralph: Wipeout [E] <B>**

"Alright, Ralph. Make sure we're recording this time. I spent a LOT of time and effort staging this event, and I'd rather not go another week without uploading a video," said Don mockingly.

Ralph gave a thumbs up, smiling nervously. "It's for sure recording now, Don."

Don closed his eyes, took a breath, and after a brief pause, his face lit up with excitement. He pointed two fingers at the camera, and started proudly, "Welcome back everyone, to another episode of...!" Don raised his hands high up into the air, and the show's title as large balloons came down to rest above his palms. "Don & Ralph in Wipeout!" Ralph panned the camera view away from Don for a moment, showing the day's planned activities. A menagerie of obstacles ranging from simple jumps and hurdles to punching machines and flamethrowers was laid out before them. Don continued, "In today's episode, we've put out a mystery prize for whichever contestants can complete the obstacle course."

Ralph laughed, adding, "I sure feel sorry for the poor mopes that have to run this!"

"Why are you laughing, Ralph? You're in this too."

Ralph's face flushed white. "H U H?"

"Yeah, did you think you were going to just sit back and film from the sky? That's not good content. We need our cameraman down there in the POV."

"Y-You-you're joking."

"I-I-I'm not," Don mocked. "Now get down there. They're waiting for you."

Ralph died a little inside and begrudgingly hung his head down as he walked to the start line with the other contestants.

"On my mark, you all go!" Don announced.

Ralph circled the contestants, getting the looks on their faces before they started. As Don readied to shoot the starting pistol into the air, Ralph took to the back of the line.

"Go!" Don screamed as he shot.

"What? No ready?" Ralph fired back, as he was left behind by the runners. He could barely keep up between the lily pad jumps with the camera on his shoulder, and when he got to the ladder climbs, he had to sling and strap the camera onto his back. At the top, he felt quite nauseous looking down, seeing a small pool of water to jump into. He gave a look of fury in Don's direction before squeezing his nostrils and plunging in, only to find out that when he emerged onto the other side, there was another set of ladders to climb.

The hurdles came next, and each jump brought the camera's weight to bounce heavily on his shoulder. He could feel sweat in places he didn't even know it could sweat, and he nearly passed out as he reached the dripleaf fall. "Well, at least this one isn't so bad," he said, as he stepped onto one of the leaves. The leaves gave way to his weight, and he landed ass-first at the bottom. If it weren't for the adrenaline currently coursing through his body, he might have felt that.

The dark tunnel he found himself in was filled with cobwebs, so he spent a good amount of time wading through all the spider junk to come to the light of the other side. He saw the back of the last contestant, so he hurried to catch them on film. They ascended in a water tube to the top, and he followed suit.

The slime jumps were next, and Ralph attempted to keep up with the contestant, but he wasn't as nimble, so he came down face-first onto the slime trampolines. Surprisingly, he was able to bounce to the next platform despite this setback, only to be punched in the face (several times) by the piston-punching machines for his next obstacle. He could finally see the end of the obstacle course, and as he took his final jump, he heard the flamethrowers turn on.

His pants caught fire, and he dropped the camera to roll on the grass. When he stood up, he felt very airy in the back and found that the flamethrowers had burned through his pants pockets, leaving a full moon for all to see. He picked up his camera again and put his hand on a snickering Don's shoulder. "Hey, Don?"

"Yeah, Ralph?"

"I want a raise." Ralph shook his head, and added, "So what was the grand prize for the winner anyway?"

"Oh, it was a haircut. This obstacle run was for charity," Don said casually.

### **Pekora Corporation's Whereabouts [O] <B>**

To begin with, not much was publicly known about the Pekora Corporation before Halcyon froze over. It was only after the world thawed that its founder, Bam, released information about what we know today about the company. As a commercial entity, its "progress over ethics" motto allowed them to gain a significant advantage over its competitors. So as long as they provided cheaply manufactured goods and services indiscriminately, their customers ranging from the common folk to established governments and countries didn't ask many questions.

Originally, Bam managed most of its operations and day-to-day processes. As the company grew and its influence widened to more diverse markets, control over each sector was delegated to capable subordinates. His role then as chairman shrank to oversee only the major budgeting decisions for each department.

Normally, this wouldn't have been an issue in terms of the company's development, but after his prolonged disappearance during the events of Lilith, there was a power vacuum left behind for a central authority. Lack of foresight left the heads of each department in conflict with one another since the company's treasury was shared.

When Bam was finally rescued and returned to the corporation's headquarters in PekoVille, it was empty. Walking through the corporate town for the first time after Pekora Corporation's dissolution felt alien to him. Its normally busy streets and the constant drone of conversations happening around every corner were absent. Each of the businesses was looted in every way imaginable - financially, logistically, and integrally. Cash registers and weapons vaults alike were emptied, terminals were cleared of all employees' records, vital infrastructure was removed, and all their research disappeared with the scientists who maintained them.

Seeking answers, Bam took off running towards his office. Knowing that if any outside forces had caused this, then it would have been at the very least, documented and preserved on a backup database. Thankfully, since his office was in a highly restricted clearance area, it was left untouched. The emergency generators provided a dim red glow to the area as he inputted his credentials on his office's vault door. The door chimed a happy beep before releasing its heavy locks and depressurizing its internal room to the outside. It was here, that he discovered the worst of the news.

Through reading stored correspondence between Pekora Corporation's departments, he learned that it wasn't outside forces to blame for PekoVille's destruction, but rather due to the internal structure of Pekora Corporation itself. After many ideological clashes about how the company should be budgeted, the greater company workforce eventually dissolved into smaller divisions that all claimed to be the true Pekora Corporation. Its various divisions tore away from each other whatever materials and files they could use to further their interpretations of Pekora Corporation's future and eventually left nothing for all.

Defeated, Bam slunk back into his chair. He breathed a sigh and buried his face in his palms. "It's gone, it's all gone." He opened one of his desk's drawers and stared at its contents for a while. Inside lay a phone and a gun. "I have to do it."

He reached inside and grabbed the phone, dialing its only number. A lengthy silence enveloped the room before the person on the other side answered. "Hello, Tux? I need you to enact phase one of Project Snowbird." Bam never told the press about that last part.

### **A Stone to Cast [O] <B>**

"Hello, Tux? I need you to enact phase one of Project Snowbird," Bam spoke gravely.

"You're kidding," Tux contested. "There's no way that-" Tux held his phone tightly to his ear.



"I'm as all serious as can be now." Bam fixed his posture in his chair, and explained, "Pekora Corporation has fallen to itself. This is a potentially world-ending scenario. You know as much as I that in the best interests of all, we can't afford to have renegade sects of the corporation operating of their own volition."

"Is there nothing else that can be done?" Tux asked hesitantly.

"There's no time. I don't know how severe our current data leak is, and the sensitive research the corporation worked on could be anywhere, in anyone's hands. It all takes but one person's lapse of judgment to exchange that information, and then it scales out of control from there. While the corporation was still whole, our system of security clearances and limited information on a need-to-know basis kept dissonance to a minimum. Now with the fracturing of the company, those fail-safes have been broken, and our research into different fields can manifest into something unpredictably terrible," Bam finished solemnly. "What happened to this place, Tux?" Bam shook his head.

"I understand. I honestly thought it would never come to this, is all. When you disappeared for the first few weeks, there was a sentiment passing through the employees that you had left your position as a test to see whether the company could stand on its own. As time passed, however, a sense of lack of direction could be felt in everyone. Some felt more strongly about it, and seeking to correct the feeling, they decided to take matters into their own hands. The department heads grew bolder each day, gradually taking out larger shares of the company budget with little to return. They started to privatize their departments' profits, believing that contributing anything back to the treasury was akin to an act of charity. Why should they, being so successful, support less-efficient developments within the Pekora Corporation? These sentiments were just but the seed of the ticking time bomb that was the fracture, and the combination of growing disdain between everyone and dwindling resources lead to internal sabotage. I'm so sorry that I couldn't stop it before it got out of hand." Tux paused, and there was a momentary silence shared between the two. "I'll gather my equipment now, but what will you do?"

"I need some time to prepare, Tux. I'll call you back soon to tell you where we'll meet," Bam answered as he ended the call. He rested the phone on the desk and pushed himself up to stand. He felt along the underside of the desk before he reached a distinct groove. A click was heard as he pushed against it. The tabletop shot forward, revealing a blueprint hidden underneath it.

### **Project Snowbird [O] <B>**

A phrase is scribbled at the top of the parchment in a bright white that reads: "Project Snowbird". Below is its warning: "Enact Snowbird only in dire circumstances. The effects of this plan should be objectively less bad than the threat it is responding to."

The paper details heavy research into Tux's ice miracle. Various failed experiments on how to replicate his powers are noted at the top left, deeming that they are manifestations of energy beyond what science can currently explain. A small note remarks that better results may be yielded by trying to capitalize on the full extent of Tux's powers instead.

Drawings of Tux's ice shards are littered around the paper with each sketch showing that they form differently each time he uses his powers. It's implied that he may not even know his limits and that he can go beyond his current ice forms through practice and supplementary equipment.

Continuing along the paper to the right, potential uses for his abilities are demonstrated with photographs stapled onto the paper and a brief description underneath them.

Experiment 14: Tux was able to shape ice into bridges across rivers. Ice seems to have been created from water in the atmosphere since the river remains untouched underneath. Has practical use in civil architecture.

Experiment 37: Tux's intense water compression ability was explored, and this yielded fruit in the form of walkable paths able to support grown men in the air without the need for

underlying support. Needs further experimentation as to the load limit. If larger versions of this can support specialized vehicles to traverse it, there may be a market for new forms of traffic.

Experiment 62: Tux is unable to melt the ice they've created, but this refined level of ice is molecularly identical to natural forms of glacial ice in the polar regions. Unclear as to the amount of strain this manipulation takes on his body, but he could potentially be used to restore the world's melting polar caps.

Experiment 89: Tux has been showing increasing levels of dissatisfaction the further we push him. His higher levels of anxiety have led to more unpredictability in his ice generation. More intense, uncontrollable mists of what researchers have deemed "zero-frost" have been produced under panic levels of stress. Zero-frost appears as a seemingly impossible state of constant gaseous liquid that saps the heat of the atmosphere around it. Could be weaponized.

On the last stretch of paper is a three-step plan on how to conduct Project Snowbird, utilizing Tux as a bioweapon to counter any world-ending scenario by freezing it over before it gets a chance to happen.

Phase One: Strongbox. Secure all important personnel and sensitive materials in self-sustainable Snowbird-grade-resistant shelters. Shelters should be stocked with enough reserve supplies to last several generations of lineage should the global blizzard persist longer than expected.

Phase Two: Candlelight. Should the warranting disaster be a threat by man or electronic-based, hidden large-scale EMP devices around the world should be set off suddenly to not allow the threat enough time to prepare themselves.

Phase Three: Snowglobe. Tux will head to one of the magnetic epicenters of the world to set up his role in donning the Artificial Distress Beacon. The beacon is a device to be mounted upon the head to stimulate feelings of extreme tension and strain within the user. This will help to amplify the erratic scaling of his powers correlated to his stress levels. A catalyst is required to jumpstart the psychotic meltdown, namely found in the form of crystals scattered around the world mined from chaos comet crash sites. From beyond this point, the world is expected to experience approximately five hundred years of an ice age, thoroughly enough time to settle through the world-ending scenario.

Bam studied each detail on the paper carefully before hiding it again under the desktop. He picked up the phone and called Tux. "It's not enough to freeze the world, Tux. I need you to blame it on the Pekora Corporation."

"What good would that do," Tux answered on the other side, as he boarded a plane. "Would that not doom the company's future should it ever try to rebuild its former glory?"

"That's exactly why I need you to broadcast it as such. We need to create a publicity stunt so bad, that no one will ever try to claim that they're the true Pekora Corporation ever again. Should one of the renegade sects ever rise to power, they'll be shut down just as quickly by everyone out of fear of the past!" Bam's voice raised in anger.

"And what of the innocents, Bam?" Tux asked concerned.

"I'm sorry to say that the ends justify the means." Bam took a breath before continuing, "It's either a future of endless military-corporate wars sponsored by Pekora Corporation technologies, or you buy me time to do damage control during the Ice Age. Because once the first arms race starts, they won't stop."

"Irony that you're using a Pekora Corporation-developed plan against itself, isn't it?" Tux chuckled softly, still grounded by the weight of the situation.

"It's not so simple, Tux. Through this Ice Age, I'll still have much work to do through my clones to track down all the dangerous research out there. Getting rid of all of it isn't going to be clean. I don't even think I'll manage to accomplish my mission in time, but by then, I'll have averted a great deal of its risk when the world thaws." Bam looked at his feet guiltily. "I - I let you go from the Snowbird experiments because I saw what it was doing to you. And now, more than ever, we need you again. I really had hoped that was the end of things and that I never had to call you back, but thank you for answering."

"I know my role in this, Bam. I'm going to save the world," Tux said before he ended the call. A single tear rolled down his cheek before it froze mid-air and shattered on the ground.

### **Armed & Black [E] <B>**

It was rather an ordinary day for the commander as he stamped documents monotonously to the rhythm of a nearby clock. Ever so mind-numbing of an activity, he glanced outside his office's window, observing his subordinates conducting training drills. Desperately, he tried to find any mistakes, even minor ones, they made in their exercises so that he had an excuse to break away from his bureaucratic work. Unfortunately for him, he had trained them well, and couldn't find anything to criticize them on in the time he watched them. He sighed and bowed his head once more to continue skimming through his daily reports. It was then, at that moment, that his day's dullness would come to an end.

The commander could hear the sound of marching footsteps approaching his door, and he fixed his posture in his seat in the meantime to be ready to receive whatever news his soldiers had to deliver him. What he received, instead, was a bound piglin with a scroll tucked inside its shirt outside his office.

"Soldier? What is the meaning of this?" the commander asked alertly.

"Sir, we found this piglin on the outskirts of our camp, and he asked to speak with you - he came alone, wasn't armed, and," the soldier paused for a brief moment, "he's a bit far from home. We're not sure why he hasn't gone mad from swine flu yet either."

Another soldier added, "He was quite passive and even *allowed* us to tie him, we thought it would be a ruse of some sort from the enemy, but a thorough checking of his person yielded no findings otherwise."

The piglin squirmed a little in his restraints, not violently enough to indicate he was attempting to break free, but enough to show that he wanted them loosened. The commander waved his hand at the soldiers and the soldiers took off the piglin's muzzle so that he could speak.

Breathing quickly in and out, the piglin then began, "Oh, dear. You wouldn't believe how awful it was to try to breathe in that thing. You'd think that for dealing with diplomats, the customs would be a lot more lenient than for prisoners of war!"

The commander's eyes widened, and the soldiers stepped back a little at the sight of the piglin speaking in clear tongue.

"Huh?" was the only thing the commander could find to utter.

"What? You've never seen an educated aristocrat like me? Now, my clothes may differ from your fancy robes and garments -" the piglin paused to look down at his patchwork rags, "but I'll have you know that what I wear, is the finest fabrics and colors of the empire. It's just... that the tailors there don't have five fingers like you folk to sew them, so don't be so judgemental." The piglin raised his head to the side in slight protest.

"It... speaks," spoke the commander, still trying to comprehend the scene that lay before him.

"Quite surely I do, I have studied a few years on your 'humie' language," the piglin snorted a bit, "That's a joke, you see, as my brothers in kin would call your species that. Otherwise, let's get down to business. That's what I am here for, after all, aren't I?"

"Y-yes. Uh, go on, continue. W-what did you come here for, Mr..." the commander stammered, trying to keep his composure. He waved at the soldiers to leave the room, and they promptly did so.

"You may call me Esquine. Esquine Elvert. My real name's Snout Hammond, but I figured that since your people have an Albert, then I should localize my calling card somehow but still differentiate my uniqueness somehow. So, Elvert it is!" He clapped his hooves together. "If you could just..." Elvert nodded his head in the direction of the restraints still bounding his arms.

The commander obliged and got up out of his seat to untie him.

"Thank you, thank you. Now, I bring to you, a plea deal from the empire underneath. Sounds quite dramatic, doesn't it?" Elvert flared his hooves outwards for dramatic effect before

unfurling the scroll downwards. "The proud peoples of the piglin empire would like to, for the first time in history, extend their greetings to the pasty folks upstairs. It would appear as though we have a common enemy who haunts the rightful halls we have built and also guards your source of blaze rods. Please do the kind and just action of evicting these 'armed and black' gentlemen from our establishments of work, recreation, and cultural significance. Signed, yours truly, the warlord of the molten kingdom whose belly bountiful, his wealth plentiful, and his legacy tasteful." Elvert finished with a satisfied look on his face, still holding out the scroll.

The commander walked around Elvert to see the scroll for himself. To his surprise, he could not make out a single thing written on the parchment, for it was but full of nonsensical scribbles and hoof markings in ink.

"You got all of that from this?" the commander pointed at the scroll in disbelief and chuckled a little.

"Well, I read over all of the expletives they called you, but yeah. That's the whole message." Elvert grinned and made a gesture with his hooves of what the commander could assume to be the equivalent of two thumbs up.

The commander made his way back to his seat and folded his arms together.

"And, pray tell, what assurance do I have that my soldiers won't be harmed during this temporary alliance with your people?"

"Oh, oh. Oh!" Elvert jumped up. "Yeah! That part! Your soldiers won't be safe at all!"

"What? They'll still be attacked?" the commander jerked forward, shocked with his hands on the desk.

"Well, of course," Elvert put both hooves on his hip and continued, "not everyone's under my warlord's banner, it's just the nature of the piglin people to follow who's the strongest, but er... we haven't found out who's that yet." Elvert held a hoof to his chin in deep thought. "So, put it simply, you'll still be attacked. Just not by my superior's fellows. They'll sit back and watch you do the work."

"What'll be in it for us, then? It'll take us resources and time we'd otherwise have elsewhere." the commander leaned in his chair and shot back.

Elvert shrugged, sticking his lip out, and then looked dead serious into the commander's gaze. "We. have. power. The type of magic that your people would die for."

The commander broke into goosebumps from the sudden transition of Elvert's voice but was equally ready to listen.

Elvert grinned, and continued upbeat, "So, anyways, play nice with us, and we'll be happy to hand you whatever your hearts desire at the end of the campaign! Do we have a deal, commander?"

"Can I ask you one last thing, Elvert?" The commander positioned himself perpendicular to Elvert.

"Yes, what would that be?"

"Why didn't you zombify? The swine flu. It affects your people the moment they hit the air of the overworld. Why didn't you?"

"I'm one of the few immune to it. We just don't typically send my kind to the surface. We still need the immune genes to spread a little more in our population. That rule's in place until we have the numbers we need to launch an extended campaign against the surface," Elvert finished cheerfully.

"Thank you, Elvert," the commander responded softly, turning around to hide his face as he tried to process the grim future he was foretold.

"Not a problem! Can you wheel me out, please?" Elvert asked courteously.

### **The Bull Gets the Horns [O] <A>**

Dark smoke rose out of a roaring ember sky as it was filled with a menagerie of screams. Neighborhoods would be stained with blood as people were hauled out of their homes, one by one. Lined up in masses, they'd be cut down like wheat to a scythe. It only took one of the many

brutish invaders to swing their battle-axe into a whirling spiral of metallurgic annihilation to mow down dozens at a time. Those executed lacked the time to register any pain if their murderer was skilled - the cruel alloys of the weapons cleaved through their necks like a hot knife through butter. The unlucky ones dealt with sloppy grunts who never sharpened their tools. Their fate was as horrendous as could be deemed, messy cuts and slashes brutalizing their throats until they eventually gurgled into silence, the light from their eyes extinguishing in a way the fires in the village seemed they never would.

As the village was razed to the ground, a man stood in the center of it all. A man seemingly eight feet tall, clad in writhing muscle mass that wrapped itself around his frame like a crude outfit. He was a holder of many names - The Godking, The Grandmaster, and The Brutal Emperor, to name a few. His true name was one spoken rarely aloud but uttered in hushed tones. He was known by all and called by none as Excer. Granted no patronymic, growing up in the gutters of the underground, he rose from a no-name orphan to become the most brutal warlord the world had ever had the misfortune to witness. He took what he wanted, when he wanted it, and held an empire that spanned across the continent. Those that rebelled faced the fate he was presenting currently. He strode unchallenged through the paths of the village, trampling mud and gore into one dark, oozing mess beneath his black metal armor, a monstrous cladding that was ornately crafted, yet worn down over years of fighting into a crude behemoth of a chassis. On his back rested a war axe, wielding one as the rest of his soldiers did. While theirs were typical of steel and other easily accessed material, perhaps diamond-edged for his lieutenants and rarer materials for his generals, his own was seemingly an aberrant beast of its right. It was made of entirely black metal, bound in gouged and scratched red leather at the handle. It glowed with a purple flame, a malicious light that dared passers-by to get close and be incinerated by its vainglorious nature. Its origin was a puzzling one. Beginning as an edge forged from a fallen star by a smith whose name had been long lost to time, how it evolved from the simple cosmic metal to the enchanted goliath it was today was still unknown to anyone outside of Excer. Battle-scarred survivors said the more blood the blade drank, the sharper its edges would get, and that whenever Excer chose to cleave armor on the battlefield, it was as if the gods sent down lightning to rain down on the enemy forces. Those who were unlucky enough to survive with permanent wounds said that they witnessed the visages of horsemen charring their allies and dragging them down to the dark hellscape of fire. Rumor had it the blade had been enchanted by a sorcerer, who Excer had attempted to promptly murder so he could be the sole holder of such power.

Excer lumbered into the town square like a cruel leviathan as he stood almost as tall as the monument to the town mayor. Fixing his hands on its base, he tore it from the earth and threw it at the barricaded doorway of the town hall. It exploded inwards, splinters of wood and stone blasting all over the place. The ground was smeared red with those unfortunate enough to be hiding directly behind the barricade. He spread his arms wide, bellowing a laugh of derision and bloodlust.

"You see!? This is what happens when you defy your fate! This is what happens when you do not submit! This is what happens when you try to defy the rules of nature! Fools. You can run, you can hide, even..." As he spoke, he walked, eventually coming across a man, bloodied and hurt, crawling away. Excer picked him up by the head as the man struggled feebly, before speaking again with an expression of disgust on his face. "But no matter what you do, you will never escape your fate as prey." As he finished, he crushed the man's skull in his fist, scattering the brains off his palm with a flick.

As the chaos, executions, and pillaging continued, with no one to save the residents, hundreds of miles away stood the great city of Drakonia. Drakonia was an ancient city-state that hung its gold, red, orange, and brass banners scattered across the blackstone structures of their town. Immense city walls surrounded its populace. Thousands of years old, Drakonia was the capital of the only empire that stood in comparable size to that of Excer. It was smaller, but its territories were better regulated and defended. While Excer's lands were run by chaos and

violence, the Drakonian Empire was run by law, conviction, and honor. Yet, despite this, their military was smaller than Excer's - their men were not as powerful, either. Drakonia's society was built upon principle, discipline, and morals, while Excer's was built upon unquenchable bloodlust and neverending conquest.

The only force that could even hope to match Excer's men was the Knights of the Drakon. Giants of individuals in both character and physique who would seem to tower over any of Excer's generals, wielding swords of indiscriminate valor. The Drakon was their symbol, the great wingless serpent of flame and acid, and it's said that the swords of the knights ignited furiously in their hands with the heat of the sun as they grasped the hilt. The blades could envelop any target in a monstrous fire, and unlike any regular flame, these fires would seemingly corrode armor and strip away flesh, and bone as if drenched in a pool of acid. There was a finite amount of Drakon Blades, each rumored to have been forged from a shard of the tooth of the All-Serpent, a drakon rumored by myth to wrap around the globe via the sea. Its emblem was an unforgettable insignia, its winding body a circle on every banner throughout the city. The Knights of the Drakon was an elite force - each had to be chosen through rigorous tests, and failure to complete them would result in immediate termination from any further consideration. The final step was taking the candidate to a volcano - if it spouted flame, the candidate was deemed worthy of the All-Serpent's divine blessing. If it spouted smoke, the candidate was deemed unworthy to wield a blade and was sent back to the barracks of the normal troops in shame. There were exactly 100 Knights - no more, no less, and one could only be replaced if they died or stepped down from the position. They were split into squads of ten, each squadron dubbed to be a "Drakon's Talon", followed by their names - Alpha, Beta, and so on.

It was on that same day that Drakon Talon Alpha had been in their barracks in the city center, underground in their compound as they played cards. Their hearty bellows of laughter sounded throughout the brick tunnels - they were brothers, by war if not by blood. One of them slammed their cards down on the great oak table that was scored with marks from knives and swords, the markings of past matches won and lost.

"Full hand, Drakon's Skull!" bellowed the Knight, laughing as he took the gold coins that had been placed in the middle of the table. His name was Tauron, the leader of this team - and he was arguably one of the greatest Drakon Knights to ever walk the earth. He had slain countless beasts and warlords, and led charges outnumbered against tyrants - he was a legend among the people, and rightly so.

"You must be fuckin' cheating. There's no way in hell you've pulled three Skulls in three games," grunted one of his subordinates, mildly upset with the loss of his day's wages - though, it wasn't as if the Knights needed wages. If they wanted anything, they simply asked and it was provided for them by the Crown.

"No, no," rebutted Tauron. "You just need to stop sitting in front of the mirror." Everyone burst into laughter as the soldier looked behind him and groaned in exasperation, realizing the shortsightedness of his choices.

It was at that moment that Tauron heard a discussion outside - something about pillaging, the Godking, and his advances. His expression went from a smile to solemn, his grizzled and bearded face dropping into silence as he nodded for his soldiers to follow him. Outside their room, they discovered two of the Emperor's advisors in hushed conversation, who halted their speech the minute they spotted the Knights, eight giant men and two massive women clad in heavy leather.

"Something about Godking Excer?" He cocked an eyebrow; his voice was bold and powerful.

The advisors experienced some mild discomfort at the casual mention of his name. Excer had spies as well as soldiers, and though they were sure they had all been flushed out, one could never be too careful.

"Do not usher his name in such a foolish tone, Knight," said one of them. The other then chipped in.

"Indeed. We were discussing his massacre of a village a week's ride from here. It is of no concern to y-"

Tauron jumped in at that, frowning.

"If it's a week's ride from here, then it's by our sworn oath to stop them. We cannot simply stand idle and show weakness in allowing them to crush who they want. Tauron nodded in the direction of his troops, and he continued, "We march on Excer and his men tomorrow. It's about time we stopped him - and it's good to eliminate him before he builds any momentum that might bring him in our direction."

As the advisors immediately started frowning and explaining why this was foolish, up on the surface, a shadowy man took his ear away from the air vent. He pulled his hood over his head, striding out of the city gates silently. His boss would pay him well for this news.

Days passed. Tauron and his troops festered in their barracks, as were the other Knights once they had found out about the situation. They had been ordered not to go out and fight Excer's forces, and to remain at the decree of the Drakonian Emperor's orders.

It was a lazy winter afternoon, dreary and grey - and then the war horns of the city sounded. Tauron exchanged a single glance with the rest of his squad before they ran to the armory. They grabbed their blades and threw on their armor - heavy plating that coated their bodies, save for their heads. The bulk of their shoulders and collars was then accentuated by all their different helmets. Each Knight had a unique helmet of their own, signifying their role. Tauron's was reminiscent of a drakon (as were all squad captains) with two horns sprouting from the sides and a snout protruding outward. His helmet and armor were marked with red and brass, while that of the lower ranks was gold and orange, with a T branded on the back of his armor ornately to initial his name. Once readied, he met the other squads outside at the city gate, converging with the other nine squad leaders.

"What's the situation, Braxx?" he demanded as he lumbered over to the leader of Squad Beta, dressed similarly to him with a B on his back. "Well," Braxx sighed. "Look over there." He pointed with his sword, and as Tauron's eyes tracked the blade, what greeted him was no pleasant sight.

The Godking had arrived.

Well over a thousand soldiers stood behind him, with Excer at the forefront, his horrific axe in his right hand, and his cruel helmet on top of his mass of armor, looming fiercely like that of a lion.

"What now, Tauron?" asked the leader of Talon Delta, as she watched him brood at the sight of the Grandmaster.

"We fight," Tauron ordered with his head held high. "CHARGE!"

With a roar, they rushed into battle, a hundred warriors against a legion of berserkers. The Knights fought adamantly, the acid-like flames of their blades burning through the gear of their adversaries - even in death, it would seem like their slain foes' corpses still burned with the heat of a furnace. Screams and roars sounded, the hiss of melting iron and the bellows of flame. At the center of it stood the Brutal Emperor, and before him, the ten captains of the Knights of the Drakon. They circled him as he watched, a sneer hidden by his helmet.

"The Knights of the Drakon. Such noble figures. You know, it's good I might finally get a challenge. "After all, the rest of you break rather easily," Excer mocked, ensuring the captains saw the blood dripping from his war axe.

One of the captains ducked as Excer threw his weapon - it spun harmlessly through his ranks and proceeded to decapitate one of the lower-ranking Knights, as well as vaporize another in a blast of lightning before it whirled back into his palm in a calculated swipe. As Tauron looked over, he noticed it had been one of the Knights under his command.

Narrowing his eyes, his sword ignited in his hand. The other captains followed suit - and then they attacked.

All at once, their swords clashed with Excer's immense frame. He threw punches and swung his deadly axe back at them. One captain was thrown into another - and all too soon, it

became apparent that the metal of his armor wouldn't corrode to their swords' hellfire. This was to be a far harder fight than had been originally anticipated.

Excer laughed, and two captains restrained his arms, with Tauron barreling into him from the front. Despite their naturally chosen strength, Excer still towered over the three of them, but he toppled as Tauron's shoulder made its way into his midsection. They piled onto the Godking, furiously slashing at his armor. He threw them off effortlessly, smacking them flying with the flat of his axe. The battle continued to rage around them, and then, gradually, it became quieter and quieter - till the captains realized the only sound was their own. When Tauron looked around him, he realized a hundred berserkers still stood, and with no more knights to fight them other than his fellow captains. Excer recomposed himself in his dented and gashed armor, for even he was suspect to a little exertion fighting ten of the realm's best warriors. The other knights looked to Tauron, their leader.

Gritting his teeth, he observed the battlefield around them. Blood, corpses. The swords of every Drakon Knight but the ones remaining had been broken beyond repair. The strength in numbers of the berserkers had overwhelmed them and left them helpless.

"You guys take them. I'll fight Excer."

At the sound of his true name, Excer growled in rage, rushing towards Tauron. The berserkers followed suit, piling onto the other captains as they fought, not so easily taken down as their subordinates. Tauron was strong, but Excer was far stronger. The Godking grabbed him by the throat and slammed him into the floor. Tauron narrowly dodged a swing from Excer's axe, and barely avoided a strike of lightning to his right flank, before a monumental right hook from the Godking crumpled the snout of his dragon's helm, crushing it inward till it looked more like a bull's. Tauron staggered back, and then raised his weapon in defiance, raising himself as Excer readied for the next bout of fighting.

"Give up, Drakonian. Your blood will feed my axe well, and your city is a fitting capital for my empire. You put up a good fight - but you cannot stop my rampage. You cannot win."

Tauron clenched his jaw, shaking himself off.

"You're right. I can't beat you. But I can sure as hell make sure you don't win unscathed." He spat on the ground next to him and sprung to life once more.

Giving a triumphant grin, Tauron heaved his sword up and ran straight at Excer. He slid under the next axe swing, gouging his blade straight into the Godking's inner thigh before removing it. As Excer roared in pain, not having felt it in decades, Tauron took the chance again, this time his sword entering Excer's left shoulder blade. He went in for yet another strike, and Excer's axe knocked him off his feet, cleaving through his breastplate. He felt a warm wetness on his chest - most undoubtedly blood, but he was still alive, so it was unlikely he was finished just yet. He dragged himself back to his feet, barely missing another slash, and in desperation, drove his sword through Excer's wrist that held the axe.

That single movement nearly killed the Knight, as he was duly made aware with a single glance as he shed his now useless upper armor, dented, and slashed beyond repair by the axe. Bone was visible beneath the gouge, and he could hear the gentle thumping of his heart. He picked up the axe in both hands as Excer staggered toward him.

"You scum...you can hurt me, but you can't win. You fucking... fool. You annoying... BASTARD... I AM YOUR END, DRAKONIAN! I AM YOUR FATE!" With that, he lunged at Tauron, with his clawed gauntlets outstretched.

Tauron roared in defiance over Excer's speech, giving him a mighty rebuttal.

"I AM THE WILL OF MY PEOPLE! I AM THE HONOR OF MY LEGION! I AM YOUR MORTAL MATCH! DRAKONIA WILL PERSEVERE THROUGH YOUR FALL, AND A HUNDRED KNIGHTS WILL REPLACE US MORE!" His only remaining instinct was to swing the axe as hard as he could. The sheer exertion of doing so stopped his heart right at the moment a lightning bolt was called down from the sky, blinding him with white flame. All he knew at that moment was darkness.

After what seemed like an eternity, he groggily opened his eyes. He was floating in a mass of red clouds, and what he could see looked like worlds - orbs of every color imaginable,



with beams of light branching between them. He was still in his armor, with the snout of his helmet still crushed. He touched it gingerly before a ray of light beckoned him closer, opening a window between the scarlet mist into a battle-scarred landscape. Tauron gasped. It had been worse than he thought. His soldiers were all disemboweled. Limbs from bodies were torn off, with some of their heads cleaved in half. His fellow captains had all faced similar fates - one of them had slammed their blade through the back of a berserker and themselves in a final bid to win the fight, breaking the tapering point of the blade off. The scene of him fighting Excer remained - Excer decapitated, the axe shattered into shards. Tauron himself had almost been torn in half by the effort of swinging the axe, his innards completely exposed as well as his ribcage. Both were burned beyond belief, lying in a smoking crater.

He went silent in shock, reaching out as the window into his old reality swiped shut.

Flames engulfed the window, and he had to shield his eyes with his arms from its intensity. With his eyes still closed, he felt his entire life pass through him again. As a child, a little street rat. Being picked up as a teenager after fighting officers in Drakonia. And to where he was now. Then, he blacked out again, and suddenly he was standing on the battlefield. He was still in his brass armor - yet this time, gold and orange ran through it too on different highlights. He walked over to his corpse in surreal wonder, recovering his seemingly unscathed sword - the sole surviving Drakon blade. As he held it in his hands, he strapped it to his back and realized he felt different. More... powerful. More unstoppable. The scene slowly faded around him, and he found himself back in the void. He looked at all the universes and their worlds - some battle-scarred, some whirling in shadow, some chaotic and convoluted. All seemed to be guided by some sort of higher power in each pocket of various realities. Some prosperous, some relatively normal in their functioning - and then he spotted one in particular. It was visibly ransacked by battle and conflict. He'd been a soldier long enough to spot the signs of that. Perhaps he'd be able to find the cause of what was going on there. He'd always been the one to lead others. Maybe he could do so in that realm. Find a new purpose.

His newfound strength almost felt natural to him, and he willed himself to be somewhere, anywhere. He found himself standing on a grassy plain. Various makeshift staircases down into stone had been built - signs of civilization, and so he decided to will himself into the presence of one of the inhabitants. He was shown a woman of small stature righteously digging through the ancient stone in the bowels of the earth - supposedly looking for diamonds, judging from her rapidly filling backpack. So determined - it resonated with him. He observed people fighting, trading, and judging each other for crimes. It was everything he stood for. He next found himself in the heavens of the world, watching down upon a landscape of void and sand-colored rocks. Dragons flew overhead while tall dark men strode through it. He could also see the hellscape and the surface world in which most of the inhabitants resided.

"Well... no point in just hanging around," he said to himself. "Seems like I've got a lot of work to do. New responsibilities. After all, I'm..." for a moment, his brow furrowed. He couldn't remember the name he was trying to think of. The one that came to his tongue was not Tauron, of the Drakonian Knights - it was something different entirely,

"After all, I'm Bohl."

"Bohl? Bohl, wake up already, you thickheaded fool. We have work to be done to ready the mortals down there for their next venture."

Bohl sat up and rose to his feet, shaking his drowsiness off him. As he followed Krowe to the meeting room, they began discussing the logistics of their next plans of action. Then, Krowe decided to address the elephant in the room - or rather, the bull.

"Bohl, what are the Knights of the Drakon?" he queried, seemingly in passing and as small talk, but in reality, rather curious at the choice phrase his colleague had mumbled while in his resting state.

"Well, Krowe. Something from before I ended up here, before I ascended just like you and Mehr did. A past life. A rather good one, too. But that's of no significance now. There are things of greater importance to think about. There's... bigger things to worry about, now."

Squashing whatever small shred of hearty emotion that the memory invoked in him, Bohl continued his errands, stopping ahead of Krowe to exchange words with Mehr. Perhaps a joke or comment made her frown before laughing along with him. Krowe stood there behind him, watching them walk off before strolling after them.

"Oh, you bovine buffoon. You're not the only one with memories you sometimes wish you could erase."

### **Rise of the Juggernauts [O] <A>**

"And what exactly was the purpose of this meeting?" spoke Mehr as she took her seat at her section of the deities' meeting chamber. "I'm quite busy with other things, you know."

"Look who's finally decided to arrive," Bohl shot back, smiling. His hands were folded behind his head, and his boots were up on the table. Each deity had recently furnished their section of the chamber with their choice of color banners and decor, and Bohl was quite proud of his section. He got up from his relaxed state and welcomed her arrival with a wide gesture extending from his shoulders. He bowed jokingly. "Welcome, your highness. You're late." Mehr scoffed and rolled her eyes. She suspected the meeting was an excuse for Bohl to brag about all his weapons that he decided to hang on his side of the wall - crookedly, that is. An impatient Krowe tapped his fingers against the table until he found an opportunity to speak.

"Bohl and I got bored in our infinite wisdom," Krowe mockingly gestured, swirling his right hand around in a circle. "And so, we decided to give our oh-so-devout followers a chance to cure this pestilent disease occupying our minds." He smirked, and nothing good could have come out of it. Mehr crossed her arms and sighed as she turned to Bohl, who unusually seemed quite calm. He even gave her a slight smirk after Krowe finished.

"What's he put you up to this time, Bohl?" Mehr asked disappointedly, sure that Bohl had fallen victim yet again to Krowe's goading.

Bohl responded with his usual gruffness. "I've fallen for nothing, Mehr. I just think that our warriors could do well with a little more advanced combat training. To extend this sentiment, they've been given portions of our power, yet they're like children excitedly waving wood sticks at each other. They seem to lack a greater understanding of what their true potentials are. Should Melina ever return, we will need a better-trained army. It is not often that we get to extend our sphere of influence beyond our Orders, so I expect to keep whoever can spread good word of my presence alive, as you would do the same."

"Alright," said Mehr, "And how do we accomplish this?"

"Just as we have granted our most devout their souls to manipulate, Melina will, without a doubt, be doing the same for her elite in kind. We simulate this environment by artificially creating our enemy. Supercharge one from the batch, make them all fight them, and we either come out with strategically tactful warriors or beaten but wisened men." Bohl finished, gleaming with excitement. To this, Mehr was quite dumbfounded. Bohl's brutish nature was to be expected, but she had never thought him to be so resourceful in his strategies. She was at a loss for words.

"Well, are you going to say something, or are you planning to just stand there in silence?" Krowe remarked. "We didn't call you here just to show up. We need your help."

"And what exactly do you need me to do?" Mehr asked.

"Bless our champion. Bohl will empower their weapons, and I," Krowe chuckled, "I'll ready the stage and boost the extent of their abilities a little. Send in the first one, Bohl." Bohl nodded.

In the ensuing chaos of swords clashing, explosions, lightning, and fire clouding the landscape, Bohl and Krowe proceeded to make bets on how many their champion would slay.

"This one's skilled, I give it an eight," Bohl heartily laughed.

"No, no, you're overestimating. Seven, at most!" Krowe countered.

Mehr's outward face showed disinterest, but deep inside she knew that this whole experience brought the rivals a little closer together. All she could do was just accept the warm feeling she felt.

**Souls Granted by The Chaos Deities [O] <B>** (In alphabetical order, **Active**, **Affinity**, **Defensive**, **Passive**, = not achieved)

<b>Miracle/Soul</b>	<b>User</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Awakened/Refined</b>	<b>Ascended/Mastery</b>
<b>Aether</b>	Augurey	<b>P:</b> <i>Flap</i> Slow Falling when looking downwards	<i>Flap:</i> Slow Falling aura	<b>P:</b> <i>Soar High</i> Refunds firework rockets
<b>Aging</b>	Owl	<b>A:</b> <i>Amnesia</i> Entities randomly teleported to each other with Nausea	<i>Amnesia:</i> Increased range, entities inflicted with Blindness	<i>Amnesia:</i> Slowness II & Weakness II
<b>Almighty</b>	Baka	<b>P:</b> <i>Steel Skin</i> Health Boost	<i>Steel Skin:</i> Health Boost II <b>A:</b> <i>Ground Slam</i> Jumps into the sky and comes down with Strength	<i>Ground Slam:</i> Higher jump, increased duration of Strength II, and immunity to explosion upon landing
<b>Architecture</b>	Dia	<b>A:</b> <i>World Brush</i> Stone blocks form along the user's vision	<i>World Brush:</i> Longer duration	
<b>Bee</b>	Night	<b>Af:</b> <i>Pollination</i> Standing on flowers charges a meter, consumption of the meter gives Levitation II & Speed I	<i>Pollination:</i> Charge rate increased; meter cap increased	<i>Pollination:</i> Meter cap increased, Speed 3
<b>Berserk</b>	Juan	<b>D:</b> <i>Rageborn</i> Strength under ½ health	<i>Rageborn:</i> Strength under 3/5 health, Strength II under 2/5 health	<b>D:</b> <i>Too Angry to Die</i> Immune to death for a short period under 1/3 health
<b>Bunny</b>	Baka	<b>P:</b> <i>Hop</i>	<i>Hop:</i>	<i>Hop:</i>

		Every third jump gives Jump Boost III	Speed II & effects last longer	Jump Boost IV, Speed III
<b>Celerity</b>	Aki	<b>A: Star Trail</b> Leaves a trail of Speed III clouds	<i>Star Trail:</i> Longer cloud lifetime, larger radius Speed IV clouds	<i>Star Trail:</i> Higher quantity, longer duration of Speed V clouds
<b>Constitution</b>	Axe	<b>P: Homebrew</b> Converts strong health potions into Health Boost potions	<i>Homebrew:</i> Longer duration of Health Boost II potions	<i>Second Wind:</i> Grants Absorption V below 1/3 Health
<b>Darkness</b>	Steve	<b>A: Dark Emperor</b> Summons bats that spread Blindness		
<b>Death</b>	Spartan	<b>A: Life Drain</b> Inflicts Wither	<i>Life Drain:</i> Wither II, more targets	<i>Life Drain:</i> Wither III, more targets, longer duration
<b>Demon</b>	Aki	<b>A: Demonic Ascension</b> User ascends and summons lightning, receives Instant Harming, grants Strength & Resistance	<i>Demonic Ascension:</i> Instant Harming II, grants Strength II, and Resistance II after a period, increased cooldown	<i>Demonic Ascension:</i> User creates an explosion, Instant Harming III, grants Strength III and Resistance III after a period, increased cooldown
<b>Destruction</b>	Owl	<b>A: Combustion</b> Summons a delayed creeper	<b>A: Fortify</b> Summons a delayed creeper that delivers Absorption	<i>Combustion:</i> Increased explosion radius <i>Fortify:</i> Absorption II

<b>Disease</b>	Axe	<b>P: The Antidote</b> Removes Poison periodically and grants Regeneration II	<i>The Antidote:</i> Longer Regeneration II, Instant Health, reduced cooldown	
<b>Druid</b>	Kilia	<b>Af: Nutrient Replenish</b> Produces bonemeal while near a composter		
<b>Duplication</b>	Owl	<b>A: Cloning Vat</b> Summons a slime on top of the nearest player	<b>A: Slime Time</b> Creates a temporary copy of a relic or artifact	<b>A: Perfect Copy</b> Takes control of an inactive soul; disables own T1 & T2 if used
<b>End</b>	Dave	<b>P: End Realm</b> Enderchest access	<b>A: Void Rift</b> Teleport to tagged target	<b>A: Void Shift</b> Teleports tagged target
<b>Engineer</b>	Joe	<b>P: Resourceful</b> Workbench(es) access		
<b>Flesh</b>	Axe	<b>D: Flesh Tumor</b> Regeneration III when under 1/3 health	<b>A: Reanimate</b> Convert rotten flesh to zoglins	<i>Flesh Tumor:</i> Regeneration III  <i>Reanimate:</i> Zoglins deploy further away
<b>Gravity</b>	Spartan	<b>A: Zero-G</b> Levitation III aura	<i>Zero-G:</i> Levitation V aura <b>P: Moonwalk</b> Slowfalling when looking downwards	<b>A: Blackhole</b> Summons a blackhole that sucks in entities
<b>Holy</b>	Dave	<b>A: Sermon</b>	<i>Sermon:</i>	<i>Sermon:</i>

		Absorption to players	Instant Health to players <b>P:</b> <i>Beloved Pope</i> Hero of the Village	Absorption II, Resistance, longer duration
<b>Hydrodynamics</b>	Aero	<b>A:</b> <i>Tidecaller</i> First trident throw drinks water, second throw disperses water	<b>A:</b> <i>Igneus Rise</i> First trident throw drinks lava, second throw disperses lava	
<b>Magic</b>	Augurey	<b>A:</b> <i>Fire Blast</i> Summons a fireball	<b>A:</b> <i>Deep Freeze</i> Encases an entity in ice that eventually thaws	<i>Fire Blast:</i> Summons three fireballs <i>Deep Freeze:</i> Longer freeze time
<b>Medusa</b>	Augurey	<b>P:</b> <i>Paralyzing Gaze</i> Entities facing user receive Slowness & Grounded		
<b>Miner</b>	Steve	<b>A:</b> <i>Cave In</i> Summons pointed dripstone to fall around the user		
<b>Motion</b>	Spartan	<b>P:</b> <i>Friction</i> Continuously sprint to gain Speed II	<i>Friction:</i> Speed IV <b>P:</b> <i>Momentum</i> Strength I during Friction	<i>Friction:</i> Speed VI <i>Momentum:</i> Strength II
<b>Nether</b>	Tflame	<b>A:</b> <i>Flame Tank</i> Consumes fires to build up fuel, and at	<i>Flame Tank:</i> Fuel consumption rate decreased <b>P:</b> <i>Heatshield</i>	<i>Flame Tank:</i> Consumes lava to build up fuel, and at sufficient fuel,

		sufficient fuel, gain Speed	Fire Resistance	gain Strength & Resistance
<b>Nuke</b>	Super	<b>A: Airstrike</b>  Summons a fireball to fly downwards	<i>Airstrike:</i>  Stronger explosion, faster velocity	<i>Airstrike:</i>  Weaker fireballs summoned around main fireball
<b>Oracle</b>	Augurey	<b>P: Foresight</b>  Inventory peek	<b>A: Seer's Orb</b>  Reveals creatures' locations	<b>P: Prophetic Vision</b>  Reveals player locations
<b>Plague</b>	Vahl	<b>A: Plague of Flesh</b>  Poison aura		
<b>Pufferfish</b>	Baka	<b>P: Toxic Touch</b>  Entities in contact receive Poison II	<i>Toxic Touch:</i>  Poison III	<i>Toxic Touch:</i>  Longer duration
<b>Ram</b>	Vahl	<b>D: Stubborn Fault</b>  Resistance below ½ health	<b>A: Audacious Charge</b>  Speed II ending with Strength I	<i>Stubborn Fault:</i>  Resistance below 2/3 health, Resistance II below 1/3 health  <i>Audacious Charge:</i>  Speed III ending with Strength III
<b>Sacrifice</b>	Juan	<b>A: Blood for Blood</b>  Self-execution in exchange for a target player to receive Absorption V & Speed I	<i>Blood for Blood:</i>  Absorption VII, Strength I, Speed II	<i>Blood For Blood:</i>  Absorption X, Strength II, longer duration
<b>Senator</b>	Vahl	<b>P:</b> <i>Nanomachines</i>		

		Grants Strength I & Resistance I when in close quarters		
<b>Space</b>	Augurey Owl Dave	<b>A: Distort Space</b>  Teleports user forward	<b>A: Void Switch</b>  Switches user's position with an entity	<b>A: Realm Warp</b>  Teleport aura to a set destination
<b>Sorcery</b>	Juan	<b>A: Raise Earth</b>  Forms a stone wall or platform	<b>A: Wind Gust</b>  Pushes entities back	<i>Raise Earth:</i> Reduced cooldown  <i>Wind Gust:</i> Increased push distance
<b>Stone</b>	Juan	<b>A: Petrify</b>  Target becomes Petrified and is immune to death for a duration		
<b>Sustenance</b>	Titan	<b>P: Second Stomach</b>  Hunger auto-replenishes to ¼ full	<i>Second Stomach:</i> Hunger auto-replenishes to ½ full  <b>A: Mass Starvation</b> Drains Hunger completely from nearby players  <b>P: Stomachache</b> Players nearby with ½ hunger or less receive Slowness & Weakness	<i>Second Stomach:</i> Hunger auto-replenishes to ¾ full  <i>Mass Starvation:</i> Increased drain period, increased range  <i>Stomachache:</i> Slowness II & Weakness II
<b>Time</b>	Ant	<b>A: Memory Recall</b>  Summons a time anchor and teleports to the previous	<b>A: Time Stop</b>  Immobilizes entities excluding players within an aura	<b>A: Time Shatter – Paradox</b>  Disrupts the flow of time that affects Relics, Artifacts, & Souls



<b>Vitality</b>	Dio	<b>P: Heartbeat</b> Continuous damage dealt over time maintains a combo that grants Speed & Haste	<b>Heartbeat:</b> Extended combo to Strength & Speed II, combo timer increased	<b>Heartbeat:</b> Extended combo to Haste II & Resistance, lowered combo requirements
<b>Wither</b>	Dio	<b>P: Defy Death</b> Removes Wither periodically and grants Strength	<b>Defy Death:</b> Wither II dispersal aura when Wither is removed and reduced cooldown	<b>Defy Death:</b> Wither III dispersal aura and grants Resistance

### BS3: Kalopsia

#### Snake Temple [S] <B>

Scrawled hastily in a journal, it reads, "Am I a failure? A martial arts master, who's failed to protect his students? I am nothing. I retreat, for now. I will return to the dirt as I was once, fading to obscurity once more, to rebuild my school. This invasion of theirs shall not go down without resistance. I will have my revenge, Melina."

#### Redfin Pirates' Cove [S] <K>

"Captain, ships are approaching up the river!" exclaimed a lookout as he burst into her cabin.

Captain Fay rolled her eyes and merely replied, "Yes, that happens quite often. It's one reason we chose to build in this cove; ships come through here."

"It's not any of the insignias we know! I checked the book twice and it's not in there- that book has every flag we've ever-" It was then that a huge rock crashed through the wall, crushing the lookout.

Racing out, the captain watched in fear as her sanctuary was buried beneath great balls of lava and stone. Her assailants had, within minutes, taken the city. The destruction came swiftly, given that the city's guards had the benefit of the doubt towards their unknown aggressors. The sky rained fire & gunpowder.

About to be overrun by the surprise attack, Captain Fay penned a quick letter and gave it to a messenger to warn anyone they could.

The letter read, "Whoever gets this - we don't know where they came from, or where they're heading next. Spread the message as far as you can. This city may have fallen due to its ignorance, but maybe you may have a chance with my warning." At the bottom of the letter was a hasty sketch of Melina's banner.

#### Aethel Universe [O] <B>

Since there's been some confusion about how the Aethel universe is organized and how its terminology is used, a visual representation of it was long overdue.

<b>Aethel:</b> The entirety of the universe is split into two realms: mortal and spiritual.
<b>Spiritual Realm:</b> The spiritual realm is a nonphysical higher plane of existence, and the celestial beings and chaos deities reside there to oversee the mortal realm. Isla's dreamworld, Isladora,

exists here. Players who travel here do not bring their bodies, but the manifestation of their souls instead. Souls are the consciousness and sentience of living beings. Souls in-game are a term for a portion of a chaos deity's power granted and bound to a mortal's soul, which allows limited control of chaos, resulting in supernatural powers. The names are the type of control they can exhibit.

**Mortal Realm:** The mortal realm is the physical plane of existence, and creations of the deities exist here. The entire realm is Chaos, which is an all-encompassing term for pure energy that is yet to be shaped or used.

**Order:** Concentrated and shaped forms of Chaos are Order, which are nonliteral spheres of influence a higher power has molded to be sustainable ecosystems. These ecosystems are called worlds.

**Limbo:** Neighboring Orders can travel to each other via Limbos. Limbos are a term for nonlinear passageways between Orders, and Limbos are relationally based. Order A and Order B have a different Limbo than Order A and Order C.

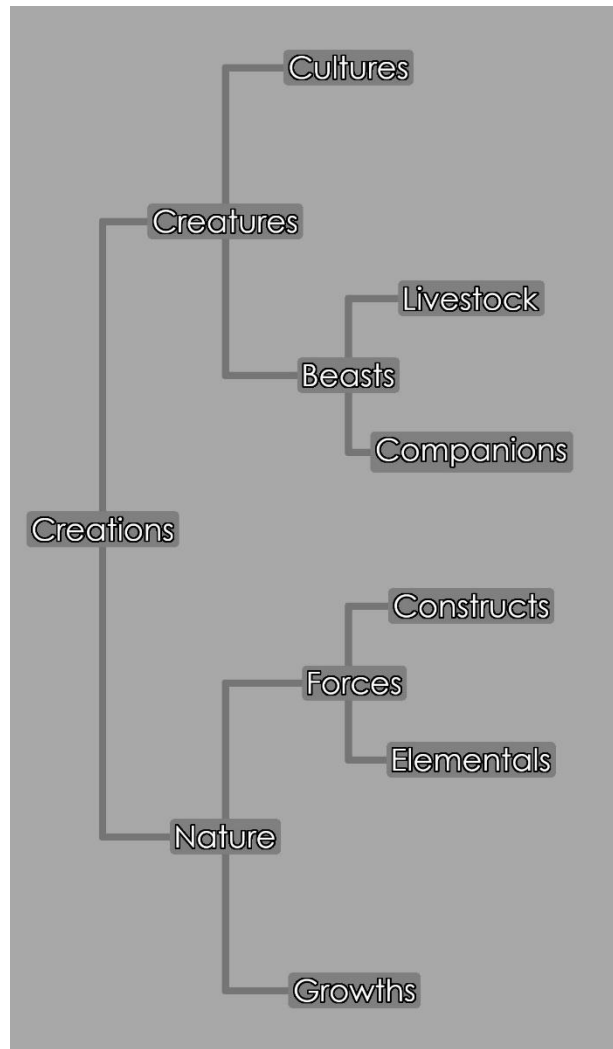
**World:** All worlds have three different elevations: The End, Overworld, and Nether. The End is the heavens of the world, Overworld is where most of the deities' creations exist, and the Nether are deep volcanic areas in the world's crust.



### Aethel Classifications [O] <B>

Creations of the deities exist in the mortal realm and are classified into various categories.

<b>Creations:</b> General term for all beings created from chaos (pure energy).	
<b>Creatures:</b> Creations that consume physical forms of energy to sustain themselves.	
<b>Cultures:</b> Creatures that primarily progress the standing of their species through civilization.	<p>Dragons (Ender Dragons, Feroxes, Wyverns, Veloxes), Endermen, Guardians (<i>Guardian</i>, <i>Elder Guardian</i>), Humans (<i>Non-Player</i>, <i>Player</i>), Illagers (<i>Evoker</i>, <i>Pillager</i>, <i>Vindicator</i>), Piglins (<i>Piglins</i>, <i>Piglin Brutes</i>), Skeletons (<i>Skeletons</i>, <i>Skeleton Horseman</i>, <i>Strays</i>), Testificates (<i>Wandering Traders</i>, <i>Witches</i>, <i>Villagers</i>), Zombies (Drowned, Husks, Zombies, Zombie Piglins, Zombie Villagers, Zoglins)</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Variants of each have been marked with italics, while different divisions of the species are separated by commas.</p>
<b>Beasts:</b> Creatures that primarily progress their species through evolution and natural selection.	Bats, Cave Spiders, Cod, Dolphins, Endermites, Frogs, Ghosts, Glow Squids, Ocelots, Pandas, Polar Bears, Pufferfishes, Salmon, Silverfish, Spiders, Squids, Tadpoles, Tropical Fish, Wardens
<b>Livestock:</b> Beasts that (from the human perspective) can be domesticated and farmed for consumption or to produce commodities.	Bees, Chickens, Cows, Goats, Hoglins, Mooshrooms, Pigs, Rabbits, Sheep, Turtles
<b>Companions:</b> Beasts that (from the human perspective) can be befriended, mounted, or have a utilitarian purpose.	Axolotls, Camels, Cats, Donkeys, Foxes, Horses, Llamas, Mules, Parrots, Skeleton Horses, Striders, Trader Llamas, Wolves
<b>Nature:</b> Creations that consume nonphysical forms of energy to sustain themselves.	
<b>Forces:</b> Forms of nature that can sustain themselves through gathering from the chaotic atmosphere.	
<b>Constructs:</b> Forces that have been created through the usage of a physical medium.	Iron Golems, Ravagers, Snow Golems
<b>Elementals:</b> Forces that may or may not have a definitive shape. They are manifestations of raw energy.	Allays, Blazes, Magma Cubes, Phantoms, Shulkers, Slimes, Withers, Wither Skeletons, Vexes
<b>Growths:</b> Forms of nature that can sustain themselves through gathering from their environment.	Creepers



### **Pandora's Box [O] <B>**

"Infinitely long before life occupied the mortal planes, before even the Chaos Deities who shaped the Orders of these universes, there existed an era where all of existence was housed in the Spiritual Realm." Isla rose her hands outwards before collapsing them into a ball at the center of her chest. "The Celestials during this period were quite different from their present-day selves, as they knew naught of mortal flaws such as temptation, jealousy, and anger. After all, they could fulfill anything they wanted to their hearts' content with their omnipresence. So what need would there be for conflict?" Isla chuckled softly, and paused for a moment in thought, before continuing.

"The period in which we Celestials called The Peace in Heaven, however, would end eventually. The start of this end would begin when in an attempt to satiate her boredom, one of the Celestials we dubbed as The Mother, created mortal life. In her explanation of this entirely new concept to us, she described this type of creation as being limited in length, and that the beings imbued with her essence could move, act, and think of their own accord. Initially, we thought this life to be harmless, as they were but mere playthings to observe in the countless scenarios we put them in. Despite that, the more the Celestials interacted with their toys, the more they would become poisoned with their creations' flaws." Isla scowled.

Above All placed her hand on Isla's shoulder, comforting her. "Please, Isla, continue. I need to know what happened next," Above All spoke concernedly,

Isla sighed, and shook her head, in a direction away from Above All, trying to hold tears back. "The Mother had unknowingly seeded a series of events that would lead to The War in Heaven, depleting but a few of the remaining Celestials today. Those who would boast their creations' achievements to be greater than others, those who would grow jealous of them, and those who got caught in between - we had before, only known peace, and not conflict. Things escalated quickly, as from mere moments, Celestials would be sabotaging each other's creations to developing weapons to exterminate each other when forgiveness was past redemption." A single tear fell from Isla's cheek, breaking the loud silence in the room. "The survivors blamed The Mother for this conflict, and we tried her, and found her guilty. Like the monsters we had hoped we never become, we slayed her."

Above All held Isla's hands in her lap and said stared at the ground. In what felt like forever would pass, Isla spoke again, slowly.

"What came of this, was something we could never have predicted. Being that all of life and creation had been of The Mother's essence, when she was slew, mortal life left the Spiritual Realm. The Mother shattered into the many shards that we know today as the Mortal Realm."

Above All's eyes widened, and hurriedly spoke, "There's more than one mortal plane out there?"

"Absolutely. And it was at the fault of us Celestials to have created that mess. Now, limited in number, but still attached to our creations, we simply cannot monitor the infinite cosmos to care for them, which is why we appoint deities such as yourself to do it for us. My hands have stained enough blood, but I want to see you do something great with yours." Isla raised her hands and placed them on the sides of Above All's face and smiled. "You are one of mine, Astarya. Please, don't repeat our mistakes. Learn from them, and maybe one day, we can know peace again. Life is precious."

### **BS3.5: Mellifluous**