

Cindercrown

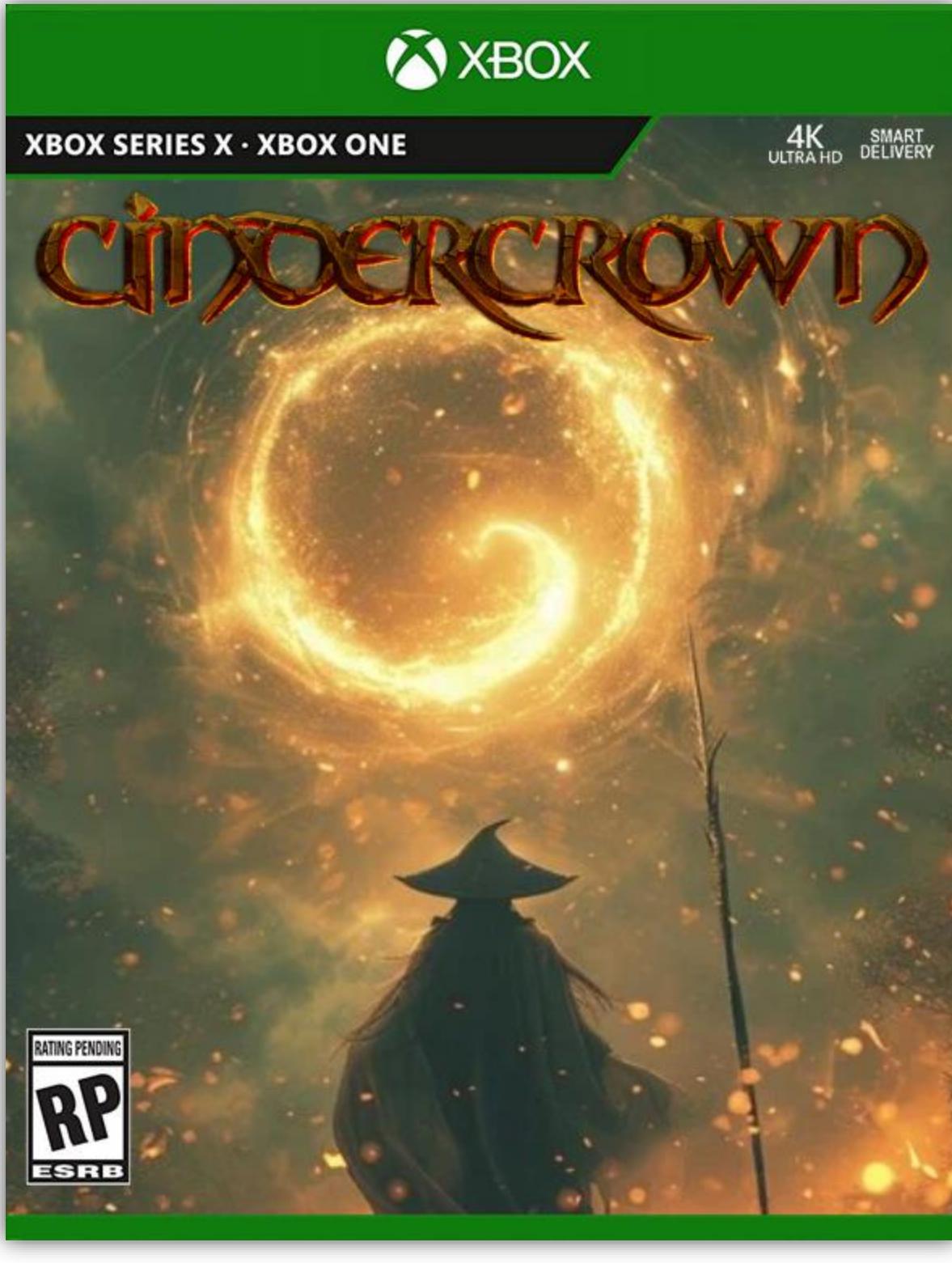


Figure 1: Title Text
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Razor Statement

Cindercrown is a single player action RPG where players take the role of Azakir, a newly awakened Scribe who must use their newfound magical abilities to free their homeland from the tyrannical rule of Iakus while discovering the secrets of an ancient precursor civilization. Players will experiment with a fully customizable magic system to fight intense battles, solve puzzles, and discover the true nature of The Scribes and what lies ahead for humanity.

Focus Paragraph

Cindercrown is an action RPG featuring a unique customizable magic system. The player takes the role of Azakir, a miner living in Kar-Reak, a colony of the theocratic dictatorship Iakus, who rule over the continent of Hyr with an iron fist. Azakir bears a deep hatred for Iakus, their brother was sentenced to life in prison for speaking out against The Praxis, the state religion. After an accident in a coal mine, Azakir discovers that they are a Scribe, a person possessing psychic abilities through a connection to an alternate dimension: Uriam. As a Scribe, Azakir possesses the Scribe's Voice, a unique language that can manipulate reality using various keywords. Using these powers, Azakir vows to liberate their homeland from Iakus' control and free their brother. On their, players will use the power of the Scribe's Voice to fight battles and solve puzzles, gain a reputation with different resistance groups, and discover the mystery of a precursor civilization that vanished from Hyr with little trace. As they progress through a three-act campaign, players will discover a threat beyond the harsh rule of Iakus and prepare to prevent a dark future for humankind...



Figure 2: Source: <https://wallpapercafe.com/w/wp7622996>

The Continent of Hyr



Figure 3: Generated with www.stablediffusionweb.com

land by the tyranny of Iakus.

Hyr is also home to the ruins of The Precursor Civilization, an ancient human civilization that once spanned the entire continent. They reached a staggering level of technological progress before being mysteriously destroyed, leaving behind only crumbling buildings and indecipherable texts. Throughout the game, players will find these ruins scattered within the levels and be able to explore them and discover their secrets. These ruins hold connections to a mysterious realm: Uriam, a higher dimension that can be accessed only by the Scribes, an ancient order of sorcerers, of which the main character is (unwillingly) a part of. Through these ruins, players will learn of the power within this realm, and the threats lurking in its shadows...

In the time of The Precursor Civilization, there existed the Scribes, a group of people who through a biological mutation were able to understand The Scribe's Voice, a language that when spoken could alter the fabric of reality through the use of various keywords. This language was incredibly powerful and allowed The Precursor Civilization to achieve technological advancements unfathomable to Hyr's current inhabitants, such as perpetual motion and energy, devastating weapons of mass destruction, grand archives of untold knowledge, and more. This power, however, came at a cost. The use of The Scribe's Voice drew energy from Uriam, and the process was incredibly loud and destructive, drawing the attention of The Others. The Others were godlike beings of unfathomable strength, who due to humanity's overuse of The Scribe's Voice, came to despise the inhabitants of Hyr. In a matter of a few short years, they entered the physical world and wiped The Precursor Civilization out, leaving only ruins behind. Only through the efforts of the Great Scribe Oboro was a barrier constructed between the physical

Cindercrown takes place on Hyr, 3 islands surrounded by a near limitless ocean, the ends of which have yet to be discovered by explorers. It is a warm region with a variety of ecosystems, from a large desert in the center to a chilly mountainous north. Hyr is home to two major nations: Iakus, a theocracy ruled by The Praxis, and The Free Kingdom Alliance, a group of several independent kingdoms who form a loosely connected country.

On the northwestern island of Hyr lies Kar-Reak, a once proud kingdom reduced to an industrial vassal state to feed Iakus' armies. Kar-Reak's lands are mined and farmed without care for the environment, resulting in a wasteland of hollowed out earth. A majority of the game takes place within the various cities and towns of Kar-Reak, players will see firsthand the damage done to the

world and Uriam, severing The Others' connection to reality, as well as depriving humanity of The Scribe's Voice.

Hyr is a high-fantasy setting, with castles, knights, monsters, and although rare, magic. Each nation has unique culture, architecture, inhabitants, and more. Players will explore these cultures throughout the course of their journey and experience many stories unique to each location as they complete the overarching campaign.

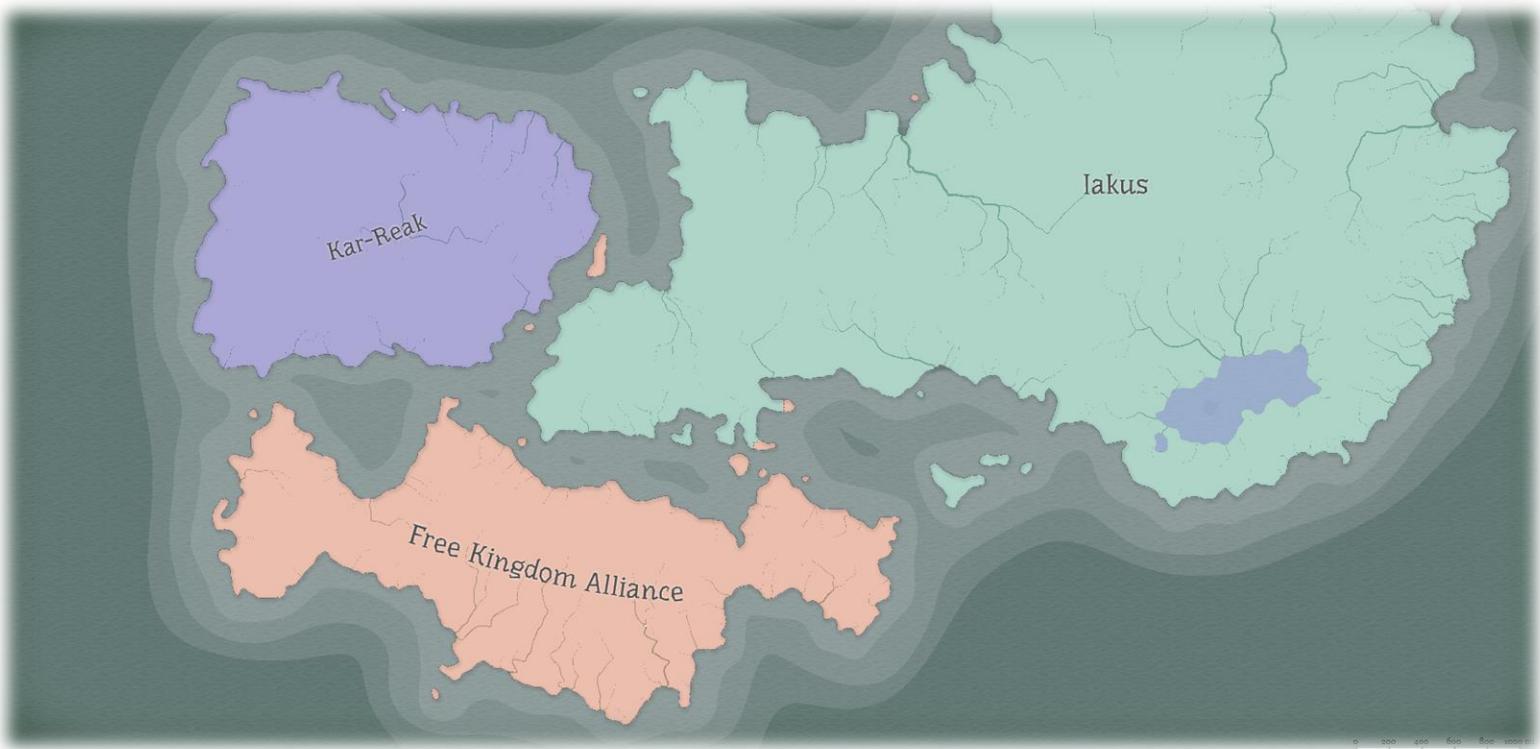


Figure 4: World Map, created with <https://azgaar.github.io/Fantasy-Map-Generator/>

Uriam

Uriam is a higher dimension above the physical world made up of pure energy. The dimension manifests as an infinite desert of white sand with a looming black sun illuminating the landscape. Uriam is inaccessible to most humans, save for the Scribes, who can vaguely perceive Uriam when speaking with The Scribe's Voice.

Uriam is empty, save for The Others, its sole inhabitants. Absolutely nothing is known about them except that they are immensely powerful beings of pure energy who guard Uriam and its power. They detest the use of The Scribe's Voice, as it drains energy from Uriam, gradually destroying the dimension. As such, they wiped out The Precursor Civilization after they overused The Scribe's Voice, nearly destroying Uriam.

Knowledge of Uriam and The Others is heavily censored by The Praxis in Iakus, out of fear that if The Scribe's Voice is rediscovered and used once more, The Others will once again destroy human civilization in another apocalypse.

In game, players will discover the secrets of Uriam through exploring ruins of The Precursor Civilization and stealing knowledge from The Praxis across their journey.



Figure 5: Source: https://stockcake.com/i/serene-desert-dunes_338619_497825

The Scribe's Voice

The Scribe's Voice is a language that when spoken can alter reality itself and is the backbone of *Cindercrown*'s magic system. Throughout the game, players will learn keywords that act as components to assemble spells and abilities. Through creating simple sentences out of these keywords, players can assemble a variety of spells with a nigh endless number of effects.



Figure 6: Image Generated by deepdreamgenerator.com

The Scribe's Voice creates power, but that power comes at a cost. As it is spoken, it drains energy from Uriam and brings it into the physical world to create its magical effects. This drainage is both incredibly inefficient, inflicting significant damage upon Uriam, but is also extremely taxing on the body. This leads to negative affects should players choose to excessively use The Scribe's Voice, players must carefully balance their spellcasting to ensure they do not suffer the consequences...

Mechanical Description

Keywords are divided into three types; Actions are the initial words of a spell; they dictate what the spell does initially. For example: “CREATE” is an action word which makes a spell that creates something. Actions are then combined with Subjects, which dictate the essence of the spell. For the action “CREATE”, adding the subject “FIRE” would make a spell that creates fire. Of course, all you’ve done now is make fire and nothing else, which is where Modifiers come in. Modifiers act upon the subject and action, modifying their effects. The modifier “PROJECTILE” when added to the spell “CREATE FIRE” causes the fire that was created to be launched as a projectile. The player could also use the modifier “TOUCH” to create fire at a point they can touch, effectively changing the spell from a fireball to a fire punch. While you can only have one Action and Subject per spell, you can have up to three modifiers per spell, allowing for deeper customization. For example, if we wanted our fireball to make a pool of fire on the ground after impact, we can make the spell “CREATE (action) FIRE (verb) PROJECTILE (modifier 1) LINGER (modifier 2)”. There are many component words that can be combined in several different ways for hundreds of unique spells.

Players can freely combine component words at will out of combat to create new spells, but they cannot freely cast spells without limitations. Spells have their own individual

cooldowns, but there is no resource like mana or energy needed to cast them. Instead, using too many spells in a short period of time will cause players to gradually accumulate **exhaustion**. Using The Scribe's Voice and channeling Uriam's energy is taxing, and overuse leads to negative debuffs such as reduced max health, impeded movement, and eventually significant damage-over-time debuffs that could lead to an untimely death if not managed correctly. **Exhaustion** gradually drains overtime, so players must manage their exhaustion to prevent failure in combat.



Figure 7: Source: <https://www.deviantart.com/blackout6/art/Arcane-Spiral-3-114419451>

Iakus

Overview

Iakus is a theocratic dictatorship that rules over the northeastern island of Hyr. They are the oldest kingdom on Hyr, existing since the dawn of recorded history in one way or another. Iakus' society, laws, and way of life are dictated by The Praxis, the state religion, of which worship and belief is mandatory.

Inhabitants

Iakus is inhabited by a refined, noble population. The citizens of the kingdom all closely follow the teachings of The Praxis, mostly because the lack of worship is an offence that can land someone in prison. The people within the kingdom are quite friendly to their own, while distrusting outsiders. The collectivist culture of Iakus fosters a sense of camaraderie between citizens, it is not uncommon to come across towns that operate like massive families rather than a group of people all just living in the same place. Within Iakus' larger cities, people interact as larger collective social groups rather than as individuals.

Most citizens of Iakus are artisans or scholars, with the mainland relying on the resources produced by the vassal state Kar-Reak to stay afloat.

Culture

As a theocracy, Iakus' culture largely revolves around the teachings of The Praxis. Worship of Sargamathara, the God King, a divine messianic-like figure, is compulsory. The religious texts of The Praxis claim Sargamathara was a mortal man who ascended to godhood through defeating the previous god of Hyr in combat, obtaining It's divinity when it fell. Priests claim that Sargamathara still rules the kingdom to this day by passing orders from the heavens directly to the clergy of The Praxis. Throughout the game, players will see the influences of The Praxis stretch across the land, even to nations and kingdoms untouched by Iakus' grand conquest.

Iakus holds the belief that warfare and conflict are divinely ordained and bring one closer to Sargamathara's holy might. As such, their history is painted in blood. They are nearly constantly at war, with the current conflict having stretched on for nearly a hundred years against the Free Kingdom Alliance.

There is a heavy emphasis on conformity and collectivism within Iakus, with the individuals' needs being overlooked for the sake of the whole. Citizens define their worth based on their position within the machine that is Iakus' bureaucracy, with politicians and religious leaders being the most revered, although the working class is not overlooked. For citizens living on the mainland, even a task as simple as farming is seen as valuable and important, with emphasis being placed on ensuring that the working class is treated fairly and with great honor.

This fair treatment is not extended to the working class of Kar-Reak, instead they are viewed as inherently lesser for refusing to conform to Iakus' standards and are harshly mistreated.

Iakus holds a hatred for The Precursor Civilization, believing it the will of Sargamathara to destroy and cover up the existence of the Precursors. This hate spawns from their deep understanding of The Scribe's Voice, gleaned from the Ars Indomina, an ancient text written by The Great Scribe Oboro. The Praxis knows of the dangers of The Scribe's Voice, and how it could once again bring The Other's to the physical world causing another apocalypse. As such, they seek to destroy all records of The Precursor Civilization to prevent The Scribe's Voice from being rediscovered and overused.



Figure 8: Image Generated by deepdreamgenerator.com

The Capital

The capital is the main location of Act 3, and the final location is accessible by players. It is a vast, sprawling city packed full of buildings and people. In game, players will arrive in the capital during a full-scale invasion by the Free Kingdom Alliance. While usually the city is glorious and opulent, the player will witness its tall marble buildings collapsing, barricaded, and

in flames as war breaks out. The High Church, the central headquarters of The Praxis from which they rule Iakus, is also located here. The building is a staggeringly tall tower of marble and gold, dominating the landscape. The location is a central area of conflict in act 3, and the location of the final boss fight and ending.



Figure 9: Generated with www.stablediffusionweb.com

Kar-Reak

Overview

Kar-Reak is the main setting of *Cindercrowns*, and the homeland of the main character Azakir. The kingdom is a vassal state of Iakus situated on the northwest island of Hyr, recently conquered in a brutal war that ended 41 years before the game began. Kar-Reak is a kingdom with a wealth of natural resources, and an unusual amount of Precursor Ruins. The island of Kar-Reak is a vast series of plains and mountains, hosting a variety of flora and fauna. The land was once lush and vibrant, but Iakus' rule has not been kind. Many of the once beautiful scenery has been destroyed by excessive mining and farming, as well as Iakus' zealous crusade to destroy all Precursor Ruins. Players will witness this destruction firsthand in the bleak environments of the towns and cities of Kar-Reak.

Some scholars of Iakus theorize that Kar-Reak is located near the capital of The Precursor Civilization, but that information is suppressed by The Praxis. In the game, players will uncover this truth as they scour the many ruins that dot the land.



Figure 10: Source: <https://wallpapercafe.com/w/kPG2In9>

Inhabitants

Kar-Reak's citizens are proud and boastful people. They hold themselves in high regard and have a strong sense of individualism. Citizens often violently resist Iakus' reign, viewing the imposing collectivist culture as limiting and oppressive. Most are farmers and miners, as Iakus squashed the industry of the kingdom upon its conquering. Citizens still hold onto their artisanal traditions, crafting traditional weaponry and armor in resistance to Iakus, who forbade the practice.

Culture

Kar-Reak's culture is one of individualism and spirituality, which clashes frequently with the collectivist nature of Iakus. They revere The Precursor Civilization, believing them to be ancient gods who left the world behind for a higher plane of existence. As such, relics and information from Precursor Ruins are considered holy, although Iakus seeks to destroy these items. Much of the culture of Kar-Reak is derived from customs inferred from ancient legends of The Precursor Civilization passed down through generations.

Kar-Reak's culture places heavy emphasis on the individual, believing that the biggest priority in one's life is self-improvement. As such, citizens constantly seek ways to gain status, wealth, and power at any cost. This leads to a cutthroat "trial-by-fire" like society, where the strong rule over those they view as weaker. Leaders are selected purely based on their wealth and physical strength, which has led to a weakened government that left them vulnerable to Iakus' influences. Iakus has integrated themselves into the government of Kar-Reak, leaving them some slight autonomy while all major decisions are made by The Praxis' clergy.



Figure 11: Source: <https://www.creativeuncut.com/gallery-23/htdf-quarry.html>

Teloth

Teloth is the first area accessible by players and the main setting of Act 1. It is a portside town located on the eastern edge of Kar-Reak, a sprawling village overlooking the vast ocean. The terrain is rather flat, with a large mountain overlooking the town on the western horizon. The town suffers from a high level of poverty, most if not all citizens live in relative squalor. Teloth's vast mineral reserves are of great importance to Iakus, evidenced by the strong military presence they retain nearby. Most of Teloth's population are miners, with others employed in jobs dedicated to supporting mining efforts. Conditions are grim, with many dying due to sickness or injuries sustained in one of the many, many mines.

The player's first glimpse at the cruelty of Iakus' rule is found in Teloth. On the streets, players witness Iakan soldiers abusing the local populace for often frivolous reasons. Most buildings are in a state of disrepair or ruin, with Iakan architecture creeping into the newer constructions, erasing the native culture. Food items are expensive and rare, and locating something good takes lots of effort. Through the harsh conditions, players will become acquainted with the terrible reality faced by the citizens of Teloth and Kar-Reak as a whole.

Teloth is the birthplace of Azakir and Mazakar, and Azakir will often make comments about their past in the town as players explore the area. Some NPCs will recognize the player in conversation, providing a glimpse into Azakir's life before the game began.

New Ezeldum



Figure 12: Generated with www.stablediffusionweb.com

New Ezeldum is the occupied capital of Kar-Reak. Iakus took control of the Capital after invading, and now runs the kingdom via a puppet government situated in the city. New Ezeldum is the wealthiest area in Kar-Reak, and that is apparent in its design. The buildings are less ruined, though many monuments have been toppled. Iakan soldiers occupy the streets, oppressing the local citizens. The capital is home to Kar-Reak's puppet government, as well as several military installations. New Ezeldum is the setting of Act 2, and players will be tasked with liberating the once-proud capital from Iakan control with the aid of the Free Kingdom Alliance.

New Ezeldum is situated on top of a vast underground Precursor Ruin. Players can choose to

delve into its depths, discovering secrets, solving puzzles, gaining new keywords, and fighting off soldiers of The Praxis who seek to destroy the ruin and its secrets. Here, players can also progress One's companion quest.

The Free Kingdom Alliance

Overview

The Free Kingdom Alliance is a nation situated on the southeastern island of Hyr and is the last holdout against the conquest of Iakus. The Alliance is a group of many small kingdoms, united by their mutual desire to remain free of Iakus and exercise their own autonomy. The island they inhabit is mountainous, with the cities and towns of The Alliance situated on the frigid peaks. This geography provides an excellent defense against invasion and has allowed The Free Kingdom Alliance to resist Iakus' crusade for many years. The player will interact with The Free Kingdom Alliance rarely throughout the game on some missions, they operate as an external force providing aid to the various resistance groups across Kar-Reak.



Figure 13: Source: https://stockcake.com/i/medieval-strategy-meeting_143381_18205

Inhabitants/Culture

The citizens of The Free Kingdom Alliance are incredibly diverse, with 31 unique kingdoms and cultures making up The Alliance. Information on each of these different kingdoms is sparse, The Alliance has lacked a proper record keeping system since its inception. As such, its inter-nation politics are incredibly complex, and it takes a keen mind to make sense of the whole picture. Functionally, The Alliance is 31 self-governing kingdoms who pool their military might together to fight against Iakus. They are a nation only in name, and there is often small scale wars between member kingdoms over territory disputes.

The different cultures of The Alliance are extremely diverse but share some similarities. All are agnostic, believing in no higher power, a common link that adds to their shared dislike of Iakus. They place great importance upon personal freedoms and limited government interference and operate under a

free-market system allowing for trade between alliance members. Most if not all also place a great emphasis on scholarship and study. There are few Precursor Ruins in the mainland, but scholars have picked them clean, studying the ancient civilization seeking to glean the secrets of its technology. They have been mostly unsuccessful.

The Precursor Civilization

Overview

The Precursor Civilization was a powerful nation that once held control over all of Hyr. Precious little is known of them, mostly due to Iakus' vitriolic pursuit of destroying their ruins and erasing them from history. They possessed the power of The Scribe's Voice, an esoteric language that could alter the fabric of reality itself. Through this power they conquered Hyr, achieving a golden age of technology and magic. This golden age did not last long, however, as they were destroyed by The Others, angered by the destructive effects of The Scribe's Voice on Uriam. Now, only their ruins remain on Hyr. Throughout the game, players will explore these ruins as the main method of gaining new keywords of The Scribe's Voice as well as knowledge on Uriam, The Others, and the apocalypse that befell The Precursors long ago.

Players will interact with Precursor Ruins through mostly puzzles, with limited combat taking place inside. Here, players will have to use their creativity and ingenuity along with The Scribe's Voice to create spells and abilities to solve complex puzzles. Success will award the player with new keywords to use in the creation of spells, as well as bits and pieces of lore regarding The Precursor Civilization, The Scribe's Voice, and the apocalypse that befell the once glorious civilization.



Figure 14: Source: https://stockcake.com/i/desert-moonrise-scene_936794_1048115

Timeline of History

HA = Heretical Age

PA = Praxis Age

- *Before Time Began*: Uriam splits from the Physical World. The Others evolve within Uriam.
- ~4000 HA (*First Evidence of Human Civilization*): The Precursor Civilization begins on Hyr. Certain humans are born as Scribes.
- ~3500 HA (*Precursor Golden Age*): The Precursor Civilization discovers the Scribe's Voice and uses it to propel their society into a golden age.
- ~3200 HA (*The Focusing*): The Others, awakened by the overuse of the Scribe's Voice, invade the physical world and attack the precursor civilization.
- ~3199 HA → 900 HA (*The Silence*): The Great Scribe Oboro creates a barrier between Uriam and the Physical World temporarily, putting an end to The Other's invasion. The damage is already done, humanity is sent back to the stone age. Oboro finishes the Ars Indomina, a detailed record of Uriam, Scribes, and the dangers of The Others.
- ~900 HA: Humanity rebuilds, and history is once again recorded. Fledgling nations are founded across Hyr.
- 319 HA: The kingdom of Iakus is founded and expands throughout northern Hyr.
- 10 HA: Iakus discovers and begins exploring precursor ruins.
- 2 HA: Iakus discovers the Ars Indomina and begins translating the text. Scholars learn of Uriam and the barrier between worlds, Scribes, and The Scribe's Voice.
- 1 PA (*The Great Enlightenment, beginning of The Praxis Age*): Iakus's scholars fully translate segments of the Ars Indomina describing The Others and their invasion of The Physical World. Terrified of the potential apocalypse should Scribes reemerge, Sargamathara, the God-King of Iakus, along with several of his advisors found The Praxis and begin destroying precursor ruins. The Praxis adopts a policy of eradication against Scribes, fearing that use of the Scribes Voice will bring another apocalypse.

- *1 PA -> 219 PA (Praxis' Crusade)*: The Praxis, with the support of God-King Sargamathara, takes over all levels of Iakus' government. Iakus invades most of its neighboring countries searching for precursor ruins, bringing smaller nations into the fold. The remaining countries found The Free Kingdom Alliance to resist invasion. Kar-Reak refuses to join the alliance, citing concerns over their autonomy. The barrier between Uriam and the physical world begins to break down.
- *210 PA*: Iakus conquers Kar-Reak and begins scouring the land looking for precursor ruins. They destroy most of them, save for a few buried too deep to find.
- *219 PA*: Azakir is born in Kar-Reak. Certain humans begin being born as Scribes once more.
- *243 PA: (The Tutorial)*: Azakir's brother Mazakar claims to have discovered writings dictating a description of Uriam. The Praxis arrests him for blasphemy to cover up the truth. Azakir reads a segment of the writing before it is destroyed and learns the keyword "FORCE".
- *251 PA*: Azakir is nearly killed in a cave in at a coal mine. They save themselves using The Scribe's Voice and discover their abilities. The tutorial ends, and the game begins.

Characters/Reputation

Throughout the player's journey in *Cindercrown*, they will encounter a wide range of characters. Some serve as supporting cast members; others will be recruitable to the player's party. There will be a total of 6 recruitable characters, with a max party size of 3, not including the player. Each companion will have their own backstory and motivations, with party members having deeper stories explored through unique character quests.

Throughout the game, companion characters will react to the player's choices in unique ways. Some choices will increase or decrease the player's reputation with individual party members, and that reputation will affect how the companion views the player. A high reputation will cause characters to speak fondly to the player, unlock unique abilities, and unlock new choices in their companion quests that could lead to discovering interesting lore or character traits. On the contrary, a low reputation will cause characters to speak negatively to the player, reduce their willingness to fight in battle, and if reputation gets low enough, they may choose to leave the player behind entirely, or even betray them in the heat of the moment. Managing reputation with characters will be a critical aspect of *Cindercrown* that cannot be ignored, and players will find that even if they make the best choices, they can't please everyone.

On a larger scale, players will also have an overall reputation across the world. If players choose to be benevolent and make positive moral choices within the story, NPCs will respond positively to the player, and perhaps be more willing to assist them. If players choose to be malevolent and make negative moral choices, NPCs may have fearful or angry reactions to players, and in extreme cases may become hostile. Morality won't always be black and white. A negative reputation will grant new and exciting opportunities and may even be more profitable than a positive one. Certain groups will also react positively to evil players and grant them new rewards. Some companions will also be evil aligned, and not wish to follow a benevolent player

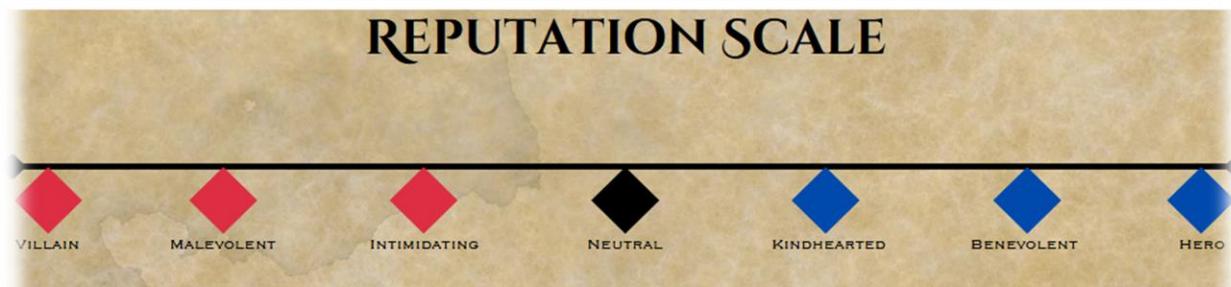


Figure 15: Image created with Canva.com

Azakir: The Scribe

“Finally... finally I can fight back...” -Azakir, Prolouge.

“Who are you, to stand in my path and demand that I kneel?” -Azakir, Villain Reputation

“I will use this power to protect, not to destroy.” -Azakir, Hero Reputation

“I need a drink.” -Azakir, Act 3

Function: Player Character

Description: Azakir is the character that players will control throughout *Cindercrown*. They are 32 years old at the beginning of the game. Their gender and pronouns are interchangeable (he/him, she/her, they/them), and have no effect on gameplay. For the sake of readability, they will be referred to with they/them pronouns within the document. Their physical appearance between genders is preset, but players can customize their outfits by equipping armor and clothing. Regardless of gender, Azakir’s personality is determined based on the player’s choices in dialogue throughout the game, ranging from upbeat and positive, to cruel and dreary.

Backstory: Azakir was born in Teloth, a mining town in Kar-Reak. As a child, they were forced into labor as a miner by Teloth’s government, which was (and still is) controlled by Iakus. They lived in squalor for many years with their brother Mazakar, as their parents died when Azakir was extremely young. At the age of 24, Azakir first discovered the power of The Scribe’s Voice after Mazakar unearthed a fragment of writing on the wall of a Precursor ruin, noticing they were able to read the untranslatable language. As a result of his discovery, however, Mazakar was arrested and labeled a heretic by The Praxis and sentenced to life in prison on Iakus’ mainland. Azakir developed a deep hatred for Iakus and The Praxis after losing the only family they had left, and vowed to one day rescue their brother.

Abilities: As the main character, Azakir possesses the Scribe’s Voice, and is the only character with full access to the spell customization mechanic. While other characters may be scribes, their spells are preset abilities rather than custom made.



Figure 16: Azakir, Masculine. Generated with deepai.org



Figure 17: Azakir, Feminine. Generated with deepai.org

Azakir, however, can design custom spells that can be fine-tuned for any situation. This makes them an incredibly versatile character, often the cornerstone on which victory rests in each battle. Azakir has the most interchangeability out of all the playable characters, able to equip most if not all items and weapons. This allows for players to make a variety of unique builds, adding more player agency a layer of replay ability to the game.

Mazakar: The Lost Brother

“Don’t worry, things will get better. They always do.” -Mazakar, Prologue

“If you knew what I know... if you saw what I see... you would do same.” -Mazakar, Act 3



Function: Non-Playable Character / Motivation

Description: Mazakar is a 39-year-old man at the beginning of the game hailing from Kar-Reak, and is the brother of Azakir. He is a taller man, with jet black hair and tan skin with a bit of muscle. He looks a lot older than he is due to the harsh conditions in which he lives, sporting a few grey hairs. He has an optimistic personality, but it is clear through his dialogue he is putting on a mask to hide feelings of resentment and anger towards The Praxis.

Backstory: Mazakar was once a miner in Teloth before he unearthed a fragment of writing in a Precursor ruin. Believing it to be a holy relic in line with his beliefs as a citizen of Kar-Reak, he spread the word of his discovery to those close to him, including Azakir. Unfortunately for him, word got back to the High Clergyman of Kar-Reak,

Cethanamial, who had him arrested for blasphemy and imprisoned in the mainland. This imprisonment is the driving motivation for Azakir’s resistance against Iakus throughout the game.

Current Role: Throughout the game, players will discover hints as to Mazakar’s location and status, until eventually finding out in the final act that he is no longer imprisoned and is instead working for The Praxis. After his arrest, he attempted escape, and along the way discovered translations of passages from the Ars Indomina. Through reading them, he discovered the truth about the fall of The Precursor Civilization and the dangers of Scribes. Although initially to be executed to prevent the spread of forbidden knowledge, Mazakar fought against his captors and killed an important member of The Clergy. Despite his hatred for Iakus, he agreed to join The Praxis’ Clergy to replace the fallen member and protect his people from a possible apocalypse, believing with his new knowledge that he may be able to free Kar-Reak from within Iakus in a

Figure 18: Generated with deepai.org

peaceful manner. The discovery of Mazakar's new role in the world will be a central plot point for players to grapple with in Act 3.

Zeketim: The Ambitious Rebel

"Don't you see? This is our chance to strike back!" -Zeketim, Act 1

Function: Companion NPC

Description: Zeketim is a young man at 22 years old who works alongside Azakir as a miner at the beginning of the story. He is extremely ambitious and has long since dreamed of a world where Kar-Reak is free of Iakus' control.

Amongst all the potential companions, he harbors the most hatred for Iakus, believing that anyone who sides with or works for them is evil, regardless of actions. He is the first party member players can recruit and is part of the party mechanics tutorial. Despite this, players can still choose not to recruit him once the tutorial ends.

Backstory: As a child, Zeketim's mother and father were both killed after The Praxis discovered a Precursor Ruin in his hometown of Iliek. Fearing that the citizens may have discovered something within the ruin, they razed the town and massacred the citizens. Zeketim survived due to pure happenstance, just happening to have left the town for a day to haul goods to a neighboring city. Returning to find everything he ever knew reduced to rubble, he dedicated the remainder of his life to toppling Iakus' rule.

Abilities: Zeketim is a frontline fighter, and his skills and abilities reflect that. He does not possess The Scribe's Voice, instead focusing on martial combat with swords, hammers, and axes. He can equip heavy armor and weapons, and his abilities focus on dealing heavy damage from up close and buffing the party's defense.

Companion Quest: Zeketim's companion quest begins in Act 1 and resolves late in Act 3. Throughout the quest, players can choose to assist Zeketim with his vengeance by showing no mercy to Iakus' soldiers and hunting those responsible for his parent's death or attempt to convince Zeketim to abandon his violent desires in the name of peace. At the conclusion of his quest, if players choose to help him get revenge on Iakus and The Praxis, he will be a shell of his former self, extending his quest for vengeance to even the uninvolved citizens of Iakus, believing them complicit in his suffering. On the other hand, players can also convince Zeketim to peacefully resolve his quest for revenge by dealing out proper justice to those who deserve it.

Morality/Reputation: Zeketim is a good aligned character, and will appreciate benevolent acts by the player. He will excuse evil choices or actions if they are aimed at harming Iakus' military



Figure 19: Generated with deepai.org

but will feel conflicted about harming innocents. If the player at any point chooses to side with Iakus in Act 3, he will become hostile and leave the party, unable to reconcile with the player's decision. Zeketim will also leave the party if the player's reaches the "Villian" reputation, regardless of actions.

Noboronama: The Disillusioned Priest

"There are holes in the scripture. Holes I can't ignore. Who was the God King, really?" - Noboronama, Act 2

Function: Companion NPC



Figure 20: Generated with deepai.org

Description: Noboronama is a former priest of The Praxis, serving as Teloth's head priest in Act 1. He is around 68 years old but prefers to hide his age. In the first Act, he is secretly a skeptic within The Praxis and has a strong desire to explore Precursor Ruins to see if they can prove or disprove The Praxis' beliefs. As such, he wishes to join the player and gain knowledge of the Precursors in his quest for spiritual fulfilment. He is a rather cynical man, often assuming the worst of people and situations without proper consideration. He also often uses his age as an excuse to get out of responsibilities, portraying himself as old and useless whenever he must do something important. This is quite far from the truth, as he is a rather fit and healthy man. Noboronama can be recruited towards the end of Act 1 but can be interacted with much earlier.

Backstory: Noboronama was always a skeptical man, believing that blind faith was an unreasonable demand from The Praxis. Growing up in Iakus' mainland, he lived a life of scholarship and study, determined to become a member of The Praxis' Clergy. He accomplished this goal, but the knowledge he discovered in his new role left him with more questions than answers. He noticed unexplainable facts, such as the true nature of Sargamathara's supposed godhood and the reason behind Iakus' hatred for Precursors. Unsatisfied with the lack of answers, he voluntarily became the head priest of Teloth to get closer to Precursor ruins and potentially discover the truths he seeks. In the Prologue, he was the only person to attempt to speak out against Mazakar's imprisonment but was silenced by his fellow clergymen.

Abilities: Noboronama is a supportive character focused on buffing the party's abilities and healing their wounds with morale boosting speeches, useful potions and medicines, and other priestly implements. He can also equip swords and daggers to provide a bit of damage alongside his support. He will refuse to equip heavy armor or weapons, citing his "bad bones". In Act 2, he can unlock the power of The Scribe's Voice and gain improved healing and buffing abilities.

Companion Quest: Noboronama's companion quest focuses on exploring Precursor ruins and discovering the truth behind The Praxis' faith. If the player chooses to assist him, he will take fragments of Precursor writings and artifacts for himself to study, possibly depriving the player of new equipment or powerful keywords. This loss is supplemented later in the game, as in Act 2 if the player has provided Noboronama with enough resources, he can become a Scribe, unlocking powerful abilities. Throughout his quest, Noboronama will discover the truth behind The Scribe's Voice and The Praxis and will become disillusioned and depressed as a result. In Act 3, players can choose to allow him to expose The Praxis' lies to the world potentially causing mass panic and societal collapse or convince him to cover up what he knows for the sake of peace and a stable transition of power.

Morality/Reputation: Noboronama is a neutral character and will not react strongly to good or evil choices unless they directly affect him or his research into the Precursors. He will draw a line at harming innocents, unless that harm produces something valuable to him such as a precursor artifact. Noboronama will appreciate the player resolving situations without violence. In Act 3, if the player sides with Iakus, he will non-violently leave the party, choosing to go elsewhere to continue his research.

Sizel: The Cutthroat Thief

"Oh, there's lots in this for the both of us. You get your brother back, and along the way I steal every drop of money I can from the Capital's vaults. We'd make a great team!" -Sizel, Act 1.

Function: Companion NPC

Description: Sizel is a petty thief from Teloth who is obsessed with the accumulation of wealth. She is around 21 years old and grew up on the streets in poverty. As a result, she has hoarding tendencies, preferring to accumulate money and possessions and lock them away, reluctant to use them. She is mistrustful, preferring to keep her relationships between the player and other members of the party strictly professional. This barrier drops in Act 2 if the player's reputation with her is high enough, and she grows to consider the party her friends. She has a witty sense of humor and will often crack jokes even when the situation is dire.

Backstory: Sizel never knew her parents or family and was an orphan since birth. She was born in Teloth and quickly abandoned by her parents for unknown reasons. As a child, she got by stealing whatever she could get her hands on to survive. Life on the streets was hard, and she experienced a traumatic upbringing with no support system to speak of. During her childhood, she learned of the wealth hidden within the vaults of Iakus' capital and made it her ultimate goal to steal from them and use the wealth to live in luxury.

Abilities: Sizel is a mix of a debuffing support and stealthy damage dealer. Many of her abilities are useful outside of combat to set up favorable scenarios for ambushes or sneak attacks. In combat, she applies powerful poisons and ailments to enemies, reducing their resistance and damage dealt. She can equip light armor and weapons as well as unique alchemical ingredients to alter the effects of her poisons. She also can steal from NPCs in the world, though this may come with consequences if she is caught.

Companion Quest: Sizel's companion quest focuses on planning a heist on Iakus' vaults. Throughout the game, players can assist her in gathering tools, information, and accomplices for her heist. If the players choose to fully support her goal, they will unlock a unique side quest in Act 3 where they must infiltrate a vault in Iakus' Capital and steal the money and treasures within. Success will grant the player a lot of currency and unlock unique gear for Sizel. Significant failure will result in Sizel's capture and imprisonment and cause her to become unplayable for the rest of the game.

Morality/Reputation: Sizel doesn't care about good or evil choices, instead, she will gain or lose reputation with the player based on if their actions accrue or lose wealth. She will remain with the party no matter the player's reputation rank. This attitude persists until Act 2 when her bond with the party deepens at which point she will prefer players to make morally good choices. If her reputation remains low with the player throughout the entire game up until the beginning of Act 3, she will betray the party and steal their belongings before leaving to accomplish her heist on her own.

Lesonathira: The Opportunistic Aristocrat

"You're the harbinger of a new age Azakir! Forgive me for wanting a seat at the table when the world changes." -Lesonathira, Act 1

Function: Companion NPC



Figure 21: Generated with deepai.org



Figure 22: Generated with deepai.org

Description: Lesonathira is an aristocrat from Iakus' mainland, traveling to Kar-Reak in search of new opportunities. She is around 59 years old, and wears her age like a badge of honor, viewing it as proof of her experience and prowess. She is a cutthroat businesswoman who cares only about power and status and views the player and the party as a means to upset the social order and place herself at the top of society. She is a minor antagonist in a few side quests in Act 1, but if the player ever uses The Scribe's Voice in front of her, she will immediately offer to join the party, claiming it to be an "opportunity too good to pass by".

Backstory: Lesonathira grew up incredibly privileged and wealthy. She witnessed the war between Iakus and Kar-Reak and knows firsthand the brutality mankind is capable of. She developed a lust for power and status

early on in life, attempting to climb the ranks in Iakus' bureaucracy. Her willingness to be ruthless and expertise in diplomacy and government allowed her to become a minor noble in Iakus, but that was not enough for her. She sought to one day rule the kingdom, whether its queen or in the shadows. As such, she developed an interest in precursor technology, and journeyed to Kar-Reak to seek out anything that could help her gain more power. In her journey, she discovered The Scribe's Voice, and is capable of using a few keywords, though her knowledge is very limited as her position makes it difficult to seek out Precursor ruins.

Abilities: Lesonathira is an elegant fighter, able to wield weapons like short swords and rapiers to dish out damage to enemies. She also has a few spells relating to ice and coldness, as she knows the "FREEZE" keyword of The Scribe's Voice. Her abilities focus on slowing down and stunning enemies to set up for damaging combos from the player. Out of combat, she can aid in social interaction via intimidation and deception in dialogue. She can equip most armor and weapons.

Companion Quest: Lesonathira's companion quest involves gaining knowledge of The Scribe's Voice and ensuring the player is able to accomplish their goal and thus weaken Iakus' government in the process. She will present multiple side quests that allow the player to make connections with Iakus' nobility and set up political rivalries to destabilize the government. In Act 3, she will encourage the player to side with Iakus and commence an internal takeover of the kingdom towards the end of the game. If the player refuses to assist her in her quest, she will nonetheless remain in the party, believing that being involved in Azakir's quest will bring her the results she seeks no matter what.

Morality/Reputation: Lesonathira is one of two “evil” companions, viewing the world as a cruel place where one must be harsh to survive. She will gain a reputation with the player if they choose to commit crimes or violence for the sake of their goal, and especially likes actions that undermine the government for the sake of personal gain. She views benevolent actions as useless and futile. She will leave the party if the player achieves the “Hero” reputation, viewing sticking around as a waste of time. She will otherwise never leave the party for any reason, regardless of her opinion of the player.

One: The Mysterious Stranger

“I am One. I am the last.” -One, Act 1

Function: Companion NPC, Secret NPC



Figure 23: Generated with deepai.org

Description: One is a person of an ambiguous gender that players discover early in Act 1 inside a Precursor ruin. Their age, background, and origin is unknown to the player initially. They claim to be an amnesiac and have a strong desire to recover the Ars Indomina for unknown reasons. Their dialogue is deadpan and flat, and they show no strong emotions. Azakir and other party members will often comment on One's strangeness and off-putting nature throughout the game. They are a Scribe and express their desire to share the knowledge of The Scribe's Voice with as many people as possible. As the game progresses, in Act 2 players discover that One is a Precursor, corrupted by exposure to Uriam when the Precursor Civilization fell. They gained immortality through prolonged contact with the energies of The Others and Uriam corrupting their genetics, removing their sense of emotion and empathy while increasing their physical strength. Their motivations remain

a mystery until Act 3. Believing humanity to be a mistake, they seek to invite the return of The Others and end the world so that a new intelligent species may evolve from the ashes of mankind.

Note: If the player never chooses to explore the specific ruin One is trapped in, they can go throughout the entire game without ever encountering them. One is more of a secret character and is required for the “Worst Ending”

Backstory: One was once a citizen of the Precursor Civilization, but their mind was corrupted by Uriam's energies when The Others invaded. Their true name is unknown, and One cares not to remember it. They were trapped in a Precursor Ruin and remained until the player chooses to free them.

Abilities: One is a powerful spell-based fighter and uses The Scribe's Voice exclusively in combat. They know a variety of devastating abilities, and as the game progresses their spells become increasingly unnerving and terrifying, wreaking havoc on the player's enemies. They cannot equip weapons or armor, preferring simple clothing.

Companion Quest: One's companion quest is inaccessible to players who are not at least "intimidating" on the reputation scale, and the game warns the player that by completing their quest, there may be "dire consequences". In their quest, One encourages the player to develop their power as a Scribe and presents opportunities to gain new keywords and equipment to boost their magical powers. In Act 3, One reveals their true motivations to the player and offers them a place at their side, encouraging the player to invoke the return of The Others and "wipe the slate clean". One's companion quest leads to the secret ending: "*Worst Ending*". The player can also choose to never begin One's companion quest, but they will leave the party in Act 2 if the quest is not started.

Morality/Reputation: One is a truly evil character. They do not care if the player commits despicable actions and will in fact encourage the player to be evil. One expresses a distaste for human life, but holds Scribes in a high regard, acting friendly to any character who can use The Scribe's Voice. One will only leave the party if the player refuses to start their quest before Act 2.

Ketzan: The Burdened Warrior

"Mazakar was a good man, I'd see to it he walks amongst his people once more." -Ketzan, Act 1

Function: Companion NPC



Figure 24: Source: <https://stablecog.com/gallery/o/38b99a08-e598-41bc-b942-a2db80b8fb0>

Description: Ketzan is an old man, and a veteran of the war between Kar-Reak and Iakus. He lives as a farmer in Teloth and was a close friend of Mazakar's before his arrest and imprisonment. Witnessing the horrors of Iakus' military firsthand, Ketzan struggles with trauma and PTSD from the war, but holds in his heart a desire to free his homeland and kill the High Clergyman Cethanamial, believing him responsible for Kar-Reak's subjugation and suffering. He is quite spiritual, following the old belief of Kar-Reak that the Precursors were gods who left the world behind. Ketzan is a benevolent person, seeking to protect the weak and punish those who would lord their power over others. He is recruitable in the beginning of Act 1 once he first meets the player, offering them his services in rescuing their

brother. Along the way, he believes he may get the opportunity to assassinate Cethanamial and bring freedom to Kar-Reak.

Backstory: Ketzan was born in Nunan, a town on the opposite side of Kar-Reak from Teloth. He joined the army at the height of the war between Iakus and Kar-Reak, becoming a decorated soldier in his career. Throughout the war, he developed PTSD from witnessing the atrocities Iakus committed in their conquest. After Kar-Reak's defeat, he fled Nunan and hid from Iakus' authorities in Kar-Reak, assuming the life of a peaceful farmer to escape prison for fighting against Iakus. He met and became friends with Mazakar during his time in Teloth and encouraged him to seek out Precursor Relics. As such, he feels responsible for Mazakar's arrest and wishes to free him from imprisonment.

Abilities: Ketzan's abilities focus purely on defense. He provides powerful buffs to the party's defensive capabilities and has several abilities to taunt enemies towards him and soak up damage for the party. He also has minor healing through abilities focused on field medicine. He can wield shields, hammers, axes, and heavy armor.

Companion Quest: Ketzan's companion quest focuses on hunting down Cethanamial and killing him. Throughout the game, he will prompt the player to assist him in tracking down the High Clergyman and undermining his influence in Kar-Reak. Ketzan's quest also grapples with his PTSD, the player can assist him in processing his trauma and rebuilding locations in Kar-Reak that were destroyed by the war. In Act 3, the player can choose to either assist Ketzan in killing Cethanamial or convince Ketzan to spare him and leave violence behind.

Morality/Reputation: Ketzan is a benevolent character and will not tolerate an evil player. He will gain a reputation with the player if they act morally and justly and will endorse acts that undermine Iakus' authority. He will however lose reputation with the player for any unnecessarily violent or cruel action, no matter who the target. If the player ever reaches the reputation of "Malevolent" or lower, he will leave the party.

Notable NPCs

Sargamathara, The God King: Sargamathara is the patron deity of The Praxis. He was one of the first kings of Iakus, and the founder of The Praxis. After discovering and translating the Ars Indomina, he developed a deep fear of The Others and The Scribes Voice. With the assistance of his government, he founded The Praxis and declared The Precursors an abomination, ordering the destruction of their ruins in his name. After his death, The Praxis claimed he ascended to godhood to rule Iakus eternally. This is false, as Sargamathara simply died of natural causes after an extremely long rule. Throughout the game, players can discover lore entries depicting his writing and words and will eventually discover the truth.

Figure 25: Source:
https://stockcake.com/i/king-reads-book_1205452_1028557



Sargamathara was simply a mortal man afraid of the end of the world, whose actions shaped the future for generations to come.

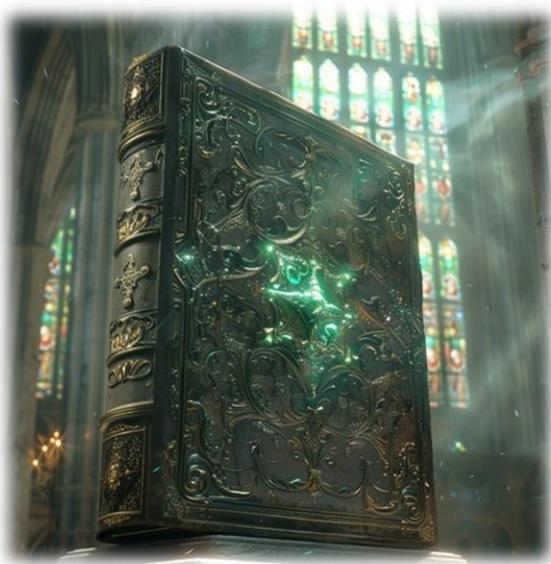


Figure 26: Source: https://stockcake.com/i/mystical-ancient-tome_463863_448128

Oboro, The Great Scribe: Oboro was the most powerful Scribe of The Precursor Civilization and is the author of the Ars Indomina and the creator of the barrier between the physical world and Uriam. Oboro wrote the Ars Indomina initially as a record of the Precursor's knowledge about The Scribe's Voice, unaware of the dangers its use posed. When The Others invaded and destroyed The Precursor Civilization, Oboro amended the Ars Indomina, warning any future readers that the knowledge within was best left forgotten. Unable to destroy his work due to protective measures he created to preserve the information within from before he knew its true danger, he split the book into pieces and hid it throughout Hyr. In game, players can recover sections of the Ars Indomina and read them to learn more about Uriam, The Scribes Voice, The Precursors and Oboro himself.



Figure 27: Source:
https://www.reddit.com/r/dndai/comments/l23vr4v/an_evil_priest_midjourney_v5/

Cethanamial, The High Clergyman: Cethanamial is the main antagonist of *Cindercrown*, and his influence can be seen throughout the prologue and all three acts. In the prologue, he ordered Mazakar's arrest personally, and throughout the game commits various atrocities in the name of The Praxis. In Act 2, he directly intervenes to slow the player's progress. Players will have the opportunity to either kill or join him alongside Mazakar in Act 3, as he wishes to preserve humanity no matter the cost. Though his intentions are good, the actions he takes to pursue them are horrible, and players will constantly witness the devastation wrought by his hand.

Jethan, The Liasson: Jethan is a diplomat from The Free Kingdom Alliance players encounter in Act 2. She offers her support for their cause, believing that if the player succeeds in freeing their brother, it may open up opportunities for The Free Kingdom Alliance to strike more directly at Iakus' capital. Jethan encourages the player to cause chaos within Iakus and offers quests relating to political subterfuge and rebellion. Jethan is a politician at heart, and views everything based on how it helps or hurts the Free Kingdom Alliance. She is a key player in Act 2 and is able to grant the player passage to Iakus' mainland at the end of the act. Jethan is also able to allow the player to escape to The Free Kingdom Alliance if the player completes all of her quests in Act 2, ending the game prematurely and giving the secret ending: “*Defection Ending*”.



Figure 28: Generated with deepai.org



Figure 29: Source:
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/853572935634190286/>

Murmured Semblance, The

Other: Murmured Semblance is a secret NPC accessible if the player recruits One to their party, learns every available Keyword, and finds every page of the Ars Indomina. Once this is accomplished, One offers the player the ability to communicate directly with Uriam and The Others in Act 3, allowing them to converse with Murmured Semblance.

Murmured Semblance is a formless, shapeless being who speaks through projecting emotions and memories into the player character's mind. It is the primary source for information about The Others, revealing that they are beings of pure energy who are directly harmed by humans using The Scribe's Voice and draining Uriam's energy, and that it was trapped in the physical world when Oboro created the barrier between it and Uriam. Murmured Semblance offers the player the option to invite The Others to return to the physical world and is the catalyst for players to achieve the secret ending: “*Worst Ending*”. Players also encounter Murmured Semblance as early as Act 1,

witnessing its strange void-like form darting around Precursor ruins. Murmured Semblance acts as an obstacle in several Precursor Ruins, blocking the player's path and creating interesting stealth puzzles with a survival-horror vibe.

Story Arc

Structure

Cindercrown's main story is divided into three acts with a prologue and epilogue. Each act has a series of introductory missions followed by a non-linear section in which players must complete a set of objectives in order. Upon completion of the main objectives, players will go through a series of climactic missions to conclude each act, the events of which will move the overall plot forward. Each mission provides critical development for the player character and presents opportunities for the player to progress towards one of the game's (X AMOUNT) endings.

A Note on Player Agency and The Open World

Much of *Cindercrown's* story takes place dynamically within one of three open-world maps. Teloth in Act 1, New Ezeldum in Act 2, and The Capital in Act 3. Within these maps, players can freely explore and complete quests at their leisure. The game's main objectives are non-linear, and the player is tasked with discovering leads and objectives themselves, with some direction given through the introductory missions of each Act. As such, different players may experience the story in completely different ways. This document will cover the beginning and end of each Act in detail, with the middle segments of exploration and discovery being summarized for brevity.

Player choice also plays a large role in progression. In each Act, players can choose to accomplish their goals in any way they see fit, with each mission having multiple avenues for success. Within these missions, players can gain or lose reputation points, becoming either a "Hero" or a "Villian". The game's ending will depend on the player's reputation, but for the sake of time and readability, this document cannot list every moral choice that can be made within each Act. Regardless, it should be noted that every act will present the player with opportunities to be good or evil, and the player's actions will affect the ending in Act 3.

PROLOGUE: "VISIONARY"

The game opens in the year 243 of the Praxis age. A cutscene plays of Azakir, a young citizen of Kar-Reak, walking through the streets of Teloth with their brother, Mazakar. Mazakar explains how he discovered something amazing that could "finally bring us our freedom". He vaguely mentions ruins underground spanning the entire kingdom of Kar-Reak with otherworldly power hidden within and strange inscriptions on the walls. Before he can fully explain his discovery to Azakir, Iakan soldiers stop them on the streets, demanding Mazakar halts. Noboronama, the head priest of Teloth, approaches accompanied by other members of the Praxis, who accuse Mazakar of spreading heresy. Noboronama gives Mazakar an opportunity to deny this, but Mazakar insists he was only spreading the truth. He claims he discovered ruins left behind by Kar-Reak's gods. Noboronama, seemingly disappointed, orders Mazakar imprisoned

for his “crime” in the name of High Clergyman Cethanamial. Before being taken away, Mazakar slips a stone fragment into Azakir’s hand, on which strange glowing symbols can be seen. The symbols glow brightly, reflecting in Azakir’s eyes, and the fragment crumbles to dust. Mazakar whispers that Azakir must “lead the path to freedom” before he is taken away. A voice over from the present Azakir mentions that this was the last time they saw their brother.

ACT 1: “SPARK”



Figure 30: Source: <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/worst-mining-disasters-in-human-history.html>

Following the prologue, a time skip of eight years occurs and the player is given full control of Azakir for the first time. The act begins in the mines of Teloth, where Azakir casually chats with Zeketim. Through the conversation the player learns that Azakir and Zeketim became friends shortly after Mazakar’s capture. As they both work on harvesting an ore vein, another miner shouts, having accidentally damaged one of the shoddy support beams, and the tunnel they stand in suddenly begins to collapse. Zeketim manages to run far ahead, but Azakir is trapped by falling rocks blocking the path. Here, the player is introduced to the mechanic of the Scribe’s Voice via an intentionally vague (for now)

text prompt and must use the keyword “FORCE” to blast away the fallen debris before they are crushed by more rocks. Upon saving themselves, the player navigates a short section of the mines before being reunited with Zeketim, who draws their attention to a strange hole in the cavern walls. Through the hole, a massive underground ruin can be seen. Zeketim wonders aloud if it could be a “ruin of the Gods”, and the player can agree or disagree through a dialogue prompt. Depending on if they agree or disagree, their reputation with Zeketim increases or decreases, and the player is given a short overview of the reputation system.

Regardless of the player’s response, Zeketim runs off into the ruin, and Azakir follows, afraid for their friend’s safety. The ruin is treacherous and difficult to navigate, with various parkour challenges standing between the player and Zeketim, who continues to explore further. Here, the player is introduced to the movement mechanics of the game and must navigate the ruins to catch up with Zeketim. As the player crosses through the area, Zeketim calls out, with several voice-lines mentioning Kar-Reak’s “gods” and how the ruins look similar to some holy artifacts back in Teloth, kept hidden from Iakus and The Praxis. Once they successfully reunite, Zeketim temporarily joins the player’s party, and the player is taught the basics of the party management mechanics. The two continue to explore the ruins, going deeper and deeper down. Zeketim comments on the strange inscriptions on the walls, prompting a short cutscene to play

displaying the stone fragment given to Azakir in the prologue, which contains the same symbols. The player is prompted to touch one of the inscriptions, and upon doing so, a flash of green light flows into Azakir. Once subsided, text prompts inform the player they have learnt new keywords in The Scribe's Voice. A voice-over of Azakir's thoughts plays where they wonder if these strange words are like the "FORCE" keyword they used to escape the cave-in. The player is then introduced to the spell-crafting system and is allowed to experiment with the keywords they learned to create a custom ability.

Upon exiting the spell-crafting tutorial, Zeketim is shocked by Azakir's new abilities. Azakir mentions how when his brother was taken, he told him of a discovery that could "bring us our freedom", reasoning that this must have been what he found. Zeketim agrees that this power could be used to fight against Iakus and liberate Kar-Reak. Excited, he tries to touch an inscription on the wall, but nothing happens. He reasons the new power must be exclusive to Azakir, but doesn't know why.

Azakir and Zeketim eventually find a pathway leading back to the mines, and Azakir notes that they better move quickly, or the Iakan guards will come looking for them. Zeketim also comments that if they're discovered within these ruins, it could be seen as an act of heresy, as The Praxis seems hell-bent on destroying all artifacts of Kar-Reak's "gods". As the two exit the ruins and return to the mines, they witness a terrifying sight. The Iakan military has arrived and is rounding up the surviving miners and executing them. Their uniforms are distinct from the typical guard uniform, and Zeketim notes that these seem to be higher ranking soldiers. Voiceovers from soldiers note the discovery of "unidentified Precursor objects", and some comment on "leaving none alive". With no other option, Azakir and Zeketim must fight their way past the soldiers, and the player is introduced to the combat mechanics. Here, the player can also choose to free some miners who have been captured and will gain heroic reputation points if they do so, introducing the player to the morality system.

Upon fighting their way out of the mines, Azakir and Zeketim sneak past the military and join a crowd of concerned spectators. A dialogue begins, where Zeketim comments on how lucky they are to be alive, and that Azakir's new power was very effective in combat. He also curses the Iakan soldiers, commenting that they should pay for what they did. Various dialogue choices are available, with some giving positive or negative reputation with Zeketim. Zeketim offers to permanently join the player's party, to which the player can accept or decline. If they decline, Zeketim can still be recruited by finding and speaking to him before Act 1 ends.

Azakir returns to their home for the night, and the player can explore the house freely. There are several items which when inspected cause Azakir to reminisce about their brother. Once the player chooses to sleep, a cutscene plays where Azakir replays the memory of the Prologue in his mind and remembers Mazakar telling them to "lead the path to freedom". He resolves that he must use his new power to free Mazakar from wherever he is imprisoned, and

along the way find freedom for Kar-Reak. Within the dream, flashes of a strange white desert (Uriam) can be seen in between shots. The cutscene ends and Azakir wakes up in bed.

(SECRET ENDING: If the player does not move upon waking up for 10 real-life minutes, Azakir says “Who am I kidding, I’m just one man. That dream... it’s impossible... Sorry, Mazakar,” and goes back to bed. This ends the game and unlocks the secret ending: “Giving Up.”)

Here, the player is given the freedom to explore the town of Teloth as they please, along with a main objective: Locate Mazakar. The primary objective of Act 1 that players must work towards is finding out where Mazakar was imprisoned, and how to get there. There are also several side activities in Teloth that reward the player with equipment, new keywords of The Scribe’s Voice, and some pieces of lore. The player is free to explore the area and accomplish quests in any order they please.

Azakir (and Zeketim, if he was recruited into the party) first seeks out information about Mazakar’s whereabouts. While attempting to look around an Iakan military installation for clues, they discover Noboronama conversing with several guards wearing the same uniforms as the ones who attacked the mines. Through eavesdropping, the player learns that the ruin discovered in the mine is but one of many in the area. Noboronama orders the soldiers to seek out other entrances, and also comments how he would like to be taken to one of the ruins. When asked why, he states it is “merely to ensure the place is properly disposed of” but looks visibly uncomfortable. As Noboronama and the soldiers leave, players must break into the installation and search for clues. Within, Azakir discovers old records stating that Mazakar was transferred to New Ezeldum, the occupied capital city of Kar-Reak. The installation also contains lore pickups about the occupation of Kar-Reak, The Praxis’ hatred of The Precursors (who Azakir assumes are Kar-Reak’s gods), and various religious texts about Sargamathara, The God King. Players can also find a hidden entry in Noboronama’s personal journal, noting his desire to explore the Precursor Ruins hidden beneath Teloth.

After discovering Mazakar’s location, Azakir’s next goal is to seek passage to New Ezeldum. Along the way, the player is given the opportunity to explore more Precursor Ruins to unlock more keywords of The Scribe’s Voice. Through exploring the ruins, Azakir learns that he is a Scribe, a human being capable of speaking with The Scribe’s Voice. Players can find several



Figure 31: Source: <https://battlesystems.co.uk/product/fantasy-village/>

lore pickups in the ruins written by The Precursor Civilization, and Azakir is shocked that they can read them. These lore entries give the player insight into the Scribe's Voice, the potential within the language, and the various feats that can be accomplished with it. Some lore entries are personal accounts of The Great Scribe Oboro, where he discusses his research into The Scribe's Voice. These entries are quite positive (for now) and show a great reverence towards the language as well as some information on Uriam, the source of The Scribe's Voice. Exploring the ruins may also lead to the player encountering One, a secret recruitable companion trapped in the depths of one of the ruins.

As players continue to progress through Act 1 and complete quests, they eventually discover a good avenue to get to New Ezeldum. Noboronama will be returning to the capital city to present his findings on the Precursor Ruins to High Clergyman Cethanamial. The ship he will be traveling on is the only one going to New Ezeldum for some time, so it may be the only opportunity to get there in a reasonable amount of time.

Act 1 concludes with Azakir and their party attacking and boarding Noboronama's ship, demanding passage to New Ezeldum. Noboronama complies after the player fights a challenging battle against the ship's crew, who are all seasoned Iakan soldiers. Noboronama, witnessing the battle and Azakir's power as a Scribe, offers to join the player's party, expressing remorse for imprisoning Mazakar. He reveals himself as a skeptic, and states that now that Azakir has demonstrated the power of The Scribe's Voice, he'd rather follow them to discover the truth about The Praxis and God-King Sargamathara. The player can accept Noboronama into the party, or choose to kill him, permanently removing him from the game. Regardless, they set sail towards New Ezeldum, concluding the Act with a final dream sequence where Azakir stands in the middle of Uriam. Strange shadows float above them, seemingly watching, waiting to see what will happen next...

COMPANION RECRUITMENT AND QUESTS: Throughout Act 1, several companion quests begin depending on who the player decides to recruit into their party.

- **Zeketim:** Zeketim is recruited in the very beginning of Act 1, and his quest involves seeking justice for the slaughter in his hometown. Through Act 1, the player can seek information about the destruction of Iliek. If they do, they learn new lore about Zeketim's past and gain positive reputation with him. The player discovers that the general who led the assault on Iliek is currently in New Ezeldum, and Zeketim encourages the player to get there as quick as possible, wanting to see justice delivered.
- **Noboronama:** Noboronama is the main antagonist of Act 1 but can be recruited at the very end after he witnesses Azakir's attack on his vessel. His companion quest won't begin until Act 2. Within Act 1, Noboronama provides some lore about The Praxis and Iakus' faith, establishing their hatred for The Precursors, which he disagrees with.

- **Sizel:** Sizel is encountered when she tries to steal from the player. The player can choose to show her mercy and assist her in her heist plans or turn her over to the Iakan military. If she is recruited, she will provide the player with some quests relating to gathering equipment, information, and contacts for her grand heist.
- **Ketzan:** The player meets Ketzan on the outskirts of Teloth, who expresses his regret for encouraging Mazakar to explore the Precursor Ruins and offers to help Azakir free him. Ketzan's quest involves attacking Iakus' military installations in Teloth, undermining Iakus' influence in the area. Ketzan also encourages the player to hunt any leads on the whereabouts of High Clergyman Cethanamial, and Ketzan reveals his ultimate goal to kill him.
- **Lesonathira:** Lesonathira is a minor antagonist in several side quests, and will offer to join the player if they use The Scribe's Voice at any point where she can witness it. Her companion quest is rather low-key in Act 1, she will simply offer the player assistance via her wealth and connections. She implies that she has hidden motivations, but these are not yet apparent in Act 1.
- **One:** One is encountered in a Precursor Ruin and will immediately offer to accompany the player on their quest. His quest involves exploring more Precursor ruins and gaining new Keywords of The Scribe's Voice. His past and motivations are unclear in Act 1 and will not be revealed until later.

ACT 2: “FLAMES”

Azakir arrives in New Ezeldum with their party, but they are not met with a warm welcome. Iakan soldiers await them at the docks and attack once the ship lands. Players must fight their way through the soldiers and into the city. After defeating the soldiers, Azakir hides within the hustle and bustle of the New Ezeldum and contemplates their next course of action with the party. While doing so, Azakir encounters Jethan, a diplomat from The Free Kingdom Alliance, who heard of their arrival in the city and leverages their connections to prevent Iakus' military from pursuing the player any further. Jethan is quite curious as to Azakir's goals, and the player can choose to be upfront, stating that they wish to free Mazakar, or reserved. Regardless, Jethan comments on how Azakir hijacking



Figure 32: Source: <https://openart.ai/community/cHoHVA4flaTOThdv5TlY>

Noboronama's transport ship has caused quite the stir within Iakus' government, and also alerted The Praxis to the presence of a strange power (The Scribe's Voice) emerging within the world. Jethan reveals that several others have displayed otherworldly abilities and tells Azakir she believes that this is the perfect time to strike at Iakus and secure Kar-Reak's freedom, which she believes will give The Free Kingdom Alliance leverage against Iakus. As a show of good faith, she tells Azakir that their brother was last seen in the prison underneath the Grand Palace of Kar-Reak, an imposing castle in the center of New Ezeldum. She states freeing Mazakar will not be easy, but that she is willing to help if Azakir agrees to destabilize Iakus' rule in New Ezeldum along the way.

The main objective of Act 2 is to break into the prison underneath the Grand Palace of Kar-Reak. This prison break is accomplished with the aid of Jethan, who provides quests in which the player must attack Iakus' military presence and Praxis churches within New Ezeldum directly in exchange for equipment and information on The Grand Palace. Notably, players must attack and destroy a prominent military fortress as well as a grand church of The Praxis. While working towards the prison break, Azakir's power steadily grows, unlocking more Keywords and abilities relating to The Scribe's Voice. As they do, they notice strange phenomena around them. Strange shadows follow Azakir, darting away as they draw near. Certain precursor ruins now glow ominously as the player walks through. Ominous whispers occasionally play in the background. These strange phenomena continue throughout the whole Act, growing more common towards the end.

As players complete quests and progress towards their final goal, they witness several side characters utilizing The Scribe's Voice, although none have as advanced of a grasp of it as Azakir. Some party members (Noboronama, Lesonathira, and One) display aptitude in The Scribe's Voice as well. As players progress, they learn more information about this power through exploring Precursor Ruins hidden within the depths of the city. Within these ruins, several pages of the Ars Indomina, the great work of Oboro, can be found. As opposed to the positive and studious tone of the lore found within Act 1, the writings discovered here are

ominous and terrifying. They allude to a terrible disaster which struck The Precursor Civilization, and accounts from The Great Scribe Oboro begin to read more as warnings than as academic texts. The entries also dive into more details about Uriam and the discovery of The Others, showing the player the first hints of the truth behind the cataclysm of the Precursors. The final discoverable page of The Ars Indomina is a warning from Oboro, begging the reader to disassemble the Ars Indomina (as it cannot be truly destroyed) and scatter its pages so the knowledge within may never be found.



Figure 33: Source:
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/792703971914221709/>

Players also learn a critical piece of information from the Precursor Ruins in Act 2. Oboro constructed some sort of "barrier"

to stop the cataclysm that struck The Precursors. This barrier was built at a price, however. Oboro used the Scribe's Voice to sacrifice an immense number of human lives to construct the barrier, which was formed out of the life-energy of those killed for its construction. Azakir is deeply disturbed by this truth, and if Noboronama is in the party, this revelation sends him into a deep depression as he realizes this sacrifice may have to be made again. Oboro also notes that the barrier isn't permeant, and that after many, many years, it will fall, and the power of The Scribe's Voice will return to the world once more.

As players complete more and more of Jethan's quests, the atmosphere of New Ezeldum changes. Citizens begin to revolt against Iakus and The Praxis and violence erupts in the streets. Once peaceful areas become battlegrounds as the player progresses through the story. This violence escalates from small skirmishes to all out rioting towards the end, and Jethan explains that Azakir's actions have inspired the people of New Ezeldum to rise and fight against Iakus and The Praxis. More and more Scribes emerge and use their power against Iakus' military, and a full rebellion breaks out. Azakir and the party take advantage of the chaos and race to break into The Grand Palace of Kar-Reak to free Mazakar.



Figure 34: Source: www.shutterstock.com

Within The Grand Palace, Azakir and the party fight their way into the prisons. Upon breaking in and discovering them empty, Azakir is stunned. Dismayed at the absence of their brother, Azakir prepares to leave the palace, but encounters Cethanamial along the way, who arrived in New Ezeldum mere moments after the rebellion broke out to rally Iakus' military. Having failed, as the riots grew too large to contain, he prepares to flee alongside most of the Iakan soldiers occupying the capital. Azakir confronts him on the whereabouts of

Mazakar, and Cethanamial laughs, stating that Azakir is "wasting his time," before attacking. The player must battle with Cethanamial, who is a formidable boss with powerful attacks and abilities. Upon defeating him, he chastises Azakir for using the Scribe's Voice, claiming that they will "doom us all", and flees to an Iakan warship to escape to the Capital. Azakir pursues him and discovers a shocking sight. Mazakar, standing aboard the warship, *helping* Cethanamial escape. Azakir shouts after their brother, asking why they're doing this. Mazakar simply shakes his head, and the warship sails away.

(SECRET ENDING: At this point, the player can choose to either continue pursuing Mazakar and Cethanamial to the Capital in Iakus' mainland or remain behind with Jethan and defect to The Free Kingdom Alliance if they complete every one of Jethan's available side quests. This ends the game prematurely and unlocks the secret ending: "Defection Ending.")

With Iakus' military retreating and New Ezeldum liberated from Iakus' control, Jethan congratulates Azakir on his actions. She states the Free Kingdom Alliance will soon send military aid to New Ezeldum and assist with recapturing the entire Kingdom. Azakir is shocked and betrayed by Mazakar's actions but resolves to continue the fight and pursue him to Iakus' Capital. Jethan offers to take Azakir and the party to the Capital, alongside a sizable military force from The Free Kingdom Alliance. She reasons that now is the best time to launch an attack against Iakus' mainland and wishes to seek Azakir's aid in doing so. Azakir accepts her request and travels to the Iakan Mainland, resolved to finish the fight and confront their brother. Before the Act ends, Azakir notices an ethereal dark shadow looming over the skies of New Ezeldum, which remains as they leave the city behind.

COMPANION QUESTS:

- **Zeketim:** Zeketim's quest in Act 2 involves tracking down the general who ordered the attack on Iliek. The player can eventually discover the general, Amithanira, within the Grand Palace of Kar-Reak. The player can choose to fight her alongside Zeketim as an optional boss, and upon defeating her can choose to allow Zeketim to kill her or stop him. If Amithanira is killed, Zeketim's companion quest concludes, with him remarking that after all this time, his vengeance felt hollow and unfulfilling. If Amithanira is spared, she will flee with Cethanamial but will reappear later in Act 3. Zeketim will be extremely angry with the player for preventing his revenge, but will accompany them into Act 3.
- **Noboronama:** Noboronama's quest involves exploring the Precursor Ruins beneath New Ezeldum. Along the way, he will remark on the discoveries made and provide the player with lore on The Scribe's Voice and The Precursors. At the end of Act 2, players can explore one final precursor ruin alongside Noboronama, where they discover a piece of the Ars Indomina which tells of The Others and the destruction they brought to The Precursor Civilization. This discovery shocks Noboronama and reveals to him the truth about The Praxis and their hatred for The Scribe's Voice. Noboronama resolves to confront Cethanamial in Act 3, seeking the truth behind the God King Sargamathara.
- **Sizel:** Sizel's quest in Act 2 involves gathering more information and equipment for her grand heist. Throughout Act 2, she encourages the player to seek out new information and items to help her heist. At the end of Act 2, the player must assist her in planning her big heist, drawing up a plan and gathering all their supplies.
- **Ketzan:** Ketzan's companion quest is rather straightforward, with him tasking the player to seek out and kill Cethanamial. The quest concludes when Cethanamial flees, prompting Ketzan to have an emotional conversation with the player about his motivations and goal, describing the horrors he witnessed in the war for Kar-Reak.

- **Lesonathira:** Lesonathira's companion quest is closely tied to Jethan's quests. Throughout Act 2, she leverages her connections to assist the player, providing money and gear that cannot be accessed otherwise. In exchange, the player is tasked with helping Lesonathira build connections with The Free Kingdom Alliance, as she hopes to use them to gain a comfortable position in Iakus' government if their invasion of The Capital is successful.
- **One:** One's quest in Act 2 involves exploring the deep Precursor Ruins beneath New Ezeldum. Upon arriving in the city, One informs the player of the Ars Indomina, and requests that they seek out its pages. While the player collects pieces of the ancient text, One will occasionally comment on the "closed mindedness" of Oboro, and the "folly of mankind". When asked to elaborate, they refuse to comment. Upon the player collecting the final page of the Ars Indomina, learning every keyword from the New Ezeldum Ruins, and fully exploring the ruins themselves, One will congratulate the player and grant them the unique keywords: "HARM" and "DECAY", and elude to Oboro's barrier fracturing. They promise both to reveal their true nature in the Iakan Capital and grant the player a grand "reward" once Kar-Reak is freed.

ACT 3: "CINDERS"

Azakir and the party, with the assistance of Jethan, arrive in The Capital alongside the invading force from The Free Kingdom Alliance. The Alliance begins their invasion, and Jethan wishes Azakir luck on finding their brother.

Act 3 is the most linear act in *Cindercrowns*, the player must fight their way through The Capital and confront Cethanamial and Mazakar. Along the way, the strange otherworldly phenomena witnessed in Act 2 grows in intensity. The shadows which once fled from the player now linger and observe, some NPCs will mention seeing strange visions in their dreams of another realm (Uriam), and the general atmosphere of the game becomes uneasy and paranoid.

As players begin fighting through the Capital, they eventually encounter Mazakar outside the High Church of The Praxis, who begs with Azakir to talk with him. The player can refuse to talk, instead causing Mazakar to flee to The Praxis' high church while warning Azakir to "stop speaking that language before you draw *them* back". If they choose to talk with Mazakar, he will explain what happened to him after his capture. He was imprisoned for a time in New Ezeldum, before eventually being transferred to The Capital of Iakus and held in the High Church of The Praxis for execution. Before he could be executed, he attempted



Figure 35: Source:
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/301107925076631129/>

escape, unintentionally breaking into the hidden library within the High Church. Within the library he discovered the Ars Indomina. Believing it to be a relic of the gods, he read the partially translated text, and to his horror discovered the truth about The Scribe's Voice. Mazakar explains to the player that The Scribes draw energy from a higher realm, Uriam, when speaking with The Scribe's Voice, and that this transfer of energy slowly destroys Uriam. The Others, the native inhabitants of Uriam, became enraged with The Precursors, who overused The Scribe's Voice and nearly destroyed Uriam entirely. To prevent this, they invaded the physical world and

annihilated The Precursors. Only by Oboro's efforts in constructing a metaphysical barrier between Uriam and the physical world was humanity spared from extinction.



Figure 36: Source:
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/983403268628125008/>

Azakir is shocked to discover this truth, realizing that the power he used to fight for his brother's freedom was the same power which had the potential to destroy humanity. Mazakar begs Azakir to stop using the Scribe's Voice, and invites them, along with their party, to a meeting at the High Church once they successfully reach the top. He then

departs as the battle heats up around them.

The Free Kingdom Alliance's army continues fighting and pushing Iakus' forces back. Reinforcements from Iakus' other territories have yet to arrive, and it appears that The Free Kingdom Alliance may succeed in taking over The Capital. Players continue fighting towards the High Church, where the last remnants of Iakus's government have gathered to make their final stand. Here, the game progresses to its final stages, and the player is given a text prompt warning them to tie up any loose ends regarding companion quests, as once they enter the High Church, they will be unable to exit until the game ends.

Upon entering the High Church, players face the toughest series of battles yet, with hordes of enemies and powerful foes attacking to stop their advance. Eventually, Azakir and the party reach the top of The High Church and confront both Mazakar and Cethanamial. If Ketzan is in the player's party, he will instantly attack unless the player chooses to convince him to stand down. Zeketim will also attack unless the same choice is made. Mazakar and Cethanamial explain to Azakir that The Free Kingdom Alliance's armies have effectively taken over The Capital, and if they can hold it successfully, Iakus will be forced to retreat. Cethanamial also reveals that most cities and towns in Kar-Reak are rioting and revolting, and Iakus will soon lose control of the kingdom. Azakir asks why they are telling them this, and Cethanamial states it is to demonstrate that Azakir and their party has won, the



Figure 37: Source:
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/15199717478988193/>

rebellion is over, and Kar-Reak will soon be free. However, Mazakar states that it will all be for nothing if Azakir refuses to hear them out.

A cutscene plays with Mazakar explaining that due to more and more Scribes awakening and using The Scribe's Voice across the land, The Others have once more been awakened and angered. The barrier between Uriam and the physical world is failing, and without intervention it will shatter, allowing The Others to once again invade and destroy human civilization. Mazakar, however, presents another option. There is still time left before the barrier breaks, Azakir can choose to join with Iakus, and with the remaining resources of the empire, work to construct a new barrier. Mazakar tells Azakir that this will be a costly effort, and many lives will be sacrificed to construct this new barrier, but humanity will be saved. The player is presented with three choices: side with Iakus and build a new barrier between Uriam, refuse to side with Iakus and attack Mazakar and Cethanamial, or leave. At this point, the final events of *Cindercrown* begin...

COMPANION QUESTS

- **Zeketim:** Zeketim's quest, if not concluded in Act 2, continues into Act 3 with him pursuing Amithanira through The Capital. Since he was convinced to spare her in Act 2, Zeketim at this point simply wants to know why she did what she did. Amithanira explains she didn't know; she was simply following the orders of The Praxis. Zeketim attacks and attempts to kill Amithanira once again, but cannot bring himself to do it, having realized his vengeance will not undo what she had done. His quest concludes with him deciding that whether Amithanira lives or dies is of no consequence, and he accompanies the player into the ending.
- **Noboronama:** Noboronama's quest focuses on him reconciling with his faith being based on a lie. The player is tasked with gathering documents from various churches and military bases of Iakus and The Praxis, with each one confirming the truth, the God-King Sargamathara was not divine, just a human afraid of the end of the world. The player is tasked with helping Noboronama process this information, and eventually work up the courage to confront Cethanamial. Once the player reaches the final stages of Act 3, Noboronama confronts Cethanamial, demanding the truth. He confirms Noboronama's suspicions, stating that The Praxis was a "lie of convenience" used as an excuse to destroy Precursor Ruins and cover up The Scribe's Voice. After the ending of the game, the player can choose to allow Noboronama to reveal the truth of The Praxis' lies to the world or convince him to keep the lie going for the sake of peace.
- **Sizel:** Sizel's companion quest opens a new mission in Act 3 where the players must break into The Vault within the Capital and carry out the heist. Azakir and Sizel break into the vault using the ongoing battle as a distraction, and sneak through the vault, which is still heavily guarded. If the player manages to successfully steal the treasures within, they gain a large sum of currency and

Sizel's thanks, and she vows to fight alongside Azakir until the very end as repayment for all their help. If they fail, Sizel is captured and becomes unplayable for the remainder of the game.

- **Ketzan:** Ketzan's companion quest concludes at the end of the game, where he attacks Cethanamial before the final battle. If he is killed at any point, Ketzan will lay down his weapons and cease fighting, believing his journey to be over and his goals completed. In the "Hero Ending", Ketzan will approach the player before the final cutscene and discuss the meaning of his revenge. He states that while he feels somewhat hollow, it was satisfying to know that the perpetrator of many atrocities in the war for Kar-Reak has finally fallen. He then departs, returning to his homeland to live out the rest of his days in peace. If the player chooses to side with Iakus, however, his quest will not conclude, and he will become an enemy players must face as one of the final bosses.
- **Lesonathira:** Lesonathira's quest concludes in Act 3 right at the end of the game. She assists the player in fighting towards the High Church, and towards the end of the game reveals her true intentions, to rule Iakus from the shadows by using the ongoing revolt and invasion to establish herself in a position of power. If the player chooses the "Villian Ending", she will not turn hostile, instead fighting alongside the player and escaping the capital with them. Before the final cutscene, she speaks with Mazakar and Cethanamial, who promise her a high position in Iakus' government in exchange for her help. Her goals accomplished, she bids the player farewell, promising that she will not forget their assistance. If the player chooses the "Hero Ending", she will begrudgingly assist in the final battle, and afterwards be seen negotiating for a position in government with the Free Kingdom Alliance. She reasons that while it is not what she expected, "status is status," regardless of nation.
- **One:** In Act 3, One's quest progresses alongside the main story quest. They direct the player towards precursor artifacts in the Capital, and become increasingly strange and unnerving the closer the player gets to the ending. Upon reaching the ending sequence, they encourage the player to kill Cethanamial and Mazakar, regardless of player reputation. If the player refuses, they turn hostile, becoming an extremely powerful final boss, utilizing the full might of The Scribe's Voice against the player.

FINAL BATTLE AND ENDINGS

The final moments, the last boss fight, and ending of *Cindercrown* vary depending on the player's reputation and choices made in Act 3. The potential endings and events surrounding them are as follows:

- **“Hero Ending”:** If the player has reached the “Hero” reputation, they can choose to refuse to construct a new barrier, instead attacking Mazakar and Cethanamial. The final boss fight begins, and players must fight their most challenging battle yet against both Mazakar and Cethanamial at once. Upon defeating them, a heartfelt cutscene plays where Mazakar and Azakir have their final moments together. Mazakar tells Azakir that while he still loves them, their actions have doomed humanity. He hugs Azakir one last time before dying. The Free Kingdom Alliance’s army arrives suddenly at the top of The High Church, accompanied by Jethan. Jethan explains that the army has successfully captured the entire Capital, and Iakus has been defeated for now. The Free Kingdom Alliance also received reports that Kar-Reak successfully declared Independence from Iakus. In effect, Kar-Reak’s struggle for freedom is over. Azakir, however, remains conflicted. The player is left with a scene of Azakir looking over The Capital from the top of The High Church, an otherworldly darkness looming overhead. A voiceover from Azakir plays, explaining that while freedom was gained, the world may soon face an unbeatable threat, and that they must prepare in any way they can...
- **“Villian Ending”:** If the player has reached the “Villian” reputation, they can choose to side with Mazakar and Cethanamial and work to construct a new barrier. If Noboronama, Zeketim, Sizel, or Ketzan are in the player’s party, they will immediately become hostile and attack. The player must then join forces with Mazakar and Cethanamial to fight off their former companions as well as The Free Kingdom Alliance’s army as they attempt to escape The Capital. Upon successfully escaping via boat, Mazakar and Azakir converse. Mazakar states that even with the loss of the Capital, Iakus still has enough manpower and resources to construct the new barrier and discusses where they should begin gathering sacrifices. The conversation fades out and a cutscene plays. Azakir is visibly distressed, but a voice over plays revealing that they are resolved to protect the world from The Others, no matter how many lives it may cost...
- **“Neutral Ending”:** The player is also presented with the option to just leave. Walk away. If chosen, Azakir refuses to make a choice and simply walks out of The High Church, forgoing a boss battle. A brief time-skip of around one week occurs, where the player sees Azakir, now returned to their home in Teloth, now freed from Iakus’ control. Unknowing if the Free Kingdom Alliance successfully defeated Iakus, or if a new barrier between Uriam will ever be constructed, a voice over plays revealing that they are content in simply waiting for fate to run its course, one way or the other...
- **SECRET ENDING: “Worst Ending”:** If the player recruits One to their party, completes their companion quest, and discovers every keyword of The Scribe’s Voice,

they can choose to accomplish the “Worst Ending”. In this ending, players proceed as normal through the events of the “Hero Ending”, with a key difference, after defeating Mazakar and Cethanamial, they speak with One, who uses The Scribe’s Voice to draw them directly into Uriam. Here, the player speaks with Murmured Semblance, who conveys that the barrier between the physical world and Uriam is cracked, but not fully broken. With Azakir’s help, however, the barrier can be shattered, and The Others can commence their invasion immediately. The player is given one final choice, either break the barrier, or do not. If they refuse, the game proceeds with the “Hero Ending” as normal, despite the player’s villainous reputation. If they choose to break the barrier, a cutscene plays in which Azakir uses their power to obliterate an invisible force-field in the sky, causing shadow and darkness to rain across the land. Destruction and devastation can be seen as The Other’s invasion begins, and One congratulates Azakir on making “the right choice.” Both One and Azakir remain in Uriam, watching patiently as the world ends...

Mission Level Script

Portions of the script in BOLD are non-interactive scenes, players will be unable to move or interact with the environment and lose control of the camera temporarily. Portions of the script not in bold indicate sections where the player may move and interact with the environment.

The Story So Far: Eight years ago, Azakir's brother Mazakar was arrested by The Praxis for blasphemy. They swore to one day rescue him, but for now have made little progress. Mazakar gives Azakir a piece of stone with a strange inscription. Currently, Azakir has been working in the mines of Teloth with their friend Zeketim. After a cave in nearly kills them both Azakir saves themselves with the power of The Scribe's Voice, a magical ability they have only just discovered. Reuniting with Zeketim in a deeper section of the mines, the two discover a strange, otherworldly ruin linked to the gods of Kar-Reak and decide to explore.

Characters:

- Azakir: The player character, a miner of Kar-Reak and vehement opposer of Iakus. They have just recently discovered their magical abilities and are eager to experiment. Their gender is chosen by the player, for the sake of readability they will be referred to with they/them pronouns.
- Zeketim: Azakir's friend who works in the same mine as them. Young and ambitious, he despises Iakus to a concerning degree. Eager to discover any means of fighting back against his oppressors.
- Noboronama: The head priest of Teloth, a member of The Praxis' Clergy. Pompous and arrogant, but clearly uncomfortable with Iakus' brutality. Doesn't usually do "dirty work" and is unaccustomed to the environment. He is only in the mines out of obligation to see the ruins destroyed.
- Iakan Elites: Elite soldiers of Iakus. Rarely seen in Teloth, they are only deployed to situations that The Praxis believes are of critical importance. They wear darker colored uniforms as opposed to the typical Iakan soldier.

Terminology:

- Point of Interest (POI): Important places or things, when they appear the camera is pointed at them to give the player a good look. Used for directions and tutorials.
- Dialogue Prompt: A section of a conversation where the player is given options as to what Azakir says next. These usually involve important choices, or conversations that affect the player's reputation. When a dialogue prompt is shown in the script, the **bold** text is what option has been selected.
- The Scribe's Voice: The magic system of *Cindercrown*. Right now, only Azakir can use it.

- Keywords: Components of spells for The Scribe's Voice. Found within the ruins and can be collected by the player to make new spells.
 - Tutorial Prompt: Onscreen text which instructs the player on game mechanics or helpful tips.
 - Flashback: A (usually brief) cutscene that plays events from the past, whether from the prologue or before the game began.
 - Reputation: A key mechanic in *Cindercrown*. A measure of how good or evil the player is, and what their companions think of them.
-

The scene begins with Azakir and Zeketim standing before a large hole in the wall. Beyond it, strange, almost glowing ruins sprawl out into a massive cave system. Zeketim cautiously stands in front of Azakir. The camera focuses on the ruins, showcasing their vastness.

ZEKETIM

Gods-on-high, what is this place?

AZAKIR

Its massive... how this has been down here all this time?

ZEKETIM

Right under our feet... we've just been sitting on all this! Could be a ruin of the gods, and its been right here!

The camera pans behind the duo, showing a pile of rocks and rubble blocking off the path back to the surface.

AZAKIR

Looks like we can't go back.

ZEKETIM

Maybe there's a way up through here? It looks like a city. There's got to be a path to the surface.

AZAKIR

I could try doing that trick again. Clear the path?

Tutorial text appears prompting the player to use The Scribe's Voice to try to blow up the rubble. The spell fails, Azakir stumbles and falls against the wall of rubble, more tutorial text appears and teaches the player about exhaustion mechanics.

ZEKETIM

Woah, easy! You alright?

AZAKIR

(Panting)

I... I'm fine. Think that was all I had in me earlier.

ZEKETIM

Well then, looks like we've only got one choice.

AZAKIR

(Dialogue Prompt)

1: It's too dangerous. We should wait here. (Decreases Reputation with Zeketim)

2: Yes, looks like we're going down. After you. (Increases Reputation with Zeketim)

Regardless of response, Zeketim jumps down into the ruins, a POI pans the camera to look at where he landed. The fall looks long, but not lethal.

AZAKIR

Careful! Going to get yourself killed!

ZEKETIM

I've survived worse! Come on, we should move quickly! Any longer and the rest of the mine-crew will think we're dead,

AZAKIR

Oh would that be so bad? Might get us a day off or two before they drag us back to the tunnels.

ZEKETIM

Ha! Boss Grizik would find a way to dock our pay for dying without permission.

The player falls down the hole and into the ruins. Zeketim is seen far ahead, already clambering over a ledge.

AZAKIR

Wait up!

The player is free to explore the surrounding ruins. There are strange runes on the wall that seem to glow if the player goes near.

If the player goes near the runes:

AZAKIR

These look familiar.

A brief Flashback plays, we see the prologue where Mazakar gives Azakir a fragment of stone with the same runes carved into it.

AZAKIR

Could these be...

ZEKETIM

Hey, what's keeping you, hurry up! Found something!

Tutorial text appears and instructs the player how to sprint, jump, and mantle up ledges. The player must navigate a brief parkour section before reuniting with Zeketim up ahead.

During the parkour section, Zeketim shouts several voice lines ,listed below.

ZEKETIM

This place looks like the holy relics of Teloth!

ZEKETIM

Could this have been a city built by the gods?

ZEKETIM

Our clerics would have a field day down here...

After catching up with Zeketim.

ZEKETIM

Check this out!

Zeketim points at a wall in the distance. A Point of Interest moves the camera over to it. The wall has a massive, glowing rune inscribed on its surface. Unlit torches are affixed by its side.

ZEKETIM

Never seen anything like this before.

AZAKIR

Its... incredible...

Upon approaching the wall, a cutscene plays. Azakir reaches their hand out to the wall and absorbs the light within. They stumble backwards as vague images flash on the screen. A prosperous city that looks like the ruins, a group of hooded figures, a white desert underneath a grey sun, and magical runes are seen.

UNKNOWN VOICE

CREATE... FIRE...

The cutscene ends. A tutorial prompt appears and tells the player they have discovered new Keywords: "CREATE" and "FIRE".

ZEKETIM

What happened? Are you ok?

AZAKIR

(Pained)

I'm... I think I'm fine. I feel... like I've learned something... Hang on.

A Tutorial prompt appears and teaches the player about the spell crafting system of The Scribe's Voice. The player is instructed to make the spell "CREATE FIRE"

After the player casts their new spell, fire erupts from their hands. Torches near the glowing rune (which has now lost its light) light up in flames.

ZEKETIM

Gods-on-high! Azakir, how are you doing this?

AZAKIR

I'm not sure...

ZEKETIM

When were you going to tell me you could shoot fire from your hands?

AZAKIR

This is new to me too. Couldn't always do that.

ZEKETIM

That rune, maybe it gave you this power! Let me try!

Zeketim places a hand on the rune, which is no longer glowing. Nothing happens.

ZEKETIM

No luck...

AZAKIR

(Dialogue Prompt)

1: Looks like I'm special.

2: You thought that would work? (Decreases reputation with Zeketim)

3: Must be something else, then.

ZEKETIM

You could just have been born blessed. Lucky you.

AZAKIR

Lucky me...

A point of interest appears and points the camera to a path further into the ruins. Zeketim runs off ahead. While the pair continue exploring, they converse.

AZAKIR

My brother...

ZEKETIM

Mazakar? What about him?

AZAKIR

Before The Praxis took him, he said he'd found something. Said it would "bring us our freedom".

ZEKETIM

Let me guess, you think this is what he discovered?

AZAKIR

It must have been. Think about it, if we could all use this power...

ZEKETIM

An army wielding holy magic... we'd crush the damned invaders in weeks.

AZAKIR

(Dialogue Prompt)

1: Or they'd crush us.

2: We'd be unstoppable.

ZEKETIM

No way. This power is far greater than whatever Iakus can cook up in their foundries. We'd slaughter them, like they slaughtered us during the war.

The two keep progressing deeper into the ruins. Another glowing rune is found along the way. Approaching this one teaches the player the keywords "ICE" and "BEAM".

An uncrossable chasm blocks the way.

AZAKIR

Hold on...

The player must utilize their keywords to cross the chasm. The spell "CREATE ICE BEAM" can be used to make a bridge of ice, or players can experiment and find another path. The spell "CREATE FORCE BEAM" can launch Zeketim ahead across the Chasm, for example.

If the player launches Zeketim.

ZEKETIM

Warn me before you do something like that! I almost had a heart attack!

After crossing the chasm.

ZEKETIM

Damn useful, this is.

AZAKIR
Quite.

Eventually, the two finally find a path that leads back into the mines. Azakir and Zeketim have a short conversation before ascending.

ZEKETIM
A way out!

AZAKIR

We should move quickly. The guards are probably doing a head count right now.

ZEKETIM

Right. Best not to be seen down here. The Praxis will call us heretics for even breathing near this place.

Shouts and screams can be heard above from the mine

ZEKETIM
What's happening up there?

AZAKIR

(Dialogue prompt)

1: Lets move, hurry! (Initiates a head on charge, no stealth).

2: Quiet, if somethings up, we should keep hidden. (Initiates a brief stealth section, player must sneak up into the mines and get the jump on the enemy).

Regardless of choice, Zeketim joins the player's party temporarily, and a tutorial prompt teaches the player about party organization.

Azakir and Zeketim charge through the tunnels, shouts and screams getting louder all around them. A Point of interest pans the camera over to a blood splatter on the wall.

AZAKIR
Gods-on-high, what's happening?

ZEKETIM
Nothing good. Iakan military, I'd wager. We need to hurry!

A point of interest pans the camera to a discarded sword and pickaxe.

ZEKETIM
Best we arm ourselves.

AZAKIR
(Dialogue prompt)

- 1: *Take the sword.* Let's move.
- 2: *Take the pickaxe.* Let's move.

If the player takes the sword, their melee attacks will be more powerful and faster. The pickaxe is clunkier and does less damage. Allowing Zeketim to take the sword will grant the player a positive reputation with him.

The two continue, eventually encountering a group of Iakan Elites.

IAKAN ELITE #1
Survivors!

IAKAN ELITE #2
By order of the Clergy!

The Iakan Elites attack, and the player must fight them off. If the player chose to sneak into the mines initially, they get an opportunity to surprise attack, catching the elites off guard and gaining the player an advantage. Tutorial Prompts teach the player how to use melee attacks, and also encourage the player to experiment with their spells in combat.

If the player uses The Scribe's Voice to attack the Iakan Elites

IAKAN ELITE #1
Unholy magics!

ZEKETIM
Feel the wrath of Kar-Reak's gods!

Once the enemies are defeated.

AZAKIR
The military, here?

ZEKETIM

These ones are dressed differently from the usual guard. What's going on?

Azakir and Zeketim continue through the mines. Various bodies can be seen within the tunnels. Some are Iakan Elites, some are miners. Eventually, the player comes across a group of miners captured by a group of Iakan Elites. The Elites initially don't notice the player.

ZEKETIM
(whispering)
Look! We need to help them!

AZAKIR
(Dialogue prompt)

- 1: Right! On my mark! (Gives good reputation)**
2: Too risky. Forget about them. (Gives evil reputation)

If the player does not choose option 1, they leave and avoid a significant amount of combat. The miners can be heard screaming as Azakir and Zeketim walk away

ZEKETIM
 We could have saved them...

AZAKIR
 We'd just have died alongside them. Our lives are more valuable.

ZEKETIM
 Who says so? They're our people, Azakir! We need to stand together.

AZAKIR
 I'd rather save my own skin than risk it for strangers.

This choice also grants significant negative reputation with Zeketim

If the player chooses option 1, they attack, giving the miners an opening:

MINER #1
 To arms!

MINER #2
 Death to Iakus!

MINER 3
 Quickly, now's our chance!

MINER 4
 We fight with you!

The miners will pick up nearby equipment and help Azakir and Zeketim fight off the Elites.

After the battle is won:

MINER #1
 Gods-on-high, I can't thank you enough. Damn Iakans would have slaughtered us without you two...

AZAKIR
 What happened here?

MINER #1
 Soldiers just stormed through and started swinging! We were caught off guard, didn't have time to get out.

MINER #2

I heard one mention something about... precursors?

ZEKETIM

They could be looking for the ruins!

AZAKIR

Good thing we left, then. Let's go!

The miners continue to follow the player and assist in combat. Several more groups of Elites are encountered, the player must fight through them all. Eventually, the player and Zeketim find an exit to the mines.

ZEKETIM

Lets get out of here!

MINER #1

We won't forget your help today. We live because of you.

MINER #2

If we meet again, I owe you a great debt!

MINER #3

Aye. I'll repay this kindness one day.

MINER #4

Thank you! Thank you!

The miners exit first, followed by the Azakir and Zeketim. The exit seems to be unguarded and is a ways away from the mine's main entrance. A crowd of people can be seen far away gathered in front of the main entrance, with soldiers guarding the perimeter. A non-interactive scene begins.

Azakir and Zeketim stealthily sneak amongst the crowd, blending in. Noboronama, the head priest of Teloth, is seen alongside a few Iakan Elites.

ZEKETIM

Of course that bastard is behind this...

A brief flashback plays of Noboronama ordering Mazakar arrested, overlaying the scene before fading.

AZAKIR

Wouldn't put it past him...

Azakir and Zeketim move closer to eavesdrop. A point of interest pans the camera to focus in on the conversation between Noboronama and an Iakan Elite

IAKAN ELITE
High Priest, it is done.

NOBORONAMA
(Dismayed)
Survivors?

IAKAN ELITE
None, as ordered, milord.

NOBORONAMA
(Shaking head)

Necessary. Cruel, but necessary. Secure the mines, cordon off the area. I'll see to it the precursor artifacts are destroyed myself.

IAKAN ELITE
Milord, leave that work to us. You should be returning to-

NOBORONAMA
No. Focus on guarding the area. I need to see this through with my own hand.

IAKAN ELITE
But-

NOBORONAMA
That is an order, soldier.

The Elite moves to object but slinks off. Noboronama sighs, hangs his head low, and descends into the mines.

NOBORONAMA
Such a senseless waste of life. Sargamathara's blessings be upon these people...

Noboronama descends out of view.

ZEKETIM
Blessings from a false god.

He spits on the ground.

ZEKETIM
This massacre was his doing!

AZAKIR
(Dialogue prompt)
1: He'll pay for this...
2: Remain silent.

ZEKETIM

Oh, he'll pay alright. He'll pay...

The crowd eventually disperses, Zeketim and Azakir linger. Iakan Elites still guard the mines, but do not attack, as they did not witness Azakir and Zeketim inside.

ZEKETIM

We made it out... thank the gods, we're alive!

AZAKIR

Thank the gods indeed.

ZEKETIM

That power of yours saved our skin. Thank you, Azakir.

If the player saved the miners:

AZAKIR

I could have saved more... if I'd been faster...

ZEKETIM

What matters is you saved who you could.

AZAKIR

It still wasn't enough. So many are dead down there...

ZEKETIM

And whose fault is that? Yours? No, its those Iakan scum who did this. And now you have the power to stop this from ever happening again!

AZAKIR

A power I know nothing about, mind you.

ZEKETIM

Well then you had better start learning. You can free our people, Azakir! You can free Mazakar! WE can. Together.

AZAKIR

We?

ZEKETIM

Yes, we. We both fought well down there, we've proven that together we can defeat the bastard invaders. Let me fight alongside you. For Kar-Reak. For your brother.

AZAKIR

(Dialogue prompt)

1: Indeed. Let us fight together. (Zeketim becomes a permanent companion.)

2: No, I fight alone. (Zeketim is not recruited, this decision can be reversed.)

ZEKETIM

This is the start of something amazing, my friend. Today, we filed down our chains.

AZAKIR

And tomorrow?

ZEKETIM

We break them.

AZAKIR

For Kar-Reak. For Mazakar.

Non-interactable scene ends.

Azakir and Zeketim walk away from the mines.

ZEKETIM

We should start with figuring out what in the gods name this power of yours is. I might know a guy.

AZAKIR

Enlighten me.

ZEKETIM

Ketzan. Veteran of the invasion. Heard he defended our holy sites from Iakus before they razed them all. Maybe he knows something?

AZAKIR

I recall my brother spoke with him often... perhaps he does.

ZEKETIM

Right then. Meet me in the square tomorrow, we'll go from there.

AZAKIR

Will do. Get some rest Zeketim.

ZEKETIM

You too friend!

Zeketim leaves. The player is prompted to walk home. On their walk, they witness Iakan soldiers harassing a shopkeeper at his stand. If the player gets close, a few soldiers will heckle them.

IAKAN SOLDIER

Ay, get away. Military business. Don't get involved

The player may either keep walking or attack the soldier. Attacking causes the player to enter combat, and if they defeat the soldier, they are rewarded with some good quality weapons and armor and good reputation. The shopkeeper, an elderly man who is clearly not doing too good under Iakan rule, also thanks the player.

SHOPKEEPER

Bless you, child of Kar-Reak. Bless you!

Other events like this one can be encountered on the journey back, and the player is given similar choices. Overall, the events show the cruelty of the occupying Iakan military.

The player is then prompted to continue walking home. Upon reaching Azakir's modest home, a shack out on the outskirts of Teloth, a non-interactive scene begins.

AZAKIR

(Voiceover)

This new power... Mazakar, was this what you found eight years ago?

Azakir sits down on his bed, it creaks under his weight. The furniture all looks like its about to fall apart, the house is clearly in terrible condition.

AZAKIR

(Voiceover)

I'll find you, brother. I swear it. I'll free you...

Azakir lays down and goes to sleep, the sunset can be seen through the window.

[LEVEL ENDS]