

Party Paths

The following pages contain summaries of each party's activities throughout the weekend. They are just that – summaries – and can clearly not explain all the complexities of each party's interactions. They are intended primarily to fill two needs:

- 1) They provide a broad overview to the party's companion, so that s/he is informed of the general direction the party will be taking
and
- 1) They provide each staff person with a chance to see how their interactions with a given party fit into the larger scheme of that party's mission.

Arden

Arden's color is dark green; its crest is an oak tree.

Investigating the charge against: Bracken

Companion: Ari (Susan Gerow)

Mission letter:

My loyal subjects,

I write to you now hoping you can help in Arden's hour of need. As I believe you know, the Duke and I have never been blessed with any children, and as I am no longer such a young woman, I assumed that the Von Marvin line would perish with us. This has always been a personal sadness for me, but it is also a public one. I tell you in confidence that there are many petty and unscrupulous men among my advisors; when Arden is left without an obvious heir, I fear that these men will battle each other for the position. This will surely be to the detriment of our fair duchy.

Then, this spring, a wondrous miracle – I realized that I am with child! Leif's and my heir will be born before the first snowfall! It would seem, then, that all would be well in our household as our prayers for ourselves and for the future of Arden have been answered. Sadly, this is not so.

For centuries now, the birth of every noble child of Arden has been heralded by the lighting of a sacred candle placed proudly in the golden Sconce of the Wood; this holy item's powers help ensure a bright future for the baby. Alas, the Sconce was stolen from us almost eight years ago by a vile scoundrel named Rook. At the time, we did not pursue the villain as we should have. As I said, we believed we would never be blessed with a child of our own and this sadness made us lax in our duties to the duchy.

Now, we pay the price for that negligence. Our advisors are already looking for a reason to discredit our heir in hopes that one of them may someday claim the title of Duke for himself. There is now foul talk circulating that says that, since our baby's birth will not be marked by the lighting of the holy candle, he or she is not really a true child of the Von Marvin line at all!

If these wicked men go to war for control of the duchy, Arden will be torn apart in the process. Our baby must be established as the true and rightful heir to the duchy's throne, and to do that, the Sconce of the Wood must be found and returned to its rightful place in Arden.

I consider it highly likely that the villain Rook has no idea of the might or heritage of the candlestick. To him, I am sure, it is just a chunk of valuable metal. I have asked my sages for help in finding what might have become of the Sconce. Their magic has told them some things – they say that it is in the neighboring duchy of Moreth, in a tiny village called World's Edge, and that they do not believe that Rook ever sold the item. Perhaps he lives there now, with the Sconce adorning his table. More likely, he has hidden it there in some secret cache of plunder. The sages could tell me no more, but suggested that a Ritual of Location, cast in World's Edge itself, might provide more information.

In the hope that the sages are correct, I ask you now to journey to that distant village. I have already sent a message to a woman who resides there, Aria Morgan. She is my bookkeeper's husband's second-cousin and is said to be a good and kind soul. I have asked her to meet you when you arrive in World's Edge; I'm sure my message will arrive before you do, and that she will be expecting you.

I fear I can tell you little about the village to which you journey, save that it is tiny and provincial. It is the sort of place in which the old ways are still very much alive. Probably you will find it to be pastoral and rather dull. Regardless, there are of course dangers present on any journey. This is the case everywhere, but in Moreth – an area of unusually potent magical energy – it is especially true. Truly, there is no telling what you might encounter there. Protect yourselves and each other.

I realize that this journey will take you away from home during the upcoming Rites of Remembrance, and I thank you for agreeing to this mission. Although it is of course possible to observe this sacred occasion and honor our beloved dead wherever we might find ourselves, it is not lost on me what I am asking of you. Know that both your service and your sacrifice are greatly appreciated.

On your quest, you shall no doubt encounter many of the citizens of World's Edge and may also meet travelers from other parts of Lyria. I am sure that you know how important it is that you act as ambassadors of Arden, leaving all you meet speaking well of our fair duchy.

The six of you have been carefully selected for this mission. Each one of you possesses unique skills that will prove invaluable during this quest; remember this when you encounter hardship along the way. I wish you much luck. I pray that a Ritual of Location will indeed find the Sconce and that you can bring it home to Arden. May you be successful on your mission and return to aid the duchy in this hour of great need!

With hope and gratitude,

Duchess Regina Von Marvin of Arden

Contact: Aria Morgan

Activity/Goals: introducing the party to the companion, getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

2nd Friday night encounter: Ursula Smirch

Activity/Goals: getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

3rd Friday night encounter: Nix Valerius

Activity/Goals: walking to their set location / experiencing combat

Item: none

4th Friday night encounter: Isaiah Cooke

Activity/Goals: illiterate letter #1 challenge; communicating despite obstacles

Item: paper listing the items the party will need to acquire (as well as the info about who to get them from)

Set Location: at the Valerius house

Paper listing the needed items/explaining how to use them:

Reckonings 401 Professor Ditherson Friday, Sept. 17th

Various rituals exist for divinings (learning info. about particular subj.) Rit. of Location is one such. (best option? how compares to Spell of Summation?)

To perform, we need:

*a Star of Direction
sm. quantity of locus root
an argentum heart
a limelight
a chaos pendant
a spirit stone
a cowry (sp?) shell
citrine shards
riverglass jewelbox*

Eight ritual participants required; casting ability not needed (so – better than Summation Spell in this regard).

All eight sit in circle, Eldest puts on chaos pendant. Each person holds one item. All pass items (slow) around to the right. Eyes are closed whole time. While passing, all say: "Let all be known. Let all be revealed" (whispering) repeated until all items passed full circuit. When each participant back holding item had at start, eyes opened again. Revelation is granted. (Questions: what happens if item has been destroyed? This material on test???)

Rationale: Isaiah Cooke has been sorting through the papers of a Valerius great-uncle who flunked out of the Crystal Spire.

Keeper's Saturday morning dream:

The mists of the dream swirl around you, orange and red like sunrise. The air is warm upon your skin; you feel the hot pulse of your heartbeat.

There is a woman walking toward you, her hair blown by the sultry breeze. She glows crimson and plum, magenta and aubergine. She holds out a hand to you, an offering, and in her palm, a heart. No horrifying savagery, this, but a token of love. And yet, no lacy frippery, no precious beribboned sweetheart's token. This heart is scarlet and silk, ruby and satin, and it is her own.

The air around her grows warmer still. It drips honey upon her skin. She cups her hand, letting it pool in her palm. She never takes her eyes from you, but she squeezes her fist, hard, and then opens it to show you. There in her hand is a crystal, orangey-gold, the color of jungle cats and flames. She encloses the gem in her fist once more. Your heartbeat is thunder now, impossibly loud, when she opens her hand again the stone is shattered into ten thousand topaz pieces.

She holds forth her hands once more, and now one palm holds the crushed jewel, the other the heart. She spreads her arms wide. "Take," she says, her voice made of amber. She laughs and her eyes are hot and knowing, and then the darkness rises around her and you see no more.

Explanation: The vision shows the citrine shards and leads the party to Valentina.

1st Saturday morning encounter: Kiko Truthspeaker

Activity/Goals: cup of insight challenge; learning about partymates

Item: locus root

Set Locations: meet party in tavern, bring them back to the Makai Camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Buzzkill

Activity/Goals: perfectly good bucket challenge; practicing brainstorming, building on partymates' ideas

Item: none (he'll give them the chaos pendant in the tavern at 9:45am Sunday)

Times available (roughly): 11am-6pm

Usually found: Crabtree & Evelyn's

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Pascal Valerius

Activity/Goals: combat teamwork challenge; becoming more comfortable with combat, working as a team

Item: star of direction

Times available (roughly): 8am-1pm

Usually found: at the Valerius house

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Karmin Smirch**Activity/Goals:** Smirch jingle challenge; being creative, working collaboratively**Item:** riverglass jewelbox**Times available (roughly):** 9-11am, 1-4pm, 6-8pm**Usually found:** at the Smirches' shop**Saturday unscheduled encounter:** Valentina**Activity/Goals:** BS! challenge; recounting fun adventures, being creative**Item:** citrine shards**Times available (roughly):** 10am-4pm**Usually found:** in the Roamer camp**Saturday unscheduled encounter:** Charlie Peacock**Activity/Goals:** perfect square challenge; working as a team, communicating in unique scenarios**Item:** cowry shell**Times available (roughly):** 1-6pm**Usually found:** in the Peacock Family Singers' camp**Saturday unscheduled encounter:** Moxie**Activity/Goals:** test of 10 challenge; acknowledging different areas of expertise within the party**Item:** riddle leading to the argentum heart**Times available (roughly):** 10am-5pm**Usually found:** in the cultists' compound in Greystone Clearing**Saturday unscheduled encounter:** Obsidian**Activity/Goals:** philanthropy challenge for Stevie Peacock; solving open-ended problems, taking moral responsibility**Item:** spiritstone**Times available (roughly):** 8am-12noon, 2-4pm**Usually found:** wandering**Saturday unscheduled encounter:** Ghost Theater**Activity/Goals:** ghost theater challenge; taking responsibility for each other's safety, communicating non-verbally**Item:** limelight**Times available (roughly):** 4 – 8pm**Usually found:** in the Ghost Theater**Riddle Text:***Argentum**– author unknown, from Anthology of Verse of Western Lyria*

*That lovely warm and laughing girl
More dear to me than all the world:
The light that glowed within her hair...
The scarlet gown that she would wear...
Oh, the light in her eyes!
Oh, the heat of her sighs!
Oh, my sweet bonny prize!
Bewitched me as I watched her there.*

*When the night was cold and lonely,
Burned for me and for me only.
She kept away the bitter chill.
Her home upon that wintry hill
Was kept all alight
With the sounds of delight,
As I lay through the night
Beside her, as young lovers will.*

*Time did pass and I grew bolder
Breathing on her rosy shoulder.
As the light of day's expiring
Still she danced on, never tiring.
The time we spent alone
In that spot 'long the Rhone,
The delights we had known,
Served just to increase desiring.*

*I pressed my girl for more and more
But got more than I'd bargained for.*

*Once I feared that I would shame her,
But her love it had enflamed her,
And my subtle fashion
Was only a flash in
The face of her passion
Then there was nothing would tame her.*

*Eyes that looked but to extol her
Saw that I could not control her;
For this love, it had exceeded
Anything I'd wanted, needed.
I cried out to the sky
"A wretched man am I!
Now one of us must die!"
And the mindful heavens heeded.*

*Then the icy rain poured down
And she was driven to the ground.
She was snapping, hissing, crying
As she danced her dance of dying.
No matter what you have wished
Your heart, it is anguished
When love is extinguished.
Those who say different are lying.*

*Years now hence, I find feet steering
Me toward that once-happy clearing
I was so young then, so undaunted...
Now though, my tired heart is haunted.
Though I am bent and old,
Her grave is ashen-cold.
Her sin? If it is told
Is this – giving what I wanted.*

Goals: encouraging close observation of natural surroundings, practicing puzzle-solving

Item: argentum heart

Location to which party is directed: Hopefully the party will guess that the "she" in the riddle is actually a fire. If they follow the location references ("long the Rhone" and "her home upon that wintry hill") they will be led to Winterhill Clearing. In the clearing is a fire-circle, and a fist-sized silver heart is hidden amongst the ashes.

Keeper's Sunday morning dream:

The murk of the dream swirls around you and then lightens, but only barely. The lantern glows black. The air pulses and throbs with sound, the drums like the beating of a mighty heart. It is everywhere, reverberating through you. A needle-thin lance of light pierces the darkness. It beams brittle-bright against the crystals and then splinters into a million rainbow shards that shatter, scatter, fall to the floor, trampled beneath the pounding feet of the mob. And o, the crowd! They are many but they are one, a writhing mass of limbs and sweat and want. It is the darkest hour but they are miles from sleep, driven into a welcome mass madness. They raise their voices but you cannot hear them over the great chanting thrum. They are anonymous here, this disordered order, held secret under the black lamp, lit shimmer-dark by its unearthly light. If the dawn is coming, it is no concern of theirs, and they gyrate in the hot velvet shadows and then the throbbing and the wanting and the writhing pulls you under and you see no more.

Explanation: This vision shows the Order of the Black Lantern and suggests that it is a club of a different sort than the party (and Bracken) might have originally thought.

Sunday morning penultimate step: getting the chaos pendant from Buzzkill

Scheduled for: 9:45am Sunday

Location: Buzzkill will meet the party in the tavern

Sunday morning final step: battling Morgoth for the Sconce of the Wood

Scheduled for: 10am Sunday

Location: the entrance to the Wild Lands

Clairia

Clairia's color is white; its crest is an eagle.

Investigating the charge against: Danny Donovan

Companion: Clementine (Britt Rothauser)

Mission letter:

My good people,

I write to you now with a heart heavy with worry. I am filled with concern, not just for a troubled young friend, but for our duchy as a whole. Forgive me. In my anxiety I do not explain myself well.

As I am sure you already realize, the death of Duke Winston was a sad blow to our duchy. Barely past his prime, he should have had many good years of governance left. Still, his heart was not strong, and it was his time to go. His son Matthew, though only fourteen years old, has assumed his proper place as Duke now.

Matthew is sensible and thoughtful; he will make an excellent leader some day. I mean no disrespect to him – in truth, I care deeply for the boy – when I now say that his age and inexperience are problematic at present. Perhaps this would not be so if it were not for the presence of Seymour and Tillman, Winston's unscrupulous younger brothers. Each feels that the ducal mantle would rest better on his own shoulders, and the two work in concert to undermine Matthew's every move.

Already this deficiency in Clairia's highest office is being felt. When Matthew authorized the giving of alms to the poor, Seymour was mysteriously unable to find the keys to the ducal treasury. Caravans of food that Matthew ordered sent to the orphanages were held up in some sort of bureaucratic nonsense of Tillman's devising. In truth, Matthew is as wise and good as his father, but he needs some force to give strength to his governance. His decisions are always correct, I feel, but they are meaningless without some power to ensure they come to fruition.

Last night I fell asleep while contemplating these woes. I dreamt of a man with powerful chiseled features. His hair and eyes were black as coal and his robes were a marvelous shade of red. Strength emanated from the man like light from a flame. I sensed that here was a man whose every edict was carried out, as he intended it. No one would dare toy with the plans and designs of this man.

And in my head, just before I awoke, a deep voice spoke, saying "The staff of Ignatius must be brought to Clairia."

The dream suggested that the staff could somehow be found in the duchy of Moreth, in a tiny village called World's Edge. In the hope that my dream holds real meaning, I ask you now to journey to that distant village. I have already sent a message to someone I believe is currently in residence there, a woman called Moxie. She is a distant relation of my cook's next-door neighbor and he assures me she is a good and kind soul who can be trusted. I have asked her to meet you when you arrive in World's Edge; I trust my message will arrive before you do, and that she will be expecting you.

I fear I can tell you little about the village to which you journey, save that it is tiny and provincial. It is the sort of place in which the old ways are still very much alive. Probably you will find it to be pastoral and rather dull. Regardless, there are of course dangers present on any journey. This is the case everywhere, but in Moreth – an area of unusually potent magical energy – it is especially true. Truly, there is no telling what you might encounter there. Protect yourselves and each other.

I realize that this journey will take you away from home during the upcoming Rites of Remembrance, and I thank you for agreeing to this mission. Although it is of course possible to observe this sacred occasion and honor our beloved dead wherever we might find ourselves, it is not lost on me what I am asking of you. Know that both your service and your sacrifice are greatly appreciated.

On your quest, you shall no doubt encounter many citizens of World's Edge and also meet travelers from other parts of Lyria. I am sure you know how important it is that you act as ambassadors of Clairia, leaving all you meet speaking well of our fair duchy.

The six of you have been carefully selected for this mission. Each one of you possesses unique skills that will prove invaluable during this quest; remember this when you encounter hardship along the way. I wish you much luck. I pray that the staff of Ignatius may indeed be found, and that it will lend the much needed strength to Matthew's leadership. May your mission be successful in bringing aid to our duchy!

With hope and gratitude,

Master Timothy Stone, head tutor to the ducal house of Clairia

Contact: Moxie

Activity/Goals: introducing the party to the companion, getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

2nd Friday night encounter: Brimstone

Activity/Goals: getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

3rd Friday night encounter: Pascal Valerius

Activity/Goals: walking to their set location / experiencing combat

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Item: none

4th Friday night encounter: Lenora Graves

Activity/Goals: icky liquor challenge; practicing brainstorming, building on partymates' ideas

Item: paper listing the items the party will need to acquire (as well as the info about who to get them from)

Set Location: at the Valerius house

Paper listing the needed items/explaining how to use them:

Have been interested lately in this idea of summoning the staff of Ignatius from the Elemental Plane of Fire. Must find time to try this, assuming can find needed materials. (Note to self: why are pants so much smaller than they used to be? Causes chafing and other discomfort. Larger pants for all! Write letter to Editor on this subject.)

For summoning staff, research indicates that the following are needed:

*fool's gold
small quantity of featherflame herb
favor from the Court of Mirrors
silver amulets from the summoner's homeland (one for each summoner)
a phoenix egg
gold essence
a winterheart gem
a dragon's-egg ring
a carbon key*

When ready to summon, put on amulet. Kindle a small fire. Place fool's gold, favor, egg, heart-gem, ring, and gold essence equally spaced around fire.

Cast the herb and the key into the fire while calling out the magical ritual words in a grand and strong voice. (Note to self: why are the younger casters today all muttering their ritual words? Treason, I say! Comes from improper nutrition. Write letter to Editor on this subject.)

Ritual words as follows: "Flame and fire, smoke and soot. We summon you, o staff. Come to us now from the Plane of Fire, for our need of you is great. Incineradum!"

Ritual must be performed in correct spot. horse-ring on left side of Gilded Way while walking from tavern toward house. Staff will not appear exactly in same spot but more likely nearby, most probably between two horse barns.

Rationale: This paper was found among the belongings of Petrus Valerius, a caster. Lenora Graves is cataloging these papers.

Keeper's Saturday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream swirls and burns around you and then lightens just barely. Charcoal tendrils of smoke wisp upward. You stand before a great iron door, impossibly huge and burnt-blackened. The handle sears your palm, but for naught: it is locked tight.

Behind you, you hear the hiss and crackle, and you turn. She is there, stepping forth from the ashes, rising phoenixlike from the fire and she studies you blaze-blasé. Her eyes are pale cold blue and her hair is pale cold bronze and her skin is pale cold cream, but she is cloaked in soot-black and she smolders. The coals blossom red and orange around her and she steps in foglike on little cat feet, her gaze never leaving you.

She moves assured to the great door, and at her touch it swings open. She holds out one graceful hand and when she opens it, you see the key rest easy on her palm, and then the smoky pitch darkness rises up once again and you see no more.

Explanation: The vision shows the Carbon Key and will (hopefully!) lead the party to Ember

1st Saturday morning encounter: Dramina

Activity/Goals: marble maze challenge; working as a team

Item: dragon's egg ring

Set Locations: meet party in tavern, bring them back to Inspirations Unlimited

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Adina Valerius

Activity/Goals: combat teamwork challenge; becoming more comfortable with combat, working as a team

Item: none (she'll give them the silver snowflake amulets in the tavern at 10am Sunday)

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm

Usually found: at the Valerius house

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Kyson Wayseeker

Activity/Goals: cup of insight challenge; learning about partymates

Item: featherflame herb

Times available (roughly): 10am-4pm

Usually found: in the Makai camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Natasha

Activity/Goals: BS! challenge; recounting fun adventures, being creative

Item: winterheart gem

Times available (roughly): 12noon-8pm

Usually found: in the Roamer camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Jack Johnson

Activity/Goals: perfect square challenge; working as a team, communicating in unique scenarios

Item: fool's gold

Times available (roughly): 11-6pm

Usually found: in the Peacock Family Singers' camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Cal Coleman

Activity/Goals: observation challenge; paying attention to their surroundings, including each other

Item: gold essence

Times available (roughly): 8am-4pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Bartleby Sprink

Activity/Goals: what a surprise! challenge; creative problem-solving of open-ended problem

Item: riddle leading to the phoenix egg

Times available (roughly): 8-11am, 1-4pm, 6-8pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Ember

Activity/Goals: photography challenge; noticing natural beauty, getting good photos

Item: carbon key

Times available (roughly): 8am-4pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: the Court of Mirrors

Activity/Goals: gauntlet challenge; developing trust and rapport, practicing communication

Item: favor from the Court of Mirrors

Times available (roughly): 4-8pm

Usually found: in the Court of Mirrors

Riddle Text:

*The phoenix-bird is sleek and red
With gold pin-feathers at its head
And oh, it makes a wondrous sight
When taking to the sky in flight.*

*Though not for these it earns my love,
But for the way it lifts above
The ashes cold and bleak. It flies
Up living after some thing dies.
Lilybeth was sweet and fair
With grace and strength beyond compare,
And Frederick was good and kind
With handsome face and clever mind.*

*Lilybeth lived on the hill,
Where deer run free and wind blows chill.
She called to Fred'rick; Thus said she:
"Will you my lifelong husband be?*

*A small snug house is waiting here;
It can be ours within the year.
Come live with me our lives to meld
Here where my family's always dwelled."*

*"I'm sure your house is very fine,"
Said he. "But better still is mine.
Shielded here from cold and snow
Here where the sweet wild roses grow.*

*Truly I wish you as my wife,
Here to share of all of my life.
So leave that place and come to me
And ever happy we shall be."*

But Lilybeth was stubborn too

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*Said she "I will not come to you
And leave my family waiting here
In this fine place I hold so dear."*

*Said Frederick "Well I shan't leave.
And for my part I can't believe
That you so resolute must be.
That now you ne'er will marry me."*

*Though Lilybeth was obstinate,
Her heart was filled with sad regret.
She took a walk her mind to ease
Amongst the quiet of the trees.*

*She walked downhill and mourned her loss;
No bridge nor water did she cross
But wandered where the path ran steep
And woods were dark and still and deep.*

*And Frederick was rueful too
He left his house and walked out through
The village there. He turned then from
The places full of rush and hum.
No want had he for ale or talk,*

*And so away then he did walk
To cross the water's misty track
And bear on then and not look back.
Instead he chose the ill-used trail*

*Off to the left. Then hill and dale
He walked. He passed through glade and glen,
Past great grey stones then down again.
And then he saw, to his surprise,
Lilybeth before his eyes.*

*And she stopped too and stared on back
At him before her on the track.
The happy stream ran cold and clean,
Oblivious, it passed between*

*Where both they - staring, silent - stood
In that most green and lovely wood.
Beth took one step; one dainty foot
Across the stream she slowly put*

*Then stopped. No further would she go
To cross to him. She told him so.
To prove he would, he too did step.
One foot on his own bank he kept.*

*Like hers, his love shone in his eyes,
Like her, he would not compromise.
And thus they stood there till their death,
Young Frederick and Lilybeth.*

*Offers making, answers wielding.
Always loving, never yielding.
In their same form I now do stand,
One foot upon each separate land.*

*One wish, one life, one heart, one mind,
Two shores, two bodies intertwined.
Like the phoenix-bird I grow
Up where they stood so long ago.*

*The lovely phoenix-bird, it flies
Up from the place where some thing dies.*

Goals: encouraging close observation of natural surroundings, practicing puzzle-solving

Item: the phoenix egg

Location to which party is directed: The places where Lilybeth and Frederick are described as living are Hillcrest and Rosedale, respectively. When the two lovers walk, the paths they take are both along the 'Rhone Trail to the place where the trail fords the Summer Stream. At the ford, there is a tree that straddles the stream. The tree has two trunks. The egg is hidden in one of the knots of the tree.

Keeper's Sunday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream swirls around you and then lightens, lightens, till it is bright blinding white as snow on a hillside, dead spectral white as Noise in a pipe.

They stand ghostly pale before you, their skin like old porcelain. They shimmer opalescent, not long for this world. Faded, nearly faded away. They speak soundless and you almost pass by unheeded, but o, do not. Stay, children of the frozen white land, for they have a message if only you are able to hear it.

The ivory smoke rises up, blooming around you like flowers of bone and frost, and then clears again. The letter sits unheeded in a pocket, cloud-crumbled and forgotten. Washed, nearly washed away. Its writing is drowned but this is its true tale to tell, if only you are able to read it. She is there with you then, the young woman, and her eyes burn angry as fire. She has lost the crown which sat paper-perfect upon her brow, has lost so much. The truth could heal her, could rest dove-peaceful against her breast if only you are able to tell it. You open your mouth to speak and then the pearly smoke rises once again and you see no more.

Explanation: This vision shows both the ghosts of the Morg and Honoré's letter to Aria, both of which are faded but also have important messages for the party.

Sunday morning penultimate step: getting the silver snowflake amulets from Adina Valerius

Scheduled for: 10am Sunday

Location: Adina will meet the party in the tavern

Sunday morning final step: summoning the Staff of Ignatius and Ignatius himself

Scheduled for: 10:15am Sunday

Location: both the Staff and Ignatius will be hiding in the horse barns

Dolorón

Dolorón's color is rose; its crest is a crown.

Investigating the charge against: Catherine Carmichael

Companion: Dodi (Maisie Sturtevant)

Mission letter:

My most trusted subjects,

I write in hopes that you can help with a distressing matter.

We citizens of Dolorón are fortunate to live in the most beautiful of Lyria's duchies, home not just to the palace of the King himself, but also the finest theaters, concert halls, museums and gardens. I have much love for all these cultural gems, but to me, the brightest jewel in Dolorón is the Great Library, the largest of its kind in our kingdom.

There are some who would be surprised by my statement. The Library lacks the spectacular architecture of the Dolorón Opera House; it is not situated high on a hill like the Crown Garden of Roses. Its façade is in truth rather drab, and those walking the long corridors between shelves may find its carpets worn and its lighting dim. But on its shelves, there lie the greatest treasures in Dolorón: the writings of the wisest minds in our kingdom and beyond, accessible not just to the wealthy and privileged, but to all.

But now, those wise voices are being silenced. Forgive me. In my concern, I am getting ahead of myself.

Several years ago, one of the Head Librarians, a man named Tesoros White, became convinced only a few people should have access to the Library, seeking to preserve the books in perfect security by locking them away from what he considered the unworthy public.

White slowly grew more and more fanatical in his disdain for the Library's egalitarian mission, eventually going so far as to hire guards to keep "undesirables" from "his" books.

Tesoros White was ultimately relieved of his authority... but at that time, he placed a curse upon the Great Library. It was a slowly-unfolding enchantment, and a quiet one... fitting, I suppose, for a library. First, words began to disappear from pages. Then paragraphs and whole pages simply vanished. Some books are now nothing but collections of blank pages. Tesoros White felt the public did not deserve to read these works, and when the Library refused to lock the books away, he made the very words themselves inaccessible.

I realize this matter might appear trivial. As curses go, it seems minor. There are no flames, no earthquakes, no blood. But for centuries, the Great Library has served to lift up the citizens of Dolorón, the poor as well as the rich, the ignorant as well as the educated. There are many born in poverty who climbed above their humble beginnings using these books as a kind of ladder. But now these books are disappearing.

My trusted advisors have sought some sort of enchantment to remove the curse. They believe they have found one, and have procured the needed components, all save one: pixie dust.

Perhaps you, like me, believed that pixie dust wasn't real, but apparently it is. And apparently, acquiring some is critical if this foul curse is to be lifted. In hopes that this elusive substance may be procured, I ask you now to journey to the duchy of Moreth, to a tiny village called World's Edge, where my advisors think it may be found. I have already sent a message to a gentleman named Mick Peacock whom I believe is currently in residence there. He is my pastry chef's wife's second-cousin, and is said to be a charming fellow. I have asked him to meet you when you arrive in World's Edge; I trust my message will arrive before you do, and that he will be expecting you.

I fear I can tell you little about the village to which you journey, save that it is tiny and provincial. It is the sort of place in which the old ways are still very much alive. Probably you will find it to be pastoral and rather dull. Regardless, there are of course dangers present on any journey. This is the case everywhere, but in Moreth – an area of unusually potent magical energy – it is especially true. Truly, there is no telling what you might encounter there. Protect yourselves and each other.

I realize that this journey will take you away from home during the upcoming Rites of Remembrance, and I thank you for agreeing to this mission. Although it is of course possible to observe this sacred occasion and honor our beloved dead wherever we might find ourselves, it is not lost on me what I am asking of you. Know that both your service and your sacrifice are greatly appreciated.

On your quest, you shall no doubt encounter many citizens of World's Edge and also meet travelers from other parts of Lyria. I am sure you know how important it is that you act as ambassadors of Dolorón, leaving all you meet speaking well of our fair duchy.

The six of you have been carefully selected for this mission. Each one of you possesses unique skills that will prove invaluable during this quest; remember this when you encounter hardship along the way. I wish you much luck. I pray that pixie dust is indeed real. May you find some to lift the curse and return the precious words to our Great Library!

With hope and gratitude,

Duchess Adelia Bellefleur of Dolorón

Contact: Mick Peacock

Activity/Goals: introducing the party to the companion, getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

2nd Friday night encounter: Lexia**Activity/Goals:** getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"**Item:** none**3rd Friday night encounter:** Jpeg**Activity/Goals:** walking to their set location / experiencing combat**Item:** none**4th Friday night encounter:** Phyllis Fieri**Activity/Goals:** what-tree-would-you-be? challenge; learning how others see you, being creative**Item:** paper listing the items the party will need to acquire (as well as the info about who to get them from)**Set Location:** at the FireWaterEarthAirBnB in Rosedale**Paper listing the needed items/explaining how to use them:***Darling Phyllis,**I've been terribly busy of late but today is your lucky day: I've found time to write!**None of the other fellows here in my new office has the slightest idea what he's doing. They're lucky they have me; otherwise the whole place would fall to pieces! I have to spend half my day correcting other people's ignorant misconceptions, but I suppose that's the price one pays for superior intellect.**Just the other day, one of the chaps here – Bigsley is his name – said something about "a pinch of pixie dust", but when I queried him on the subject, it turned out he knew nothing about the stuff, even confessed he thought it wasn't real. Not real! I had to spend most of my afternoon enlightening him.**Probably you're in the dark on the subject just as old Bigsley was, so I'll tell you what I told him: pixies are as real as you are, but a good deal more magical, of course. They're small beings, most of them, although every once in a while there's one that grows nearly human-sized. Lucky is he who's treated to the sight of them cavorting in a woodland glade, all bedecked in their bright finery and lifting their wee jolly voices in laughter!**As for pixie dust, it's powerful stuff. It's not easy to conjure up, of course. Even attempting the ritual requires a extensive collection of magical components:*

- merula-fruit cordial*
- a silver incense-burner*
- whiteleaf sage*
- limelight*
- a signalstone ring*
- a gemwing butterfly*
- water from the River Sigh*
- a seafoam sphere*
- a snake-eye talisman*

*After you've acquired all those things – I'm speaking rhetorically here, of course; this isn't the sort of complicated thing you yourself would want to try – you need to bring them all to the base of a great hill. Over in World's Edge, you'd go to the base of Overlook Hill, on Autumn's Path, I'd assume. You'd light the whiteleaf sage and set it inside the incense burner. Then you'd pour out half the merula-fruit cordial out onto the ground, right there at the base of the hill.**From that point on, the rite would have begun, and none of the people performing it should speak save what the ritual calls for. Those present should arrange themselves in a line, single file, and walk slowly up to the crest of the hill, with the first holding the chain of the incense burner and the last holding the cordial. Once there, they should arrange themselves – still silent, mind – around the ashes of an old fire. The limelight and the gemwing, the river water and the ring, the seafoam sphere and the snake-eye talisman should all be placed atop the ashes. Then all those present should place their right hand atop the incense-burner and their left atop the bottle of cordial. They'd then move their hands in a circle, pouring out the remainder of the merula cordial onto the ashes. Whilst pouring it out, everyone must say together "Let it be done, let it be done, let it be done!"**And if everything has been done correctly: voila, pixie dust!**But I fear I've neglected you horribly in this letter. No doubt you're clamoring to know how I'm doing, and who can blame you? Overall, I've been well, although busy as noted. I expect a promotion any day now. After all, I'm already running the place! I dined out with Humphrey last Saturday and the cod was overcooked. I gave the serving girl several pointers which I'm sure she appreciated. The weather here has been uncomfortably warm, which as you know I cannot abide. I have read several new books, but I fear you'll have to wait to learn my opinion of them. I warn you that it may be more than a week till I can write again. So frightfully much to do when one is as important as I!**Best regards from your favorite, Howard***Rationale:** This letter was sent to Phyllis by a long-ago gentleman admirer.**Keeper's Saturday morning dream:**

The darkness of the dream rises grave-somber around you and then clears, lightens, but only a little. You see her there emerging from the chrysalis-shadows to stand before you, burnished gleaming in the gloom. Her gentle wings flutter-tremble in the mournful air. The years have touched her face, beating moth-gentle against her skin, but she has made a friend of time. She has known the touch of death but she is alive and she is all things beautiful and Bright.

There is a flickering movement, shimmering like jewels in the corner of your vision. It moves toward her, drawn toward her light, fragile but unafraid. Golden topaz and rose-pink rubies glitter on its glimmering wings, a sparkle in the deathly darkness. She sees it, this woman who has seen so much, and she understands the promise of salvation in its glitter-brilliant flight. She reaches out a soft hand, the wind rustling the aqua-azure luster of her skirts. She is morning instead of mourning, and the wee baublebeast senses this. It lands, shining shimmer upon her glistening copper hair and then the dream enfolds safe around her and you see no more.

Explanation: The vision shows the gemwing butterfly and will (hopefully!) lead the party to Eugenie Bright.

1st Saturday morning encounter: Crabtree

Activity/Goals: perfectly good bucket challenge; practicing brainstorming, building on partymates' ideas

Item: snake-eye talisman

Set Locations: meet party in tavern, bring them back to Crabtree & Evelyn's

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Malachi

Activity/Goals: managers & peons challenge; finding new methods of communication, practicing teamwork and cooperation

Item: none (he'll give them the merula-fruit cordial in the tavern at 9:45am Sunday)

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm, 4-8pm

Usually found: in the Roamer camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Isaiah Cooke

Activity/Goals: combat teamwork challenge; becoming more comfortable with combat, working as a team

Item: riddle leading to the silver incense burner

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm

Usually found: at the Valerius house

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Kora Peacekeeper

Activity/Goals: cup of insight challenge; learning about partymates

Item: whiteleaf sage

Times available (roughly): 9am-4pm

Usually found: in the Makai camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Pansy Golden

Activity/Goals: cheer up, Ned! challenge; solving open-ended problems, thinking about other's perspectives

Item: seafoam sphere

Times available (roughly): 8-3pm

Usually found: in the Inn at World's edge, or wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Stevie Peacock

Activity/Goals: pitchpipe challenge; working as a team

Item: signalstone ring

Times available (roughly): 8-11am, 3-8pm

Usually found: in the Peacock Family Singers' camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Eugenie Bright

Activity/Goals: observation challenge; paying attention to their surroundings, including each other

Item: gemwing butterfly

Times available (roughly): 10am-4pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Bracken

Activity/Goals: web-weaving storytelling challenge; being creative, highlighting other's stories

Item: water from the River Sigh

Times available (roughly): 8-11am, 1-4pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Ghost Theater

Activity/Goals: ghost theater challenge; taking responsibility for each other's safety, communicating non-verbally

Item: limelight

Times available (roughly): 4 – 8pm

Usually found: in the Ghost Theater

Riddle Text:

May 16, 938

Dear Diary,

Last night, I had the strangest dream. When I woke, it was so crystal-clear in my mind that I wrote it all down.

In the dream, I saw an elderly woman, dressed as a Keeper would be on a holy day, and when she looked at me, I saw that she had a green gem in the middle of her forehead, so I knew she was a High Priestess of Spring.

In her hands she held the chain of an incense burner, bright silver, and the smoke from it wafted all around so thick I could scarcely see her. She was chanting and I assumed it was a prayer, but when I listened, I realized it was a strange poem instead. This is how it went:

Listen, listen, raise a cup
To those who serve, who liftest up
The high-born ones: the kings, the sires,
For they are naught without their squires.

Pierre who ruled us, great was he!
In our kingdom fine and free,
Near the hearty river's flow
And where the bright-red roses grow.

In stony silence he would stare,
That flinty monarch, King Pierre.
In all our kingdom there could be
None other large and fine as he.

Squires a-plenty had our lord
All proud to serve him we adored.
Many served him, all because
Of just how grand and great he was.

But one foul day the earth did shake
And cruelly did our great king take,
Laying him low and toppling down
Our brave bulwark who'd worn the crown.

Oh, brave Pierre who'd sat the throne,
Our hearts did crack to see him prone!
And this we swore, though he was downed,
We ne'er would lay him on the ground!

Midway are we, no steps yet taken,
There betwixt that glade forsaken
And the span of promised peace.
There you'll find us, without cease.

Small though we are, we bear aloft
Pierre who ruled our simple croft.
Great though he is, we will not let
His body fall; we bear him yet.

Listen folk, hearken to me:
Beneath his body there may be
A treasure found for those deserving.
Where we are waiting, we are serving.

A prize you'll seek, a prize you'll find,
But as you do, bear this in mind:
Gold may tarnish, gems may spill,
But true allegiance never will.

Listen, listen, raise a cup
To those who serve, who liftest up
The high-born ones: the kings, the sires,
For they are naught without their squires.

After she finished chanting, the smoke obscured her completely.

Then the dream changed very dramatically. My mother was there, but she was an octopus. It stopped making much sense after that.

Goals: encouraging close observation of natural surroundings, practicing puzzle-solving

Item: the silver incense-burner

Location to which party is directed: Along Big Bow Trail, halfway between Peaceful Crossing Bridge and the entrance to the Forsaken Forest, is a large rock, fallen over but still held up by a collection of smaller rocks. The incense burner is underneath.

Keeper's Sunday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream swirls around you and then lightens with the shady filtered glow through branches. At the base of the tree, a nest of twigs. It is too small, shoddily made. This wee barracks of sticks, sharp and uncomfortable. Nothing is nearly good enough.

Nearby you see him, robin rose-breast. Poor sad thing, his dull brown-black wing hangs broken. He hops piteous, limp-limbed in his distress, easy prey, and his squawk is a wretched lament.

The light is fading. In the dusky gloom, you almost miss it: the shimmer-glint beneath his feet. Perhaps you are mistaken? But no, it is there. The flash of gold in his talons. He clutches it close and reaches out greed-grasping for more.

Night marches in on swift soldiers'feet. You can barely see, but there is a sound, the feathered beating against the air. Just before he takes flight, the robin turns your way. His glittering eye meets yours. He cocks his head - o! clever trickster! - and then with one strong unfettered flutter he takes to the sky and is gone and then the darkness is complete and you see no more.

Explanation: This vision shows Vernon Gill and suggests both that his injury is feigned and also that he's motivated by greed.

Sunday morning penultimate step: getting the merula-fruit cordial from Malachi

Scheduled for: 9:45am Sunday

Location: Malachi will meet the party in the tavern

Sunday morning final step: conjuring the pixie dust (and, unexpectedly, pixies)

Scheduled for: 10am Sunday

Location: at the top of Overlook Hill; the pixies will be hiding behind the Prosecutor's Pavilion

Elsewhich

Elsewhich's color is grey; its crest is a bunch of grapes.

Investigating the charge against: Evelyn

Companion: Elvie (Christine Huebbe)

Mission letter:

My most loyal subjects,

Throughout my reign I have always found you to be devoted and dependable subjects of the duchy of Elsewhich. For this reason I call upon your aid now, in this time of dire need. Only you can save my beloved daughter and Elsewhich's hope for a peaceful future.

As you know, my daughter Lilith was born quite late in my life, after it was supposed that Ash and I would never produce an heir. As all mothers do, I loved this child purely for her own self. I also rejoiced that the duchy now had a clear successor to the throne and so would be spared dreadful chaos, in the form of political fighting between my dishonorable brothers, when my life someday comes to a close.

Now, on the eve of Lilith's eighth birthday, she lies pale and silent with some grave illness. The local keepers have found nothing wrong with her, yet she grows weaker and weaker with every passing day. They have tried to treat her with their healing prayers, but to no avail. Once Lilith was full of songs and laughter. Now she is perilously near death.

I believe that my dear one's sickness is no natural disease, but rather a magical illness. Several nights ago, I dreamed that a great stone hung around Lilith's neck, but that it might still be possible to lift it from her. The dream suggested that a cure might somehow be found in the duchy of Moreth, in a tiny village called World's Edge. In the hope that my dream is actually true, and not just a mother's desperate wish, I ask you now to journey to that distant village. I have already sent a message to a local woman named Electra; she is my tailor's wife's cousin and he says she is a good and kind soul who can be trusted. My letter should arrive before you do, and I have asked her to meet you when you arrive there. All of Elsewhich will owe you gratitude if only you can find some cure.

I fear I can tell you little about the village to which you journey, save that it is tiny and provincial. It is the sort of place in which the old ways are still very much alive. Probably you will find it to be pastoral and rather dull. Regardless, there are of course dangers present on any journey. This is the case everywhere, but in Moreth – an area of unusually potent magical energy – it is especially true. Truly, there is no telling what you might encounter there. Protect yourselves and each other.

I realize that this journey will take you away from home during the upcoming Rites of Remembrance, and I thank you for agreeing to this mission. Although it is of course possible to observe this sacred occasion and honor our beloved dead wherever we might find ourselves, it is not lost on me what I am asking of you. Know that both your service and your sacrifice are greatly appreciated.

On your quest, you shall no doubt encounter many of the citizens of World's Edge and may also meet travelers from other parts of Lyria. I am sure that you know how important it is that you act as ambassadors of Elsewhich, leaving all you meet speaking well of our fair duchy.

There is one more thing I should tell you, which may or may not prove helpful to you: When this sickness first came upon Lilith, she was delirious and burning with fever. She kept whispering "Bring me the cup", but when water was brought to her, she would not drink it. I do not know what this might mean, but we must overlook nothing in our search for a cure.

The six of you have been carefully selected for this mission. Each one of you possesses unique skills which will prove invaluable during this quest; remember this when you encounter hardship along the way. I pray for the success of your mission. May you come home bearing a cure for my darling child and hope for the future of Elsewhich!

With deepest gratitude,

Duchess Elana Silver of Elsewhich

Contact: Electra

Activity/Goals: introducing the party to the companion, getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

2nd Friday night encounter: Ember

Activity/Goals: getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

3rd Friday night encounter: Kira

Activity/Goals: walking to their set location / experiencing combat

Item: none

4th Friday night encounter: Kerrick Dealbinder

Activity/Goals: cup of insight challenge; learning about partymates, encouraging self-reflection

Item: paper listing the items the party will need to acquire (as well as the info about who to get them from)

Set Location: Makai camp

Paper listing the needed items/explaining how to use them:

Honored Mr. Dealbinder and other Makai friends:

As I said, this remarkable cup confers the most wond'rous of healing powers. Remember, however, that the astounding potency of its magic cannot be made manifest without a specific collection of components and a carefully-conducted ritual. As I give you this cup in repayment for your unsurpassed hospitality (and that delicious cider!) I will include that list of components, along with the concise directions for the ritual, herewith:

*a golden laceleaf pendant
fine Elsewhichian wine (a great quantity thereof!)
a heliotrope candle
a small quantity of folly dust
the Magic Cup itself (of course!)
doveroot seeds
an amethyst sphere
cat's-eye jewelbox
gospel weed*

Lastly but perhaps most important, you must find someone who has magic within, but knows it not. The pendant is worn by that individual. The doveroot seeds, amethyst sphere, cat's-eye jewelbox, gospel weed, and the folly dust are placed gently (no splashing!) in a large container of Elsewhichian wine. Everyone present must then gather round, as the heliotrope candle is lit, and the Ritual Words spoken three times. The Ritual Words are as follows:

Let us now this magic do. Let these words be spoken true. When this cleansing rite is through, let this Cup be made anew.

While everyone is speaking the person wearing the pendant must then wash the Cup in the enchanted wine. This ritual will release the healing magic in the Cup. The next person to drink from the Cup will be healed of all illness!

Mark my words: this is a splendidly robust enchantment, and one that you should be loathe to forget. Commit the list to memory, or else be sure to keep this written account safe! You shall forevermore be glad you did.

In your lifelong service, Dartmoor,

Wandering Merchandiser

Rationale: This letter was left with Dealbinder by a wandering peddler

Keeper's Saturday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream swirls around you and then lightens, lightens, to the ivory pewter half-light of dawn. It is time at last! Her day, they call it, but but truly it is their day. After so long. In the distance, like a tintinnabulation, you hear it: a pinging, a dingding, a ringing. You are wanted. You are called.

She moves silver-bright toward you, her joy a chime in the air. Her laughter peals snowy white and her eyes sparkle. Above her, the very trees tinkle and jingle to sound the happy news. From one amber-golden bough, a leaf shakes loose. Eaten away by insects and time, it is a gilded filigree against the heavens.

She walks lightly to greet the day. A breeze rustles around her and the honey-colored leaf falls, delicate and perfect, to rest in her cupped palm. She gazes curious upon it, wondering what to make of it. Ask not for whom she tolls, for you know she tolls for you. And then the shining shimmer light intensifies and rises and you see no more.

Explanation: The vision shows the gold laceleaf pendant and will (hopefully!) lead the party to Belle Bishop

1st Saturday morning encounter: Mila

Activity/Goals: grab-bag storytelling challenge; being creative, working collaboratively

Item: amethyst sphere

Set Locations: meet party in tavern, bring them back to the Roamer camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Teknos

Activity/Goals: marble maze challenge; working as a team

Item: none (he'll give them the Elsewhichian wine in the tavern at 9:45am Sunday)

Times available (roughly): 10am-3pm

Usually found: at Inspirations Unlimited

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Danny Donovan

Activity/Goals: combat teamwork challenge; becoming more comfortable with combat, working as a team

Item: crummy magic chalice

Times available (roughly): 10am-4pm

Usually found: at the Valerius house

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Belle Bishop

Activity/Goals: what-tree-would-you-be? challenge; learning how others see you, being creative

Item: gold laceleaf pendant

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm

Set Location: at the FireWaterEarthAirBnB in Rosedale

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Donna Peacock

Activity/Goals: perfect square challenge; working as a team, communicating in unique scenarios

Item: cat's-eye jewelbox

Times available (roughly): 12noon-8pm

Usually found: in the Peacock Family Singers' camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Fenwick Michaels

Activity/Goals: charmed I'm sure challenge; learning names, getting comfortable, being creative and silly

Item: gospel weed

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm, 6-8pm

Usually found: at the prosecutor's pavilion

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Pearl Bryce

Activity/Goals: double-mute charades challenge; collaborating with another party, communicating despite obstacles

Item: riddle leading to the heliotrope candle

Times available (roughly): 10am-4pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Samuelson

Activity/Goals: what a surprise! challenge; creative problem-solving of open-ended problem

Item: doverroot seeds

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm, 6-8pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: (mad) Lincroft Spence

Activity/Goals: mind of a madman challenge; working as a team, examining behaviors

Item: folly dust

Times available (roughly): 4 - 8pm

Usually found: Lincroft Spence will be in front of the tavern whenever he's available for this challenge

Riddle Text:

Dearest Elizabeth,

Dearest Cassandra,

Dearest Kathryn,

Dearest Margaret,

By the time you read this, I shall be far, far away. Forgive me that I could not stay here and be your faithful husband. I am a wandering spirit, and the road again calls out to me. As you know, you have always been my only love. Those others meant nothing to me.

In leaving this day, I do what I must to stay happy and free. And I know that if I am happy, you are happy too, my sweet, for so great is your love for me. Yet still I fear you will pine for me; I have had that effect on others in the past. To soothe your lonely heart, I have left behind a treasure for you, a magical candle. It is a most marvelous item, capable of working much beneficial magic, and it's that purple color you like, except that you have the fancy name for it. Remembering your love of riddles and stories, I have left you this clue. Follow it, and it will lead you to the treasure's hiding place:

*We two sisters stand together,
Separate still but joined forever,
Heads to sky and feet to earth,
In sun and rain and windswept weather,*

*As we have stood since long ago.
Listen now our tale to know:
We will tell you all there is
About our home along the bow.*

*Fair were we, and strong and clever,
With skin as brown as sparrow's feather,
Our dainty feet upon grey rock
Like slippers of the softest leather.*

*Suitors came there to endeavor
Our sweet bond to finally sever,
Spoke to us "O forest sisters,
Cleave apart and to us tether."*

Six-score paces they had taken

600 - Party Paths

*From the ancient wood forsaken.
All the way to autumn's walk?
Oh no, friends. You are mistaken.*

*We sent them all away dejected.
"Our sister-bond shall be protected."
Tossed our spring-green hair defiant
And their love-suits all rejected.*

*But as for you, you give us pleasure,
And so we'll tell: we have a treasure!
It can be yours. 'Tis ours to give you:
Bold and bright in equal measure.*

*The candle burns but does not blind us;
Plain to tell: it is behind us.
Know this, friends, 'tis up to you;
All you need to do is find us.*

*We two sisters parting never,
Heads apart but feet together.
And the light that we've kept hidden?
It shall be yours now and ever.*

*I must close now. Goodbye, my dearest Margaret. I will always remember your beautiful blue eyes.
Ever faithful, Arturo*

postscript - Unless you were the one with the brown eyes, in which case please disregard.

Goals: encouraging close observation of natural surroundings, practicing puzzle-solving

Item: heliotrope candle

Location to which party is directed: Walking "south" on Big Bow, approximately 120 paces beyond the entrance to the Forsaken Forest, on the left side of the path there are two joined trees with their roots spreading over a grey rock. The candle is hidden behind the trees (that is, away from the path.)

Keeper's Sunday morning dream:

The mists of the dream swirl around and then slowly dissipate. Before you, you see a young girl, not yet ten years old. She is pale and wan, her dark eyes huge in her small face. She is watching you, entreating.

She lays in a large wooden bed elaborately carved with grapevines and hummingbirds. Covered with heavy grey velvet blankets, the child still shivers. Her eyes never leave you. Ancient silver rings glint on her small fingers. She pulls the covers tightly up around her chin, but the mist of dawn is stealing into the room. Its whitish haze obscures her from your sight.

When it clears, you see another girl, older than first, but only just barely grown to womanhood. Her clothes are simple, the green of the grass, the white of the snow. Her face is unmarked, but when you squint, you can see the tattoo traceries that await her. Muscles flex in her capable arms. She strides forth, purpose in her step.

Somehow, she has entered the other's luxurious room. Her simple clothing is out of place here, but if she notices she gives no sign. She moves straightaway to the bed. Her strong tanned fingers are gentle when they caress the tiny pale face in the bed.

While you watch the young woman, a light begin to glow, seemingly within her chest. You wait for her to notice, but she is oblivious to it. It glows purple, like a light shining through a colored lantern, brighter and brighter. It glows within her, this warm and magical light, and she knows it not.

The young woman holds forth a cup, and in a voice old beyond her years, says "Take, little one. Take and drink." And the pale little girl in the bed smiles at last.

Explanation: The vision (hopefully) suggests that Kira is the one who has magical ability but doesn't know it, and that she is thus the one who can successfully do the ritual with the magic cup.

Sunday morning penultimate step: getting the Elsewhichian wine from Teknos

Scheduled for: 9:45am Sunday

Location: Teknos will meet the party in the tavern and will then lead them to the wine

Sunday morning final step: consecrating the magical healing cup with Kira

Scheduled for: 10am Sunday

Location: Kira will walk with the party to Winterhill Clearing, where she will perform the ritual

Glendeep

Glendeep's color is pale green; its crest is an arch.

Investigating the charge against: Aesthetika

Companion: Gloucester (Brian Neff)

Mission letter:

My good people,

As you well know, we lucky residents of Glendeep have long enjoyed a peace and prosperity that many of our land-dwelling friends can only dream of. Perhaps that very peace has made us complacent, even careless.

Forgive me. My great worry has robbed me of my ability to speak clearly. Let me take you into my confidence and fully explain:

In the long-past days when Glendeep sat on land like all the other Lyrian duchies, there was great inequity between those of noble and common birth. The noble families – mine very much included – lived in luxury in the great castles, while poorer families barely survived, left to eke out an existence farming the stony hillsides and often called upon to send their daughters and sons to fight and die in endless territory skirmishes.

Happily, recent generations have seen a much more equitable life for all of us. But not all the noble folk of Glendeep consider these changes to be a positive development.

I have only recently learned that a small but powerful faction of noble families wish to return our duchy to a system of greater disparity between rich and poor. They want to reinstate brutally high taxes on commoners and to conscript those who cannot pay into a military force "to defend Glendeep", although presumably the only defense needed would be against those who oppose their oppressive rule.

Rest assured that I will defend a more equitable Glendeep as long as there is breath in my body. But of course I will not live forever.

After hoping so long for a child, my wife and I have at last been blessed with the birth of a young son. It has been suggested that this faction might attempt violence against my boy, either to use him as a twisted sort of bargaining chip, or possibly to supplant my family altogether.

I am desperate to protect young Elijah, partially of course because of a father's great love, but also because I fear for Glendeep's future. But I do not know exactly who among the other nobles may prove traitorous, and my wife and I cannot watch Elijah constantly and also govern.

I sought the counsel of my most trusted advisor, Glendeep's High Priestess of Spring, asking how I might protect my sweet son. After much prayer on the subject, she relayed a dream she had, which is cryptic but perhaps presents a shred of hope.

The dream suggested that Elijah will be kept safe if we can use something called a "Ritual of Reclamation" to acquire the sword of Lorelei. I have never heard of anyone called Lorelei, nor do I know why her sword is special, but I have great faith in the High Priestess. According to her, the sword may be found in the duchy of Moreth, in a tiny village called World's Edge. In the hope that Glendeep and my own sweet son may be kept safe, I ask you now to journey to that distant village. I have already sent a message to a woman named Celeste Wilde whom I believe is temporarily in residence there. Ms. Wilde is my bookkeeper's husband's second-cousin and he assures me she is a delightful and trustworthy soul. I have asked her to meet you when you arrive in World's Edge; I trust my message will arrive before you do, and that she will be expecting you.

I fear I can tell you little about the village to which you journey, save that it is tiny and provincial. It is the sort of place in which the old ways are still very much alive. Probably you will find it to be pastoral and rather dull. Regardless, there are of course dangers present on any journey. This is the case everywhere, but in Moreth – an area of unusually potent magical energy – it is especially true. Truly, there is no telling what you might encounter there. Protect yourselves and each other.

I realize that this journey will take you away from home during the upcoming Rites of Remembrance, and I thank you for agreeing to this mission. Although it is of course possible to observe this sacred occasion and honor our beloved dead wherever we might find ourselves, it is not lost on me what I am asking of you. Know that both your service and your sacrifice are greatly appreciated.

On your quest, you shall no doubt encounter many of the citizens of World's Edge and may also meet travelers from other parts of Lyria. I am sure you know how important it is that you act as ambassadors of Glendeep, leaving all you meet speaking well of our fair duchy.

The six of you have been carefully selected for this mission. Each one of you possesses unique skills that will prove invaluable during this quest; remember this when you encounter hardship along the way. I wish you much luck. I pray that the sword of Lorelei is indeed in World's Edge and that a Ritual of Reclamation can find it. May you be successful on your mission and return to aid our duchy as well as my own family.

With hope and gratitude,

Duke Galileo DelMar of Glendeep

Contact: Celeste Wilde

Activity/Goals: introducing the party to the companion, getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

2nd Friday night encounter: Adina Valerius

Activity/Goals: getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

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Item: none

3rd Friday night encounter: Kora Peacekeeper

Activity/Goals: walking to their set location / experiencing combat

Item: none

4th Friday night encounter: Kemma Runereader

Activity/Goals: cup of insight challenge; learning about partymates, encouraging self-reflection

Item: paper listing the items the party will need to acquire (as well as the info about who to get them from)

Set Location: Makai camp

Paper listing the needed items/explaining how to use them:

K.R. – Here's that rite we were talking about. Can't think what you'd actually use it for, but of course there's plenty I don't know about. Best of luck to any poor sap who actually decides to try it, since the list of ritual components is a mile long.

Ritual of Reclamation (Seasons forbid anyone name these damn things something monosyllabic) Gather together:

*a rose-quartz orb
a revels cup
a brimstone egg
a viper's-eye pendant
a ghost key (whatever the hell that is)
a quantity of folly dust
devil's-fire whiskey (these old school ritual-writers were soused half the time, I think)
a spring tambourine
a shadow ward*

As if acquiring all that wasn't already a big enough pain in the ass, the first step of the ritual is "place the shadow ward on someone and wait at least one year, and preferably five years or longer." So I hope the sap doing the ritual isn't in any sort of hurry.

Once you're ready to begin (if you haven't already died of old age) gather together seven people: the one who's got the shadow ward on, plus six others. None of them need to be keepers, though it doesn't hurt if they are.

Pour the devil's-fire into your revel's cup; have one person carry the cup. Have another one hold the rose-quartz, another the brimstone egg, another the ghost key, another the folly dust. Put the viper's-eye pendant on another. Give the tambourine to the person with the shadow ward.

Start your ritual in holy ground BUT (more pain in the ass) NOT the holy ground where you'll complete the ritual. Here in World's Edge, I'd choose Fern Grotto, for reasons that'll be clear in a minute.

All together, the seven people speak these words: "The bound shall be free. The weak shall be strong. The lost shall be found." Then they form a line with the ward-wearer first. She shakes the tambourine while the whole group walks to holy ground. (See, if you took my advice and started in the Grotto, you only have to listen to the damn tambourine while you walk to the Shrine of AllSeasons. You're welcome.)

No one but the ward-wearer may speak. As they enter the holy ground, she alone repeats the words: "The bound shall be free. The weak shall be strong. The lost shall be found."

And then presto, I guess, the ward-wearer can do... something? Find a lost thing, presumably? It better be something really great, if you've spent "preferably five years or longer" getting ready for the ritual. But hey, what do I know?

Anyway, good seeing you again. Tell Wayseeker that if he leads you off any cliffs, he'll have me to answer to. – O.

Rationale: This is a note Obsidian wrote for Runereader, detailing a ritual he's read about but never seen performed.

Keeper's Saturday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream swirls around you and then lightens, lightens, to a blanched ghostly white. The army of the dead is on the march, grim and silent, their tattered banners limp in the lifeless air as the column approaches the mighty barred gate. Row upon wraithlike row they move forward, their milky spectral eyes on the man at the head of the endless parade.

Alone of them all he sees you, he who is living flesh, this raven-coated Phantom keeping watch over a platoon of pale ivory spirits. They follow him, these faded revenants, knowing that the entry before them is locked and that the door will open only to him. Shade-touched he stands, watchful eyes on the coming storm, his brow gloom-cast.

He pulls something then from his pocket, glinting silver-frost in his hand, and the haunted souls behind him surge closer. The world is bleached white as a false smile, but in his solemn scowl they see the truth. Pewter-bright in the quiet air you hear the phantasmal click of the lock, and as one they raise their ghastly voices in a soundless cheer. Then the great door opens at last and the night rushes out to enfold him in its welcoming arms and you see no more.

Explanation: The vision shows the ghost key and will (hopefully) lead the party to Umberto (Shadow) Dunn.

1st Saturday morning encounter: Karla Smirch

Activity/Goals: Smirch jingle challenge; being creative, working collaboratively

Item: brimstone egg

Set Locations: meet party in tavern, bring them back to the Smirches' shop

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Pansy Golden**Activity/Goals:** cheer up, Ned! challenge; solving open-ended problems, thinking about other's perspectives**Item:** none (she'll meet them in the tavern at 9:30am on Sunday, wearing the shadow ward)**Times available (roughly):** 8am-3pm**Usually found:** in the Inn at World's edge, or wandering**Saturday unscheduled encounter:** Poppy Golden**Activity/Goals:** combat teamwork challenge; becoming more comfortable with combat, working as a team**Item:** revel's cup**Times available (roughly):** 8am-1pm**Usually found:** at the Valerius house**Saturday unscheduled encounter:** Umberto Dunn**Activity/Goals:** what-tree-would-you-be? challenge; learning how others see you, being creative**Item:** ghost key**Times available (roughly):** 8am-12noon, 2-4pm**Set Location:** at the FireWaterEarthAirBnB in Rosedale**Saturday unscheduled encounter:** Mick Peacock**Activity/Goals:** pitchpipe challenge; working as a team**Item:** spring tambourine**Times available (roughly):** 12noon-6pm**Usually found:** in the Peacock Family Singers' camp**Saturday unscheduled encounter:** Bane**Activity/Goals:** test of 10 challenge; acknowledging different areas of expertise within the party**Item:** devil's-fire whiskey**Times available (roughly):** 8am-12noon, 4-8pm**Usually found:** in the cultists' compound in Greystone Clearing**Saturday unscheduled encounter:** Edwin Davies**Activity/Goals:** observation challenge; paying attention to their surroundings, including each other**Item:** viper's-eye pendant**Times available (roughly):** 9am-4pm**Usually found:** wandering**Saturday unscheduled encounter:** Kazmira**Activity/Goals:** managers & peons challenge; finding new methods of communication, practicing teamwork and cooperation**Item:** riddle leading to the rose quartz orb**Times available (roughly):** 8-10am, 2-8pm**Usually found:** in the Roamer camp**Saturday unscheduled encounter:** (mad) Lincroft Spence**Activity/Goals:** mind of a madman challenge; working as a team, examining behaviors**Item:** folly dust**Times available (roughly):** 4 - 8pm**Usually found:** Lincroft Spence will be in front of the tavern whenever he's available for this challenge**Riddle Text:**

*Rosie Ro some things did know
Of roses pink or white as snow.*

*Sweet Rosie lived, that winsome dame,
In the place that matched her name.*

*Miss Rosie then did think to go
To see the jolly Roamers, oh!*

*And in her hand, a rosy sphere
So perfect-smooth, she held it dear.*

*She walked a bit, Miss Rose, alone,
But stopped before she reached the 'Rhone.*

*And there she paused, to drink a cup
Where the fog had long rose up.*

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*Miss Rosie she was rarely daunted
But now she worried for she wanted*

*That precious sphere kept safe, and so
Miss Rosie Ro, she crept below.*

*She hid it there, to safely store
It, 'mong the rocks, to roll no more.*

*Miss Rosie Ro, she stayed four score
But now, alas, she lives no more.*

*And silent-sleeps beneath the hill.
The sphere? It maybe sits there still.*

Goals: encouraging close observation of natural surroundings, practicing puzzle-solving

Item: rose quartz orb

Location to which party is directed: among the rocks underneath Misty Bridge

Keeper's Sunday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream swirls around you and then lightens just a bit to the icy azure sky of pre-dawn. The air crackles with cold, and the silent hills slumber under their cerulean blanket of snow. The last stars sparkle crystalline January above.

Only the boy is awake. Soon he will light the fires and begin his early chores, but for now he is the master of the realm. The chill sits easy on his skin, for he is winterborn. He flexes his fingers and takes up his pen. Upon the snowy expanse of his page, a world is made. Characters and creatures spring to life in ink.

The first yellow rays glimmer across the heavens. The sun bursts forth, shining gold in the royal morning. The boy tips his head in the sudden brightness, surveying his work. It is good, he knows, and yet too he is coming to realize the wrongness of it. Ill-done but too late to stop. His sigh is a frigid whisper. He stretches a slender arm up up up until he can dip his brush into the honeyed light and then paint it shimmering across his art. In the bright beautiful reflection off the page, you see the boy's eyes. They are deep icy blue as a frozen river and they cloud with guilt and fear. He looks at you imploring and then the darkness rises up again and you see no more.

Explanation: This vision shows Frost painting and suggests the guilt he feels at what he's being made to do.

Sunday morning penultimate step: meeting up with Pansy Golden (wearing the Shadow Ward) who then accompanies the party

Scheduled for: 9:30am Sunday

Location: Pansy will meet the party in the tavern and will then accompany them to their party path ending

Sunday morning final step: doing the Ritual of Reclamation (and, unbeknownst to them, animating the statue of St. Lorelei)

Scheduled for: 9:45am Sunday

Location: the ritual will be performed Fern Grotto and the Shrine of AllSeasons

Keer

Keer's color is light blue; its crest is a keera-fish.

Investigating the charge against: Dorito

Companion: Keifer (Bob Marriott)

Mission letter:

My loyal subjects,

As you well know, we island-dwellers of Keer have long borne the assault of marauding pirates who seek the plunder of our fair shores. For many years we have repelled these attacks with a fierceness that is a credit to our people.

When the pirate Mikos was captured and sentenced three years ago, he swore he would have revenge on me for bringing him to justice. He placed a curse upon the island, and said he would summon a creature from the deep that would lay waste to our duchy.

It now appears that his rantings were all too true. There have been numerous sightings of a huge creature rising up out of the sea, with a black neck taller than a ship's mast, and rows and rows of wicked teeth. I would not believe it had I not seen it for myself; it can only be the great beast Leviathan. Already three ships have been ravaged attempting to reach the Scallop Bay. Two of them washed up, destroyed, upon the southern shore. The third was dragged down into the watery depths, and no trace of her has yet been found. How long can we survive if our mighty harbors cannot be reached safely? And how long before Leviathan turns its hunger and rage upon the island itself?

All this past week, I have sought the counsel of my wisest advisors, but none can say what we should do. Then last night, I had a dream which seemed to present – if not an answer – at least a shred of hope.

In it, I dreamt of the Knights of the Golden Circle. I trust you are not all so young that you do not know the legend of the Knights – how they were a force for good, traveling about the kingdom, going where the need was very great. No one has seen them for years and years now, and I daresay many now believe that they never really existed at all.

The dream suggested that they could somehow be found in the duchy of Moreth, in a tiny village called World's Edge. In the hope that my dream is more than just a delirious wish for salvation, I ask you now to journey to that distant village. I have already sent a message to a woman who resides in that region, Ms. Belle Bishop. She is my bookkeeper's wife's second-cousin, and is, according to the wife, both brilliant and delightful. I have asked her to meet you when you arrive in World's Edge; I trust my message will arrive before you do, and that she will be expecting you.

I fear I can tell you little about the village to which you journey, save that it is tiny and provincial. It is the sort of place in which the old ways are still very much alive. Probably you will find it to be pastoral and rather dull. Regardless, there are of course dangers present on any journey. This is the case everywhere, but in Moreth – an area of unusually potent magical energy – it is especially true. Truly, there is no telling what you might encounter there. Protect yourselves and each other.

I realize that this journey will take you away from home during the upcoming Rites of Remembrance, and I thank you for agreeing to this mission. Although it is of course possible to observe this sacred occasion and honor our beloved dead wherever we might find ourselves, it is not lost on me what I am asking of you. Know that both your service and your sacrifice are greatly appreciated.

On your quest, you shall no doubt encounter many of the citizens of World's Edge and may also meet travelers from other parts of Lyria. I am sure that you know how important it is that you act as ambassadors of Keer, leaving all you meet speaking well of our fair duchy.

The six of you have been carefully selected for this mission. Each one of you possesses unique skills that will prove invaluable during this quest; remember this when you encounter hardship along the way. I wish you much luck. I pray that the Knights of the Golden Circle do indeed still exist and that they can help us. May you be successful on your mission and return to aid the duchy in this hour of great need!

With hope and gratitude,

Duchess Mariella Kincaid of Keer

Contact: Belle Bishop

Activity/Goals: introducing the party to the companion, getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

2nd Friday night encounter: Kyli Talespinner

Activity/Goals: getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

3rd Friday night encounter: Elly Peacock

Activity/Goals: walking to their set location / experiencing combat

Item: none

4th Friday night encounter: Shaun Peacock

Activity/Goals: pitchpipe challenge; working as a team

Item: paper listing the items the party will need to acquire (as well as the info about who to get them from)

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Set Location: the Peacock Family Singers' camp

Paper listing the needed items/explaining how to use them:

The Knights Of The Golden Circle

told by Shaun Pecok

writtun by Mara

Wunce upon a time, many many years ago (before Shaun was even born! when Obsiddien was a little baby!) there were some wonderful knights called the Knights of the Golden Circle. They were the best knights in the whole land – brave and strong and good. Whenever a person truely needed help, they could magically call upon the Knights and the Knights would always come and help them. Here is the way that someone would summon the Knights:

The person would need to gather together:

*a perfect sphere of earth
a perfect sphere of air
a perfect sphere of fire
a perfect sphere of watter
limelite
a fortshun's wheel pendent
a horn of sumoning
a ring set with a glimmergem
a nightstone ring*

When all those things had been gathered, the person needed to stand in just the right place. In World's Edge it would be the Bowwer of Dremes. One person would hold the earth sphere and another person would hold the air sphere and another person would hold the fire sphere and another person would hold the watter sphere. They would be four people, so they would stand in a diamond-shape. In the center of the diamond-shape would be two more people. One of them would hold the horn of sumoning and put on the nightstone ring and the glimmergem ring. The other person would hold the limelite and put on the fortshun's weel pendent. That person would say Summoned are you, oh Knights. Great is our need. O heare this our plea. Just when they finished with the words, the person holding the horn of sumoning would blow it loud and for a long time.

Then, if the need was really truely great, then the Knights would come.

Nowadays, there are no Knights of the Golden Circle anymore, which is very sad. Even if there were, you probably couldn't summon them because their are so manny things you wood need.

The End

Rationale: This is a story a child wrote for Shaun, after he told her the legend of the Knights.

Keeper's Saturday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream swirls around you and lightens, but only slightly. The air is cold and grey and bitter, and you are aware of the creaking of the great wheel. He is chained in a dark place. His master rants and raves and lashes out, but cannot be appeased. He ducks his horned head in fear. Magic swirls writhing chaotic within him, but he is only a servant here. The wheel creaks and turns.

The dream lightens. His master is dead; he is his own master now. He walks a springtime path and the air is fruitful with promise around him. He has found a place, and more than a place, a home. The air is gentle upon his skin and he swishes his tail in appreciation, but even in the warm buzzy breeze of the April air, the low squeaking of the wheel sounds. Turning, turning, always turning. That which was up shall be down.

The vision has grown darkly uncertain. He has tried to care for those he loves, but he has stolen from them instead. Perhaps now they will hate him, will drive him from their midst? He will be alone once more. He is afraid, and he fingers the pendant that hangs at his throat. The only constant is change, and then the wheel spins once more and the dark rises up and you see no more.

Explanation: The vision shows the Fortune's Wheel Pendant and will (hopefully!) lead the party to Brimstone

1st Saturday morning encounter: Jpeg

Activity/Goals: test of 10 challenge; acknowledging different areas of expertise within the party

Item: ring set with a glimmergem

Usually found: in the cultists' compound in Greystone Clearing

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Al Bishop

Activity/Goals: what-tree-would-you-be? challenge; learning how others see you, being creative

Item: none (he'll give them the horn of summoning in the tavern at 9:30am Sunday)

Times available (roughly): 12noon-6pm

Set Location: at the FireWaterEarthAirBnB in Rosedale

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Sylvie Valerius

Activity/Goals: combat teamwork challenge; becoming more comfortable with combat, working as a team

Item: perfect sphere of air bubble necklace

Times available (roughly): 10am-4pm

Usually found: at the Valerius house

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Kovi Woundtender

Activity/Goals: cup of insight challenge; learning about partymates

Item: perfect sphere of fire candle

Times available (roughly): 9-3pm

Usually found: in the Makai camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Nina Bliss

Activity/Goals: charmed I'm sure challenge; learning names, getting comfortable, being creative and silly

Item: perfect sphere of water bottle

Times available (roughly): 10-5pm

Usually found: at the prosecutor's pavilion

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Electra

Activity/Goals: philanthropy challenge for Bracken; solving open-ended problems, taking moral responsibility

Item: nightstone ring

Times available (roughly): 10am-1pm, 4-8pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Brimstone

Activity/Goals: one good sock challenge; practicing brainstorming, building on partymates' ideas

Item: fortune's wheel pendant

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm, 5-8pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Huxley

Activity/Goals: managers & peons challenge; finding new methods of communication, practicing teamwork and cooperation

Item: riddle leading to the perfect sphere of earth

Times available (roughly): 8-10am, 12noon-6pm

Usually found: in the Roamer camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Ghost Theater

Activity/Goals: ghost theater challenge; taking responsibility for each other's safety, communicating non-verbally

Item: limelight

Times available (roughly): 4 – 8pm

Usually found: in the Ghost Theater

Riddle Text:

Ewe whose eke per affection list ant whom ye!

Hit wilt bee oars; ewe own lean kneed two he damn eye a device.

Firs ago toothy feel twitch bell longs tootie barren. Tern no waif rum the hat lay cough song sand dig owe all long dew-eyed rode hat peril hulls there if her art. Foe hollow hittin' till hit combs toothy lit tall pat honor rite tango rye tear. Trample long force ever all mini its, sand goad hound endowin' endowin'. Key puff hollow winged a tray ill butt doughnut letterfeat ghetto tally wed. Den a pup pup pup one saggin', huff coarse sundae tray all. Aft terra why all, yew lick hum tootie lit tall louses. Elm host dare! Ago ant ooh duh whole leap lace, an wok pastor po' Dee am. Key pa wall kin. Dell eat all tray ill wills splittin' spa lit ones Moor. Goat tootie Ander deep hath - eyes shell knot hell yew which; yule justify end hit yore is elf - ant hen her each in two deck old. Owe, hits fairy coal! Butt doughnut Dee's pair; hairs does fear fir yew two clay am!

NOTE: This riddle will likely need to be replaced for this plot. We can't know that for certain till we're at the camp, and we can't write a new one till we're at the camp. Please stand by.

Goals: encouraging close observation of natural surroundings, practicing puzzle-solving

Item: the perfect sphere of earth

Location to which party is directed: in the Shrine of AllSeasons, a small path leads past the altar. Following it down to the water (there are several paths; the party will have to check them all), the sphere is in the lake itself (at the very edge.)

Keeper's Sunday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream swirls around you and then lightens, brightens, whitens, to the flat pristine perfection of a blank page. Stretched across its expanse are row upon row of characters you can almost but not quite read.

The man is there, solid and secure. He reaches his hands to the sky full of words and they are his and he is theirs. How he loves them, luxuriating in this world of written ideas! He is the king of this domain, but he is a king in exile. He pines for the words. At night when he sleeps upon the unfamiliar ground, his hand dreams of his pen. He has learned so much and o! to have a page such as this on which to scribe out all he has seen and experienced! To compose is to make reality, and he drifts draftless, currently unmoored. Soon he will be able to write. Soon but not now. The world flips and inverts.

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The woman is there, afraid and uncertain. She lifts her hands to shield her head, but the words in the sky swell and storm and sleet down harsh upon her. They pile up slippery around her feet, and when she looks at them, they twist and tumble and refuse her pitiful deciphering. Her brain aches and struggles but no! no respite is there. She is languishing in this language, linguistically sickened. Never will she understand this feat that young children find trivial. She does not belong here. The world spins and changes once more.

The man and the woman stand before each other, together but apart. They could be made whole, but where are the words now? Will they find them before it is too late? You can read no answers and then the darkness swirls up black as ink and you see no more.

Explanation: This vision shows Bane with all the words he cannot (in his undercover guise) write and Dorito with all the words she cannot (because of her dyslexia) read.

Sunday morning penultimate step: getting the horn of summoning from Al Bishop

Scheduled for: 9:30am Sunday

Location: Al will meet the party in the tavern

Sunday morning final step: summoning the Knights of the Golden Circle

Scheduled for: 9:45am Sunday

Location: the Bower of Dreams

Noctara

Noctara's color is purple; its crest is a dragon.

Investigating the charge against: Kerrick Dealbinder

Companion: Nadia (Sherry Rinell)

Mission letter:

My loyal subjects,

I write to you now to request your aid with a rather sensitive and awkward matter.

More than ten years ago, I bestowed a gift upon a cousin of mine. Although we are only distant kin, he is a fine fellow and I have always thought highly of him. Anyway, he is an adventurous sort who for reasons unbeknownst to sane folk decided to leave Noctara and become - Seasons preserve us! - a sailor. Still, he makes visits back to the home country now and again, and on one such I presented him with the Crystal Chalice, an item which has been in our family for years. It is a pretty thing to look upon, and some even used to claim it had magic powers. Anyway, I gave it to Somerley - that's my cousin's name - as a gift and then thought little more of it. One piece of ornamental bric-a-brac looks about the same as any other to me, and Seasons know we've got enough of it around the castle, although don't tell my wife I said that.

But I'm getting off my subject here.

Last week, Nero - my court caster, that is - was doing some research or somesuch, and perhaps he waved his arms when he should have wiggled his fingers or something, but anyway the matter went all awry and the long and the short of it is he's gone and turned himself into a newt.

As you can imagine, we're quite eager to set him right once again, and he seems rather anxious about the matter himself, although truth be told it's a little hard to say. This brings me to the matter at hand. As I mentioned already, some people used to claim that the Crystal Chalice had magical powers, the specific nature of which was transformative. There's hope that, if the stories are true, we might be able to use the chalice to put Nero back as he was meant to be, assuming of course that we can convince the little fellow to drink out of it.

The awkwardness arises from the fact that I gave the chalice, as I said, to Cousin Somerley, who then took it half a world away and sold it to some fellow - of course he has no idea who - in Uri-Kesh. My court sages were able to use some ritual or somesuch to figure out that the Chalice is now in the duchy of Moreth, in a tiny village called World's Edge. I'm guessing whoever bought it from Somerley must be a traveler himself. Or maybe the chap who bought it sold it to someone who then sold it to someone who travels... anyway, it's apparently in World's Edge, however it got there.

In the hope that you can find the fellow who bought the Chalice - and that he'd see fit to send it back to Noctara for Nero's sake - I ask you now to journey to that distant village. I have already sent a message to a woman who resides there named Eugenie Bright; she is my groundskeeper's wife's second cousin and is said to be a good and kind soul. I have asked Ms. Bright to meet you when you arrive in World's Edge; I trust my message will arrive before you do, and that she will be expecting you.

I fear I can tell you little about the village to which you journey, save that it is tiny and provincial. It is the sort of place in which the old ways are still very much alive. Probably you will find it to be pastoral and rather dull. Regardless, there are of course dangers present on any journey. This is the case everywhere, but in Moreth - an area of unusually potent magical energy - it is especially true. Truly, there is no telling what you might encounter there. Protect yourselves and each other.

I realize that this journey will take you away from home during the upcoming Rites of Remembrance, and I thank you for agreeing to this mission. Although it is of course possible to observe this sacred occasion and honor our beloved dead wherever we might find ourselves, it is not lost on me what I am asking of you. Know that both your service and your sacrifice are greatly appreciated.

On your quest, you'll no doubt encounter many of the citizens of World's Edge and may also meet travelers from other parts of Lyria. I'm sure that you know how important it is that you act as ambassadors of Noctara, leaving everybody you meet speaking well of our fair duchy.

The six of you have been carefully selected for this mission. Each one of you possesses unique skills that will prove invaluable during this quest; remember this when you encounter hardship along the way. I wish you luck and thank you sincerely. Your success will mean a great deal for poor Nero and for our duchy.

With hope and gratitude,

Duke Humphrey Crumbert of Noctara

Contact: Eugenie Bright

Activity/Goals: introducing the party to the companion, getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

2nd Friday night encounter: Bonnie Stillwater

Activity/Goals: getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

3rd Friday night encounter: Natasha

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Activity/Goals: walking to their set location / experiencing combat

Item: none

4th Friday night encounter: Aleeya Witchborn

Activity/Goals: managers & peons challenge; finding new methods of communication, practicing teamwork and cooperation

Item: paper listing the items the party will need to acquire (as well as the info about who to get them from)

Set Location: Roamer camp

Paper listing the needed items/explaining how to use them:

Dear Bonnie,

I have looked into that matter you asked me about, and I believe I've found something. It's not going to be easy, but then, whatever is? You'll need to assemble a rather strange collection of items, as follows:

*a small amount of mortality dust
an azure riverstone
a limelight
an amethyst obelisk
a heart of darkness
an emerald star
aventurine shards
a copperstone crown
a jester's egg*

I have a few ideas about where you might find some of these, although not all of them, alas. Wishing you much luck,

Aleeya

[written across the bottom: Friends from Noctara – According to Bonnie, if you're able to find the above and are still interested in claiming the Chalice, you should meet her at Serenity Point on Sunday morning at half past nine. She asks that you please be on time. – A.W.]

Rationale: Bonnie writes a confidential note and sends it to Aleeya via the 3rd Friday. After Aleeya reads it, she pulls out a note she'd already written to Bonnie and gives it to the party, after she (pretends to) write the note at the bottom.

Keeper's Saturday morning dream:

In the darkness of the dream, you first become aware of the music. It is a sprightly little tune, made for dancing and hopping and whirling. The light increases, ever so gradually, and you see her, a fool, leaping and bobbing and spinning to the happy little song. She is dressed in fool's motley, half gold, half silver, patchworked together as is customary among those who clown for their livelihood. Stitched tidily straight down the middle. She tells a joke, a harmless little folly, and then falls over, laughing. Silly little fool.

Behind her, you can slowly begin to see her audience. A... man? Maybe. He watches the fool with his watchful loving hopeful eyes. His... muzzle? No. No, his face. His face curves up in a smile. Long has he waited to smile.

In his veins, his blood is a patchwork. He is mongrel, mutt. He is stitched together, a little of this, a piece of that. In his own way, he is perfection. He is still, watching, and only the foolish little clown moves. She is oblivious to her audience, dancing for the joy of dancing alone. In the fool's hands – what? – a stone, an egg? She tosses it high into the air and catches it without looking. And then, although she had shown no sign of seeing the other, she turns suddenly and presents it, placing it into the other's paws. No, into his hands. Into the other's worthy hands. The little clown bows low after bestowing this gift and then the dream rises up and everything again is darkness.

Explanation: The vision shows the jester's egg and will (hopefully) lead the party to Bailey.

1st Saturday morning encounter: Santiago West Valerius

Activity/Goals: combat teamwork challenge; becoming more comfortable with combat, working as a team

Item: copperstone crown

Set Locations: meet party in tavern, bring them back to the Valerius house

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Tanya Peacock

Activity/Goals: pitchpipe challenge; working as a team

Item: none (she'll give them the azure riverstone in the tavern at 9:15am Sunday)

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm

Usually found: in the Peacock Family Singers' camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Kyli Talespinner

Activity/Goals: cup of insight challenge; learning about partymates

Item: riddle leading to the amethyst obelisk

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm

Usually found: in the Makai camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Cary Montalvo

Activity/Goals: what-tree-would-you-be? challenge; learning how others see you, being creative

Item: mortality dust

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm

Set Location: at the FireWaterEarthAirBnB in Rosedale

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Dorito

Activity/Goals: test of 10 challenge; acknowledging different areas of expertise within the party

Item: heart of darkness

Times available (roughly): 8am-3pm

Usually found: in the cultists' compound in Greystone Clearing

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Bailey

Activity/Goals: curiosity challenge; calling attention to party behavior

Item: jester's egg

Times available (roughly): 8-11am, 1-4pm, 6-8pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Samuelson

Activity/Goals: what a surprise! challenge; creative problem-solving of open-ended problem

Item: emerald star

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Pearl Bryce

Activity/Goals: double-mute charades challenge; collaborating with another party, communicating despite obstacles

Item: aventurine shards

Times available (roughly): 10am-4pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Ghost Theater

Activity/Goals: ghost theater challenge; taking responsibility for each other's safety, communicating non-verbally

Item: limelight

Times available (roughly): 4 – 8pm

Usually found: in the Ghost Theater

Riddle Text:

*Now it is time for us to rhyme:
To sing a song of sisters three
Prisoners of geometry.*

*And then a poem about their home:
They lived where only shadows go
(All this was many years ago.)*

*The sisters stayed in forest glade,
Off the swampy trail, close by
The silent place where sleepers lie.*

*Let us tell this of the eldest:
Her gown was charcoal-grey and plain
And know that Delta was her name.*

*Say a little of the middle:
Trina she was called. Her gown
Was russet-red so dark 'twas brown.*

*Before we're done, the youngest one:
'Twas as Angel she was known.
Her gown was goldish-white in tone.*

*But this story makes us sorry,
For though each by herself was good,
They did not act as sisters should.*

*Our sisters fair no love did share.
From the time when they were small,
The topic mattered not at all –*

*These sisters three could not agree:
If one said "black", another "white",
The third said "grey" ... and then they'd fight.*

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*Dispute begun, three tongues did run,
As each one sought to win the bout,
Not caring what they fought about.*

*So Sister One with words spared none:
"Your foolishness I must refute;
My scorn for you grows more acute."*

*And Sister Two spoke harshly:
"You Must know you are making scant sense
And your words go off on tangents."*

*And Sister Three said, "Seems to me,
For witlessness there's no excuse.
I beg you, do not be obtuse."*

*And in their eyes: "No compromise!"
Nothing could their minds appease;
More vexed each then grew by degrees.*

*"This fight's not done!" in unison
They cried, content to wait the night
Till someone else would say "You're right."*

*None would give in; each was driven
To be right, but none conceded.
Days passed, weeks – then months – unheeded.*

*How long they've been in wooded glen!
Our sisters three, respect demanding,
In that clearing still are standing.*

*So do not be like those sad three.
The moral of this simple story:
Say you're wrong. And say you're sorry.*

*For our meaning bears repeating:
Though your argument's profound,
The winning's in the middle ground.*

Goals: encouraging close observation of natural surroundings, practicing puzzle-solving

Item: amethyst obelisk

Location to which party is directed: The party is directed to Shadownook ("where only shadows go", "along the swampy trail") ("close by the silent place where sleepers lie"). (NOTE: we are referring here to the NEW Shadownook location, along Great Swamp Way, near the Graveyard. NOT the old clearing near Autumnnook!) Hopefully they will notice the many triangle references in the poem (Delta, Trina, Angel, acute, tangents, obtuse, degrees, plus the fact that it's organized by trios.) In Shadownook, they will find three flat triangular stones on the ground (one grey, one brown and one gold/white); the obelisk is (shallowly) buried in the ground an equal distance from the points of the triangles. ("the winning's in the middle ground")

Keeper's Sunday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream swirls around you and then lightens, lightens, to the glimmer-glow of midday. The sun is a bright amber jewel in the pale blue brocade of the sky. The little princess sits before you, sleekly content upon her cushioned throne, and why should she not be, her whole world perfectly gold and cerulean around her? On her brow, a shimmering corona alights. She is cosseted and coddled, beloved golden catkin, opulent and indulged pet. She raises a hand, languid, to grasp her treasure but then... what is new, sweet pussycat? Is it a trick of the yellow light? Only a minute before, there was a diadem, diamond-perfect upon her guileless brow, but now where is it? Gone completely? You see this register in her eyes and a sudden sharp brightness rises in her face. She opens her pretty kitten mouth and within it you see, fierce and deadly, her glistening razor teeth. Only then do you realize, now that it is too late. Her gilt is apparent. Her eyes flash brilliant and her incisors find your throat and then the darkness rises feline-quick around you and you see no more.

Explanation: This vision shows Karla Smirch, the coddled kitten with saber teeth, and shows what she will do to protect "her" crown.

Sunday morning penultimate step: getting the azure riverstone from Tanya Peacock

Scheduled for: 9:15am Sunday

Location: Tanya will meet the party in the tavern and will then accompany them to their party path ending

Sunday morning final step: Bonnie Stillwater

Scheduled for: 9:30am Sunday

Location: Serenity Point

P'loa

P'loa's color is turquoise; its crest is a sailing ship.

Investigating the charge against: Solomon Stillwater

Companion: Polo (Amos Meeks)

Mission letter:

My loyal subjects,

I write now hoping you can help in P'loa's great hour of need. By now, surely word has reached even the most remote villages of the great whirlpool which opened in the sea between Okina and Makalei. Two weeks ago, I was outside the ducal palace on the side of Mount Okina when I heard a sound unlike any I ever heard. It sounded as though the sea itself was drawing a deep breath. I turned and looked out across the waves toward Makalei, and it was then I saw a swirling darkness appear in the ocean. At first it was only a strange valley, and then before my eyes, it grew into a sucking vortex. I could only watch, horrified, as a midsize fishing boat was caught in the churning waters. Her crew shifted the sails, frantically seeking wind to break free, but in the end the ocean was stronger than any wind could be, and she was pulled down beneath the waves. No trace of the ship nor her crew has been found.

Even though shipping routes have been dramatically altered between these, our two most populous islands, the whirlpool is growing slowly but surely bigger, and since that day, four more ships have been lost to this maelstrom.

I have sought guidance from my most trusted advisors, and at last they believe they have discovered the maelstrom's cause. Understanding it requires a very brief history lesson. Almost eighty years ago, there was a P'loan diver named Lio who was reputed to be the most courageous and skilled of any the islands have ever known. People said Lio could stay underwater for five full minutes before surfacing; people also said that he could find treasures beneath the waves even in the darkest part of the night. Whether those are true I cannot say, but it is a matter of record that, at eighteen, he dove off a ship anchored due west of Makalei Bay and surfaced with a pearl so large and perfect that people would later call it the Jewel of the Waves. Lio always claimed that the ocean had made a gift of the pearl to him. "I wake every day and thank her for this most precious honor", Lio used to say.

Lio died at the age of 88. That was two weeks ago... on the very day that the maelstrom appeared. Strange as it seems, it is hard to imagine that this is a coincidence. My trusted advisors, men and women who base their decisions on logic and science, have stood before me with somber faces and claimed: "This is the cause of the whirlpool. The ocean wants her pearl back."

Fantastical as it seems, I would of course not hesitate to cast this treasure into the sea. It would be worth any cost to still the whirlpool, that desperate hungry mouth that cannot be sated. But alas, the Jewel of the Waves is not here in the islands, nor has it been for years.

Not long after finding it, Lio made a gift of the pearl to the Duke's daughter. Elani was a great beauty, and on her 25th birthday, Lio had the pearl set into a pendant and presented to her. People say she never took the pendant off.

Elani's story, though, is not a happy one. Engaged to be married, she and her betrothed Kano climbed the steps beside Diamond Falls to the overlook, but the ground was slick with moisture, and Kano fell to his death. Elani, understandably, was heartbroken. She claimed that she could never look on the beautiful land of P'loa again, and she traveled alone to the Lyrian mainland. Her letters said she was journeying inland, seeking some sort of solace, but then the letters stopped coming. Painful though it was, it appeared that Elani wished no further contact with anyone in P'loa, and her family respected her wishes.

Elani was my great, great-aunt, although she left the islands long before I was born. We know that she eventually reached a tiny village called World's Edge, in the duchy of Moreth. If Elani is still alive, she would be 95 now. A greatly-advanced age, to be sure, but not impossible for we hearty P'loans.

I realize the chance Elani or the Jewel are still in World's Edge is a very small one, but it appears to be our only hope to still the great maelstrom. Because a very small chance is better than none, I ask you now to journey to that distant village. I have already sent a message to a gentleman named Koreos; I met him when he traveled to P'loa and found him both forthright and personable. I have asked him to meet you when you arrive in World's Edge; I'm sure my message will arrive before you do, and that he will be expecting you.

I fear I can tell you little about the village to which you journey, save that it is tiny and provincial. It is the sort of place in which the old ways are still very much alive. Probably you will find it to be pastoral and rather dull. Regardless, there are of course dangers present on any journey. This is the case everywhere, but in Moreth – an area of unusually potent magical energy – it is especially true. Truly, there is no telling what you might encounter there. Protect yourselves and each other.

I realize that this journey will take you away from home during the upcoming Rites of Remembrance, and I thank you for agreeing to this mission. Although it is of course possible to observe this sacred occasion and honor our beloved dead wherever we might find ourselves, it is not lost on me what I am asking of you. Know that both your service and your sacrifice are greatly appreciated.

On your quest, you shall no doubt encounter many citizens of World's Edge and may also meet travelers from other parts of Lyria. I am sure you know how important it is that you act as ambassadors of P'loa, leaving all you meet speaking well of our fair duchy.

The six of you have been carefully selected for this mission. Each of you possess unique skills that will prove invaluable during this quest; remember this when you encounter hardship along the way. I wish you much luck. I pray the Jewel of the Waves may be found and that you can bring it home to P'loa. May you be successful on your mission and return to aid the duchy in this hour of great need!

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With hope and gratitude, Duke Kai Edgewater of P'loa

Contact: Koreos

Activity/Goals: introducing the party to the companion, getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

2nd Friday night encounter: Obsidian

Activity/Goals: getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

3rd Friday night encounter: Stevie Peacock

Activity/Goals: walking to their set location / experiencing combat

Item: none

4th Friday night encounter: Joni Peacock

Activity/Goals: perfect square challenge; working as a team, communicating in unique scenarios

Item: paper listing the items the party will need to acquire (as well as the info about who to get them from)

Set Location: the Peacock Family Singers' camp

Paper listing the needed items/explaining how to use them:

I, Jed Thimble, being of sound mind and old body, do hereby and forthwith and henceforth lay out this accounting of what's for who: My oldest, Peggie, is to get the house, on account of she's the one who's cleaned it ever since her ma passed, and that seems only right. My middlest, Little Jay, is to get the cows, on account of how they like him best, and there's no sense making a cow mad and expecting anything but nasty thinnish milk from her.

My littlest, Binnie, is to get whatever cash can be scraped together from selling the rest, and my apologies that it's not more.

All of mine are to keep track of this ritual, which has come in handy more times than I can count over the years. Did a nice job putting this together if I do say so myself.

I don't know that this ritual has a big fancy name. In my head I always called it the Ritual of Togetherness, and since I'm the one who's having it set to paper, I guess that's as good a name as any.

A Ritual of Togetherness is for when you need to find a person, including a person who's laying cold in a grave. It's not necessarily for bringing you to them, or them to you. It's for bringing the both of you together. That's why it's called that.

Here's what you need:

- a strong cedarwood box*
- something what belonged to the person you want to find*
- a fluorite crystal*
- a seekingstone*
- a shimmerstone orb*
- a small bunch of leatherleaf herb*
- favor from the Court of Mirrors*
- ashes of a lightning-struck oak*
- black diamond shards*

Getting the stuff's the only hard part of the ritual. Once you've got it, all you need to do is go to the person's last known location, then put all the stuff in the cedarwood box. Give it just a minute or two for the magics to all get familiar with each other – and then you're on your way!

This ends my last will and testament. Signed this September 3 – Jed Thimble's mark

Rationale: Joni wrote out this will for the illiterate caster who created the ritual.

Keeper's Saturday morning dream:

The dream begins dark, like night, like death. For the longest time you see nothing at all, and then, like lightning flashes, you begin to see glints and sparks. Glittering stabs of light, sparkling off a huge stone which sits, sooty as the all-encompassing black that surrounds it.

Behind the stone, you see a woman – no, a girl – or maybe a woman after all, dressed in black and blue, like a bruise. She touches the stone, very lightly, exploring its facets with her fingertips. Then she steps back, slowly, deliberately, and brings one boot down on the stone and it shatters, fractures, into a million pieces. They are arrayed at her feet, jagged, sharp as razors, as teeth, as knives.

She smiles then, mocking, but you are unsure if she is laughing at herself or at you or at the darkness itself. She scoops up the fragments of stone in her hand and squeezes them hard. You flinch, willing yourself to turn away rather than see her blood dripping blue onto the floor. But you look anyway and see that there is no blood, and that the original gem sits, cool and perfect, in her hand. The past behind her is shattered, broken and destroyed and swept away, but she is whole, cool and smooth and unscathed in the darkness. The light glints off her smile and then there is a flash and all is again black.

Explanation: The vision shows the black diamond shards and will (hopefully) lead the party to Nix Valerius.

1st Saturday morning encounter: Vernon Gill

Activity/Goals: illiterate letter #2 challenge; communicating despite obstacles

Item: leatherleaf herb

Set Locations: meet party in tavern, do this challenge in a quiet corner of the tavern or outside

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Ned Crochett

Activity/Goals: memorial challenge; develop party identity, articulate who they are & what they value, be creative

Item: none (he'll give them the cedarwood box in the tavern at 10:15am Sunday)

Times available (roughly): 8-11am, 3-8pm

Usually found: in the Inn at World's Edge, or wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Nix Valerius

Activity/Goals: combat teamwork challenge; becoming more comfortable with combat, working as a team

Item: black diamond shards

Times available (roughly): 10am-4pm

Usually found: at the Valerius house

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Kira

Activity/Goals: cup of insight challenge; learning about partymates

Item: ashes of a lightning-struck oak

Times available (roughly): 8-11am, 1-4pm

Usually found: in the Makai camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Quinoa

Activity/Goals: grab-bag storytelling challenge; being creative, working collaboratively

Item: seekingstone

Times available (roughly): 8-10am, 12noon-6pm

Usually found: in the Roamer camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Irena Montalvo

Activity/Goals: what-tree-would-you-be? challenge; learning how others see you, being creative

Item: fluorite crystal

Times available (roughly): 12noon-6pm

Set Location: at the FireWaterEarthAirBnB in Rosedale

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Angelica Sprink

Activity/Goals: what a surprise! challenge; creative problem-solving of open-ended problem

Item: tortoiseshell comb (formerly Elani Edgewater's)

Times available (roughly): 11am-3pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Lincroft Spence

Activity/Goals: writer's block challenge; tell stories of their exploits, including 'negative' ones

Item: riddle leading to the shimmerstone orb

Times available (roughly): 8am-12noon

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: the Court of Mirrors

Activity/Goals: gauntlet challenge; developing trust and rapport, practicing communication

Item: favor from the Court of Mirrors

Times available (roughly): 4-8pm

Usually found: in the Court of Mirrors

Riddle Text:

*Look at the sun; it shines alone
And sparkles like a shimmerstone.*

*Look at the Roamers, dancing free,
But it's not here your prize will be.*

*Look at the paths, a choice to make;
The foolish way you must forsake.*

*Look at the bridge and mind your stride
Till safely on the other side.*

Look at the field of noble name;

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There's nothing here for you to claim.

*Look at your legs; it's time to walk;
Head off toward friends and ale and talk.*

*Look at your sword, and for its sake
No peaceful path is yours to take.*

*Look at the stone, a spot to bide --
It's here along your left-hand side.*

*Look at your feet, so tired, so sore;
Maybe rest a minute more.*

*Look at the ground, so hard, so cold;
What treasure maybe does it hold?*

Goals: encouraging close observation of natural surroundings, practicing puzzle-solving

Item: shimmerstone orb

Location to which party is directed: Hopefully the party will follow along with the directions in the riddle, starting off in the Roamer camp, turning out to the left (avoiding Fool's Errand), crossing Garth's Plank, walking through the Baron's Field and heading toward the tavern (friends and ale and talk), avoiding Big Bow Trail (which leads to Peaceful Crossing) but instead finding the stone "bench" that's along the left side of the trail. This bench is very near the intersection with the 'Rhone Trail (but not on the 'Rhone.) The orb is buried in the ground in front of the bench.

Keeper's Sunday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream swirls around you and then lightens to a ruddy glow. Murky russet light filters into the... barn? No, smaller. Barely a shack, this. A henhouse, maybe. The autumn air is amber-thick here. In the warm grainy shadows, the fox lurks. His orange fur is faded but he is sleek still. Agile and hungry, he waits. Coiled in the corner, the snake watches, tasting the promise in the air. Her crimson scales shimmer and her red tongue flickers, beautiful but deadly.

Harvest time. The fruits of the hunt, ripe for plucking. Pumpkins and burgundy grapes and the golden yolks of stolen eggs. The fox and the snake move together, entwining, all sinew and muscle and want. Flesh and greed, the rust-ruby afterglow of avarice. They will pair together so long as it benefits. Watchful eyes and readied teeth. When the other's usefulness is spent, they will be discarded, destroyed with a quick snap of teeth, a sharp crack of bloodied bone.

Below the dust-dark floorboards, it waits hidden, all glimmer-glow and shining. Both of them can sense it, gleaming rich and lustrous. Hunger and want. Soon, so soon, it will be theirs. Well, no. Not theirs. His, perhaps, or hers. The air shimmers with menace and bounty and then the dark grasping desire rises up thick all around and you see no more.

Explanation: This vision suggests that Cal (the fox) and Scarlet (the snake) are working together, albeit only temporarily, and also hints at the treasure hidden beneath the tavern floorboards.

Sunday morning penultimate step: getting the cedarwood box from Ned Crochett (who stays with the party for their party path ending)

Scheduled for: 10:15am Sunday

Location: Ned will meet the party in the tavern and will then accompany them to their party path ending

Sunday morning final step: doing the ritual of togetherness (and unbeknownst to them, meeting Elani Edgewater & the Fae)

Scheduled for: 10:30am Sunday

Location: the ritual will be performed in Hillcrest (as near as possible to the Silverspan Bridge) and will lead the party through Hillcrest and then to the Low Bridge

Sythwan

Sythwan's color is gold; its crest is a stallion.

Investigating the charge against: Huxley & Quinoa

Companion: Silla (Lori Nadig)

Mission letter:

My good people,

I write to you now with a heart heavy with worry. I am filled with concern for our beloved duchy, and, in truth, for all of Lyria. Forgive me. In my anxiety I do not explain myself well.

Several months ago, I received word of a situation in the village of Amaranth, in northwestern Sythwan. A foul pair of sorcerers, a husband and wife, had attempted to use their magic to extort money from the folk of that village. When the people of Amaranth courageously fought and defeated the couple, I thought the matter resolved. There were reports that the wife had screamed out a curse with her dying breath, but since she and her husband were indeed killed, this was not a cause for concern. I see now that I was optimistic and naïve.

After scarcely more than a week had passed, the crops growing in Amaranth began to wither. The leaves and stems of the wheat slowly faded from their normal healthy green; the kernels of young corn shriveled and decayed on the cobs. And then, whatever strange blight was affecting the fields settled in the hearts of the villagers as well. Physically, people were well, but a sort of quiet despair descended over this formerly vibrant community, and no healing or medicine has been able to relieve it.

As if this situation was not dire enough, this affliction is seeming, slowly but perniciously, to spread outward from Amaranth. First the crops surrounding the village languished, and then so too did those poor folk who live in the countryside beyond the barony proper.

Whatever this cursed scourge is, it is foul and it is spreading.

We have had some success moving people away from the afflicted area. The sadness that sits so heavy upon their hearts is pushed aside, but they are still like faded copies of their former selves. It is a partial solution at best. And since the malady continues to creep slowly outwards, it is presumably only a matter of time before it overtakes all of Sythwan, then all of the kingdom.

One week ago, I was visited by Ellaria, High Priestess of Sythwan and my trusted advisor and dear friend. Ellaria is a sensible sort, not easily given to fanciful speculation, but for the first time in many days, I could see hope in her eyes.

Like all keepers, Ellaria's dreams are portents from the Seasons themselves, so I knew she was not speaking lightly when she reported dreaming of a man she had never seen before. In the strange way of dreams – even holy ones, it seems – she knew that his name was Golden. This seems a fitting moniker; for in her dream, the man began to sing, and though he sang a song about the night, light began to glow soft and gold within him. As he sang, Ellaria saw the failing stalks of wheat begin to revive and the hearts of the people gladden once more.

The idea that a song might lift this curse seems a mad hope, but since Ellaria's dream is all we have, my sages went to work. They have found reports of a man named Golden, a composer of songs who resides in a faraway village called World's Edge, in the duchy of Moreth.

In the hope that the sages are correct, I ask you now to journey to that distant village. I have already sent a message to a young woman named Pearl Bryce whom I am told is currently in residence there. She is my tailor's wife's second-cousin and is said to be a good and kind soul. I have asked her to meet you when you arrive in World's Edge. I trust my message will arrive before you do, and that she will be expecting you.

I fear I can tell you little about the village to which you journey, save that it is tiny and provincial. It is the sort of place in which the old ways are still very much alive. Probably you will find it to be pastoral and rather dull. Regardless, there are of course dangers present on any journey. This is the case everywhere, but in Moreth – an area of unusually potent magical energy – it is especially true. Truly, there is no telling what you might encounter there. Protect yourselves and each other.

I realize that this journey will take you away from home during the upcoming Rites of Remembrance, and I thank you for agreeing to this mission. Although it is of course possible to observe this sacred occasion and honor our beloved dead wherever we might find ourselves, it is not lost on me what I am asking of you. Know that both your service and your sacrifice are greatly appreciated.

On your quest, you shall no doubt encounter many of the citizens of World's Edge and may also meet travelers from other parts of Lyria. I am sure that you know how important it is that you act as ambassadors of Sythwan, leaving all you meet speaking well of our fair duchy.

The six of you have been carefully selected for this mission. Each one of you possesses unique skills which will prove invaluable during this quest; remember this when you encounter hardship along the way. I wish you much luck. I pray that you can find this man Golden and convince him to return with you to Sythwan, where his song might lift the curse that is even now creeping outward from Amaranth. May you be successful on your mission, bringing aid to our duchy in this time of great need!

With hope and gratitude,

Duke Robert Aubrey of Sythwan

Contact: Pearl Bryce

Activity/Goals: introducing the party to the companion, getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

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2nd Friday night encounter: Poppy Golden

Activity/Goals: getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

3rd Friday night encounter: Miscellania

Activity/Goals: walking to their set location / experiencing combat

Item: none

4th Friday night encounter: Melados

Activity/Goals: marble maze challenge; working as a team

Item: paper listing the items the party will need to acquire (as well as the info about who to get them from)

Set Location: Inspirations Unlimited

Paper listing the needed items/explaining how to use them:

Oraculos Ritual:

An investigation into its components and properties

Prepared by Cyn Standish

for Professor DeMeo's MAG671 Course

Abstract:

In this paper, the author will consider the little-used but extremely powerful Oraculos Ritual, a rite which might, if performed correctly, allow the practitioners to communicate with an individual who had been deceased as long as half a year. Oraculos was first researched as a rite at the Crystal Spire Academy by the esteemed magic partnership of Stonem and Willoughby (Higgenson, Toward Elemental Understanding) and is seldom used because of the cost and difficulty of locating the required components and the high possibility that the ritual will fail. (Op cit.) However, the author will herein attempt to demonstrate that the difficulty in performing the rite is offset by its tremendous power and will then move forward to consider new research which suggests that the effects of the Ritual may in fact be even more significant than previously believed. (Lyrian Magical Coalition, unpublished thesis #764)

Introduction:

The Oraculos Ritual, as it is currently conceived, has a number of required components:

- a cloudite ring*
- ashes from an ancient fire*
- a riddlestone ring*
- an eternity pendant*
- a bejeweled chalice*
- a celadon egg*
- a filigree'd mule pendant*
- moonstone shards*
- a quantity of folly dust*

*At least six people are required for the performing of the rite, although none need be trained in the magical arts. (See Berenstein's influential work *Mastery* for an interesting discussion of other spells which share this unusual property.) Once the items are attained, those performing the ritual must proceed to the location of the deceased's body, or as close to it as is possible. Along the way, they must stop at a water source rich in occult energy. (The author is perhaps biased in considering this step to be a rather simple one, having grown up near just such a water course. So brimming with occult energy was this "Sheldon's Pond" that many who were not casters could feel it rising off of the water.)*

*The tallest of the six holds the jeweled chalice; it is filled with water from the previously described source and is then carried full the rest of the way. Once they have arrived at the body of the deceased (or at the deceased's grave, should burial have already occurred) the group is arrayed smallest to tallest. The first dons the filigree'd mule pendant and holds the container with the moonstone shards. The next wears the riddlestone ring and the cloudite ring. The next holds the celadon egg. The next holds the folly dust. The next holds the ashes and wears the eternity pendant. And the tallest holds the chalice. (Higgenson, *ibid.*)*

The group walks in a circle, with the smallest leading, around the body or grave. The rest all follow. The one holding the chalice pours a small amount of water out while walking. The group moves once around the circle. They then turn inwards to face the body (or, again, the grave) and together recite the words "Speak to us, o fallen friend!"

If the ritual is done correctly and the request is made with pure hearts, the ritual should work.

For several years now, it has been the belief of the academy that... [Here the paper trails onto another page.]

Rationale: Melados has found a portion of a caster's old school paper

Keeper's Saturday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream presses down around you, heavy and empty as midnight. A thousand miles of night sky stretch above. Harried clouds scud 'round the full moon, which hangs directly above, pearlescent and silent.

In the wild night streets, he walks. He is a young man, brash and brave, and in his hands are the shining scales and shimmering sword of justice, lustrous and silver and true as the contented moon. His hair is the dark brown-black of the unfaltering path and his feet move him sure and steady forward. The same stars that gleam bright overhead also spark in his eyes and at his belt. The night is his.

Winds blow. Dark clouds rise and fall around you and the years flood past.

In the halls of the mighty, he sits. He is older now, bent and bowed, and in his heart, the darkness and fear of midnight weigh heavy. His hair is the pale pewter of the pitiless constellations, which glisten and mock, always out of reach. He belongs still to the night, but he has grown so tired. Do they hang still at his belt, his scales, his sword, his stars? If they do, he is too weary to wield them.

The ceiling of this room is naught but the night itself. His dark eyes never leave yours, but he reaches up, impossibly high, till he holds the moon. It burns coldly, searing his palm. He sets it upon the bench before him and then sharp and sudden brings his gavel down upon it. It shatters into a thousand jagged pieces before him and in that split second, you see the young man in him again, courageous and confident, and then the dark miasma of the dream rises up once again and you see no more.

Explanation: The vision shows the moonstone shards and (hopefully) leads the party to Orion Wilde.

1st Saturday morning encounter: Elliot Peacock

Activity/Goals: perfect square challenge; working as a team, communicating in unique scenarios

Item: celadon egg

Set Locations: meet party in tavern, bring them back to the Peacock Family Singers' Camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Tinker Bill

Activity/Goals: grab-bag storytelling challenge; being creative, working collaboratively

Item: none (he'll give them the bejeweled chalice in the tavern at 10am Sunday)

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm

Usually found: in the Roamer camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Honoré Valerius

Activity/Goals: combat teamwork challenge; becoming more comfortable with combat, working as a team

Item: cloudite ring

Times available (roughly): 10am-4pm

Usually found: at the Valerius house

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Kazim Firestarter

Activity/Goals: cup of insight challenge; learning about partymates

Item: ashes from an ancient fire

Times available (roughly): 11am-4pm

Usually found: in the Makai camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Ursula Smirch

Activity/Goals: Smirch jingle challenge; being creative, working collaboratively

Item: filigree'd mule pendant

Times available (roughly): 12noon-8pm

Usually found: at the Smirches' shop

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Bonnie Stillwater

Activity/Goals: memorial challenge; develop party identity, articulate who they are & what they value, be creative

Item: riddle leading to the riddlestone ring

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm

Usually found: in the Inn at World's Edge, or wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Orion Wilde

Activity/Goals: charmed I'm sure challenge; learning names, getting comfortable, being creative and silly

Item: moonstone shards

Times available (roughly): 10am-4pm

Usually found: at the prosecutor's pavilion

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Aria Morgan

Activity/Goals: philanthropy challenge for Brimstone; solving open-ended problems, taking moral responsibility

Item: eternity pendant

Times available (roughly): 8-10am, 12-3pm, 5-8pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: (mad) Lincroft Spence

Activity/Goals: mind of a madman challenge; working as a team, examining behaviors

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Item: folly dust

Times available (roughly): 4 - 8pm

Usually found: Lincroft Spence will be in front of the tavern whenever he's available for this challenge

Riddle Text:

*Underneath me you'll find what you need
(So once this you read, you had better take heed.)*

*Come ye and visit me; take what you wish from me.
(Dumb me! Crumb me! Attached to my tummy!)*

*Some rush over me, some rush under me.
(Blunder me! Wonder me! Find me and plunder me.)*

*I sit here so still; I see the world go by.
(From low! From high! Oh dear! Oh my!)*

*Seek underneath me for water or gold.
(But there's nowhere to hold; it's dreadfully cold!)*

*Five of us handsome Wood Brothers there be.
(Next-to-the-first is the one who is me!)*

*If you are clever then me you shall find
(Refined! Defined! Leave no one behind!)*

*And then as I've told you you'll get what you wish.
(A kiss! Amiss! Please don't take the fish!)*

Goals: encouraging close observation of natural surroundings, practicing puzzle-solving

Item: riddlestone ring

Location to which party is directed: the "speaker" in the riddle is a bridge. The next-to-the-first of the five wooden bridges (that is, counting them in the order the stream passes under them) is Peaceful Crossing. The ring is attached to the underside of the bridge (near the "upstream" edge.)

Keeper's Sunday morning dream:

[NOTE: This is a vision unlike any other, because this vision will be completed at the camp, and it describes the party.]

*The darkness of the dream swirls around you and then lightens just a bit, to the dusky confines of a small room. A cabin, the walls rough-hewn wood. All around, they come awake in stages, these Wild Riders from a land of honey and grain. On one bed, a *NOUN* with *COLOR* hair. A *NOUN* with *NOUN* like *NOUN*. [Describe the Sythwan 2024 partymembers.] They are weary still but they waken, knowing there is much still to be done. At home, their people grow sick and weak, waiting for the golden notes which will make them hale and whole once more.*

*And around one bed, the loving touch of *SEASON* hangs warm and close. *PRONOUN* is waking, the sacred dreamdark still swirling about *PRONOUN* brow. *ONE SENTENCE PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF KEEPER PLUS MAYBE REFERENCE TO SATURDAY'S EVENTS* *PRONOUN* is the dreamer and the dream.*

The light is growing. The day will soon begin. But first there is this. It hangs shimmering on a wall, silver-perfect. A window, a looking-glass, a soul vision. They gather before it, these strangers who are now kin. They look curious into its cool glittering depths.

And then faces on the other side! A woman with hair like dark gold and man with a beard like pale silver. Their garish-bright clothing is... strange for not being strange? They peer back, through the glass. It is... a refraction? A reflection? None can say. But in a way that is hard but also easy to understand, you are they and they are you.

The dream begins to swirl up again, compelling and mysterious and sure. You have been called to this place. Adventure tugs your heart to action. You are needed here. And through the pane and through the pain, it is the same for them. Their hearts too were called. It is the same for them. And then the darkness grows and thickens and you can see no more.

Explanation: This vision shows the party from Sythwan looking through a mirror at Huxley and Quinoa and suggests that they are all adventurers of a certain kind.

Sunday morning penultimate step: getting the bejeweled chalice from Tinker Bill

Scheduled for: 10am Sunday

Location: Tinker Bill will meet the party in the tavern

Sunday morning final step: the ghost of Jon Golden and the ghostly chorus

Scheduled for: 10:15am Sunday

Location: the Graveyard

Uri-Kesh

Uri-Kesh's color is red; its crest is a tower.

Investigating the charge against: Eugenie Bright

Companion: Urving (Bill Sabram)

Mission letter:

My loyal subjects,

I write to ask your help, not on behalf of our fair duchy, but on a more personal matter. I do not take this step lightly, but at this point, my heavy heart sees no other option.

Perhaps some of you have already heard the rumors - and if so, I can now confirm that they are true: about three months ago, I came into possession of a very special lamp, a magical lamp that had a Genie inside it. He is a Genie of tremendous power. And now - alas!

- because of my foolishness, he has forsaken Uri-Kesh. But I am getting ahead of myself.

When I found the lamp, it had been long-dormant. He is a Genie of the type that can only be summoned once every one thousand years. It so happened that over a millennium had passed since anyone had chanced to rub the lamp. I remembered a story my grandmother had told me years before, about a Genie that lived inside just such a lamp. I had never believed the story, but for a lark, I spoke the magic words that would supposedly call him - "Ali-kazar Sembah Ahszewez!" You can imagine my surprise when he appeared before me! And thus it was that I was the lucky one who brought the Genie forth from his enchanted resting place.

As you are no doubt aware, Genies grant three wishes to their summoners. In answer to my first wish, the Genie completed - in less than a day! - a splendid new hospital in Mal Allaz, which as you know is one of Uri-Kesh's poorest cities. It was his magic that laid the mosaic floors and furnished the soft clean beds, but it was his generous heart that made him stay to help the newly-hired doctors spread word of the facility through even the worst of the slums.

I wanted time to consider my two remaining wishes, so the Genie accompanied me back to the palace in Aliz Bazaar. Every day, we walked together through the marketplace and he told me of the many things he has seen. I found him to be compassionate and wise and sensitive. But here the story grows dark.

We quarreled one day, and in the heat of anger, I foolishly spoke the words I have regretted ever since: "I wish you would just go away!" The moment I finished the words, the Genie disappeared back within the lamp. Less than ten minutes later, a thief entered the castle courtyard.

Spying the shining lamp, he grabbed it and hastily left the area. His actions were surely the work of my Genie's magic, designed to carry out my ill-spoken wish.

Since that sad day, my court sages have sought information high and low, trying to trace the whereabouts of the thief, a man called Shade. Day after day dragged by, but finally they have tracked his path to a tiny village called World's Edge in the duchy of Moreth. In the hope that the lamp can be found and retrieved to its rightful place in Uri-Kesh, I ask you now to journey to that distant village. I have already sent a message to a gentleman who is temporarily in residence there named Bartleby Sprink. I met Mr. Sprink when he travelled through Uri-Kesh and know him to be a good and kind soul. I have asked him to meet you when you arrive in World's Edge. I trust my message will arrive before you do, and that he will be expecting you.

I fear I can tell you little about the village to which you journey, save that it is tiny and provincial. It is the sort of place in which the old ways are still very much alive. Probably you will find it to be pastoral and rather dull. Regardless, there are of course dangers present on any journey. This is the case everywhere, but in Moreth - an area of unusually potent magical energy - it is especially true. Truly, there is no telling what you might encounter there. Protect yourselves and each other.

I realize that this journey will take you away from home during the upcoming Rites of Remembrance, and I thank you for agreeing to this mission. Although it is of course possible to observe this sacred occasion and honor our beloved dead wherever we might find ourselves, it is not lost on me what I am asking of you. Know that both your service and your sacrifice are greatly appreciated.

On your quest, you shall no doubt encounter many of the citizens of World's Edge and may also meet travelers from other parts of Lyria. I am sure that you know how important it is that you act as ambassadors of Uri-Kesh, leaving all you meet speaking well of our fair duchy.

The six of you have been carefully selected for this mission. Each one of you possesses unique skills which will prove invaluable during this quest; remember this when you encounter hardship along the way. I pray for your rapid success. I do not worry that anyone else will have summoned the Genie because of the millennium restriction, but I fear that Shade will again have moved on before you reach your destination. The Genie is the only man I have ever loved and my only wish - if he too desires it - is that he return home to me.

Please, please find the lamp and bring it back to Uri-Kesh. With hope and gratitude,

Duchess Azalea Stargazer of Uri-Kesh

Contact: Bartleby Sprink

Activity/Goals: introducing the party to the companion, getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

2nd Friday night encounter: Umberto Dunn

Activity/Goals: getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

3rd Friday night encounter: Tinker Bill

Activity/Goals: walking to their set location / experiencing combat

Item: none

4th Friday night encounter: Esmerelda

Activity/Goals: grab-bag storytelling challenge; being creative, working collaboratively

Item: paper listing the items the party will need to acquire (as well as the info about who to get them from)

Set Location: Roamer camp

Paper listing the needed items/explaining how to use them:

Good people of Uri-Kesh,

We Roamers understand that you need to use our Lamp. At the request of Archon Mila Wayfarer, I have prepared this list of items – each highly-sought and valued by the Roamers – for which we are willing to make such a trade. As I'm sure you understand, the trade can occur only if all of the items are collected.

I wish you the best of luck, although I must warn you that we have sought many of these items ourselves, to no avail. Some are very costly, others extremely rare. You seem like a persistent bunch, however, and I See great things in store for all of you.

The items are as follows:

a sterling silver heart box

a love potion in a fancy bottle

a magical Cryptstone brandy-cork (This remarkable item, when used to cork a flask of normal water, will turn the flask's contents to finest brandy in a fortnight. Dimitri's always wanted one.)

an aquamarine looking-glass

a favor from the Court of Mirrors (no idea how you'll get this one, but Natasha is insistent)

a gilded conchshell

a pendant set with a fire-gem

a silver shield pendant

a bottle of callibogus rum (Malachi wants this. It is nasty stuff, but rare. To each his own, I suppose.)

Blessings upon all of you as the Rites of Remembrance is upon us,

Esmerelda

p.s. Does one of you have a lover with dark and sultry eyes? You had best not stray from home for too long. I am not certain this person is entirely faithful.

Rationale: Esmerelda wrote the note for the party before they came to ask for the lamp. The Sight is helpful like that.

Keeper's Saturday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream is lit only by the cold silver of the crescent moon and the sparkle of the stars. The snow reflects back the deep blue of the sky. He makes his way through the grey and twisted trees. He is an old, old man now, he tells himself, but something in the way he moves suggests that his muscles and bones have not forgotten the ways of the warrior. It is his favorite kind of night, clear and crisp and very very cold.

He goes to sit beside her in the graveyard. Soon, he tells her. Soon I am coming to meet you after all this time. But in his heart he hears her voice, sweet as it has always been: Wait. Your time will come soon enough. And I will still be waiting for you.

From his old black satchel he pulls a box shaped like a heart. He opens it carefully and from it he takes a handful of dried rose petals, whisper-pink-colored, her favorite. Look what I have brought you, he says, laughing. A little of your Spring in the very heart of my Winter. And he scatters them atop the snow which is her blanket. Soon, he whispers to her again. Soon but not tonight.

And straightening, he closes the box again. Sterling silver, it is. Bright and untarnished and true. Even after all these years.

Explanation: The vision shows the sterling silver heart box and will (hopefully) lead the party to Obsidian.

1st Saturday morning encounter: Celeste Wilde

Activity/Goals: charmed I'm sure challenge; learning names, getting comfortable, being creative and silly

Item: aquamarine looking-glass

Set Locations: meet party in tavern, bring them back to the prosecutor's pavilion

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Diesel

Activity/Goals: test of 10 challenge; acknowledging different areas of expertise within the party

Item: none (he'll give them the callibogus rum in the tavern at 10:15am Sunday)

Times available (roughly): 12noon-6pm

Usually found: in the cultists' compound in Greystone Clearing

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Lenora Graves

Activity/Goals: combat teamwork challenge; becoming more comfortable with combat, working as a team

Item: riddle leading to the silver shield pendant

Times available (roughly): 10am-4pm

Usually found: at the Valerius house

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Kullis Toolforger

Activity/Goals: cup of insight challenge; learning about partymates

Item: gilded conchshell

Times available (roughly): 10am-4pm

Usually found: in the Makai camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Phineas Smirch

Activity/Goals: Smirch jingle challenge; being creative, working collaboratively

Item: love potion in a fancy bottle

Times available (roughly): 10am-1pm, 3-8pm

Usually found: at the Smirches' shop

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Milton Peacock

Activity/Goals: perfect square challenge; working as a team, communicating in unique scenarios

Item: pendant set with a fire gem

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm, 4-8pm

Usually found: in the Peacock Family Singers' camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Obsidian

Activity/Goals: philanthropy challenge for Stevie Peacock; solving open-ended problems, taking moral responsibility

Item: sterling silver heart box

Times available (roughly): 8am-12noon, 2-4pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Katherine Carmichael

Activity/Goals: double-mute charades challenge; collaborating with another party, communicating despite obstacles

Item: cryptstone brandy cork

Times available (roughly): 8-12noon, 2-4pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: the Court of Mirrors

Activity/Goals: gauntlet challenge; developing trust and rapport, practicing communication

Item: favor from the Court of Mirrors

Times available (roughly): 4-8pm

Usually found: in the Court of Mirrors

Riddle Text:

My dear Mr. Petrus Valerius,

Hoopahoppa! I am so enjoying our correspondence! I've hidden a little something for you – a silver shield pendant! I trust I haven't made the riddle too easy for you; have fun!

Yours, Stratego

*Giant Tom was tall and strong;
His silver sword was eight feet long,
And Worlogs fled from him because
Of just how very big he was.*

*Giant Tom, he liked his ale.
He drank it from a wooden pail.
And drunk or sober, he was mean
As any man the world had seen.*

*Giant Tom would stride around;
Said he: "You see, I run this town.
And no man dares oppose me. Why?
Because no man is strong as I."*

*"There's stronger things than men, that's true.
I must show I can best them too.
For it must undisputed be
No thing no where is strong as me."*

He left the houses on the hill;

*He walked and then he walked on still
Up toward the glen of wintry name
But first he stopped to stake his claim.*

*He swung his mighty sword around
And cut the grass and bushes down.
He cleared a space in which to stand
And mock the weak and fragile land.*

*Tom then laughed a mighty laugh
And sliced the ancient stone in half
Just to prove he could, and then
He sliced the halves in half again.*

*Said Giant Tom "It's plain to see
The earth itself's no match for me.
And lest there's doubt I'll prove I'm right
No living thing withstands my might."*

*And then he saw me standing tall
Resplendent in my gown of Fall
And seeing me, he laughed out loud,
But I stood unafraid and proud.*

*"You are no match for me," he said
And swung his sword above his head.
Deep in my breast he sunk the blade;
From heart to feet a gash he made.*

*The gentle wind was soft and calm;
It blew and swirled 'round Giant Tom.
And from the air Tom caught a chill
And soon he lay there, deathly ill.*

*A giant scar I still do bear;
An ancient wound in the place where
His giant sword did slice my skin
But couldn't touch my soul within.*

*And still the stones are strong and grey
There where the woodland creatures play
And still the rain falls soft and sweet
Upon the treasure at my feet.*

*And still I stand where then I stood
In that most green and lovely wood.
And still the wind blows softly on
But nothing's left of Giant Tom.*

*Let that my story's moral be:
That be you tall and strong as he,
You've weakness too. And don't forget
A gentle one may best you yet.*

Goals: encouraging close observation of natural surroundings, practicing puzzle-solving

Item: the silver shield pendant

Location to which party is directed: This riddle item is in a slightly different spot than it was! The riddle mentions walking away from Hillcrest toward Winterhill Clearing, pausing along the way in Greystone Clearing. There is a tree on the edge of Greystone with a very long slice in it. The pendant used to be hidden in the slice, but it has grown too snug. The newly-added stanza references the "treasure at my feet"; the pendant is at the base of the tree, under some debris.

Keeper's Sunday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream swirls around you and then lightens, but only a little. Dusky-dim memories rise up mourning-black all around. Onyx and jet, grim and sedate. You see his hand upon the gleaming silver head of the cane. Respectable, yes, oh yes, and admired.

Outside the grand old house, the garden grows lush and wild and fertile. The velvet petals are soft, crimson-dark and beautiful above the treacherous razor thorns. They have fed well, these blustery blossoms, their sustenance poured like sweet wine down upon the ground that they may suckle and grow strong. It nurtures and nourishes, but the scent rises thickly toxic up, sweet like rot and ruin, of clotted choking death. Be careful. Keep your hands clean.

Inside the house, all is tranquil hushed. On the table, a crocheted doily, and upon the lace a bottle. The amontillado within glows warm amber, all mellow-gold. She has earned this, yes. The decanter open, the spirit breathes. It pours out tawny in the glass, caramel and lovely. But...

Wafting up invisible, the putrid stink. Death oh death, it hangs undetected in the afternoon air. The deed is done the cork replaced the spirit breathes no more and then the deceitful ebony mists rise up once again and you see no more.

Explanation: This vision suggests the toxic rose fertilizer in the bottle of sherry and possibly also ties this to Edwin Davies.

Sunday morning penultimate step: getting the callibogus rum from Diesel

Scheduled for: 10:15am Sunday

Location: Diesel will meet the party in the tavern

Sunday morning final step: Esmerelda (and, unbeknownst to the party, the Genie of the Lamp)

Scheduled for: 10:30am Sunday

Location: the Roamer camp

Waylon

Waylon's color is orange; its crest is a lion.

Investigating the charges against: Milton Peacock

Companion: Wade (James Surano)

Mission letter:

My most trusted subjects,

I write to you now of a disturbing incident which took place over five years ago. It began with a small but extremely powerful and ruthless group of casters who decided that they could - through a mixture of magical and mundane violence - seize control of the Waylonian Casters' Guild, thereby achieving a very large measure of wealth and political influence. The duchy militia was called in to restore the peace. The details do not matter; suffice it to say that for various tactical reasons, it was determined that a surprise nighttime attack by the militia would result in the least casualties to both sides.

And so it would have, if the attack had actually been a surprise.

Instead, it was clear that the casters had expected the militia's actions, and that they had adequate advance warning to stage an elaborate and effective ambush. Over half of the duchy's elite guard - including my own son Mithran - were killed in the ensuing rout.

The group of casters was subsequently subdued and tried for their crimes. It was also plainly apparent that someone else - someone outside their organization - had informed them of the exact details of the militia's plan. We found evidence that someone was compensated very well for this act of treachery. And we found enough clues to give us a very strong idea who this someone was.

Her name was - is, rather - Ursula Smirch. She was working as supplier to the guardhouse, and in a position to learn much, apparently. Mrs. Smirch was accused of selling this information to the casters, and she stood trial for this crime. But to all our queries, she managed to provide an answering explanation. Since the evidence against her was very strong, the court allowed the casting of Truth magic upon her. Under the power of the magic, she declared her innocence and was subsequently released. She and her family left the duchy not long after.

You must understand that I am greatly pained by the loss of my son and the others who died needlessly. Nevertheless, I would shudder to pursue a person whose innocence our courts had determined. But in this particular case, I know in my heart that Ursula Smirch is guilty. I could see in her eyes that she was laughing at us. I do not know how she managed to defeat our truth-magic, but I am quite sure that she did.

Recently, I have learned of an obscure and difficult spell, called Testimony. It is said to be very powerful.

The Smirch family, I have learned, now makes their living in the duchy of Moreth, in a tiny village called World's Edge. In the hope that this arcane magic can finally bring Ursula to justice, I ask you now to journey to that distant village. I have already sent a message to Lord Santiago West Valerius. Lord Santiago is himself Waylonian by birth, although he has since married into the family of Baron Honoré Valerius, of World's Edge. I have met Lord Santiago on several occasions and am confident he can be trusted absolutely. You may speak openly to him and to any member of the Valerius family. I have asked Lord Santiago to meet you when you arrive in World's Edge; I trust my message will arrive before you do, and that he will be expecting you.

I fear I can tell you little about the village to which you journey, save that it is tiny and provincial. It is the sort of place in which the old ways are still very much alive. Probably you will find it to be pastoral and rather dull. Regardless, there are of course dangers present on any journey. This is the case everywhere, but in Moreth – an area of unusually potent magical energy – it is especially true. Truly, there is no telling what you might encounter there. Protect yourselves and each other.

I realize that this journey will take you away from home during the upcoming Rites of Remembrance, and I thank you for agreeing to this mission. Although it is of course possible to observe this sacred occasion and honor our beloved dead wherever we might find ourselves, it is not lost on me what I am asking of you. Know that both your service and your sacrifice are greatly appreciated.

On your quest, you shall no doubt encounter many of the citizens of World's Edge and may also meet travelers from other parts of Lyria. I am sure that you know how important it is that you act as ambassadors of Waylon, leaving all you meet speaking well of our fair duchy. If anyone will know more about the spell of Testimony, surely it will be someone in that most magical land of Moreth.

The six of you have been carefully selected for this mission. Each you possesses unique skills that will prove invaluable during this quest; remember this when you encounter hardship along the way. I wish you much luck. I pray that your actions may at last bring justice to a situation where there has been only deceit and sorrow.

With deepest gratitude,

Duke Gareth Orion of Waylon

Contact: Santiago West Valerius

Activity/Goals: introducing the party to the companion, getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

2nd Friday night encounter: Fenwick Michaels

Activity/Goals: getting comfortable interacting in the "otherworld"

Item: none

3rd Friday night encounter: Bailey

Activity/Goals: walking to their set location / experiencing combat

Item: none

4th Friday night encounter: Evelyn

Activity/Goals: perfectly good bucket challenge; practicing brainstorming, building on partymates' ideas

Item: paper listing the items the party will need to acquire (as well as the info about who to get them from)

Set Location: Crabtree & Evelyn's

Paper listing the needed items/explaining how to use them:

Hello, dearest Evelyn! I was so excited (and more than a little surprised) when you wrote that you had gotten married! My dear, your letter was woefully short on details. You must tell me everything! What does she look like? Is she delightful in every possible way? I hope she is not making excessive... how shall I say?... demands upon you.

All here is well. Tabitha II has been sick with some sort of tummy trouble and Mr. Flufferman cut his poor little paw on a rough stone, but other than that, the whole family is well. Mouser McMouserson and Puffball both wanted me to ask you when their Auntie Evelyn is planning another visit?

I have been busy at work recataloging all the spellbooks, components, etc. They've hired a series of new girls to help out, but honestly, the handwriting on these younger set of casters... Well, suffice it to say that I don't know what they're doing on the weekends at school, but it's not practicing their penmanship as we used to do!

I saw an interesting spell cast last month. It lacked the finesse with the casting that they used to drill into us, but it was nevertheless very interesting. It was called Testimony, and used on someone reputed to be otherwise immune to Truth-magics. Lacking in diction the caster may have been but it certainly was effective after it was cast!

Anyway, components for the thing were

- one bottle of elderberry wine*
- a jade egg*
- a quantity of folly dust*
- a bit of water from the Talian Sea*
- a skull cup*
- bloodroot essence*
- an agate orb*
- a smokestone jar*
- an eternity mirror*

They gathered up six people for the casting, and none of them needed to be a caster, although it certainly wouldn't hurt if they were, of course. One held the egg, another the jar, a third the orb and yet another the mirror. The seawater, bloodroot essence and the folly dust were poured into the wine, and the whole group walked around the bottle, saying "Love above beauty / Faith above hope / Truth above all / Veritas veritas veritas"

That served to charge the wine, apparently, and it was poured into the cup and given to the target. Only the first person to drink it is affected by the spell. Really, it was all very interesting.

I heard from Missa and Katharina that they'll be at Reunion next year. Are you going? Let me know, because I'm not going if you're not going!

I'll close now as Princess PurrPurr is asking Mommy for her supper. Please give my best to your bride!!!! Ann

Rationale: This is a letter to Evelyn from another caster who's an old friend.

Keeper's Saturday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream swirls around you and then lightens... but only partially. The sky above you is divided, equal shares for the night and the day. The sun and moon wait, and watch. She stands in the space in between, belonging to them both and neither and yet also wholly her own. Her hair and her skin are inked all the colors of the rainbow and she contains multitudes.

The smoke from the trash fires billows up toxic and for a second she is obscured. When it clears, you see her again. Her eyes are fierce upon you and her jaw is set ferocious but the color is drained from her. She is ash and eggshell, silent and watching. Her gaze never leaves you and she raises the cup to her lips and drinks, slow and deep. You cannot look away from her, but her lovely skin fades paler and paler and then blows away like dust in the chill wind. She is watching you still, her visage now only chalky bone, her absent eyes still somehow upon you. She raises her jet-black mug and as the whiskey pours pale into her skeletal mouth, the dream-dappled smoke rises once more and then you see no more.

Explanation: The vision shows the skull cup and (hopefully!) leads the party to Equinoxious.

1st Saturday morning encounter: Cameron Light-Astor

Activity/Goals: what-tree-would-you-be? challenge; learning how others see you, being creative

Item: water from the Talian Sea

Set Locations: meet party in tavern, bring them back to the FireWaterEarthAirBnB in Rosedale

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Dimitri

Activity/Goals: BS! challenge; recounting fun adventures, being creative

Item: none (he'll give them the elderberry wine in the tavern at 9:30am Sunday)

Times available (roughly): 1-8pm

Usually found: in the Roamer camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Carmina Bordeaux

Activity/Goals: combat teamwork challenge; becoming more comfortable with combat, working as a team

Item: eternity mirror

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm

Usually found: at the Valerius house

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Kable Worldwatcher

Activity/Goals: cup of insight challenge; learning about partymates

Item: bloodroot essence

Times available (roughly): 8am-2pm

Usually found: in the Makai camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Solomon Stillwater

Activity/Goals: memorial challenge; develop party identity, articulate who they are & what they value, be creative

Item: riddle leading to the jade egg

Times available (roughly): 8-10am, 12noon-4pm

Usually found: in the Inn at World's Edge, or wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Dusty Peacock

Activity/Goals: perfect square challenge; working as a team, communicating in unique scenarios

Item: smokestone jar

Times available (roughly): 10am-3pm

Usually found: in the Peacock Family Singers' camp

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Equinoxious

Activity/Goals: test of 10 challenge; acknowledging different areas of expertise within the party

Item: skull cup

Times available (roughly): 10am-4pm

Usually found: in the cultists' compound in Greystone Clearing

Saturday unscheduled encounter: Geneva Sprink

Activity/Goals: what a surprise! challenge; creative problem-solving of open-ended problem

Item: agate orb

Times available (roughly): 8-10am, 12noon-4pm, 6-8pm

Usually found: wandering

Saturday unscheduled encounter: (mad) Lincroft Spence

Activity/Goals: mind of a madman challenge; working as a team, examining behaviors

Item: folly dust

Times available (roughly): 4 - 8pm

Usually found: Lincroft Spence will be in front of the tavern whenever he's available for this challenge

Riddle Text:

Dear Engelbert,

Thank you so much for the lovely tea-cozy. So pretty! How thoughtful you are to remember my birthday!

Things here are much the same as during your last visit. We had dinner over at your cousin Alice's again and your father ate too much blackberry pie, which as you know pains his stomach. I tried to warn him of this but of course he did not listen. Alice's pie is good but she over-sugars it, I think. But of course that is just my opinion; some people probably like it so awfully sweet.

Alice is expecting again! Four children in five years! Her mother is of course so proud, and who wouldn't be with so many beautiful grandchildren?

Darling, a young man as wonderful as you shouldn't still be without a wife. Surely there must be some girls there in World's Edge. I am so hoping for some little grandbabies, and I'm not getting any younger, you know. I remember my grandmother always used to say that if you sleep with a jade egg under your pillow, you'll dream of the one you're going to marry. To find a jade egg, you just say this little riddle and it tells you where to look:

*Oh, I am a man dressed all in red;
I eat as much as I am fed
And I'm always wanting more!
Yes, I'm always wanting more!*

*My lovely daughter, she wears grey;
But sadness! She has gone away!
And won't come back e'er more.
No, she won't be back e'er more.*

*Go to the place where the dead men lie
And the wind blows low and the ravens cry
And don't go too much more
No, don't go too much more.*

*Climb to the top of the tiny hill
Soon my riddling words will still
And I won't say too much more!
No, I won't say too much more!*

*Find the place where I made my bed
Now that I am long since dead
And am not there no more,
No I'm not there no more.*

*And if you my fine words do heed
Then there you'll find just what you need,
All you could want and more!
It's all you want and more!*

Well, your father is wanting his dinner; so I shall draw to a close now. Do think about what I said, won't you, sweetheart? And if you'd like me to introduce you to someone, you know to just say the word. The McPherson girl is so nice, and a handy seamstress too. Thank you again for the cozy.

All my love, Mama

Goals: encouraging close observation of natural surroundings, practicing puzzle-solving

Item: jade egg

Location to which party is directed: Next to the graveyard ("where the dead men lie") is a little hill. At the top of it is a fire- circle. The jade egg is in the middle of the fire-circle under some burned wood.

Keeper's Sunday morning dream:

The darkness of the dream swirls around you and then lightens, lightens, to the hot glistening gold of midday. The sand burns beneath your feet and the sun glitters, tricksy. Nothing is as it seems.

Far in the distance you see it, and you race in that direction. Respite, in this dry and deceptive place. Lush green and saturated blue, this beautiful oasis. The birds wait around the water. Exotic and lovely, their eyes shine in the desert brightness. They crowd together - a flock, a flight, a family - and their emerald and sapphire feathers ruffle in the welcome shade. As one, they raise their faces to sing and then dip their beaks to drink.

But what is this? Not an oasis. Only a mirage. They are not truly birds, they are no true family, and there is but sand here to drink. Nothing is as it seems. They lift their heads again in the arid air, their song a shriek of confusion and betrayal, and they scatter.

She comes into the clearing so quiet you almost miss her. She is all things beautiful and bountiful. Her gown is as white as the shimmering sand, her hair and jewels are the lustrous gold of the sun, but her eyes are the cold sweet blue of the far-distant ocean. Those cool knowing eyes meet yours. She lifts a pitcher and her gaze never leaves you as she begins to pour. The water runs out upon the thirsty sand. Surely her pitcher cannot hold such a flood, and yet in truth, the waters begin to pool. The birds turn their heads, unsure. They want to be called back into the fold. Maybe the deceit and the truth are one and the same. Maybe she has enough to give, if only there is willingness to take. Maybe things are indeed what they seem, and as you ponder, the darkness rises once more and you see no more.

Explanation: This vision suggests there's something deceptive going on among the Peacocks - specifically, Milton's confession - and hopefully also raises the idea of Miscellania providing the replacement money.

Sunday morning penultimate step: getting the elderberry wine from Dimitri

Scheduled for: 9:30am Sunday

Location: Dimitri will meet the party in the tavern

Sunday morning final step: giving the Testimony wine to Ursula Smirch

Scheduled for: 9:45am Sunday

Location: in Smirch & Smirch