

## Chapter 1

Spyke is running late for the train, as he often does. However today is the day of his final exam that will determine whether he is inducted into the Formican army, and finally getting closer to his father.

The 9:27 train from Kings Cross is the only train that will take you to the Formican army base. If Spyke missed it, he would fail the exam by default.

Big Ben chimed at 9.00 as Spyke dashed across Westminster with his huge broadsword swinging from side to side across his back.

“Shit! I’m gonna be late...”, Spyke muttered to himself. He knew a shortcut through an alley that would save him approximately 23 seconds, so he glided through the hordes of people trying to get to work and slipped through.

The air was cold and a gust of wind almost blew Spyke’s red bandana off his shoulder length ginger hair. It startled him for a second but he carried on. He came to a small grassy area where he saw a trio of punks, young, dressed in black, smoking and giggling towards each other.

As Spyke stepped out onto the grass, the punks turned towards him and stared at him, looking him up and down as if to size him up. Spyke glared back at them for a second with his piercing green eyes then carried on past them. It felt like an eternity as Spyke was walking directly in front of their line of vision. All you could hear was the grassy footsteps and gusts of wind.

Spyke could feel the eyes on him, but decided to ignore them and carried on.

“Hey...”, one of the punks called out to Spyke as he walked past. “That’s a pretty cool weapon you got there on yo’ back.”

Spyke ignored him and carried on.

“Is that just for show or do you know how to use it?”

Spyke continued to ignore him as he felt himself being slowed down by the wind.

“I’m talking to you!” The punk suddenly appeared behind him, grabbing Spyke by the shoulder. Spyke was startled for a second and immediately reached for his katana strapped to his side.

“Don’t touch me.” Spyke swivelled around and snarled back at the punk, his two friends joining him by his side, giggling.

“I asked you a qu...”

“I don’t have time for this, get lost!” Spyke’s fury echoing in the park.

The punk jumped back, pulling out a short sword, while his two friends did the same.

“Come on, let’s play...” one of the other punks said.

“I don’t have time to play with you. Why don’t you go and play with yourself...”, Spyke began backing away but was hesitant to take his eyes off them. His hands eased off the hilt of his katana when suddenly one of them dashed towards him.

Spyke drew his katana and blocked his attack as the third punk dashed towards at a different angle. Spyke pushed him away and blocked the second oncoming attack. The first and biggest punk just hung back and watched as Spyke readied himself for a fight.

“Hmph... I guess I could do with a warm up...” Spyke muttered to himself.

\*\*\*1st Battle - tutorial - Spyke vs 2 punks using katana\*\*\*

Spyke defeated the two punks without fatally wounding them. The big punk just watched and giggled to himself.

“I asked if you could use that big sword on your back!” He said, drawing his own broadsword.

"Hmph!" \*\*\*2nd battle - tutorial - teach Spyke how to switch weapons - switch to the broadsword and defeats last punk\*\*\*

Spyke withdrew his sword and carried on along the path. The gusts of wind stopped as he muttered to himself, "I'm gonna miss the train...".

When Spyke left the view of the punks who were knocked out from the agony, they all vanished in a poof of smoke. A tall hooded figure stepped out from the alleyway and watched as Spyke left the view. Spyke felt a chill down his spine as he looked back. Nothing was there, and he carried on.

\*Cutscene, intro, Spyke makes the train and is enroute to the Formican army base.\*

Spyke arrived at the base. Stewards were directing people to where they should be going. The base was huge and featured a massive pyramid like structure in the centre.

The Formican army were recruiting to combat the monsters that were appearing on Earth, due to the planet \*Terra\* entering the Milky Way solar system. The monsters would appear due to a large concentration of Plasma (the Earth's new energy source that is being extracted from Terra).

The year is 3031 and the planet has been flooded. All land has been buried underwater as the polar icecaps have melted. Humans have such built huge towers above the water and raised civilisation to the sky.

Humans had destroyed this world. The global warming crisis was never addressed and caused the planet to be flooded by water.

Now, Terra appeared and instead of continuing to use the renewable sources of energy that had powered the civilisations for the last few centuries, Plasma was discovered and extracted from Terra, that grants incredible amounts of energy and gives humans special abilities. Because of this, wars have been fought between nations to obtain more Plasma. Since then, monsters have begun appearing where there are huge concentrations of Plasma, including the battlefield, power stations, airports and the like, so now there is another war to be fought; against the monsters.

The Formican army were drafted together to fight these monsters, and this is where Spyke believes he'll be able to find his long lost father who abandoned him.

Spyke advanced to the pyramid-like building and registered his name for the exam. \*The player would have the chance to practice battling, and study basic concepts like sword art\*

Spyke would be paired with two other people, and they would take on a scenario, fighting a series of monsters and a boss at the end.

"I don't need to be paired up with anyone else, I can do this myself", Spyke was heard ranting from across the corridor. He was not too impressed to hear that his pass or failure of the exam depended on two other people.

"You will be examined on your teamwork capabilities which is paramount to field work", the registrar replied. "You are free to walk around until the test time begins. Please come back here when you're ready."

\*Spyke can walk around and explore until the player is ready to take the test - a bit like Balamb Garden SeeD test in FF8\*

Spyke readies himself as June walks up to him.

"Are you in for this slot?" June asks Spyke.

"Yes", Spyke shot back at her, giving her a glance then continuing to ready himself.

"Great... my name is June. I look forward to...."

"Spyke", Spyke interrupted June as she was taken a bit aback.

(He must have been that guy that was yelling earlier), June thought to herself. (Great, how did I get stuck with him?! He does look strong though).

Spyke continued to warm up as if June wasn't even there.

June tied her blonde hair back as she checked her equipment. She had a shortsword, one magician glove and a pistol. She was armoured with a shoulder pad but was lightly dressed, wearing a sporty top to give her support, short shorts and black tights. Spyke gave her another glance, wondering why she had so many weapons in her arsenal.

"Yo, you guys here for the exam?" A dry and manly voice could be heard down the corridor. Draster walked up to both Spyke and June. He had dark brown skin, black and silver hair and soft brown eyes. He was slim built and wore an all in one suit-robe that looked like a navy style jacket. He had his hands in his pockets and was wearing magician gloves.

"My name is Draster, pleased to meet you".

"Hey Draster! My name is June and this is Spyke, pleased to meet you!", June replied suddenly awake and happy that someone a bit more social was on the team.

Spyke gave him a glare and remained silent, continuing to warm up.

"Lets just get this over with", Spyke muttered to himself.

Draster was unmoved, June was disappointed at Spyke's attitude.

The team was finally assembled. Spyke, June and Draster were sent through to the examination room, a path behind the reception counter.

When they entered the room, they felt as if they had just entered a greenhouse jungle. Trees and grass had grown and the dome of the room looked like a sunset sky. It's as if they were transported to another world.

A voice over an intercom chimed in: "Your mission is to defeat the Ravage and obtain the gold ring it is holding".

"And where is this Ravage?!" June barked out.

"That would be too easy...", replied Draster.

Spyke glared at the scenery in front of him and noticed a trailed path to the right. He started walking towards it without saying a word.

June and Draster naturally followed, noticing the path as well.

\*Player has control and can explore the dome - when in a battle, a character switch tutorial will appear. Player will battle some monsters and eventually get to the Ravage boss - the Ravage is a beast like monster similar to a Behemoth. It has the gold ring pierced to its nose\*

"So you're the Ravage huh?" Spyke mutters under his breath. "You guys stay back, I'll handle this myself".

"Are you kidding? We need to work together!" June yells back as Spyke goes charging in.

"Jeez... Draster let's go!"

"Hmph... I guess we all need to be alive to pass this test", Draster says shrugging his shoulders. They both follow behind Spyke as they go charging in.

\*Ravage boss battle - player must identify his weakness and \*stagger\* him before significant damage can be done. His weakness is his tail. June regularly reminds Spyke that they must work together but Spyke doesn't listen. They eventually defeat the boss.\*

The boss disappears into Plasma dust and Spyke picks up the gold ring left behind.

"This is it huh?" Spyke says.

"OK we've got it, now let us out!" June yells, expecting the intercom to respond.

Seconds of silence pass.

"I guess we need to find the exit ourselves" said Draster. "Lets just go back the way we came."

\*Player takes control and goes back, but when they get back to entrance, there is no door.\*

"Hmm? I'm sure the door was here", Spyke says, mostly to himself.

"Yeah me too. Did we take a wrong turn perhaps?" replied Draster.

"No. It was here", snapped Spyke.

"Great... are we lost now?!" June says agitated.

A gust of wind sweeps the dome.

"Wind? In here?" said Draster. "Something strange is going on."

"Something is up, stay alert and don't get killed." Spyke said dryly.

The wind got stronger and stronger until the trio were struggling to see out of their eyes.

Suddenly, a hooded figure appeared, dressed in black and carrying a broadsword in one hand, with 3 punks either side of it.

"It was you earlier", Spyke said, reminded of his earlier encounter in the park. "Who are you?" With no time to think, the trio are forced to fight the 3 punks, who are slightly stronger than last time.

\*battle - after the punks are defeated, they disappear, intimating that they were actually monsters.

"What's going on?" June said.

"I don't know, but that guy attacked me earlier". Spyke replied. "What the hell are you?!"

"You will know soon enough", the hooded figure spoke with a deep resonance that sent a chill down the spine. "You've passed the test, now its time to go."

"Is this part of the test?!" June bellowed out.

"I don't think so" replied Draster.

"Hey! answer me! What the hell are you and what do you want?!" Spyke yelled back at the figure.

"Hmph...", said the figure.

That set Spyke into a rage. He ran towards the hooded figure, attacking him and starting a battle.

\*Battle with Hood - Spyke goes into rage mode tutorial. This is the only way that Hood can get damaged. Any other attack is nullified. The player can progress by winning or losing this battle. Hood does massive damage and will generally leave the party with an attack at 1hp before the battle ends\*

"Goddamnit", Spyke says panting. "What are you...".

"Just call me, Hood", the figure replied in its eerie voice.

The trio were down on their knees panting.

"Now it's time to go to Terra...".

"What?!" June screamed.

Spyke and Draster were left stunned.

"Hey.... what the hell...", Draster tried to speak but it caused him pain.

Suddenly the hooded figure raised out his empty hand, with his broadsword in the other. Wind started to gust around the trio just like before. It was so strong that they were being moved by it. Spyke had one more attack left in him. He picked up his sword and dragged himself towards the figure, even though he couldn't see.

"Goddamnit!!!" Spyke let out a roar as the trio were kicked up by the wind and blown away, vanishing behind a tornado of dust particles. The trio of Spyke, June and Draster were sent to Terra.

## Chapter 2

Spyke woke up. He saw his hand resting on strands of blue grass. He felt groggy like someone had knocked him for 6. His sword was lying across from him as his eyes rolled around trying to get a clear vision. He slowly got up to a crouching position as he saw June and Draster just beginning to wake up on the blue grass.

The sky was a light pink colour and you could see the odd tree with blue leaves in the field they were lying in. The air felt heavy as the trio were taking heavy breaths trying to get oxygen.

"What... happened...?" A groggy June asked.

"I don't know...", replied Draster, rising to his feet.

Spyke was continuing to look around when noticed that the big planet in the sky was not Terra this time.

"That's Earth...", Spyke said.

June and Draster looked up and confirmed what the trio had feared. They had somehow ended up on Terra.

"Shiiiit..." June let out.

Silence broke out between the trio for a while. Spyke picked up his sword and sheathed it.

"We need to get back...", Spyke began.

"Who the hell was that guy Spyke?!" June interrupted.

"I don't know..."

"Why was he following you? Did you not think to investigate before taking the Formican exam?", June snapped.

"What?! Are you trying to blame this on me?!" Spyke reacted.

"Well duh! He was after you, and now we're here on another planet because he wanted to send you here!", said June angrily.

"I couldn't even sense the guy until we were already in the exam, same as you!"

"Yeah but you must have known..."

"ENOUGH", Draster bellowed out. "Quit bickering. Spyke is right, we have no idea what's going on and why we're here, but we need to work together to get back to Earth."

"I'm not working together with this fool...", Spyke began.

"I'm not working together with this moody motherf...", began June.

"STOP", Draster interrupted again. "If we're gonna get off this planet, then we have to work together. Come on, lets look to see if there's a town or something we can head to...".

June and Spyke were staring at each other angrily.

Draster spotted a trail of smoke in the distance.

"Over there, smoke..." he pointed in the direction. Come on lets go. Draster took the lead as Spyke and June eventually followed.

\*Player gets control and can explore - tutorial - player is able to switch control of who leads.

Player has random encounters until the reach a small shack\*

A small humanoid was working on a machine. He was not human. He had pale blue skin, white balding hair and a mustache. He was around 5ft 2inches and was wearing grey overalls. He noticed the trio and stared at them for what seemed an eternity. He then muttered something in some unknown language. The trio stared back at him, wondering if he was friend or foe.

The man then realised something, gesturing as if he had an 'aha' moment and went inside is small shack to get something. The trio looked perplexed and then alerted as the man came back out holding a gun like object in his hand pointed upwards.

"He's got a gun!" June exclaimed as the trio readied themselves for a battle. The man looked perplexed but he continued to walk closer to them. The man tried to wave away their fears as he pointed the gun to his arm gesturing what he was about to do. They backed away slightly and there was a standoff. The man continued to talk gibberish. Draster seemed the most calm, so the man approaches him. Spyke and June had their weapons ready as Draster said, "I don't think it's lethal" to the others.

The man gestured to tell Draster to hold out his arm, he did so, and he shot something into his arm that made him squeal. Spyke and June readied their weapons again as the man started talking gibberish again.

"Yeah I can understand you now", Draster replied to the man.

"Eh?!" June said.

"Looks like this thing is some kind of translator device?" said Draster, the man nodded.

Spyke and June both held out their arms as they were both shot with the translator gun.

"Can you understand me now?" The old man said.

"Yes", replied Spyke, the last to get shot.

"Great, now what are you humans doing here? Are you here to order some Plasma weapons?" asked the old man.

Draster explained the situation to the old man as he gave a confused look throughout \*skip the story\*

"So you want to get back to Earth? Good luck with that hehe", said the old man. "By the way, my name is Jairek. I can give you some food and a place to stay for tonight."

"How do we get back to Earth?!" shot Spyke, his urgency apparent in his voice.

"It's impossible", Jairek said. "Come on in, you must be hungry after your ordeal...".

"What do you mean it's impossible?" Spyke said. "I need to get back".

"There is no way to get there, there is no way to leave Terra." Jairek responded.

"What?!" June cried.

"I'm sorry, but there is no way to leave Terra. We've been trying to go to Earth for centuries to warn the humans, but not one being had managed it", concluded Jairek.

"How do you know that no one has ever left?" Asked Draster.

"Because I used to be the Supreme Governor of this planet." Jairek replied proudly. "I was the leader and ruler of the lands."

"Really?! You?" June interjected.

"Pitiful isn't it?" Jairek said, he knew that the trio were about to ask what happened.

Jairek was ousted as leader by a human being called Morkain. He lead an army to revolutionise the world and evict the Imperials from power.

"So Morkain came to Terra and overthrew the government?" asked Draster.

"Yes he was incredibly strong, dark, wicked and would do anything for power." said the former leader. "He had this wind like power that could wile you out in an instant."

"Its that Hood guy!" Spyke yelled. "That bastard that was following me, and sent us here, it must be him."

"You met him and survived?! How strong are you?" said Jairek.

"He probably could have killed us if he wanted to...", explained June.

"So that must mean there is a way off this planet...", said Draster. "And Morkain knows how. Do you know where he is based?"

Jairek nodded, "his army is based up in Monument Heights. But he himself is holed up in the Dukedom of Bazzleton. It's quite a journey from here though, you cannot reach by foot."

"So how do we get there?" Spyke said.

"Your best bet is to go through Red Hills, Crying Jungle, take a boat to Felix Pier, then...".

"Just give us a map". Spyke interrupted.

The realisation that the man who had sent them to Terra was the man who had conquered Terra's government suddenly gave the trio a new urgency. They knew that there was a way to get back to Earth, they just had to get it out of Morkain. Morkain's power however, was another issue they would have to deal and why were they sent to Terra in the first place?

Jairek invited the trio into his shack to rest up and stay the night, which the trio obliged. The shack looked bigger from the inside than it did from the outside. It had a kitchen like area with a single bed in the corner and a large area with stacks of weapons and armour. Jairek went to the back and pulled out three sleeping bags for the trio as they began to make themselves comfortable.

There were other things that were bothering Draster that he couldn't shake off his mind.

"Why haven't you been able to build a rocket or something and land on Earth that way?" Draster asked while they were making themselves comfortable ready for bed.

"There is a barrier that envelopes the planet", Jairek began, pouring water into a cup. "Anything that touches it is turned to dust."

"Ah I see, so that's why there is such little information that we know about Terra back on Earth", replied Draster.

"And one other thing...", he started again.

"You're full of questions aren't you young one?" Jairek nodding.

"You mentioned something about wanted to warn the humans on Earth about something. What did you want to warn us about?" Asked Draster. Spyke and June looked on intently.

"Ah...", Jairek's face suddenly dropped. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"What is it?" Spyke asked again. "Your body language suddenly changed. Tell us."

"No, I don't know what you're talking about..."

Spyke jumped up and grabbed Jairek by his jacket. "Tell us, NOW! What are you hiding?"

"Spyke calm down!", June pleaded.

"Yeah Spyke, chill out. Maybe I misheard him, my mistake."

"Indeed, sometimes the translator can go wrong you see..." Jairek said scaredly.

"Hmph", Spyke let him down and went back to his rollup bed.

"Anyway, I want to say thank you for your hospitality, and if there is some way we can repay you...", June started.

"Please, the only thing I wish for you to do is to teach Morkain a lesson and return to Earth safely." Jairek cut in, as he began to close up shop. "You could buy some of my weapons and armour from me too. I've been making these weapons for my counter attack on Morkain anyway..."

Jairek walked out the room as the trio was left alone in their sleeping bags. All their armour and weapons were taken off and they laid to rest. What an extraordinary 24 hours it has been for Spyke, June and Draster. They knew what they had to do now and tomorrow, they would set off on their journey to find Morkain. \*inn rest cutscene\*

### Chapter 3

Spyke was the last to get up the next day. June and Draster were outside talking with Jairek, while Spyke was getting his gear together. \*Spyke gets control and can explore the house. There is some hidden story bits that the player can find for some added story [STORY]\*. Spyke joins the rest outside.

"Hey Spyke, here's the map, I've marked the place you need to go on the map."

\*Player gains control of the trio. Player is able to talk to Jairek and buy his items from him.\*

\*When the player leaves the area and earshot of Jairek a cutscene occurs\*

"Spyke, I know you sensed something about Jairek. He was hiding something", Draster explained.

"Yes, so why did you stop me?" replied Spyke.

"Because we weren't going to get anything out of him that way! He was willing to help us and didn't want to throw away that opportunity."

"Whatever. It doesn't concern me anyway. All I want to do is get back to Earth...", Spyke said.

"Great we're all on the same wavelength then", concluded Draster, rolling his eyes at June.

\*Player gains control and has to travel through the High Valley to trigger a boss battle. The player will have random encounters, be able to explore and find hidden items until then.\*

Spyke, June and Draster reach the beginning of High Valley as it was marked on the map. It was a mountainous region with the odd blue leafed tree perched precariously around the two mountains. The path led the trio directly between the mountains and they continued through to the other side.

Suddenly, they heard a big bird-like grunt, and huge wings flapping in the distance behind them. The trio halted for a second wondering what was going on. Then from in front of them, a huge bird like creature appeared, looking for food for its youth. It was about 10 times the size of an eagle. It had huge steel wings and metallic feathers. Its beak looked like rock-hard bone. It had giant yellow claws as it was just hovering above the ground. It seemed like the bird was wearing protective armour that it absorbed into its body. It let out a huge shriek as it attacked the trio.

\*Boss battle (ArmourBird). The boss will fly away now and again to avoid attacks. Melee attacks won't work unless the boss is grounded or been staggered. Player will have to use ranged attacks to do damage (sword art, gun, magic). Effect damage can only be done to its feel. The player should be able to accurately target the bosses body parts.\*

The trio defeat the boss and move on. They battle their way atop a canyon and decide to rest and camp out.

"I need a break...", June muttered as they eventually settled on a spot between two trees about 50 yards from a cliff.

Spyke was seemingly annoyed that they were so quick to take a break, but Draster agreed they need to pace themselves.

"Yeah, even if we're not tired, we should still pace ourselves," Draster said looking at June, but moreso talking to Spyke as if he could read his mind. "Let's set up camp. Jairek gave us some supplies..."

Draster pulled out a tent that put itself up instantly. It was big enough for two people.

"We're not all gonna fit in there..." Spyke started.

"We will take it in turns. Two will sleep and one will keep watch and we rotate," said Draster.

"You two go ahead," Spyke suggested. He much preferred to spend the time by himself anyway.

"I'll keep watch."

"Well I'm surprised, that's the most unselfish thing I've heard you say. Thank you!" said a shocked June.

"Yeah, whatever", Spyke muttered.

June and Draster unequipped their gear and took a spot in the tent while Spyke sat outside in front of the fire. June could be heard yelling, "Now don't you try anything!" to Draster, who was deeply offended.

Spyke just lay in the blue grass, looking up at the dark violet sky, and the stars beginning to appear behind the clouds. He had thought a lot about the recent events. How he was on the one hand so close to locating his father whom he had pure hatred for and wanted to kill him, to end up on a totally different planet now so far away from him. He had to get back to Earth at all costs, to avenge his friend and master.

June fell asleep almost instantly, and Draster was waiting for this so he could have a one-to-one chat with Spyke.

"Shouldn't you be sleeping?", Spyke sensed Draster was approaching as he continued to lay on the grass.

"Shouldn't you be keeping watch?" Draster wittingly replied.

Spyke sighed.

"So... what's your story? Spyke Tinwall?"

"My story?" replied Spyke. "What do you mean Draster \*Surname\*?"

"Why are you so angry?"

Spyke didn't bother trying to lie. It was as if Draster could read his mind the whole time.

"It's none of your business." Spyke said softly.

"I thought you'd say that", Draster started, picking up a rock and throwing it into the fire he created with his magic.

"Are you a mind reader or something?" Spyke asked him, sensing there was some kind of connection between them.

"No, we just think alike. Great minds and all. You know, I don't think we're too dissimilar..." .

"You know nothing about me, so how can you come to that conclusion?!" Spyke yelled as June started groaning. "You have no idea what I'm thinking or what I've been through!"

"Then tell me", Draster asked again. "If we're gonna be travelling around together, I want to know a little bit about who I'm travelling with."

"What does that matter. We are just travelling together in order to reach Earth, that's it..." Spyke began.

"You really are stubborn aren't you. Alright I'll tell you about myself," Draster said, feeling the tension ease up a bit.

"I'm not interested", Spyke said. "If you're not going to sleep during this shift then I will." Spyke got up and grabbed his sword to go back to the tent. Draster got up as well and grabbed him by the shoulder.

"Has anyone ever stood up to you?" Draster asked him calmly. Spyke shot back his hateful glare at Draster. They felt each other's fiery energy as they stared into the other's eyes.

"Get your hands off...", Spyke started to say.

"Let's have a duel", Draster cut him off. "If you win, I'll tell you my story, my past. If I win, you tell me yours. Deal? Nothing lethal of course."

"Nothing lethal huh?", Spyke decides to pull out a dagger hidden by his side.

"How many blades do you have?!" Draster asked.

"Just five, any more and the plasma inside of them would weigh me down too much." Spyke replied, pulling out his hidden blade behind the armour on his leg.

"Dual wielding eh?" Draster quizzed. "Is that the most effective against a ranged enemy?"

"...It depends, whether the ranged enemy will try to run away when I get close. But with this, I can only use a limited amount of sword art." Spyke explained.

"I see, a double-edged sword then."

"Something like that."

"Shall we begin?"

"Whenever you're ready."

Spyke and Draster readied themselves as they clash!

\*Player takes control of either Draster or Spyke, while June is sitting by the tent quietly watching. If Draster wins, then Spyke will tell his story and Draster will learn icicle (used to slow down melee). If playing as Spyke and Spyke wins, he will learn dual wield, but still decide to tell his story. The player must win to advance. The player can give up and skip the story altogether and will need to learn icicle or dual wield at another time\*

June sees Draster about to win and tells the pair to stop. Spyke is furious.

"I was just about to win!" Spyke bellows as Draster walks over to shake his hand. Spyke accepts his defeat and shakes his hand reluctantly.

"You know, you shouldn't tell an enemy your strategy." Draster said to him. Spyke unequipped his weapons and sat back down.

"Hmph, don't you think I know that?" said Spyke.

"You were going easy on me so you could tell your story?" asked Draster.

"I told you because it's important to know my fighting style so you don't get in my way on the real battlefield", said Spyke.

"I see", Draster stated chuckling.

"Nice fight guys! Now keep it down will ya? I'm going back to sleep", said June, turning around in the tent.

"Don't you wanna hear Spyke's past?" asked Draster Spyke rolled his eyes.

"Oh yes! I'd like to know why you're such a moody so and so!" joked June. Spyke held his same expression unimpressed. June jumped out of the tent and joined the boys in front of the fire.

"My past huh? Where do I start...?" Spyke thought as he looked up to the sky.

#### Chapter 4 - Spyke's Past

Spyke narrates. I remember being locked up in some camp from an early age. Maybe from 5-6, I dunno. I lived in a small hut, that was surrounded by a playground and that was surrounded by a tall barbed wall. My father would bring me food, just enough so that I could eat for a few days and then leave for a week or more. I had access to a radio so I could hear what was going on in the world, and that taught me how to speak. I had a few books that I could read from. I had this Plasma broadsword with me then too. That was it, I wasn't allowed to leave.

My mother died giving birth to me, and my father said that I was being punished for killing my mother. I would just cry and cry myself to sleep when I heard those words. All I could hear was my father blaming me, yelling, shouting, screaming at me, and I would just crawl up into a ball and cry in a corner. I would say I'm sorry, but I didn't really know what I was apologising for. Apologising for existing? For being born? There were times where I wish I had never been born, and there were many times I thought about taking my own life just to end the pain, for me and my father.

"That's horrible. Did you ever try to escape?" June asked.

Of course I did. I tried climbing the wall, I tried screaming for help. Nothing.

The only tool I had was this sword, so over the years I built up what little strength I had so that I could try to use it. I was barely able to lift it until I was 11 years old.

"It took you five years to be able to lift that sword?" said Draster.

Plasma swords are not just hunks of metal. They are infused with Plasma, which makes it almost 10 times heavier if you do not know how to manipulate Plasma. If you just tried to lift a small dagger infused with Plasma without any knowledge of Plasma manipulation, it would weigh the same as a car.

Anyway, one of the books I found in that old hut, was on Plasma manipulation which I didn't know at the time as it was written in a language I couldn't understand. It took me years to decipher what I had to do, but I figured it out and I could finally lift the sword. It took me another year before I could swing it to great effect.

The time had come for me to try to cut down the door. I tried chopping and slicing the door, but all that left was scars and calluses in my soft hands. I tried everything, but the sword wouldn't leave a scratch on the door! I was either too weak or the door was impenetrable. Whenever my father was to return, I would put the sword back where it was so he wouldn't notice, and I would hide my hands so he didn't see them. Then I would try again when he left.

I kept trying and trying, I sliced at the walls, the barrier, everything. I grew tired and frustrated until I was just about ready to give up... Then I thought of everything. Everything he did to me, beating me, yelling at me, treating me like dirt... I let out a huge cry and sliced at the door one last time, and a Plasma beam shot out of the blade and destroyed the door.

I did it, after years of trying to escape that prison, I was free. I took the sword with me and ran. The prison was in the middle of a misty forest. There was no sign of any life, it was just me, fog and the forest. I ran, crying, as fast as I could for as long as I could. My legs were not used to running such far distances so I tired quickly. But I didn't care. All I knew was when my father saw that I escaped, he would come after me. I ran and ran until I collapsed.

"Hey... hey kid... hey you OK?", said some unknown male voice.

My face was cold, my body was numb. I had blacked out and was lying on the cold hard ground. I slowly opened my eyes and could see a figure of a man staring back at me. I immediately grabbed my sword and swung it in his direction, jumping up to my feet in one swift motion. He dodged the attack effortlessly.

"Woah woah, who taught you how to use that thing?", the man said.

My eyes were still blurry but I could tell it wasn't my father. I eased up a bit and tried to clear my eyes. A man, wearing a red bandana, with blonde spiky shoulder length hair, and piercing blue eyes stood opposite me with an amazed smile on his face.

"Uuurggh", I blurted out. "Heeelp".

"Are you OK? What happened?" the man asked.

I then noticed his white cloak and his katana strapped to his belt. I let out a cry after seeing his sword.

"Hey don't worry, you're safe now OK? I will help you." the man said. He stepped a bit closer, but I got wind of this and immediately reacted by swiping my sword at him. He suddenly disappeared, as I was just recovering from that last attack, I felt a tap on my neck and I blacked out again. He knocked me out.

I could feel myself being carried by piggyback. My eyes were half open as we finally arrived to what looked like a derelict church. I could hear some kind of chanting from within. "Ha... Ha...", could be heard in a rhythmic way.

When we got to the entrance, the man saw that I was awake and he let me down.

"Here, this belongs to you", he said, handing me my broadsword. He gestured to follow him as he walked inside. The chanting got louder and louder as we walked through some corridors. I couldn't believe my eyes when we got to the hall.

There were about 50 kids all with kendo sticks striking at a dummy in front of them all in unison. It was a training hall! The kids' ages ranged from 8 to 16, with a mix of gender and ethnicity.

We walked out onto the stage where there was a training instructor watching over them.

"How's it going Memphis?", the blonde man said to the training instructor. He was wearing a red and black military-like jacket and he had a katana strapped to his hip. He was bald, about 6ft 3 and had a mustache and beard that covered most of his mouth.

"It's going well Master, and who do we have a here?" said Memphis turning and smiling towards me.

"I found him collapsed in the woods. What was your name young man?", the Master asked me. I shrugged, not know what a name even was.

"You don't have a name? That's OK. Lets see... you have spikey ginger hair... how about Ginger?" the Master suggested.

"We already have someone named Ginger, Master", Memphis said.

"Spikey then! But with a 'Y' instead of an 'I', how do you like that?" the Master suggested with enthusiasm.

"I prefer Spike", butted in Memphis.

"Alright... but with a 'Y', yes?!"

I didn't have any idea what they were talking about. I had barely communicated with another person before, so I couldn't really speak with confidence.

I looked out at the kids doing their drills. None of them had looked up at me, they were all focussed on the task at hand.

"How is Spyke able to carry that sword? Is it Plasmafied?!" Memphis just noticed in shock. I could feel one or two eyes look up towards the stage.

"I found him with it. Its his and he's been using it. Look at his hands", the Master dragging me by my hand.

"How can this be?!"

"I don't know, he doesn't say much. Anyway, you must be exhausted Spyke, I'll show you your room and you can get some rest." said the Master, walking off and saluting a still shocked Memphis.

Memphis could be heard yelling "FOCUS", at the kids as the Master and I walked through a set of corridors to a room full of bunkbeds.

"This one is yours, this where you sleep", he pointed to a bottom bunk. It had folded up clothes on top of the green sheets and had a pillow. This was heaven, I thought. While locked up, all I had to sleep on was a cold, hard floor and some of my old clothes. I burst into tears.

"Hey, Spyke. I don't know what it is you've been through, but I can tell it was hell. You're safe now, OK? I'll protect you", the Master said, putting his hand on my shoulder.

I nodded as my sobs could be heard throughout the corridor.

"Th-th-thank... y-you".

Time had gone past, and I was enjoying life in the orphanage. I could speak and understand the other kids. Most of them were nice, but there were cliques forming here and there. I made friends. I had arguments, but I had fun and I was happy.

We were taught how to wield a sword, even though I taught myself the wrong way, I went back to basics and would relearn everything. Then Master and I would have extra lessons where he would teach me how to use the broadsword, and how to control Plasma. He called me his apprentice, and I think some of the other kids were jealous of that. Master told me not to tell anyone what happened to me in the past, so I didn't, and that left a resentment feeling among some of them.

Master would organise bounty missions for us. A few of the kids would team up with seniors to go and get the bounty, and bring back the reward for the rest of us to share. Eventually, they would let me go out with just a few other kids, trusting me as a senior, even though I hadn't been there long. I was granted senior status because of my skill with a blade, and I was able to

manipulate Plasma at such a young age. This only served to build up the resentment even more amongst some of my peers. The one who detested me the most was Seymour.

Seymour eventually became a senior, but it was long after I became one, and it was through a lot of grit and hard work, and not so much natural talent. Because I had “trained” with a broadsword and had no choice but to learn how to use it from early on, he deemed that I just had luck and natural talent to get to where I was. But he didn’t understand and he resented me for this.

We had spent many years quarrelling and arguing for no reason. So much so that Memphis, the chief instructor, had to separate us himself.

“That’s enough you two! This is not how seniors should behave!” Memphis yelled at us as we were embroiled in fist fight. He flipped both of us onto our backs as we were in mid fight. A number of the junior kids were egging us on, supporting both of us and was then astonished at how easily we were both left on our backsides. “You should be setting an example! Both of you, to the Master’s office immediately!”

Memphis walked off as we instinctively followed him, feeling rough. We arrived as Master had a long look on his face.

“Leave us Memphis, thank you”, he said warmly. Memphis marched off, closing the door behind him.

“I need you two to be on your top form. We’re going on a S rank bounty. And it’s just us three.” Master rarely went on a hunt himself unless it was high risk, but high rewarding.

“We are low on seniors and I need you two to step up. Also, this will be an opportunity to get to know each other a bit better, so you’ll have to learn to get along. Understood?”, Master asked in a warm but command manner.

Seymour and I both nodded. We had never been on an S rank bounty before. Most A ranks need 3 seniors and 2 juniors to help clear the path. But it was just us three going. Master must have been supremely confident in us both.

“Good, now go and gear up. We leave in an hour”, he said.

Seymour and I both headed out the door and dashed to our bunks, not saying a word to each other.

I equipped my leg protector and shoulder shield, put on my red and white uniform, attached my hidden dagger and broadsword, and met Master and Seymour outside the church.

“Always late I see...”, Seymour muttered.

“Right let’s go”, said Master. “We’re heading to Goldhawk. I’ll explain what we need to do when we get there.”

Goldhawk was a quite the trek from our countryside base. We had to trek to the main road, then get in our hover vehicle and drive for two hours around London. I drove, while Master was in the passenger seat, with Seymour rolling around in the back, struggling not to throw up. “Can’t you drive a bit smoother?” he yelled at me as both Master and I chuckled to ourselves.

We followed the long straight road into London. We were travelling at 11pm on a Sunday so there was minimal traffic.

We finally reached. Master told me to pull over outside an old warehouse.

“What is this place?” I asked.

“Our bounty is here, stay alert”, Master replied.

We jumped out the vehicle with our equipment and walked with caution up to the front gates. It looked like a derelict old building that had not been set foot in 100 years. It was heavily chained and padlocked.

"This warehouse used to house a huge concentration of Plasma," Master started. "There are no doubt monsters running around in there, but we don't know how strong. Our "bounty" is to clear this place of monsters and take it for ourselves."

"This will be our new base?" Seymour asked.

"I want to expand the orphange and help more children without having to build another base ourselves. This will be the next base for us to help more kids. And I want you two to be in charge of it," Master explained.

I was shocked. I had nothing but admiration for Master. He sought ways to help more kids and keep the town safe. He educated us himself and gave us a home. I was honoured that he would consider me to run the next orphanage.

"Wow, that's amazing!" Seymour blurted out. I still couldn't warm to him. Something about him was still cold. "But do I have to share it with him?" he pointed to me.

"This is not about you Seymour," I said to him.

"Indeed," Master agreed. "You two share a similar history. That's why you should be able to understand each other and work together."

"I'm not working with that red head..."

"What did you say?!" I snapped back at Seymour.

"ENOUGH," Master spoke with a commanding energy. "Focus on the task at hand. We are to clear this place of monsters and secure it. Understood?"

We both nodded, with goosebumps on our backs.

Master slashed open the padlocks using his lightning fast iaijutsu. We then released the chains, pushed the huge double doors that creaked open and set off inside. "Spyke, you take point." Master said.

\*Player takes control of the party. Switching is disabled. Master is incredibly strong and can destroy monsters with ease. The player fights their way to a strange black and green crystal\*  
"What's that?", Seymour said as he walks over to touch it.

"WAIT, don't touch it!", Master calls out but it was too late. A green light shone out from the crystal and a huge gusts of wind started to swirl around us. A black whirlwind engulfed Seymour before he was knocked out cold.

Master ran to Seymour, grabbed him and threw him onto his back. My head and my eye started throbbing intensely. So much so that I could barely stand. I called out in pain as I was left clutching my left eye, I could see something out of the corner of my right eye. "Master... look out!".

But he already saw it. It was a massive demon blocking our escape route. It was the size of the entire room we were in. I grabbed my sword but I couldn't move, I was paralyzed by this throbbing pain in my eye, and Seymour was knocked out cold.

Master whizzed to my direction and picked me up into his clutches. "Spyke, you look after Seymour." He took us to the back of the room where we would be out of harm's way. The demon saw us and let out a bellowing roar. Seymour was lying on the ground. His entire body looked like he'd been burned and blackened. Master cast a protective sword art around us and nodded to me. He was counting on me.

Master stepped out in front of the demon and readied his iaijutsu stance with his hand firmly on his katana's hilt. "Now I can finally go all out!", he said with a ferocious, calm grin on his face.  
\*Boss battle - Master vs Crystal Demon. Player should have an enjoyable time using Master's advanced abilities. It should be challenging but fun.\*

What an incredible fight, I thought. I had never seen Master use his full fighting abilities but he needed it against the demon. He was incredibly strong and confident. Something that I aspired to be. It looked like he was dancing around the demon with his white cloak and red bandana blurring behind him.

Master turned back to Seymour and I. My eye and head had stopped throbbing and Seymour was beginning to wake up. Master let out a sigh of relief. "Are you guys OK?", he asked. We both nodded slowly.

"Let's rest up a bit and then we'll continue. I think that will be the hardest battle we'll face tonight", Master said.

\*Party's health is restored. Spyke takes point again. Player continues to the end of the corridor until all the monsters have been cleared\*

That was it. We had cleared the monsters from the warehouse just as it was starting to get lighter outside. It was about 4am now and we were exhausted. We walked outside and to the gates, pleased with the end outcome.

When we got to the gates, we could hear a truck pull up outside. Then a large number of footsteps. Master had a bad gut feeling something was about to happen, so he signalled over to us to hide, so we did. It was Formican Army soldiers, six of them dressed in their standard blue uniform, their helmets covering most of their faces and weapons at the ready.

"Well who do we have here?", one of the soldiers said, appearing to be their leader. "If it isn't 'The Saviour' himself."

"Bart Geiger huh? What brings the Formican Army way out here?"

"I could ask you the same thing."

"This is my new HQ now," Master responded proudly.

"Oh really? You responsible for all the monsters in there too?", snapped Bart.

"What monsters?" Master said.

"I see, so you must have the crystal then." Bart said.

"What crystal?" Master asked innocently.

"Quit the act! Deserter!!" Bart was growing frustrated with Master's lack of cooperation.

"I actually don't know what you're talking about. There are no monsters in there, and I have no crystal. Feel free to search the place," Master said, never failing to keep his cool. "And I'm not a deserter."

"Anyone who leaves the Formican Army without dying is a deserter in my eyes." Bart said coldly.

That was the first time I had heard that Master used to be part of the Formican Army.

"Anyway. Are you going to search my HQ or not?", Master asked impatiently.

"Hmph, what a waste of time", Bart said. "I knew there was no crystal here."

"The Formican Army has turned to treasure hunting now? What's this crystal you keep harping on about?" Master asked.

"None of your business, deserter." Bart barked and turned around to his comrades. "There's nothing here, we're moving out."

"But sir, shouldn't we at least check...", one of the other shoulders began to say.

"NO! We're leaving. Move out!"

The soldiers turned tail and marched back to their vehicle before driving off.

Master turned around and walked back through the gates to find us.

"Seymour, do you have the crystal they were talking about?" Master asked calmly.

"No, it disappeared when I touched it", Seymour responded.

"OK, it's time to go. We need to head back to base. I'll call for a few seniors to make their way down. Good job guys." Master said.

I sensed there was something off between Master, Seymour, that Formican squadron and about that crystal. But I couldn't put my finger on it.

We headed back to the car and found our tyres to be slashed.

"Shit!", Master exclaimed. It was the first time I had seen him lose his cool.

"Aha"... Bart came out from behind the block. "Who do we have here? Two kids just pop out of nowhere huh? Do they have the crystal?"

"Bart....".

"And where do you think you're going? I thought that was your HQ?"

"It is".

"Liar! Where's the damn crystal?!"

"We don't have any crystal!"

Bart marched up to Master's face. He didn't flinch but he did draw his hand closer to his katana.

The other soldiers followed behind Bart.

"Then why does my sensor say that it's right here!"

"Search us! We don't have any crystal!" Master yelled at Bart with commanding rage.

Seymour and I were speechless. We didn't know what to do.

"Search the damn kids!", Bart barked to the other soldiers. Bart did a patdown of Master himself. A soldier came to check me and another to check Seymour.

"Hmm?", the soldier searching Seymour muttered. "Sir!", he said calling to Bart. Master and I looked round at Seymour. The soldier had lifted up Seymour's top, and saw a glowing green object in his chest.

"You swallowed the crystal?" Bart asked him. A moment of silence passed by as Bart then said, "arrest them".

Master was the first to react. He knocked out the two closest guards and went for Bart, but Bart was on to him and parried his attack with his own blade.

"Attacking an official eh? That can send you down for years." Bart snarled, as Master and he struggled for supremacy. They pushed each other back.

\*This triggers a boss battle. Bart and three Formican soldiers vs Master, Spyke and Seymour. Player can control Master, Spyke or Seymour.\*

We defeated the Formican soldiers but didn't kill them off. We ran away from the warehouse as we heard Bart calling for backup.

"We need to make sure we're not followed," Master said as he led the way. We were too far from base to run the entire way and the Formican Army would catch up to us. We turned a few blocks and ran into more soldiers.

\*Battle with soldiers\*

We needed a vehicle. I suggested hijacking the Formican Army's vehicle but Master explained that they have trackers. He then came to the realisation that they have a sensor to track the crystal that was lodged inside Seymour.

"We can't go back to base while this crystal is inside of you Seymour, we need to find a way to get it out," Master said.

"Just go on without me...", Seymour said. "This is my fault, I shouldn't have touched that crystal and it's me they want..."

"Forget it, it's done now. We need to find a way to get it out, and I might know someone who can help." Master said.

Master knew a man, a former Formican Army medical doctor who probably knew a thing or two about discectomy. The problem is he was still an hour away and with the Formican Army on our tail, it was no easy task.

Master brought out his mobile, "Doctor, it's me. I need a favour and it's urgent... No you'll need to meet us, we're being tracked by the Formican Army and... Yes, you know, the emergency location... Yeah we'll make sure we aren't followed when you get here... bring everything you have... alright see you soon." Master hung up the phone.

He knew that the Formican Army had ways of tracking people via a phone and didn't want to reveal too much in case they were listening in. He turned it off and we got moving immediately. The emergency location was on the outskirts of London and we had to get there fast.

It was around 4AM and there were still morning busses running. We decided to hop on one that would take us closer to our destination, and luckily there was hardly anyone on the bus, and it was powered by artificial intelligence. Although, when one or two people saw us getting on, they decided to get off immediately. Probably because of the high profile weapon on my back.

"We'll be there soon. Stay alert." Master instructed us. He stayed closer to Seymour inspecting him when he could. His hand was blackened from where he touched the crystal and his chest had a bright green glow from where the crystal had placed itself.

Another ten minutes on the bus and we signalled for the bus to stop. We jumped off at Perivale. It was quiet and you could hear a few cars driving past. No sign of the Formican Army. Did we lose them?

We walked through a few winding roads and into a park where there was a small hut on the outskirts of the greenery. There was a car just outside and a man standing by the entrance.

"I was wondering when you was going to get here son!", said Master's father. "What have you gotten yourself into this time?!" he asked in a grumpy voice, having been woken up at 3AM.

He was tall, lanky and greying blonde. Wore a suit jacket and glasses and carried a suitcase with him. "Let's go inside first", Master said, as they headed to the small hut out of view.

"My name is Ruben, pleasure to meet you both...", he said to Seymour and I. Master hurried us inside after disengaging the lock with the hilt of his sword.

The hut looked like an old safe house turned medical lab. There were four beds, lined up next to medical equipment and work benches. Ruben flicked on the lights to reveal the entire room.

"Show him Seymour", Master instructed as Seymour lifted up his shirt. I started to get a weird sensation whenever he did that.

Ruben looked for a few seconds at his chest. "I see, this crystal is what the Formican Army is after?"

"Correct. Can you remove it?" responded Master impatiently.

"Not without gouging it out of his chest."

"The crystal is emitting some kind of signal that the "Formican Army is using to track it. Is there a way to block the signal until we can find a way?" Master asked hurriedly.

"A high concentration of Plasma should do the trick."

Master then ran off to the corner and grabbed an old armour set that was stashed behind a cupboard.

"Ah nice, that should work. But, you know the risk..." Ruben started.

"I know", Master snapped.

I had never seen Master this erratic before.

"Is there anything I can do to help?", I asked, feeling helpless.

"Thank you Spyke, we just need to put our heads together and think of a plan." Master said, back to his warm, calm self. He handed the armour to Seymour and he put it on. It looked like it weighed a ton and without the proper plasma manipulation, Seymour would have been crushed by its weight. Such was the training that Master had provided us, Seymour was able to stand and move around with the breastplate surrounding the crystal.

"Now is someone going to explain to me what's going on?!" Ruben blurted out!

Master filled him in on the details.

"So there was just a dark crystal lying there in that warehouse this whole time? Why did the Formican Army only just turn up now?", Ruben asked.

"It probably triggered their sensors or something when we fought the beast protecting it", Master explained.

There was something I was dying to ask them but I only just got the chance.

"Were you both in the Formican Army? Why did you leave?", I asked, interrupting them.

Master and Ruben looked at each other with blank faces.

"It's a long story", Master started. "The Formican Army is not what you think it is, Spyke. I'll explain once we head back to base." Master turned towards his father. "We need a lift back to base."

"Is that any way to ask something from your father?" Ruben said shockingly.

"Spyke, Seymour, let's head out to the car", Master ignored his father's remark and followed Seymour and I out. Just what relationship did he have with his father I wondered. Now wasn't the time, we had to move.

We had a quick scout around the hut to make sure there was no one around. It was deserted. It was now a bit lighter outside but you could see a rumbling storm cloud following us.

We boarded Ruben's car, Ruben and Master in the front, with Seymour and I in the back, and took off. I had recognised the long winding roads that we travelled down to get to Goldhawk. We were close to base and finally the drop off point.

Master had made a call to a senior. He kept it short and sweet so his phone couldn't be tracked and turned it off again.

We arrived at the drop off point. No vehicles could travel through here because of the mountainous and rocky terrain.

"You head home now. I'll call you. Thank you," Master bid farewell to his father in haste, more so because he wanted to get away from his father than escape the Formican Army.

"Take care of yourself, and you too Spyke, Seymour", Ruben said as he drove off.

"We're almost home, let's move out," Master said leading the way through the rocky path. There were a few monsters lurking around that suddenly were attracted to us. \*battles\* This was strange as on the way to Goldhawk, we didn't encounter any, I thought to myself. A few more random encounters later and we could see the final stretch, when suddenly I heard a gunshot.

Master's leg had been taken out as he dropped to his knees and drawing his sword.

"Sniper! Get down!", he yelled. "Defensive formation!"

Both Seymour and I drew our swords and we formed a cocoon around Master so we couldn't get shot again.

"You're losing your touch, deserter!", Bart yelled out from behind a hill. "If you were still sharp, you'd be able to sense us a mile away."

Another twelve soldiers followed him out.

Master gave Bart a cold glare from behind his blade.

"Not a bad defense, you've trained them well," Bart's voice was irritating me more and more.

"Are there more of your trainee's in that place over there?"

I can feel Master's pulse and energy rising. He was livid.

"All I want is that damn crystal boy you got there. Just hand him over and I'll leave the rest of your kids up there well alone..."

"I'm going", Seymour said, the guilt had all but taken over.

"Don't move a muscle," instructed Master.

We were in a dilemma. If Master killed even just one of the soldiers, we would be wanted criminals, and the Army would destroy our home and our lives. On the other hand, he couldn't abandon Seymour and let him be killed by the Formican Army extracting the crystal from his chest.

"We're gonna fight", Master said calmly in his usual way. "Trust me."

Master stood up, backing us away with his hands in the air. "Alright take him, and you're stupid crystal".

"I see you've finally seen sense", Bart snarled.

Both Seymour and I were shocked by Master's actions, but we thought this must have been part of the plan. We slowly started to rise and come of the cocoon to face the soldiers. All of them stood still, pointing their guns at us. One of them beside Bart slowly was moving awkwardly.

"Drop your weapons and no sudden movements!", Bart yelled out triumphantly.

It was at that moment I saw him. I saw my father. He was the soldier beside Bart, slowly taking his helmet off to reveal his face. I could never forget that man's face. All the pain and suffering he put me through.

"It's been a while", he said coldly.

I was getting riled up. I could hardly breathe. All I could feel was rage and I saw red and was about to yell when I heard, "You bastard!!!", from Seymour.

"You know him? Who is he?", Master asked, keep one eye on me.

Seymour and I both said at the same time, "he's my father...".

Seymour and I both stared back at each other wondering what we just said. We were both speechless.

"He's both your father?", Master said. "That would explain it...".

Bart was confused, looking at my father like he was some alien. "What the hell is going on? Is this some kind of family reunion? Tinwall! Put your helmet back on!"

"Shut up!", my father said, staring over at Seymour and I.

"What the hell did you say to me?!", Bart scolded.

Master was quick to seize this moment of confusion as he swirled his sword in the air performing sword art that whisked the Formican soldiers off their feet.

At that moment, the rest of the seniors from the orphanage, all 8 of them, had sprung from nowhere to attack the Formican soldiers. My father had remained planted to the ground, the sword art not affecting him. He drew his broadsword from his back stepped towards us, the seniors running past him to dispose of the incapacitated soldiers.

"Go, both of you.", Master said to Seymour and I. "Let him know how you feel."

The rage in me had taken over. I had drawn my sword and charged into my father that I almost tripped over, but instead it turned into a powerful thrust that push him back as he blocked it.

I was finally face to face with my father again. His face was expressionless.

"Why?!" I said to him. "Why did you treat me like trash?"

He pushed me back as Seymour began stepping towards.

"Because you are trash. You killed my wife." He replied coldly. "You both did".

Seymour charged towards him and attacked him head on. Father parried him and kicked him away.

"Is that all you've got?! Pathetic!"

We were fighting on emotion, everything we learned went out of the window. Seymour and I took it in turns to attack him, but we couldn't lay a scratch on him. When Seymour next attacked, Father slashed his chest as the suit of armour he was wearing was blasted off. This revealed the black and green crystal lodged into his chest to glow and pulse. Then my unbearable headache started again. I was paralysed, I couldn't move. It felt like my left eye was bleeding, as my vision started to fade. "Are you going to cry again...", I could hear Father's bitter words as he ran towards me to finish me off. "You're all alone... you trash..." .

I was helpless, I could barely see, feel anything. It was as if time had slowed down and what I could see was in slow motion. All the seniors fighting off the Formican soldiers, Seymour in agony as the crystal pulsated in his chest, and then Master running towards me.

He reached just in time to block Father's strike across my neck, and he chopped and slashed him away as I could hear he say, "You're never alone, Spyke. I'll always be here to protect you." My vision waned, and I could hear my pulse deafening in my ears. I blacked out.

When I woke up, it was raining. I could feel the cold, damp grass on my face. My left eye was still throbbing and my vision was blurry. I blinked a few times to clear my eyes. It felt like a few hours had gone past. I slowly started to get up, as I looked around the forest. There was nothing, only blood. Blood around the grass, the trees, everywhere. "What had happened", I wondered. Then, behind me I could hear someone breathing heavily. I turned around and saw Master on the ground with a hole in his stomach.

"Hey Spyke...", he said calmly gasping for air.

I dropped to the ground beside him. I couldn't speak, my whole body was in shock.

"I don't have much time... take this," he passed me his katana laying beside him.

"Wha... what happened?!" I blurted out with tears running down my face.

"My bandana... take it," he continued.

I hesitated as the tears were blocking my eyes. I slowly started to undo his bandana and had it in my hands, clutching tightly to it.

"Spyke... you are never... alone," Master said, taking his last few breaths. "I... am... with... you... always." His eyes looked back into mine. I was sobbing so bad I could barely understand him. But I could see him smile. The rain was heavy, as if the heavens were crying.

Master's breaths became slower and slower. I held his hand and clung to it tightly. I was helpless. I couldn't do anything to help him. After he helped me endlessly, even in his last breath he was able to give me comforting words. His eyes slowly began to close as he took his last gasp of air.

He died. I screamed and wailed. I had never cried so much in my life.

I sat with Master, for some time. Trying to figure out what had happened. Why was it just Master and I left? What happened to Seymour? The Formican Army? The rest of the orphanage? My father?

My father. My father... he was part of the Formican Army. It was him I would go for, for answers. So that's why I would enlist in the Formican Army. That's why I took the test. To find... him. And now I'm on this planet, no closer to knowing who or where he really is, or what really happened that day.

\*\*\*\*\* Back at the camp site \*\*\*\*\*

"Did you look up your father's name in the database?" asked June.

"Of course I did. All I know is his, and my, surname, Tinwall," Spyke replied. "There were no results, records or anything. Nothing for Bart either. And for some reason, I couldn't remember Master's name."

"I wondered why you kept calling him 'Master'", Draster thought out loud.

"This was only 5 years ago. Either it was wiped from my memory during that battle or he never told me", Spyke said. "I tried searching for everyone. Seymour, Memphis, even the rest of the orphans had vanished from that church. I don't understand what happened... All I know is Master is dead."

"I'm sorry Spyke...", June started.

"I don't need your sympathy!", Spyke roared back. "I just need to get off this damn planet!"

Spyke got up, taking his sword with him and walked away.

"I can see where his rage comes from now", Draster whispered to June. "He's not just moody..." .

"I know. Should we...?" June replied.

"No, leave him be." Draster said.

Spyke walked to the edge of the cliff, where he could see the valley they had just climbed earlier. He sat down and looked out to the water below. He swore to himself he wasn't going to cry anymore. He was going to find his father no matter what, and get revenge for his fallen Master.

## Chapter 5

The trio were up and ready to continue to the city of Gunners Green marked on their map. Spyke took the lead.

\*Player is given freedom to roam and explore until they get to Gunners Green. There will be just random encounters until then\*

Spyke, June and Draster arrive at Gunners Green. There was a huge gate providing the entrance to the city. There were two huge pistols either side of the gate. The doors were wide open, allowing anyone and everyone through. There were streams of people entering and leaving using hover vehicles. People, being \*elf\*, \*goblin\* and \*taurus\* were conversing with each other and coming in and out.

"This looks like the place", Draster said. "Let's take a break and explore".

"Sounds good to me!", said June.

"Fine with me", Spyke replied.

\*\*\*The party split up and player takes control of Spyke - similar to Zidane in Lindblum. Player is able to look around, shop for items and play a card game. Only guns are available for June to buy.

The game continues when Spyke finds Draster talking to a woman at the bar, and June is found playing with some kids. The player will then need to go to the train station area to continue across the river to the next district. The player will be prompted to find June and Draster first before they are allowed to continue on. GAMIFY- Player needs to do a quest to get a ticket to board the train \*\*\*

The trio reassemble and board the train to the old district of Gunners Green. They grabbed a seat of four by a window. There were a few other people aboard the train in mini compartments chatting to themselves as the train departed to the Old District.

"I wonder if there are any other humans here", Draster thought to himself.

"I've not seen any yet. The locals don't seem to mind humans however", June replied.

"Yeah, I was trying to get some information. They don't seem to remember seeing humans but have heard of us", said Draster.

Spyke gazed outside, looking out into the fields. He could see the New District of Gunners Green as a bustling town full of people and shops. The Old District had a more solemn look to it as they approached. There was a dark cloud over the district that had their sunlight blocked by the New District.

The district was in ruins. There were half collapsed buildings and destroyed roads and pathways. The train approached the platform as the trio disembarked.

"Is this the same city?", Spyke said to himself.

"It's in tatters", Draster said.

The station was deserted. The trio had to walk through the Old District to continue on their journey. As they continued to follow the map they saw very few people. Some people were working to rebuild their homes. There were beggars sitting on the ground, looking up at the trio in disgust.

"I'm getting a very bad vibe. What happened here?" June said, as a kid ran up to Spyke and threw rocks at him.

"Go away!", the kid yelled. He then ran away down an alleyway.

"What the hell?!", Spyke was shocked. "Damn kid..."

Spyke started following him as June and Draster followed. The trio took a few twist and turns with the Old District before seeing the kid enter through a tunnel leading underneath ground. They lose sight of the kid but continue on into the tunnel. They see light, and then see the kid amongst a group of 15-20 other kids and a man, with a cane standing in a group facing the entrance as if expecting them. Spyke immediately had a flashback of Master and the rest of the orphans that he stayed with.

There was a good five second pause between the two groups of people. The man was an \*elf,\* seemed young, but the eldest of the group. The majority were children between the ages of 8 and 13 in human years.

"What do you want?", the man shot at the trio.

There was a silence for a while as Spyke then opened his mouth to speak.

"What happened here?", he said.

"Hmph!", the man started.

"Why is this place in ruins? And why are you hiding in this tunnel?" Spyke responded.

"Because of you! You humans...", the man snarled back at Spyke.

"...Morkain?", Spyke replied.

The man turned away and started pacing away from the kids. This kids continued to stare back at them in a huddle.

"You humans are the source of all our anguish. This used to be a bustling town until the war broke out", the man reminisced. "What you see here is the remaining children - war orphans. All the others were killed."

"Why did they target this place?", June asked.

"This place is called Gunners Green for a reason, young girl", the man began calmly. "We specialised in manufactured guns. The human army targeted us to cut off the Imperial supply line of weapons. But the Imperials did very little to help..." .

The man paused as he gazed at the trio.

"You are not of this world are you?"

"No...", Draster started as he filled in the man on their predicament.

"I see, so you were brought here by that vile man," the elf said. "Perhaps it was wrong of me to assume you were at fault. I do apologise for my earlier brashness. My name is Cannon."

"It's dangerous of you to assume all humans were the same. What if I assumed the same thing of elves?", June started lecturing Cannon. "We are actually really nice people and only want to return home."

"You are right, I do apologise", Cannon replied remorsefully. "Kids, these people are good people and are only here to help. Don't be shy, introduce yourselves!"

Suddenly all the kids huddled in a corner started cheering and dancing around the trio.

"Get away... damn kids...", Spyke snarled, but that didn't put the kids off.

"OK OK that's enough!", Cannon yelled before they all scattered and went off into their own rooms. Spyke did notice one child who didn't join in. It was the child who threw rocks at him and lead them here.

"Hey, you! What's your name?" Spyke pointed at him.

"None of your business!", the kid responded, then stormed off.

"Heh, he reminds me of someone", Draster chuckled.

Spyke shot back at him.

"How long have you been looking after these kids?", June asked Cannon.

"For as long as I can remember...", he started. "I assign them tasks to do keep them busy.

Scavenge for food, do some odd jobs, and that provides for the collective. However resources are running scarce and there are too many of us in this little tunnel."

"Is there anything we can do to help?", June asked, Spyke and Draster's ears prodded up.

"Yes... yes actually there is", Cannon begun.

\*QUEST\*

"There is an abandoned building, a factory, that I need you to clear out..."

Spyke gets a flashback of Master telling him the same thing to him and Seymour.

"The factory purifies water but its being contaminated by a slime beast \*Flan like creature\*. If the monster were to disappear, then we could fix the machinery in the factory and return pure water to the Old District."

"Where is this factory?", Draster asked.

"Melvin will show you. Melvin!"

The kid that threw stones at Spyke returned.

"So your name is Melvin huh?", Spyke said, snarling at the fact he discovered his name.

"Alright, we'll take care of it. We'll prove to you that not all humans are bad", June said.

"Oh thank you!", Cannon cheered and bowed.

\*QUEST ACCEPTED\*

\*Player gains control and must follow Melvin to the factory. There will be random encounters on the way until Melvin points out the factory to them\*

"This is it", Melvin said. "Try not to get killed, hehehe".

Something about what Melvin said creeped the trio out as he wandered back to the entrance.

"I don't think so kid!", Spyke grabbed Melvin by his robe. "You're coming with us until we find this monster."

"Tch...", Melvin kissed his teeth as he was shoved in front of the trio.

Spyke took point as June and Draster accompanied him and Melvin to the beginning of the water purifying factory.

\*Description needed - random water based monsters appear until they reach the boss. Regular physical attacks are ineffective. The player must use sword art/magic to defeat enemies effectively. This is where Spyke/Draster learn how to use Elemental Sword. Similar to Sword Magic in FF9. Draster will imbue Spyke's sword with an elemental property that he can use to physically attack enemies. June can do the same but she is also able to use magic.\*

The trio with Melvin's help reach the monster that was causing the machine to malfunction. It also seemed to be the cause of all the other monsters in the factory. It was a gooey, sticky, blue beast that covered the whole contraption.

"So that's the monster...", Spyke muttered. "Melvin you stay back."

"No need to tell me twice!", Melvin replied, hiding behind June.

The trio attacks!

\*Boss battle: Blue Phlegm - Physical attacks (sword strikes, gun) are ineffective and the party will need to use magic and sword art. The monster will spawn minions that the party will have to defeat quickly in order to win\*

The trio defeat the monster and Melvin returns impressed.

"Nice work!", he said. "I'll check the machine".

Melvin ran over to the machine and flicked a few switches. Suddenly, a remaining gooey minion appeared from behind the machine and jumped out at Melvin. He braced himself as he was about to take a hit, but it never came. Spyke had sliced away at the minion with his electrified sword.

Melvin looked up at him with gratitude.

"Continue", Spyke said calmly.

Melvin nodded. He flicked on a few more switches and the contraption started making noises, lights came on, and it appeared to be doing something.

"Is it working?", June asked.

"Seems like it", Melvin replied.

"Then... we're done here?", Spyke asked Melvin.

"Yes", Melvin nodded to Spyke. He seemed to have a newfound respect for him. "Let's get out of here and head back to Cannon".

\*There is now a shortcut the player can use behind the machine that will lead outside. The player returns to the tunnel and back to Cannon\*

"Wow, you did it?!", Cannon said with amazement. "I can't believe it! You don't know what you have done for us."

"Hey it was no problem at all", June said smiling.

"I was wrong about you, I am so delighted you came here", Cannon continued. "On behalf of the Old District of Gunners Green, please accept this gift."

\*Player receives new gun\*

"Thank you", June said, checking out the new gun.

"If you need anything, you are more than welcome to return. I hope the next time we meet, it will not be in such dank surroundings", Cannon finished.

"We look forward to it", Draster beamed.

"What do you say when someone does something for you kids?", Cannon turned around to ask the children, cleaning up and playing around.

"Thaaaaank yoooou", they all said in unison.

Spyke noticed Melvin was nowhere to be seen.

"It's time to go", Spyke said, nodding to Cannon. Cannon reached out to shake Spyke's hand.

\*DECISION - Spyke has the choice to accept/reject it - this will affect decisions later on. If Spyke rejects it, he will not get help from Gunners Green later on. For the purposes of the story, he accepts\*

Spyke accepted the handshake as Cannon whispered, "if you ever need anything, please call on us." Spyke nodded, and walked out of the tunnel. There, he saw Melvin waiting.

"So you're going now huh?", Melvin asked sadly. "Hey, will you teach me how to use a sword one day? I don't really like guns".

"Maybe", Spyke said.

"Alright!", Melvin said ecstatically.

June and Draster smiled.

"But you have to help your Master first. Do everything you can to restore your town and become stronger in your own way", Spyke said calmly, arms folded.

Melvin nodded.

"Take care", he said.

## Chapter 6

The trio continued on their journey and exited Gunners Green towards their next destination on their map.

\*Player gains control - the path should take them to a forest\*

"So this must be Sleepy Forest", Draster says looking at their map.

"I wonder why it's called Sleepy Forest", June said. The trio decide to rest before entering the forest \*rest\*.

The entrance to the forest was welcoming with an expanse of trees that covered the entire area for as far as you could see. There was a clear footpath to follow and the trio took it.

The trees enveloping them blocked most of the sunlight meaning that they had to watch their steps and keep to the path to ensure they didn't lose their bearings. The leaves on the trees were dark bluish colour as opposed to the greenery on Earth. The path laid out for the trio was muddy and trodden on. This was probably the path that Morkain's army took to invade Gunners Green.

\*Player encounters random monsters - the various monsters use sleep spells - until they get to a POI the player can use "slap" or "yell" to wake each other up. They have a random chance of waking up when used.\*

The party reach a sign and a crossroads. The sign said "Dream", pointing left and "Nightmare" pointing right.

"Which way do we go Draster?", Spyke asked him.

"There is only one path on the map", he replied.

"Let's take "Dream" then", June chimed in. "Spyke, what do you think?"

\*Player decision - choose between Dream or Nightmare. Both paths eventually lead to the same place. Dream has easier enemies, but have a higher chance of making you sleep. Nightmare has tougher enemies, but lower chance to make you sleep, and more items.\*

"Alright, we'll go down 'Dream'", Spyke agreed with June.

\*Player has random encounters until they reach a boss at the end of the forest\*

Suddenly, a huge plant like monster appeared from nowhere and jumped down in front of the trio. The monster attacked!

\*Boss fight - \*\*\* need a name \*\*\* the boss specialises in putting the player to sleep (which should be annoying) and then eating their dream/nightmare that deals damage to the player. Fire is slightly more effective.\*

After the trio defeated the monster, the monster released a purple gas from its enormous mouth that Spyke, June and Draster couldn't escape from. This put all three of them to sleep.

"Ugh...", Spyke groaned as he began to wake up. June and Draster were just beginning to wake up too.

They were in a prison. They had been locked up in a cell that was barely big enough for one person.

Spyke slowly rose to his feet, looking around. He noticed that all his weapons were gone.

"Shit! My weapons!" June cried.

June and Draster also had their weapons and gear removed.

"What the hell...?" Spyke muttered.

Draster took a step closer to the gates and looked around. It was dead quiet. There were other cells but they were all empty. One or two had skeletons chained to the wall. There was a dull light flickering that kept the room from darkness.

"This is some kind of dungeon", Draster said slowly.

Spyke walked up to the gate and yanked as hard as he could. He then tried kicking the lock, making a huge racket, but no luck.

"Tch...", Spyke sighed.

"Do you have your hidden blade Spyke?", Draster asked.

"No, whoever brought us here have taken everything. I presume they've taken your gloves too?" replied Spyke.

"Yeah...", Draster sighed.

"I still have my shoes", butted in June.

"So?", questioned Spyke.

"They're imbued with Plasma...", June said. "I don't just kick for fun you know."

"Could you try kicking down the door?", Draster asked impatiently.

"Sure, here goes...".

\*Player is given a mini game with June to kick down the door\*

June blasts the door open with her foot, blowing the hinges off the door.

"Nice!", Draster said.

"Let's go. Whoever brought us here will have heard that", Spyke said.

\*Player is giving control and must navigate the dungeon and solve puzzles to find their gear\*

"There's our gear", Spyke says, bursting through a door. The trio quickly equipped their gear and dashed back towards the light. At the end, they suddenly saw a shadowy hooded figure turnaround.

"Morkain!", Spyke yelled!

The trio were getting closer as they could see his dark mist and wind start to swirl. Spyke's head began to pulsate as he was struggling to see. He clutched at his head as he continued to run towards Morkain. The headache was getting worse and worse. Spyke yelled in agony. He was inches away from Morkain. The man who sent him to Terra. Spyke instinctively grabbed his sword, prepared to do battle with Morkain once again. But Morkain begun to vanish into dust as Spyke swiped at thin air.

"I am not Morkain." a mysterious high pitched voice defeaned Spyke's ears.

Spyke turned around, June and Draster were gone. And so was the dungeon. It was nothing but blank white space around him.

"Who are you?!", Spyke called out, his head still piercing with pain.

"I am you", the voice spoke.

Spyke turned around and suddenly a mirror was there, floating in midair.

Spyke looked at it through his right eye, his hand pressed against his left. He started to see something in his reflection. His hand was full of blood, pouring from his eye. He moved his hand down his face and saw that his eye was a different colour.

Spyke, horrified by what was going on, creped closer to the mirror and looked at the reflection in his left eye. His iris was purple, and the whites of his eye was black, while the left side of his face was dripping with blood.

Spyke roared in pain, wondering what was going on. "Was this a nightmare?", he thought to himself.

He looked around. Nothing but white space. He turned back towards the mirror and it had disappeared.

"Who are you?! What the hell....!!", Spyke cried out.

Suddenly, a dark green and black figure appeared before him. A dreadful aura engulfed the figure. Spyke spotted the figure's purple eye, much like the one he saw in the mirror.

"Soon... I'll be in control...", the demon said.

Spyke's eye was in constant pain. His sword was already in grasp, so he aimed a swipe at the demon, but he vanished.

"Soon... your suffering... will be over..."

At that instant, the demon figure formed a hand with a sword and struck at Spyke's good eye.

"Spyke... Spyke...", called out a woman's voice.

"Ugh", Spyke groaned.  
June and Draster were around him looking concerned while he was face down on the ground.  
Spyke slowly rose to his feet, clutching his eye.  
"Are you OK Spyke?", asked June worriedly.  
"Yeah... what happened?", Spyke asked.  
"We both woke up and found you tossing, turning, screaming. Like you were having a nightmare", June replied.  
"A nightmare...?", Spyke realised that it all must have been his imagination. But it felt so real.  
"Did you guys have a dream too?"  
"No, I don't remember," Draster said. "We woke up pretty much after the usual sleep spell duration."  
"What was happening in your nightmare?", asked June.  
"We were locked up, then we escaped, then I saw Morkain...", Spyke started. "Then this demon appeared. It all felt so real."  
"Maybe you took a strong whiff of that sleep spell", Draster deduced.  
Spyke picked up his sword and equipped it, still wary of his eye.  
"Alright, let's continue", he said.  
"Are you sure you don't want to rest for a bit", asked June.  
"I'm fine. We need to keep moving", Spyke replied strongly.  
The trio brushed themselves down and continued to exit Sleepy Forest.

## Chapter 7

The trio exited the forest and were left facing a wide expanse.

\*Player takes control and can explore around, getting random encounters\*

\*Stoke Nier has minimal effect on the story. If the player completes all the bounties. They will get help from them later in the game\*

The trio arrive at Stoke Nier, a small village of \*draenor\*. The village was built up of huts made from straw and wood, and it was a drop in the ocean compared to the Hart Expanse that they just walked through.

Spyke, June and Draster walk through the entrance of the village and could see draenor going about their business. There were children playing around, mothers hanging out their washing, labourers building and shop owners selling. They didn't take much notice of the trio that stood out like a sore thumb.

The trio make their way to the inn.

"Let's take a break", Draster said.

"Yeah, we've covered a lot of ground since Gunners Green", June agreed.

"Alright, let's stay here then", Spyke said.

Spyke requests a room for 3 people and they are taken up to the room.

\*Player rest sequence\*

During the night, Spyke can hear a voice in his sleep.

"Mm... mmmm... mmmmm, mmmmm", the voice mumbled.

"What?", Spyke called out.

"I'm... mmmm... mmmmm, mmmmm", it said again.

"What? I can't hear you", Spyke said.

"I'm... in...", the voice got clearer.

"Huh?", Spyke replied.

"I'm... in... control...", the voice of the demon said.

"Who are you?!", Spyke cried.

"I am you, from within", replied the demon.

"What?! What does that mean?!"

"You'll know soon enough."

The trio woke up and exited the inn. Spyke spoke nothing of the words he could hear last night. He could feel his head and eye pounding again in the morning. June and Draster were acting normally so he assumed they couldn't hear anything. What was that dream? Spyke thought. The trio moves on and decide to go to the pub. Here, Spyke spotted a few posters for some bounties.

\*The player can accept bounties and return to the pub to collect their reward. Bounties will give money, rewards and experience\*

The trio stocked up on supplies and continued on their journey.

The next spot on the trio's journey was the Dukedom of Hart. Here, they could find transport that would take them to Morkain's manufactured island. After journeying across the Hart Expanse, they finally arrived at the entrance of the Dukedom.

The entrance gates were enormous, more than double the size of the gates at Gunners Green. They were guarded by two \*canine like humanoids\* dressed in blue and green uniforms, both holding weapons. They stood tall and looked directly on.

There were people coming in and out of the Dukedom of Hart on vehicles and airships.

"If we could get a ride on one of those airships, we can travel directly to Morkain's lair", Draster said mostly to himself, while looking up at the airships.

"Indeed", June said. "Let's see if we can find someone who can take us there."

The trio walked through the city. It was full of people travelling to and from work, working, selling, talking and going about their business. No one really took notice of them. But there were still no signs of any other humans.

\*Player gains control and can explore the Dukedom of Hart\*

The Dukedom was extravagant in its design. All the buildings were made from shiny metallic material and all it's people were dressed in upper class clothes. It was a far cry from the town of Gunners Green. There was an air of regalness here.

Spyke, June and Draster made their way to an information centre.

"Greetings!", said the receptionist. "How can I help you today?"

"Hello", June started, "How do I get a board one of those airships?"

"Ahaha, those airships are not for the general public", the receptionist replied. "They are imports and export goods".

"Ah OK. Where do the goods go?"

"The goods are exported to the other Dukedoms of Terra of course!", said the receptionist enthusiastically.

"Oh really?", said June pretending to be interested.

Spyke and Draster were huffing and puffing, beginning to get impatient.

"And where are the other Dukedoms?", asked June, prying for more information.

"Well there are 4 other Dukedoms apart from this one in the south of course! There is the Dukedom of \*Carnaby\* to the East lead by Duke Carnaby. The Dukedom of Sickleworth to the West, lead by Duke Sickleworth. The Dukedom of Rainvale in the North, lead by Duchess Rainvale..., the receptionist tailed off.

"And the last one?", June asked.

"Well the Dukedom of Bazzleton to the Centre of Terra... which is lead by Lord Morkain!", the receptionist finished.

Spyke and Draster's ears propped up.

"Lord Morkain?" June asked, gesturing for Spyke and Draster to remain calm. "I thought he invaded the South?"

"Yes that is correct", the receptionist said darkly. "He liberated all five Dukedoms and replaced the leaders with his own soldiers. He currently resides in Bazzleton to the Centre of Terra."

"How do we get to Bazzleton?", June asked calmly.

"Hehehe, one does not simply get an airship to Bazzleton if that's what you're thinking."

"Then how do we get there?!", Spyke butted in impatiently.

"Sssorry sir..." the receptionist said startled. "Ever since the war, airships have never travelled to and from Bazzleton directly. The only way is via Rainvale..."

"Cut the crap!", Spyke raged. "We need to travel to the north of this planet to get to the center?!"

"Ye-yes sir!", the receptionist stuttered. "His army are based in Rainvale to the North so...".

"I get it", Draster butted in. "Thanks for your assistance. Let's go." Draster grabbed Spyke and June and spun them around. "We've made a scene, time to go."

Spyke looked around and saw all the townspeople staring at them.

"Listen you guys", Draster started as he lead the way away from the area. "Humans have invaded this planet and liberated all of their Dukedom's and renamed their countries. We can't go around asking too many questions and drawing attention to ourselves, or someone is going to mistake us for one of Morkain's lackeys. Understood?"

"If Spyke had kept cool, we could have eeked out more information from that guy!", June said.

"Everyone was already watching by then", Draster replied.

"Hmph", Spyke grunted. "Anyway, we need to steal one of their airships."

"Spyke, that's madness", Draster started. "No, we need to sneak onto one of their airships and jump off before they realise we're on it."

"But the airships don't go directly to Bazzleton where Morkain is", June said.

"There must be a reason for that", Draster said. "He probably has his base heavily guarded."

Either way, we can't go in all guns blazing or we'll have a whole army on us."

Spyke and June eventually agreed, nodding in approval.

"So now, we need to find a way on to one of those airships", Draster concluded. "Let's follow one from the ground and see where it goes."

\*Player gains control and must find the airship base in Hart\*

Spyke, June and Draster find the airship base that had airships coming and going at a fast rate. There were the same \*canine-like\* guards handling everything, overseeing the transport and the exchange of goods.

"Maybe we can hide in one of those boxes that they're loading the airship with", June suggested.

"Right", Draster replied. "Where are those boxes coming from?"

"Underground", Spyke said. "Over there".

Spyke pointed to a conveyor belt that was transporting all the boxes from the underground.

"YOU!", a loud voice startled the trio. It was one of the guards from behind. "You're not supposed to be here! Duke Hart is waiting for his personal guard and you're not even dressed yet!"

The trio looked startled and confused. Spyke had his hand on the hilt of his katana, but Draster stepped forward.

"We were just ensuring things were going smoothly here", Draster said confidently.

"I see, please pardon my tone," the guard said. "Please put on your uniforms and make your way to Duke Hart. There are some spare uniforms in the barracks underground. He is expecting you."

"Right. We will immediately", Draster said.

The guard spun on his heels and walked away.

"He thought we were the Duke's soldiers?", June asked.

"Probably because we're humans", Draster said. "This is our chance".

\*Player gains control and must find their way through the underground passage\*

"What is it they're shipping anyway?", June thought out loud.

"No idea", Draster said.

The underground passage was like a dark cave, only lit up by candle flame. They came to a box by the side that was half open. Spyke decided to take a look inside and out jumped a monster!

\*Battle\*

"What the hell?!", Spyke exclaimed. "They are transporting monsters?"

"No way...", June said. "Maybe that monster was looking for food and found some in that box. But what would a monster be doing here?"

"I don't know", Spyke said. "Let's continue."

\*The trio continue and find 3 boxes stacked on top of each other\*

"Let's have a look in here", Spyke said.

Spyke slashed open the boxes as three more monsters jump out.

\*Battle\*

"What's going on?!" Spyke said.

"Something isn't right in this place", said Draster.

The trio continue and walk up to a room with a light. They hear some voices as they approach. Draster grabs Spyke and June and they hide in a dark corner out of sight as three Formican soldiers walk out chatting to themselves. Their uniforms in the same highly distinguishable blue with helmets that covered their faces.

"I'm still hungover from that party last night!", one of them said in a feminine voice.

"Yeah me too", one of them replied in a more masculine but softer voice.

"Come on you two! You will get me in trouble because of YOUR floundering! Let's move out!", the last one said in a masculine, colder voice.

The three Formican soldiers marched off in the opposite direction that Spyke, June and Draster were hiding in.

"Formican soldiers?", June stated. "What is going on?"

"I don't know...", Spyke replied. He suddenly got a \*flashback\* of Master saying to him; "The Formican Army is not what you think it is".

"Anyway, let's put on those uniforms and follow them", Draster said. "Presumably those guys were the Duke's personal guard".

The trio dived into the room and found a number of lockers and changing rooms. These lockers contained the much needed uniforms that the trio needed to stay undetected. Spyke broke open some of lockers while Draster kept watch by the door. He eventually found three uniforms.

"Quick, let's get changed and get after them", Draster said.

\*Player gets changed - Spyke, June and Draster's clothes changed into the Formican Army uniform\*

The trio continued through the passageway, staying fully alert in case they encountered anyone or anything. They began to hear heavy machinery the further they went. Louder and louder it became until they saw it. A machine with a black and green crystal in its center. It seemed to be connected to wires pumping plasma in and out of it. Empty wooden boxes were being sucked into the machine. The crystal would glow for a second, and shoot out a beam of light into the box, before the machinery would apply the lid to the box.

"That crystal...", Spyke said.

He suddenly had a \*flashback\*, of the crystal that Seymour had fused inside of him.

"What is that machine doing?!", said June.

There was no one manning the machine. The trio took a look around.

\*Player gains control of Spyke\*

Spyke approaches the crystal. It was exactly the same. The size, the dimensions. It was the same crystal that he, Seymour and Master had seen in that abandoned factory years ago. He took off his helmet to get a closer look, and as he did Spyke's head and eye started to pulse.

"Shit", Spyke said.

The pain was fierce. He could feel his left eye about to pop out of his head as he clutched it and dropped with one knee to the ground.

"Spyke! What's wrong?", called June.

Draster saw Spyke on the ground and hurried over to him.

"Aaaaaahhh", Spyke cried out.

Draster pulled him up and helped him out of the next corridor where the pain began to subside.

"June", Draster called out. "Let's go".

June quickly followed and they hurried out of the corridor.

Blood was seeping out of Spyke's left eye. He just about regained the use of his legs.

"Spyke, are you OK?", June asked running over to them. Suddenly, a monster the size of the entire corridor spawned in front of June, blocking her path.

"Can you fight?!", Draster said to Spyke.

Spyke looked up, wiping the blood from his face. He regained control of his body, drawing his broadsword and readying his stance.

"Of course I can!", he replied.

\*Boss battle - Crystal Monster - this is the same monster as the one Spyke, Seymour and Master fought in Spyke's past. The monster is facing June, and has its back to Spyke and Draster. Damage done from behind is more effective\*

"That crystal...", Spyke started. "It was the same crystal... all those years ago. It gives me pulsating headaches, and my eye feels like it's going to pop out... the same monster appeared... the Formican Army were chasing us to get it..."

June and Draster looked at Spyke intently.

"It's all connected... it must be."

"Are you OK Spyke?", June asked.

"I... 'huff'... 'heave'", Spyke could barely breathe let alone speak.

"There are too many questions that we don't have answers for", Draster said. "Right now, we need to continue or someone will find us..."

"I know", Spyke grunted, catching his breath. "That crystal, that machine... what was it doing?"

"I don't know, but those boxes that were going into the machine were not empty", June started.

"It smelt like blood."

"Monsters", Draster said calmly. "There were monsters in those boxes."

"So that machine was creating monsters using blood and the crystal", Spyke deduced.

"What?!", June yelled!

"What is all that damn racket down there?!", a loud masculine voice was heard from behind them.

"Shit!", the trio said in unison. Spyke grabbed his helmet from Draster and quickly put it on. June and Draster already had their helmets on.

One of the Formican soldiers had appeared from around the corner. He was large and overweight. He had his weapons attached to his belt and a helmet covering his face, although you could see his extra chin from underneath him.

"What the devil are you three doing here!", he said angrily. "You should be top side at the palace preparing for the banquet! Lord Morkain will be here soon! Are you three still drunk from that party last night?"

"Ssssiir!", Draster said and saluted at the same time. Spyke and June also followed suit.

"Well go on then! Get a move on!", the soldier bellowed.

"Rrrright!", Draster ran past the soldier, with Spyke and June following suit.

"Hold it!", the guard said as June ran past him.

The trio stopped and turned around in horror, concerned that they had been discovered.

"I've had reports of three intruders spotted near the rear entrance to the tunnel. If you see them, bring them to me at once!"

"Sir! Yes! Sir!", the trio declared in unison.

"Good! Now on your way!", said the guard, turning his back to them. The trio ran up the stairs and through the corridor as fast as they could before the guard could realise that they were actually the intruders.

"That was close", June sighed.

"Yeah, they are on to us so we need to be careful, and try not to bump in to anyone else", Draster said calmly.

"But did I hear him correctly? He said Morkain will be at the banquet", June said.

"Yes", answered Spyke. "We need to be at that banquet. But right now, we need to get out of here without alerting anyone else."

\*Player gains control and must navigate their way out of the underground passage\*

Spyke, June and Draster make it to the exit. Luckily there was no one standing guard. All the \*canine\* guards were busy talking amongst themselves and the noise of the airships coming in had done enough to conceal their presence. They walk out of the airship base and into an alleyway where they change into their regular clothes.

"We can use these uniforms to get into the banquet", Spyke said. "So let's hold on to them and plan our next move at the inn."

\*Player gains control and must make their way to the inn for a debrief.\*

The trio get a room to themselves and begin discussing what they saw at the base.

"Spyke", June started. "What happened to your eye back there? It was dripping blood..."

"I don't know...", Spyke snapped. "I remember the same thing happening 5 years ago when we found that crystal."

"That crystal in the abandoned warehouse?", Draster asked.

"Yes", Spyke replied. "Whenever I get close to it, I get a piercing headache and my eye starts to ache, like it's gonna pop out."

"What is that crystal anyway?", June asked.

"It seems to have some connection with monsters", Spyke began. "That same monster appeared 5 years ago when we came into contact with it. But it had fused within Seymour's chest when he touched. If it's the same crystal... they must have extracted it out of him".

"We don't know if it is the same crystal, maybe there are multiple crystals. And it looked like that machine was creating monsters with it", Draster chipped in. "There were monsters in those boxes, and they are using the airships to transport them."

"What could the Formican Army be doing?", June started. "They should be protecting people against monsters, not creating them and putting them in boxes. And why are they even on this planet anyway?!"

"We still have more questions than answers", Spyke said. "We will go to this banquet dressed as Formican soldiers and find out more."

A few hours pass and it's the evening. The banquet was about to begin. Spyke, June and Draster make their way to Duke Hart's palace dressed as Formican soldiers. There were people running around the back of the palace getting food prepared. The entrance was heavily guarded with \*canine\* soldiers manning the gates. There were no signs of Formican soldiers.

The trio decide to head through the back entrance where there more \*canine\* guards looking dead ahead. The guards didn't flinch at the sight of the trio, meaning their disguises were good. They could hear a vehicle approach towards the front of the the palace. They turned to have a look, and it was a slick, long and black vehicle that had pulled up. The driver, dressed in Formican colours, got out of the vehicle and ran towards the back, opening the door for the occupant inside.

It was Morkain. His black Formican Army uniform was distinguishing. With his hood down, you could see his long blonde and wrinkled features. He had a scar across his face and a long goatee beard. He got out of the vehicle and strolled into the palace, the guards bowing their head as he walked past.

"He's here", Spyke said coldly. "Let's go inside".

The trio walked into the back entrance that led into the kitchen. There were \*wolves\* and \*goblins\* cooking and making a racket too loud for them to notice the three intruders walk in. The trio walked through at a pace, keeping their heads down and out into the corridor. Straight ahead, they could see Morkain down the other end of the corridor walk forward. He was then accompanied by two more soldiers.

"Let's keep up, but keep our distance", Spyke said.

They took a detour walking parallel to where Morkain was heading. There were no guards around, they all must have been preparing for Morkain's arrival, Spyke thought.

A few more corridors later, and they reached a dead end. The trio would have to follow Morkain directly. They walked in towards the centre of the palace, and they could hear voices. The banquet was well under way, and the trio were enroute to crash the party.

"You three! What are you doing here!" a loud voice from behind called out to them. It was the same soldier that they encountered in the tunnel! "Are all the preparations complete?!"

"Yes sir!", Draster replied hurriedly.

"Good! Get in line and march in with the rest of thr privates! Chop chop!!", the soldier bellowed as he walked ahead of the trio.

This was the second time they were saved by the guard's ignorance. But this meant they were allowed to be in the same room as Morkain without arousing suspicion.

Spyke, June and Draster went around the corner and saw a long line of Formican soldiers in a single file leading to the banquet room. The trio quickly joined the back of the line before they

started marching into the room. The soldiers marched all in unison and in perfect timing. The trio did the same, mimicking the soldiers until they entered the enormous banquet room that was big enough to seat 1000 people. The room was taken up by a long gold and red table through the middle. Gold chandeliers were raised above the table, with pictures of the Formican Army symbol erected around the room. Calm and solemn orchestral music played in the background. The soldiers marched around the room, stopping at certain positions to fill the space and stand guard around the room. Spyke, June, then Draster stopped and spaced far enough apart to mimic the other soldiers.

They stood still and waited for the members of the banquet to arrive.

Suddenly, the music changed to a fanfare as several guests arrived to take a seat by their name cards. The guests were wearing distinguishable different colours of the Formican uniform. They all stood up as Morkain in his all black uniform walked in. He gestured for all the guests to sit down as he walked up to the head of the table.

"Ladies and Gentleman", he spoke confidently. "Thank you for joining me this evening. And Duke Hart, thank you for hosting tonight's banquet. Please update everyone on where we are at."

Morkain sat back down at the head of the table. Spyke looked around in his helmet to see who was Duke Hart. He finally stood up. He was sat next to Morkain, wearing a gold and blue uniform. He was tall, handsome and had short and neat brown hair.

"Thank you my lord", he started in a very regal voice. "We've produced over 10,000 units using the crystal and have sent them and continue to send them to the laboratory in Sickleworth. We believe they will be good candidates for our objective."

"They better be!", a short old man from across the table barked. "The last batch you sent us were useless!"

Duke Hart continued, "Duke Sickleworth, I can assure you that we are doing the best we can. There are very few corpses that remain from the war."

"So just kill a few more people! The fresher the better!", Duke Sickleworth replied.

"Have you tried using live samples yet?", Morkain butted in asking Hart.

"Yes my Lord", Hart replied "The Old District of Gunners Green has proved useful and they are included in the new batch of 10,000."

"Good, Sickleworth let me know how the new batch turns out", Morkain replied. "If these manufactured monsters prove to be uselsess, we will just drop them on Earth."

"That's good", a female from across the table chipped in. "We are running out of monsters on Earth. The troops to monsters ratio is getting too high."

"Duchess Rainvale", Morkain turned to her. She was dressed in a red and black uniform. She had strawberry blonde hair tied in a bun. She had a stern face and piercing blue eyes.

"And your update?", Morkain asked her impatiently.

"We have gathered over 7000 monsters", she said.

"Good", Morkain said, he could sense Rainvale wanted to say something else, "...but?"

"We have many troops my Lord, on Earth and Terra", she replied. "And they are all restless and itching for a fight."

"This is a time of 'peace' Rainvale", Morkain replied. "They will have a reason to fight as soon as we reach our quota. For now they will continue gathering monsters."

"Understood", Rainvale said.

"And finally...", Morkain turned to the last Duke. "Duke Carnaby?".

"My Lord", he began. He was a big, muscly man wearing a green uniform and he had the most presence physically. "We've had no interference at the gate to Hell. Everything is as it should be. We have also located another crystal."

"Excellent work Carnaby, overdelivering as usual. Send that over to Bazzleton."

"Has our special guest arrived my Lord?", Carnaby asked.

"Yes, he has", Morkain said shooting a look directly at Spyke, as if he could see him through the helmet.

Spyke gulped but remained frozen. June and Draster were aware of this and did the same.

"I see, my Lord", Carnaby replied.

"Anyway, let us feast!", Morkain said smiling. He clapped his hands together to signal for the food. The waiters and waitresses strolled in almost immediately with platters of food and drink to serve to the Formican Army. Morkain grabbed some meat and downed it almost in one fell swoop. The guests began tucking in and talking amongst themselves. The various other guests were high ranking lieutenants and assistants to the Dukes.

Spyke kept an eye on the other soldiers to see what they were doing. They continued to stand guard, dead still in their positions. Spyke had taken his eye off Morkain for a second to look back towards Draster and June, when suddenly, his vision appeared green and purple with distortion. He couldn't move. He was paralysed. It was the same sensation he felt when he battled Morkain. Suddenly Morkain stepped into his vision, walking normally, while everyone was frozen in time.

"I am impressed that you've made it this far. I'm giving you an opportunity to walk out of here alive", he said coldly. "Join us"

"Why me?", Spyke blurted out, still frozen.

"Because I need your power", Morkain replied. "You've experienced it before haven't you? The headaches? Your eye?"

"Wh-what?", Spyke stuttered.

"The fact that you are able to talk to me now demonstrates that power", Morkain said. "So, will you take off your helmet and join us? Or does your journey end here, without knowing what really happened 5 years ago?"

Time returned to normal. Spyke could move and his vision returned to normal. He looked back at where Morkain was sitting, and he was there eating as if nothing had happened.

What had just happened? Spyke thought to himself. He didn't have time to think, he had to act. Morkain knew they were there and he wasn't going to give him long to make a decision.

Spyke remained still, frozen as if he was still paralysed. Spyke kept his eyes firmly on Morkain who took no notice of him and was busy eating away.

"Guards! Leave the room. I want to eat without having dozens of eyeballs watching over me!", Morkain barked with his mouth full of food.

It was at that moment that the soldiers began marching out of the room, leaving the diners to feast.

Time was up. Spyke had to make a decision. Does he stay and join the Formican Army? Or does he walk out and try to escape?

\*Player decision - Spyke can either choose to take his helmet off and join the Formican Army, or he can escape with June and Draster. Joining the Formican Army will result in game over.  
Player has a limited time to make a decision. If a decision is not made, Spyke will remain and default to joining the Formican Army\*

Spyke walks around with the rest of the soldiers with June and Draster behind him. No one took any notice of them, but Morkain let out a big drawn out sigh.

"Is this OK my Lord?", Duke Carnaby asked.

"No", Morkain reply coldly. "Hart, don't let him leave the country."

"As you wish my Lord", replied Duke Hart.

The soldiers marched outside and relaxed. Spyke grabbed June and Draster and pulled them to one side.

"Morkain knows we're here", Spyke said.

"What? How do you know?", June asked.

"He spoke to me", Spyke replied. "He said he wants me to join the Formican Army or else we're not getting out of here alive".

"Huh? When?! I was watching him the whole time", Draster asked.

"He stopped time or something. I'll explain later. For now, let's go. We can't take him on here...", Spyke said hurriedly, walking down the corridor. 2 soldiers walked in front of them and drew the weapons. Another 2 stepped out from behind.

\*Battle with Formican soldiers\*

"Looks like you were right Spyke", Draster said. "Let's get out of here."

The trio marched with haste down the corridor through the back where they were met with more soldiers.

\*Battle - Player must continue to the back entrance of the palace, fighting their way through Formican soldiers.

The trio make their way onto the streets but they are still being followed by Formican soldiers.

"Where do we go? June exclaimed. Everywhere we go, there are Formican soldiers!"

"We need to get out of this Dukedom", Spyke said, just as they were greeted with more soldiers.

"The front gates are probably heavily guarded so we don't escape", Draster said.

"The airships then", Spyke said, leading the way to the airship base. "They will catch up to us if we escape on foot, but we have a chance via airship."

"I guess we really are going to steal an airship then!", Draster yelled to Spyke.

\*Player must fight their way to the airship base\*

The trio makes it to the airship base where it is unusually quiet. There were still airships coming and going during the evening but there were no guards around.

Spyke, June and Draster looked around for a way to board one of the airships.

\*Player must look around and find a way to the boarding deck\*

"There's an airship that's ready to go I think", June said pointing out into the distance. The others follow her and suddenly, out steps Duke Hart from around the corner.

"I cannot let you leave", he said, drawing out his sword. He was shortly joined by 3 Formican soldiers.

"What do you want from us?!", Spyke yelled back at him.

"Lord Morkain already told you", he replied. "We need your power Spyke Tinwall. Join the Formican Army just as you had planned, and you will obtain all the answers you seek. Including everything that happened 5 years ago, and what happened to your father and your master...".

"I'm not joining you bastards after everything you've done!!", Spyke reacted in a fit of rage that June and Draster had never seen before. "Where is my father?!"

"You do not understand the full story of our work", Duke Hart explained. "We are protecting the Earth. That is the duty of the Formican Army"

"You are protecting the Earth by creating monsters and dropping them onto the planet?", asked Draster.

"This planet called Terra did not appear by coincidence all those years ago", Duke Hart said. "It is a planet eater. It is sucking the life force out of the Earth by trading the Earth's atmosphere for Plasma. That is why we are able to breathe here. Terra consumes that which contains Plasma. We create monsters in order to stop the Earth's life force being sucked away, but the monsters' lives instead."

"Those monsters that started appearing. It's all because of the Formican Army. Those monsters have been killing people...", June tailed off.

"It is a small price to pay for saving the planet", Duke Hart said. "That is why we have a team of troops that help control the effect of monsters in towns and cities."

"But what you are doing is killing people on Earth!", June replied.

"What would you have us do?", Duke Hart replied. "Allow the entire Earth to be destroyed?"

"...There must be another way", Draster thought to himself.

"I am open to suggestions. We have another plan, but it involves your power", Hart said, pointing to Spyke.

"What is this power that you need from me?", Spyke said, still angry.

"You will know once you join us", Hart said, turning his hand into a reaching out gesture.

Spyke wavered for a second, wondering whether he should help the Formican Army for the greater good. He gets a \*flashback\* of Master telling him that Formican Army is not what they seem. Is this what he meant? Why did he join the Formican Army? And then leave?

"What of my Master?", Spyke asked.

"Your Master was a coward who deserted the Formican Army. He wasn't willing to do what was necessary...", Duke Hart said loathingly.

"I don't believe you", Spyke said.

"You are but a child...", Duke Hart began. "It seems I will have to bring you in by force."

"I would die first before I let you bring me in!", Spyke reacted.

"Then so be it!", Duke Hart said, rushing in to attack.

\*Boss battle vs Duke Hart and 3 soldiers\*

The trio defeat the soldiers and Duke Hart. Hart pants as he drops to one knee.

"Tell me", Spyke said, drawing his sword toward Hart's throat. "Where is my father?"

"You are strong", Hart said. "You are indeed Lord Tinwall's son".

"Where is he?!", Spyke yelled.

"Spyke! There are reinforcements coming!", June called out, watching over the platform.

"I don't know", Hart said panting. "This airship is going to Calderio to the East, you will learn more there. Shouldn't you be going?"

"Spyke, we need to go!", Draster said who accompanied June onto the airship.

Spyke looked at Hart as Hart looked up at him. There was a moment of respect for one another, as Spyke withdrew his sword and left Hart to join the others onto the airship.

The airship was finally loaded with monsters from underneath the deck, and it took off with the trio on board. The Formican Army troops arrived on the platform too late. The airship had already departed and there was no way for the troops to bring them down. The soldiers began firing shots, but they could not penetrate June and Draster's Earth barrier. They were clear.

## Chapter 8

Spyke, June and Draster checked and double checked the airship to ensure there were no soldiers on board. There were only crates of manufactured monsters.

The airship's destination was indeed set to Calderio as Duke Hart had told them and it would automatically navigate there. The altitude was set to 10,000 feet. June looked down as the airship hovered over the unclimbable mountains to the East of the Dukedom of Hart.

Draster went down to the control room to see if they could alter the airship direction.

"Looks like the controls are locked down. We can't change anything", he said.

Spyke and June were inspecting the crates.

"So there are monsters in here...", Spyke said.

"Yep," June replied. "I saw them before the lid was sealed. Why don't we take a look?"

"Don't," Draster said walking upstairs. "We don't know what kind of monster is in there. And it could trigger the other boxes to open."

\*Player decision - open or leave it. If the player opens it, they will fight a weak manufactured monster.\*

"Monsters...", Spyke started. "What really are they? They can be created using a black crystal and Plasma. They exist everywhere on this planet. Did someone manufacture all of the monsters on this planet too?"

"I read somewhere that they are the souls of the dead, but have taken on a different form", Draster replied.

"The souls of the dead...", June wondered.

"What I want to know is why the Formican Army are manufacturing monsters", Draster said.

"Indeed", June replied. "I wanted to join the Formican Army because...", she tailed off.

"Because of what?", Spyke asked.

"A monster... killed my parents", she said slowly, beginning to sob.

"I'm... sorry to hear that...", Draster said softly.

Spyke remained silent.

"It happened when I was 10, when the monsters began appearing. We were out to dinner in the city...", June began.

### \*\*\*June's Past\*\*\*

"Dad! What's that?!", I said to my dad.

"It's called foie gras sweetie", my dad replied.

"Furaa gura?!", I said, trying to pronounce it.

My mum and dad were really patient with me. We had a lot money. We weren't rich but we had a lot of nice things and could afford expensive meals.

"No honey, 'fra gra'", my mum said laughing.

We were a happy family. Both my parents worked hard and I went to school. They did spoil me though as I was the only child I guess.

Anyway, we were on the top floor of a fancy restaurant in Canary Wharf. While we were eating, an alarm rang out through the restaurant we were at. The staff assumed it was the fire alarm as they told us to remain calm. But I could sense something was up.

"Ladies and gentlemen", the restaurant manager started. "Please remain seated while we find out the cause for the alarm".

So we sat, waiting and waiting and still the alarm sounded.

Suddenly we heard screams down the corridor.

Mum and Dad were whispering to themselves. I asked them what was going, but they told me not to worry as parents do to their children. We then heard another scream closer to where we were.

The room was no silent, the tension was building.

"What the devil is going on!", one of the other guests yelled standing up.

A few of the other guests began to stand up to.

Suddenly, a Fang (monster) came running through the dining room with one of the waiters in its mouth. Everyone went ballistic. It was charging across the room, bashing into people and destroying the furniture.

Dad picked me up and grabbed mum by the hand. "We need to get out of here!", he said.

I was so scared. I had never seen a monster before and there one was just killing people in front of me. There was blood everywhere.

Dad dragged us to the fire exit as we started to make our way downstairs. We were on the top floor of a 47 floor building, so we had to hurry if we were going to get out alive. We saw other people running down the stairs on the floors we had just went past, and we could hear the growls of the Fangs nearby.

Dad was getting tired carrying me so I told him I can also run, but he wouldn't let me go. Mum was a bit further ahead when we ran out of stairs.

"We need to go across to the other side of the building!", mum cried ahead of us.

"OK, let me go first", dad said.

"Dad put me down, I can run myself!", I said to him.

"Alright hunny but stay close to me OK? It's dangerous", dad said.

I nodded in agreement as dad lead the way through the corridor with me in the middle and my mum behind. We could still hear screams above us but there was nothing on our floor. We slowly walked through the narrow corridor. If a monster were to appear now, we would be screwed. There were one or two maintenance doors to the left and right down the corridor, and the fire exit at the end. We walked with pace towards it when we suddenly heard a monster drop down to the floor behind us! We looked behind and saw its jaws, filled with the body of another human being. There was a split second before we dashed towards the exit and the monster dashed towards us. It threw away the corpse in its mouth in favour of fresh meat. We were inching closer and closer towards the fire exit that would lead further down, but so was the monster! Dad got through, mum picked me up and she hurled us both through the door before dad slammed the door shut in the monster's face. We heard a loud thud as it almost made an imprint in the door. It growled and scratched at the door as Dad held the door firm with his foot. Mum and I were nursing some fresh cuts from the dive, but we would have been lunch if we didn't make it through that door.

"We need to continue", dad said to us. "Are you both OK?"

I nodded.

"Yes, we're fine", mum said.

"Ok let's go", dad directed.

We continued down the stairs in the same formation. We were getting close to the 10th floor when we saw corpses of a family, a mother, father and a boy, ripped to shreds on the ground. There was blood everywhere. I almost heaved at the sight of it.

"Don't look sweetie", dad said to me as if he could read my mind. We gently stepped over the corpses and carried on until about the 3rd floor where we could smell smoke.

"Let's proceed with greater caution honey", mum said to dad in front. He nodded.

We reduced our pace almost to a creep as we made our way to the final few steps of the 47-floored building.

We reached the bottom and followed through the door towards the lobby. There were broken lights and smeared blood everywhere. You could smell the death, but there were no corpses. We continued down the corridor, slowly, before reaching the open lobby area. There was fire and monsters! There were four Fangs circling the area and one lurking by the main exit. There was a huge fire blazing in the centre of the lobby and there were piles of human bodies. We were astounded that things were not taken care of by emergency services, however this was before the discovery of monsters and plasma weapons. It looked like there was some SAS soldiers that stormed the building, but they were dispatched of by the Fangs.

Mum and dad looked around for a way out, being careful not to alert the monsters. There was no other way out other than by the door that the Fang was lurking around. We were trapped! "What do we do...?", I remember whispering to dad. He was thinking hard and so was my mum. Both were unbelievably calm in this situation.

"I will create a distraction", dad started. "When they are both coming for me, you two head for the door."

"No honey...", mum replied.

"There's no other way", dad said. "Take care of June OK? I love you..."

Mum and dad kissed for the last time. Dad then turned his attention to me.

"June, I'm so proud of you...", tears were beginning to stream down his face. At the time, I didn't really understand what was happening.

"Why are you crying daddy?", I asked him. "Why don't we just climb out that window?", I pointed to a half open window directly across from us.

Mum and dad both looked dumbfounded. They did not spot the window! It was big enough for a human to get through, and the drop was negligible given our predicament. However, we would need a boost to get up there and we would be in clear view of the Fangs.

"This is why I'm proud of you sweetie", dad whispered, laughing.

The Fangs below us were growling, perhaps sensing our hope. We crouched low, keeping out of view of the Fangs until we got to the other side and just below the window.

Dad gave me a boost up to the window. I just barely clutched onto the ledge before one of the Fangs saw us and growled menacingly. The other Fangs caught wind of this and howled in our direction.

"Did they find us?!", I asked, still trying to climb over the ledge.

"It's OK, they can't get us from here", dad said.

I couldn't pull myself up. I then realised I had my jacket stuck on a hook.

"I'm stuck!!!", I cried.

Mum and dad tried to help but it was too high for them to reach. The Fangs were getting closer. Dad gave mum a boost to try and untangle my jacket, but it was grappled tightly as if someone had purposely sewn it together.

"Rip off the jacket", dad said calmly.

"Climb onto me and take it off sweetie", mum said to me with haste.

I did just that and jumped back onto the ledge. I could see the cold ground outside as I reached for it. But something grabbed me back. It was a Fang!

One of the Fangs had teleported above mum and grabbed my tunic.

"Aaaah!" I screamed as mum and dad pulled the Fang off me together. Another Fang had teleported to the balcony, and another.

"June", dad said, "make us proud". Dad then took up a fighting pose and ran in to attack the Fang.

"I love you sweetie", mum said.

I looked back at them as if it was a still picture. They were both smiling.

And with that, mum used all her might to jump up and push me over the other side onto the cold, hard ground into an alleyway outside the building where I landed on my backside. I looked up at the window and it had closed behind me.

"Mum!! Dad!!", I cried towards the window, for what felt like hours. But there was no response.

After some time, a grown up came round to the alley, picked me up and took me to front of the building. There was a picket line with a number of concerned people waiting outside the building for any survivors. I was hoping to see mum and dad walk out of there but I knew it was a long shot. Still I stood and hoped.

After a couple of hours, the police and forces began ushering people away. I didn't know what was going on, but you could see a blaze of fire in various corners of the building. We all evacuated but I decided to stay and wait for my mum and dad.

"Come on little girl, let's go!", the elderly woman who picked me up from the alley told me.

"No", I said sharply to her. "My mum and dad are in there. I'm waiting for them".

"That's fine, but let's back up a bit. So that we are able to see them when they come out", the woman replied, sensing my stubbornness.

So I reluctantly started backing away from the building, as all the other adults were moving away. I had my eyes firmly fixed on the doors of the building, that was full of flames now.

A few short paces after, the building had begun to collapse. The woman picked me up and we ran away from the huge dust cloud that was chasing us. I kicked and screamed with tears streaming down my eyes coming to the realisation that my mum and dad couldn't find a way out.

They were dead.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Chapter 9

"So you were a survivor of the Canary Wharf disaster", Draster said.

"Yes", June replied, tearful. "Since then, I wanted to learn how to fight, how to destroy those monsters. I learned every martial art and weapon I could so something like this would never happen again."

"And that's why you decided to join the Formican Army", Spyke chimed in.

"Yes, there is no other way to destroy monsters other than with Plasma. Only the Formican Army knew how and they were dedicated to destroying these monsters that started appearing. I owed it to my mum and dad...", June tailed off. "Which is why the thought of the Formican Army manufacturing monsters makes me sick. Were they the ones who caused those Fangs to appear that day?"

"Something tells me if we can find my father, we'll have all our answers", Spyke said. "What it is that happened that day, what happened when my Master died, and what the Formican Army are doing and what they want from me. There are too many questions that we just don't know the answer to".

"Indeed", Draster said. "All we can do is keep on keeping on until we find what we're looking for".

"Yeah", June said, pulling herself together.

"We will soon arrive, so let's prepare ourselves for a Formican welcome", Spyke said. "The plan is to find out information about my father "Tinwall" and find him.

"Roger!", June said back to her jolly self.

The airship, on its course to Calderio, began to approach the docking station where cargo ships would be automatically unloaded and sent back. The trio looked outside and didn't spot any

soldiers. They took the opportunity to jump off the airship just before it docked and was sent back around to the Dukedom of Hart.

\*Player gains control - exit the dockyards and explore Calderio\*

Calderio was a bright and vibrant town. There was no sign of any Formican soldiers or any humans.

"Let's go to the inn to find some more information", Draster suggested. Spyke obliged and led the way.

The trio entered into the inn and spoke to the inn keeper.

"Hey", Spyke started. "Are there any other humans around here in Calderio?"

"Humans?", the innkeeper replied. He was an old \*elf\* who spoke in a cockney-like accent. He was wearing half moon spectacles and casual formal wear. "There is a human that comes here every so often".

"Do you know his name?", Spyke asked.

"It was a she", the inn keeper explained. "Her name is Zena. She usually comes by to pick up the bounty before anyone else."

\*Player can inquire about more information or leave\*

"So this Zena", Spyke turned to the others. "Maybe she's a Formican Army soldier, so we should seek her out. Maybe she knows something about Tinwall."

"So whenever there's a bounty, she appears", June said.

"Maybe we can put one up ourselves and make her come to us", Draster explained.

"Good idea", June said. "Where do we go to get one drawn up?"

"Let's ask the innkeeper", Spyke said.

\*Player asks innkeeper and gets a location to go on their map\*

The trio goes ahead to the draftsman and get's their bounty drawn up. \*The player can choose which to get\*. They return to the inn to post it.

"So it's up, now we wait around for her to show up?", Spyke said.

"I guess so", Draster said.

"Hey innkeeper", Spyke called out. "How long till Zena usually comes for a new bounty?"

"You want have to wait long son", the innkeeper said. "She will find you before to confirm the bounty first anyway. Just make sure to stay within the city."

"Alright thanks", Draster said.

"In that case, let's go exploring or shopping... or we can take a break here?", June asked.

\*\* Player decision - explore or rest. If choosing to explore, Zena will appear before the trio as soon as they step out of the inn.

If they choose to rest, Zena will appear in their room \*\*

Spyke chooses to rest.

"Holy shit! Who the hell are you?!", Spyke yelled with the sight of a brown haired woman standing over him.

"You're the kid who put up the fake bounty to get my attention, right?", the woman said. Spyke got up out of bed and turned to face the woman. June and Draster were just waking up to see her.

"So you must be Zena", Spyke said.

"What of it?", Zena said in a stern voice.

She was a tall and muscled woman, wearing red and yellow battle gear and a large plasma axe attached to her back.

"Tinwall. Where is he?", Spyke asked her directly, assuming she had a connection to the Formican Army.

"Don't know who you're talking about", Zena replied.

"Aren't you with the Formican Army?", Spyke asked.

"Never in a million years would I join that bunch of losers", she replied with disgust.

"Then how did you get here? To this planet?", asked Spyke.

"I was born here", Zena said.

"What?", Spyke said. "You're not from Earth?"

"My ancestors were probably, but I was born and raised here on Terra. My tribe is a couple of miles to the North of here", Zena explained.

"There's a whole tribe of humans here?", June exclaimed. Zena looked at June, unimpressively.

"We tend to keep away from the rest of the folk", Zena continued. "Ever since that asshole Morkain and his stupid army came here and liberated the continents, people don't really like humans too much these days. I just come here to take care of the bounties and collect my cash."

\*Player has the choice of asking Zena more questions, but will eventually need to agree to leave Calderio and accompany her back to her village.\*

"So you'll come back to the village with me then?", Zena asked.

"If there is someone who knows more about the Formican Army, then yes", Spyke said.

"Can't guarantee that...", Zena said.

"We'll come anyway", Draster chipped in. "The only other humans we've seen here is the Formican Army".

"Alrighty, let's move out! And on the way, you can fill me in how you came to be here..."

\*Zena joins the party, but can't be controlled. She matches the level of the main party members. Player must leave Calderio and head to the location on the map - Juniper Village\*

"So that bastard Morkain brought you here, huh?", Zena said as the party exited Calderio and into the East Plains.

"Yes", Spyke replied.

"So what is it you plan to do about him?", Zena asked.

"What we need to do right now is gather more information, and that's why we're looking for my father," Spyke replied. "He killed my Master and he's connected to the Formican Army somehow. We don't really know the Formican Army's true intentions".

"Their true intentions? Isn't it obvious?", asked Zena.

"What then?" June asked impatiently.

"They are planning to take control of Terra and use the resources here to do the same on Earth," Zena said. In a way, they have already taken control of Terra...".

"And they are secretly sending monsters to Earth", Draster interrupted, "...in order for the world government to rely on them as the only faction to be able to exterminate monsters and thus, gain power".

"Unbelievable...", June said. "They are sending monsters to Earth... and then employing people to kill them, just so they can get money and power? Those monsters have killed thousands of people..."

"There must be some other reason...", Spyke wondered. "Morkain doesn't strike me as someone who cares about money, he's seeking some other power..."

Spyke had a flashback to when he and Morkain encountered each other in Hart Castle.

"Join us... I need your power," Morkain said to Spyke chillingly.

"The village elder may know something," Zena said, snapping Spyke out of thought. "It's not far now, so let's make haste!"

\*Party continue to Juniper Village\*

Spyke, June, Draster and their new friend Zena arrive at Juniper Village. The village consisted of basic huts, made from wood and stone. There were humans inside and outside, performing menial tasks like cooking and washing. Children ranging from 5-12 were playing outside. All of them looked up at the first sight of the trio, aliens to the village.

"Don't mind the stares," Zena said. "They always stare at people not native to the village".

Zena led the way through the village as they were greeted with blank stares from the tribes people. They could hear whispers and giggles from each corner of the village.

Spyke glared back at some of the kids who looked them up and down as if to challenge them to a staring competition. Suddenly a young man jumped in front of them.

"Yo," the man said. "Welcome to Juniper Village".

"Marik, not now," Zena said.

"I just want to introduce myself," Marik said. He had a strange aura about him, Spyke sensed. He had spiky blue hair, and an eye patch covering his left eye. He also had a long black arm sleeve and glove covering his left hand, while the rest of his upper body was bare. He wore shorts and boots to complete his outfit.

"Nice to meet you," he said to the trio, offering a hand to June. "My name is Marik...". He had a suspicious smirk on his face. June reached out slowly and cautiously and shook his hand.

"June", she said in reply.

"Pleasure to meet you June".

Marik then turned to Draster and offered a hand, "I'm Marik", he said to Draster.

"I'm Draster", he replied.

"Nice to meet you Draster", Marik said politely.

Marik then turned to Spyke. They both glared at each other, sizing each other up, before Marik smirked and offered a hand to Spyke.

"Nice to meet you, I'm Marik".

Spyke glared into Marik's eyes, piercing through his soul.

After a few seconds of tension, Spyke accepted and grasped Marik's gloved hand.

"I'm...", Spyke started, but he was suddenly cut off by Marik.

"DEAD!", Marik yelled, finishing off Spyke's sentence as he pulled Spyke close to him, Marik pulled out a dagger from behind him and reached for Spyke's throat.

\*\*\* Player reaction - the player has one second to react to Marik's attack. If the player fails to react, Zena will step in and block the attack, leading to Marik mocking Spyke for his lack of awareness. If the player reacts in time, Spyke and Marik will have a duel \*\*\*

Spyke sensed the dagger a mile off and block Marik's attack with his own dagger strapped to his side.

"Heh... nice reactions...", Marik hissed at Spyke as they both glared at each other. They were both still grasping each other's hand refusing to let go.

Marik threw some swipes of his dagger towards Spyke's neck, but Spyke blocked them. June, Draster and Zena continued to watch.

\*\*\* Player has a duel with Marik - Spyke does not attack, only deflect. \*\*\*

"What's wrong redhead... are you not going to attack me?!", Marik hissed in Spyke's face.

Spyke got pissed off at that verbal blow. Spyke headbutted Marik, turned his hand so it was facing up, then stabbed Marik's hand with his dagger. The feedback from the stab was not what Spyke expected and he reacted with amazement.

"Aaaaaaaaaaaah!", Marik let out a big scream in agony as the dagger pierced his hand, then he stopped. "Just kidding."

Spyke jumped back, releasing his hand from Marik's and withdrawing his dagger, as Marik made one last swipe towards Spyke.

"Heh, not bad redhead...", Marik said.

Spyke glared at the blue-haired attacker. Marik lifted up his gloved hand to reveal that it was a robotic hand that Spyke had stabbed.

"You stabbed my metal", Marik said. "I had my arm cut off and my eye gouged out when I was younger."

Spyke continued to stare at him.

Marik continued, "chill redhead, I only wanted to have a quick duel with ya. I don't get much competition around here. No one died so we're good right? Hehe..."

Spyke then realised they had an audience. The whole village had gathered to see the fight.

Spyke lowered his guard and sheathed his blade, and Marik did the same.

"The next time you want to duel me, just say so," Spyke said coldly.

"Now that wouldn't be any fun would it redhead?", Marik replied.

"Stop calling me redhead, I hate it," Spyke said in a cold voice.

"Heh, you got a lot of pent up anger don't you?", Marik continued to mock Spyke. "I know the feeling... to have anger, hatred that you don't know what to do with."

Spyke remained motionless and still, continuing to glare into Marik's unpatched eye. Marik broke the tension by turning and beginning to walk.

"We will meet again redhead, so you better be ready," he said, saluting the others and walking through the villagers and disappearing.

"Who the hell is that creep?", June asked Zena.

"Marik? He's some kid that arrived 4-5 years ago," Zena answered. "He came waltzing into the village with only one eye and one arm."

"What happened to him?", June asked.

"Nobody knows, he won't tell anyone", Zena said.

The crowd began to slowly disperse as Spyke began staring at them. His strong, intense gaze scared them away. Eventually, the only person left was an old woman with a walking stick.

"Ah! Elder!", Zena said at the sight of her.

"Zena, who are these children that you've brought to our village?", she said in an old, creaky voice.

"They are not with the Formican Army Elder," Zena said, sensing her fear.

"But their weapons...", the Elder started.

"It's alright," Zena reassured her. "They have come seeking answers and guidance from their fellow humans, that is all."

The Elder looked up and down at Spyke. He eased up on his cold glare and looked the Elder directly in the eyes.

"Hmm... Very well, then please follow me," the Elder said.

She swivelled on her heels and began walking towards a large hut at the back of the village.

The trio and Zena followed her. Zena gestured to Draster and June to remain calm, and to try and keep Spyke calm. Spyke was obviously still fired up from his encounter with Marik. The last person to call Spyke 'redhead' was Seymour, and he didn't get on with him either.

Draster caught up with Spyke.

"That was a pretty close encounter", Draster whispered to Spyke. "Let's try and keep cool now and find out what we need..."

"I know," Spyke interrupted Draster mid-sentence, and continued walking behind the Elder.

Draster, having travelled with Spyke for some time now, knew to back off a bit.

They arrived at the Elder's hut, stepping inside, it seemed a lot bigger inside than it did from the outside. It was split into a room in one corner and a rug with cushions was laid out in the middle. "Please excuse the humbleness of my abode," the Elder said, as she sat down on the largest cushion. She gestured for the others to sit down in front of her. Spyke, June and Draster sat in front of her while Zena stood and watched from the back of the room.

"What is it you wish to know?", the Elder asked.

"Do you know of a man called 'Tinwall'?", Spyke asked directly.

"Tinwall..." the Elder repeated. "The general of the Formican Army?"

Spyke opened his eyes a bit wider, finally finding some information on his father.

"General? Yes... do you know where he is?", Spyke asked.

"He could be anywhere of a number of places...", the Elder replied.

"Where?", Spyke asked hurriedly.

"He could be in any of the Dukedoms of course. Do you know about Formican Army's liberation of Terra?", asked the Elder.

"Yes," Draster answered. "We know that the Formican Army holds all four Dukedoms and currently controls the airspace between them."

"Good, then you are well informed," the Elder continued. "He is most likely at Bazzleworth to the north. That is where the Formican Army's stronghold is. But tell me child, why do you wish to see this man, Tinwall?"

"Because he killed my Master," Spyke reacted angrily.

"So it is revenge you seek?"

"I seek answers. He is also my father."

"I see... so he is your Master's killer first and your father second?"

"He's scum and I need answers from him," Spyke's rage was all the more apparent.

"What will you do when you see him?"

"Kill him."

There was a short pause as if to let Spyke's words sink in.

"And then what?", the Elder asked. "What of Morkain and the Formican Army?"

"I...", Spyke stuttered for a second. He had let his rage for his father overcome him so much that he totally forgot about Morkain.

"Do you think Morkain will allow you to defeat one of his generals so easily?" the Elder said.

"Morkain..." Spyke muttered. Morkain had been the cause of all of this. "Who is Morkain? What is his goal?"

"Morkain, the founder of the Formican Army...", the Elder began. "He is a man obsessed with power. He will destroy anything and everything to get what he wants. He was always a troublesome child."

"You knew him as a kid?" June asked.

"He is my son!" the Elder laughed.

The trio looked at each other in shock.

"He was incredibly gifted," the Elder continued. "Morkain always excelled at everything he did. He was never content with living in the village. He wanted to go out and explore. He ran away many times and came back with new stories to tell. One day, he came back and claimed he discovered a way to get to Earth," the Elder tailed off.

"How?", asked Draster.

"He wouldn't say," the Elder continued. "But that day, there was something different about him. Something different about him. He was in darkness. He ran away again, and when he came back, it was with his Formican Army, marching to the west to liberate Calderio."

"How long ago was this?", June asked.

"About a decade ago", the Elder answered. "All I remember was him saying that he's found his 'meaning to live' and that was to obtain power. He was the one who discovered the first Plasma weapons left by the ancients of this world, and then he created his own. He was the one who discovered the artifacts left by the ancients and why this planet is infested with monsters.

Without Morkain, planet Terra and planet Earth would be a very different place."

"The ancients?", June asked.

"The ancient civilisation. The civilisation that existed before this planet entered this solar system. The civilisation that was consumed by this planet so it can be used as a vessel to travel the universe..."

"What the hell are you talking about?", Spyke asked the Elder.

"Long ago," the Elder began. "This planet called Terra existed in a different solar system. It had a civilisation much like ours on this planet. It also was attached to another planet in the solar system, much like how it is currently attached to planet Earth. One day, the planet that it was attached to, had crumbled into dust, consumed by Terra. At the same time, the civilisation on Terra had been eradicated with very few survivors and the planet drifted to this solar system. Now it is attached to Earth..."

"So you're saying that Earth will eventually be consumed? And everyone on Terra will die?!", June screamed in horror.

"Yes," the Elder said calmly. "These are the teachings from the civilisation before."

"How do we stop it?", Draster asked.

"It cannot be stopped," Elder responded.

"The must be a be a way..." Spyke muttered to himself. "How long until this happens?"

"I do not know," the Elder said. "You will have to observe the teachings for yourself. There is a shrine to the north that contains one set of teachings. There are 12 located all around the world."

"So what is Morkain's intention?", Spyke asked.

"Morkain cannot stand something that is more powerful than him. Death is not something he will accept so lightly," the Elder explained. "He has already journeyed to all 12 locations and received much power from each of the locations. From the knowledge he attained, I can only assume that he is executing a plan to survive the catastrophe. He did not disclose his plan to me."

"So he gained his power by going to all 12 locations?", Draster confirmed. "If we go there ourselves, then we might discover a way to stop this catastrophe."

"Correct", the Elder said. "Beware though, many have journeyed to these locations and never returned."

"Do you know where they all are?", June asked, ignoring the Elder's warning.

"Luckily, my son likes to talk to his mother when he occasionally visits," the Elder chuckled. "If you have a map, I will mark them down for you."

"I have another question," Draster begun. "Why is the Formican Army sending monsters to Earth?"

"It is a part of his plan for survival," the Elder responded. "I do not know why exactly I'm afraid. You will surely find that out if you discover the teachings."

"Spyke...", Draster begun. "This has suddenly become bigger than you and your father. We cannot ignore the Formican Army or everything that will happen to this planet..."

\*\* Player decision - go after Tinwall or go to each location. If the player chooses Tinwall, Spyke will be scolded by June and Draster and eventually choose 12 locations \*\*

"Something tells me we will run in to my father soon enough and I'll settle the score then," Spyke said. "Right now, if we were to run into Morkain again, we would be no match for him. He is the one who brought us here, he is after something within me, but I don't know what it is."

"Something within you?", the Elder asked. "Let me take a closer look at you..."

The Elder got up and felt Spyke's head, looked into both his eyes and felt his arms.

"Do you get visions? Headaches occasionally?", she asked.

"Yes," Spyke replied. "I get dreams, of something trying to possess me. It wants control..."

"What about your eyes?", the Elder questioned.

"It bleeds," Spyke recalled.

"You... you are the one with the blood of the ancients...", the Elder said, gasping.

"Blood of the ancients?", Spyke said.

"Yes... he said you would come here," the Elder said slowly.

"Morkain? How did he know?", Spyke urged for answers.

"That is enough questions for now," the Elder said.

"Hold on," June butted in. "You can't just drop a bomb on us like that. What do you mean he's got the blood of the ancients?"

"She said 'enough'," Zena said from the back. "You've asked plenty of questions and she's given you the answers. It's time to leave."

The Elder stood up and shimmied backwards, keeping her eyes firmly on Spyke's.

"Thank you for your time," Draster said. He got up and walked out towards the entrance. June got up and reluctantly followed him. Spyke remained still, his eyes firmly locked onto the Elder's.

"Good luck child," the Elder whispered so only Spyke could hear. "Please take care of Morkain for me. Only you can do it."

Spyke remained motionless, wondering what to do. The Elder turned her back and walked towards her room. Spyke stood up and joined the others towards the entrance.

"What did she say to you?", June asked.

"She said 'good luck,'" Spyke replied, as he walked out of the Elder's hut.

"You guys should get some rest," Zena suggested. "There is a spare hut where you can stay the night, it's yours."

"Thank you Zena," Draster replied. "I suggest we take the invitation and rest up," he said turning to Spyke.

"Fine," Spyke agreed.

\*\* Sleep sequence \*\*

"Spyke... Spyke...", a man's voice whispered.

"Who's that?", Spyke replied.

"It's me," the voice said, becoming much clearer.

"Who?!"

"Don't you know your own Master's voice?!", Master's voice suddenly became music to Spyke's ears.

"Master?!", Spyke yelled.

Spyke opened his eyes slowly and he was sitting in the woods. He recognised the area. It was the place where he and his Master first met. There was a fire blazing in front of him, as Master came into view and sat down beside him.

"It's been a while," Master said.

Spyke was lost for words. He stared into Master's eye's like a lost child. His red bandana, blonde hair, and white cloak were a welcome sight to Spyke.

"You know," Master started. "I've been watching you, this whole time. You've been through a lot. But you made some good friends... I'm proud of you."

Master looked up at the sky. It was night and the stars were out.

Spyke's eyes were teary. He didn't know what to say.

"There will be much pain and heartache coming your way, but I know you can deal with it,"

Master continued.

"I'm...", Spyke started.

"Just remember what I told you Spyke," Master interrupted, looking back into Spyke's eyes and soul.

"You're never alone."

Spyke suddenly woke up. His heart was thumping. After such a period of uncertainty, the sight of his Master eased his heart. He noticed that Master's katana had glowed slightly and then slowly dimmed to normal.

\*\* Spyke gains new ability \*\*

The trio wake up from their break and discuss the next plan of action.

"So the nearest shrine," Draster started. "Is a couple of miles to the north of here."

"So how long will it take us to get there?", June asked.

"Depends on the monsters we encounter on the way," Draster said. "I already spoke with Zena, it doesn't look like we'll get anything else out of the Elder. She seemed spooked didn't she?"

"Hmm indeed, the blood of the ancients?", June wondered.

"Anyway," Spyke chimed in. "Let's prepare ourselves and move out."

\*\*\*Player gains control and can explore Juniper Village. The player cannot access the Elder's hut. The game will continue when the player exits the village\*\*\*

"Oh wait!" Zena came running towards the trio. "Please take this, a gift," Zena handed Spyke a trinket.

\*\* Player gains item \*\*

"Be careful out there!", Zena said waving them off.

The trio thanked Zena and continued on their journey.

\*\*\*\*\*

Chapter 10

\*\* Player gains control and must travel to the shrine to the north of Juniper Village \*\*

"Weird that we just met Morkain's mother, right?", June thought out loud.

"That's what I was thinking," Draster said. "She was very open about her son. She clearly doesn't agree with what he's doing. Killing people for power..."

"We still don't know his true intentions. All we know is he is executing some plan to survive the catastrophe," Spyke said, annoyed.

"Or how the catastrophe happens," Draster said.

"We'll find our answers once we visit these shrines though right?", June reassured the impatient pair.

"I hope so," said Draster.

\*\*\*Player arrives at Shrine Sagittarius - this shrine will drop the player's attack stat upon entering and have random encounters\*\*\*

"So this is the shrine huh?" Spyke said. He looked up towards a Japanese shrine symbol that stood in front of the entrance to a cave within the mountains. The trio entered the shrine.

"Look at all the symbols on the wall," June observed.

"Doesn't look like a human language," Draster replied.

"Look at this one," June said.

Spyke and Draster walked over to the wall she was stood against.

There were symbols, along with an image of a huge circle.

"What is this?", Spyke murmured.

\*\* One world \*\*

"Did you hear that?!", Spyke said to the others.

"Hear what?", June asked.

"Someone spoke... into my head. You didn't hear it?", Spyke asked.

"Nope," June said disappointedly.

\*\* The planet Tetra \*\*

"The planet Tetra?", Spyke repeated.

"I guess only you can hear it," Draster said.

The symbols on the wall began to pulse and then fade.

The trio continued down the cave. More symbols appeared on the wall and began to glow with Spyke's presence. A symbol of a comet appeared to glow.

\*\* A devastating force appeared on planet Tetra. \*\*

"A devastating force appeared...", Spyke repeated the strange voice's words.

\*\* The force was called Plasma \*\*

"Plasma...",

As the trio continued, more symbols appeared.

An image of two worlds, with energy being shared between them.

\*\* Plasma had split the planet Tetra into two worlds. Terra and Gaia. \*\*

"Plasma had split Tetra into two worlds..." Spyke said. "Plasma..."

\*\* (See FF9 Oeilvert as a reference) \*\*

\*\* The two worlds shared Plasma's energy, but Terra had grown greedy \*\*

"Terra had grown greedy?", Spyke repeated.  
"What? Terra was a living being?", June asked.  
"The planets are all living beings. They are born, live and die just like us," Draster said.  
The glow of the symbols had died down, so the trio continued.  
Suddenly, a whole wall of symbols appeared and glowed.  
\*\* Terra had a thirst power \*\* the strange voice began.  
\*\* Terra began extracting the lifeforce from Gaia \*\*  
"Terra extracted the lifeforce from Gaia...", Spyke repeated.  
\*\* Gaia soon turned to dust, and Terra was reborn anew \*\*  
The symbols began animating, showing Terra surrounded by energy with Gaia's lifeforce extinguished.  
"So Terra extracted the lifeforce of Gaia, and Gaia died...", Spyke said aloud.  
"The catastrophe...", Draster murmured.  
\*\* Everything had perished, both on Gaia and Terra. Even us \*\*  
"And who are you?!", Spyke asked the voice.  
There was no reply.  
The trio continued, another set of symbols appeared.  
\*\* Terra drifted in search of new lifeforce... and entered the solar system of Proxima \*\*  
Spyke walked up to the next symbol.  
\*\* Another planet, Titan, shared Terra's Plasma. Soon enough, Terra absorbed Titan's lifeforce.  
Titan was no more. \*\*  
"I see...", Spyke said to himself.  
He walked into a dark room. A switch was present on the wall. Spyke flipped it, and a number of symbols of faces lit up, one by one.  
"Faces," Draster said. "Are these the faces that were speaking to you Spyke?"  
One of the faces lit up and moves its lips.  
\*\* Now Terra has drifted to the Milky Way and paired itself with Earth \*\*  
That face dimmed and another lit up.  
\*\* Earth will suffer the same fate. As we speak, Earth's life force is being absorbed by Terra \*\*  
"Earth's life force is being absorbed?", Spyke asked.  
Another face lit up and spoke to him.  
\*\* The cycle will continue, and Terra will be born anew. Earth will be the next to perish \*\*  
"How do we stop it?!", Spyke yelled. "Answer me!"  
\*\* It cannot be stopped \*\*  
"Who are you?"  
\*\* We are the civilisation of Gaia, you share our blood \*\*  
"I share your blood? How is that possible? I was born on Earth!", Spyke asked the people of Gaia.  
\*\* Humans were originally of Gaia \*\*  
The faces switched again.  
\*\* You must delay Terra for as long as possible \*\*  
"How?!"  
\*\* Seek our power. Use our power and distribute Terra's lost souls to Earth. \*\*  
\*\* Terra will continue to absorb the lost souls instead of Earth's \*\*

"Lost souls... you mean monsters?!", Spyke asked.

\*\* Seek our power \*\*

The faces disappeared.

"What are they saying Spyke?", asked June.

"Distribute the lost souls of Terra to Earth, and it will delay the catastrophe," Spyke answered.

"Monsters...", Draster wondered. "Is this what they told Morkain to do? Is this why the Formican Army are sending monsters to Earth?"

Suddenly, Spyke grabbed his left eye and dropped to the ground. His head throbbed as if it was about to burst.

He could see a vision. A meteor, crashing into Terra.

"Spyke... Spyke... are you OK?", Spyke could hear June's distant voice.

He got back up to his feet, clutching his eye.

"We have company guys!", Draster called out to the others. A demon appeared before them.

\*\*\* Boss battle - Player must defeat the boss with reduced attack power - after the battle, player receives item: Crystal of Sagittarius \*\*\*

"Are you OK Spyke?", Draster asked him.

"I'm fine," Spyke replied. "But let's get out of here."

\*Player gains control and must navigate back out to the shrine's entrance\*

The trio saw sunlight and made it back to entrance. As soon as Spyke's eyes hit sunlight, he crashed to his knees. His eye pulsating with pain and blood seeping out. He could hear a loud screeching in his ears. His senses were heightened. Spyke then raised his head and saw the sky was green, and his vision was tinted with purple. He looked back towards June and Draster, and they were caught motionless in mid-action. This was a similar sensation to his encounter with Morkain. He was in a time-freeze.

Spyke could look around normally. He tried to get up, but could do so only very slowly. His muscles were not used to moving at such a fast rate.

Then he looked around. He could see the particles of the atmosphere swirling around. The Plasma mixed in with the air that he was breathing. Then in the distance, he could see Earth, tilted with the huge current of energy being exchanged with Terra. The atmosphere of Earth was being exchanged with the Plasma from Terra. Spyke understood now.

He then saw something that caught his eye, a spec in the distance. He squinted with his purple eye, and saw it. A big ball of energy, floating in space. "What is that?", Spyke thought to himself. "That is Plasma," Morkain's voice said from behind him.

Spyke turned around to see Morkain standing there, directly in front of June and Draster who were still frozen in time.

"The catastrophe is that big ball of Plasma, heading straight for us. Once it hits Terra, the world will be left damaged beyond repair, and will use the Plasma and lifeforce on Earth to repair itself."

"How do we stop it?" Spyke said slowly, still getting used to the time difference.

"I don't plan to stop it, I plan to use it," Morkain said coldly. "By becoming the most powerful being on this planet, Terra will choose me to be its primary source of power. I will become one with Terra and live for eternity as a deity, free to travel the cosmos as a part Terra itself."

"Become one with Terra?", Spyke said, grasping his eye in pain.

"This is how the ancients survived and become one with Terra," Morkain continued. "They live on for eternity as a part of the planet. However, I'm not satisfied with just living. I want to gain control of this planet."

"What... the... hell...?", Spyke dropped to his knees again, clutching his eye.

"The crystals," Morkain said. "Allow me to create and control the "lost souls". By sending them to Earth, I will be able to control the energy that Terra uses to repair itself, and I'll use it to gain control."

Spyke began huffing and puffing.

"You bastard...", Spyke muttered.

"So you see Spyke, this is why I need your power. Your blood of the ancients. Whether I get it willingly or not, now or later, I will get it," Morkain concluded. He then turned around to look at June and Draster, and raised a sword to their throats.

"No!!", Spyke yelled. He grabbed his katana, immediately got up and instinctively slashed towards Morkain using his Master's iaijutsu. In that instant, Morkain had disappeared, and Spyke narrowly missed June's face.

"Join me," Morkain said softly from behind Spyke. "And together, we will live for eternity!"

Spyke turned and glared at Morkain's eyes. He then got a sharp pain in his eye and the time freeze was broken. Spyke's katana was glowing gold, something he had never seen before.

"Spyke... are you OK?", June said reaching towards him.

"He was here... Morkain," Spyke said, surveying the area. "He was using his time freeze ability again."

"Morkain was here? What happened?", Draster asked, propping up his guard.

"I'll fill you in later," Spyke replied. "Right now, I've got a bad feeling the Formican Army are right around the corner."

"Sure thing," Draster said pulling out the map. "I don't think it's safe going back to Juniper Village. If Morkain is around, then he is probably visiting his mother."

"Wait, look!", June pointed out towards the village. "There's smoke coming from the village!"

"It's him...", Spyke said.

"Come on," June said running towards the village. "We can't just stand by and do nothing!"

Spyke and Draster followed after her.

\*Player gains control and must head in the direction of Juniper Village\*

As the trio approached Juniper Village, they could see the village and huts were still ablaze. Fire had consumed the atmosphere. There were a few villagers that stood on the outskirts of the fire as June ran towards them to ask what happened.

"The Formican Army...", one of the villagers said.

"They came asking for him. For Spyke Tinwall."

"They were looking for us?", Draster said.

"No," Spyke interrupted. "Just me."

"We didn't know where you were," the villager continued. "But even if we did, we wouldn't have told them!"

"That damn, wretched Morkain!", another villager yelled, watching the flames.

"Are there people still there?", June asked.

"My mum is still in there!", a young villager cried.

"Please can you find her?!"

June looked at the kid with sympathy. She could not ignore a child's cry for help, especially since she lost her own parents to a fire.

"Of course, I'll bring her back. Just stay here OK?", June reassured the young villager.

"I don't see the Elder, or Zena," Spyke said.

"They are probably still in the village...", Draster replied, looking around among the villagers.

"Guys," June started. "Let's go."

June marched directly towards the village that was still ablaze. Spyke and Draster followed her, as if any decision to stay watch had been taken away from them. They knew it was their fault that Juniper Village was burned down. It was only right that they did everything they could to help.

\*June and Draster begin using ice and water magic to douse the flames. Spyke chops down any debris and barriers in the way\*

"Help!", a female voice was heard in one of the huts on fire.

"Over there," June said to herself as she headed towards it. She used the remains of her magic and broke through the door. It was then June saw it. A Fang. The same Fangs that had taken her parents in the Canary Wharf disaster. \*Flashback\*. She gritted her teeth and attacked the Fang head on.

\*Battle - June vs Fang\*

June defeated the Fang and helped the woman to safety. The hut was engulfed in smoke and had just began to collapse as they escaped.

"Brian! My son!", the woman yelled.

"Don't worry, he is safe," June reassured the woman. "I'll take you to him now."

June ushers the woman towards the edge of the village where the young boy and mother are reunited.

"Thank you! Thank you so much", the woman was heard saying to June.

\*Context switches back to Spyke and Draster\*

"Sounds like June found the kid's mother," Draster said.

"Good," Spyke replied. "Let's continue looking for the Elder and Zena."

\*Player gains control and must fight through Fangs and fire looking for the Elder and Zena.\*

"Spyke, here's a watery sword," Draster said as he casts a spell on Spyke blade.

Suddenly, two Fangs jumped in between the pair, bringing with it a trail of fire and separating them.

The pair could hear a woman fighting three of the Fangs and struggling. It was Zena!

"Draster, go and help her!", Spyke ordered. "I can take care of these!"

Draster looked into Spyke's eyes, nodded and ran in the other direction towards Zena. Draster jumped through the hordes of fire and debris, dousing flames on his way to Zena. He healed her and fought off the other Fangs.

\*Battle - Draster & Zena vs 3 Fangs\*

"Thank you," Zena said as Draster helped her to her feet.

Zena had a bad wound on her leg, something that could not be healed with magic.

"I need to get you out of here," Draster said to Zena, wrapping her arm around his soldier.

"But what about your friend?" Zena asked.

"He'll be fine," Draster reassured Zena. "Your leg won't last if we don't get it treated ASAP."

Draster and Zena make their way to the edge of the village.

\*Context switch to Spyke\*

Spyke fends off the two Fangs around him.

\*Battle - Spyke vs 2 Fangs\*

"Dammit...", Spyke mutters to himself as the fire surrounds him. He still had the watery sword spell from Draster, but it was waning and the heat was getting to him. There was a clear path he could take that would lead him to the Elder's hut, but deeper into the burning village.

Spyke had to look for the Elder. There was no way he could abandon her after the knowledge she had imparted on him. Even if she was Morkain's mother. Even if there was the slightest chance she was alive, he couldn't return to the villagers or June and Draster without checking.

Spyke marched on, batting away the flames with his blade and keeping a lookout for Fangs. He approached the Elder's hut, that was still intact, but the roof was burning. He hurried inside.

There he was. Morkain standing in front of his mother who was kneeled on the ground, ready to be executed. His blade was in the air, ready to slice her in half.

\*\*Player decision - Use iaijutsu and Master's katana, or use broadsword. If the player chooses to use the broadsword, Spyke won't make it in time to block Morkain's attack. \*\*

Spyke sheaths his watery broadsword and grabs his Master's katana. Using iaijutsu, he moves with lightning speed in front of Morkain to block his broadsword. Morkain is momentarily taken aback. Spyke's katana glowed yellow and gold, something he noticed back at the shrine, and push Morkain back.

"She is dead anyway," Morkain said with a smirk.

"You bastard!", Spyke yelled at him. "How could you burn down your own village? Kill your own mother?!"

"Were you not ready to kill your own father?!", Morkain shot back at him.

Spyke was startled. He didn't know what to say.

"It is OK child... this is my sin for giving birth to a monster..." the Elder said calmly.

"She has outlived her usefulness to me anyway," Morkain continued. "Better that she dies by her son's own hand than by some catastrophe she cannot control."

"You will have to go through me first!", Spyke grunted.

It was at that moment that both June and Draster jumped through the hut together. The trio pinching Morkain.

"Looks like we're just in time!" June said.

"You are far too late!", Morkain uttered.

Suddenly a time freeze occurred again. Spyke's vision were tinted with green and purple. He could see June and Draster at the hut's entrance, and Morkain in front of him, laughing. Then he started walking, then running, towards his mother!

Spyke tried to move, but he wasn't fast enough. It was as if he was moving in slow motion, unable to match Morkain's speed. Spyke's head was pulsating, but he had to move. He couldn't keep up. He prepared another iaijutsu attack, but he couldn't reach Morkain, who had gone around him, around his mother, and stabbed the Elder in the back.

Time was restored to normal.

"No!!!", Spyke yelled.

And it was as if time had stood still again. Spyke, June and Draster could only watch as Morkain's sword pierced through the Elder. Her old, worn eyes rolled back as she lost life in her body. Morkain withdrew his sword and sheathed it again.

"You... monster!", June shouted.

The trio watched as the Elder fell to the ground face first.

"What the hell happened?", Draster said scoping the area. "...Time freeze again? How do we counter that?"

"You can't," Morkain overheard Draster mutter. "It is the power of the ancients. It cannot be stopped by mere humans."

"So you have the blood of the ancients?", Spyke asked.

"I have it yes," Morkain said. "I sought the blood and made it mine."

"Morkain...", Spyke started. "The catastrophe. We need to stop it."

"It cannot be stopped child," Morkain replied calmly. "And besides, even if I could, I wouldn't anyway! Why would I pass up the opportunity to become immortal, YOU FOOL!", Morkain's voice suddenly bellowed in ears of the trio. They were taken aback by his sudden change of demeanor.

"You child! Have the blood of the ancient! Why do you not seek to use it?! Why do you travel around with these weaklings? I could kill you all right now if I wished it!! Hahahaha!"

The trio readied their weapons, preparing for any oncoming attack. Spyke glared deeply into Morkain's eyes, searching his soul.

"Then why don't you kill us then?!", Spyke snapped. "Why are you keeping us alive?! Why did you bring us here?!"

"Hmph...", Morkain looked back into Spyke's eye's unimpressed.

"You're just some power hungry freak of nature, you bastard...", Spyke uttered in disgust. "How could you destroy your own village... kill your own mother in cold blood..."

"ENOUGH", Morkain's voice bellowed throughout the village again. "I have better things to do than trade insults with a child. We will meet again..."

Suddenly a giant Fang jumped into the hut, just behind June and Draster.

"Til' we mees again, if you can escape this place alive...", Morkain hissed. A gulf of darkness enveloped him and he disappeared.

"Running away again huh?", Spyke uttered under his breath.

"Spyke! We have company!", June shouted.

The Giant Fang attacked!

### \*Boss battle - Giant Fang\*

The trio defeated the Giant Fang, just as the roof of the hut was about to cave in. Fire had begun to spread.

"We need to get outta here!", Draster said.

Spyke looked back at the Elder for a moment. Then he decided to pick her up and carry her.

"Lead the way," Spyke said, with the Elder in his arms.

"Let's go!!", June yelled!

The trio fight their way through fire and debris, using water magic and cutting through wrecked houses.

The make it to the edge of the village where the rest of the evacuated villagers were. They immediately saw their Elder be carried by Spyke in his arms. She was lifeless. Her wrinkled hand hung by her side. The villagers took a collective gasp as they realised what had happened.

Spyke walked closer to them, and slowly set her down on the grass.

"Draster?", Spyke whispered.

"She is already gone," Draster said, shaking his head knowing that Spyke was going to ask for any healing magic that could help.

Spyke, June and Draster all looked towards the Elder as the villagers dropped to their knees, mourning the loss of their matriach.

Zena appeared through the crowd of villagers, and immediately broke down next to the Elder.

After a few moments, Spyke turned towards the village, staring at the fire.

"This is my fault," he thought to himself.

Then he suddenly thought of his own father. And how much he hated him. But could he really bring himself to kill him, just as Morkain killed his own mother that brought him into the world? Would that make him any different from Morkain?

Spyke continued to watch the fire as the flames slowly died down.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Chapter 11

Spyke, June and Draster spent the next morning with the villagers of Juniper Village, mourning the loss of their Elder and lost ones. Once the flames had died down, June and Draster scouted the remains of what was left, seeing if there were any Fangs left or anyone trapped and still alive.

The villagers held a burial for their Elder, finding a huge rock as the tombstone while Spyke helped to dig the grave. He thought it was the least he could do.

"You three," Zena turned the trio once the ceremony was over. She ushered them out of earshot of the other villagers.

"Thank you for rescuing me, and bringing the Elder back to us. You have my sincerest gratitude. But you need to continue your journey," Zena continued. "What the Elder told you, you must finish it and put a stop to what Morkain is planning."

Zena pulled out a red crystal and shoved it in Spyke's hand.  
"Here," she said. "This is the treasure of the village. See it as an alliance. If you ever need our help, then reach out to us."

\*\*Player receives red crystal\*\*

"Why?", Spyke looked downhearted at the floor. "Why would you help us? This is all my..."  
"Enough," Zena cut Spyke off. "This was the act of a madman. You cannot blame yourself for this. There will be much more loss and death as you continue your journey, but you must stay strong. And when the time comes, call on us. Promise?"

Spyke looked at Zena vividly, as she reached out for a handshake. Spyke shook her hand and nodded.

"Go now, and give that Morkain one for me eh?", Zena said smiling.

"We sure will!" June replied excitedly.

"Thank you for hospitality," Draster started. "But are you sure there is nothing else we can do to help?"

"No, just teach that bastard a lesson," Zena snarled.

"We will carry on then. Thank you, Zena," Spyke said. He turned around and marched on, with June and Draster followed behind.

"Byyyeeeeee!", a young child was heard from the crowd of villagers. It was the child that June helped to rescue his mother.

June looked and waved back at him. The other villagers then caught wind of them leaving and they all began waving, smiling and thanking the trio as they walked away.

"Not a bad send off," Draster said.

"Indeed!", June replied, "Let's not let them down!"

Spyke looked back at the villagers, almost cracking a smile, he nodded, and continued marching on.

The next shrine was located south east from Juniper Village. A considerable distance by foot.  
"Man...", June began. "Isn't there a vehicle we can rent or something that can get us around faster?"

"Maybe they have horses here?" Draster suggested.

"Well I haven't seen anything that we can use to ride," June replied.

"Let's just continue on foot..." Spyke sighed.

"When we get to Glowkirk outpost, we can ask someone," Draster said.

"And how far is that?"

"About five miles."

"Gaaah!", June grunted.

\*Player must walk for 5 miles to the next outpost or can continue to the next shrine - if walking to the outpost, the player can learn to catch a rideable monster\*

The next shrine was located at lower ground, towards the coast. The trio journeyed to the cliff, but were unable to see a route down.

"The map says it's down there somewhere," Draster said to the others.

"Really? Are you sure?", June replied.

"Yes, pretty certain," Draster answered.

"We need to find a way down...", Spyke muttered, looking around. "We can't risk jumping from here."

"No shit!", June said. "There's no way I'm jumping from here."

"Maybe we can use a combination of wind and water magic?", Draster suggested.

"What do you mean?" Spyke asked.

"If we can combine our spells in a non-lethal way, we can use it to slow our descent," Draster explained.

"That's crazy!" June yelled. "I am not jumping down there!"

"Do you want to walk another 20 mile round trip just to get down there?", Draster asked.

"...No", June said, slightly embarrassed. "So how do we do this then?"

"You cast water, and I'll cast wind," Draster started. "If we can soften the intensity of the spell and combine it with the right ratio, we can use it without damaging ourselves too much."

"It's worth a try," Spyke said.

"We will need to practice this first," June said.

"Of course," replied Draster.

\*Player takes part in a mini game to combine spells with June and Draster. The player will then need to combine their spell that's cast right to the bottom of the cliff.

Player will then learn how to combine spells with June and Draster\*

The trio make it to the bottom of the cliff by jumping through the combined spells of wind and water.

"Draster, I always knew you were a genius!", June said giving him a high five.

"Told you it would work! And now we can try it out in battle," Draster replied.

Spyke gave a nod of approval. "There's the shrine", he pointed to the symbol within the cliff.

"No rest for the wicked!", June said, still pumped by their achievement.

"We should prepare ourselves before we head in", Spyke suggested.

\*Player can buy/sell items online before entering the shrine\*

The trio entered the Shrine of Cancer in the cliffs.

\*Player will battle their way through the caves until they reach glyphs on the wall\*

"There are more glyphs here," June said, touch the wall with her hands.

"Do you hear anything this time Spyke?" Draster asked.

"Not yet," Spyke replied. "Usually when they light up, I hear the voices."

The trio continued through the cave.

\*\* The one with blood \*\*, a voice rang out in Spyke's ears.

"Now they're talking to me," said Spyke. The glyphs on the walls lit up.

\*\* will bring change to this world \*\*

"The one with blood will bring change to this world...?", Spyke repeated.

The lights of the glyphs dimmed and they continued.

\*\* The one with blood must gain control \*\*

"Gain control...?", Spyke repeated.

\*\* The eye of power will be the savior or the death of Terra \*\*

"The eye of power... my left eye...", Spyke mumbled.

Suddenly, Spyke's head began to pulsate. He dropped one knee to the ground in agony. His left eye began bleeding.

"I'm in control...", a voice hissed in his ears.

"Spyke!", June said rushing to his aid.

"Aaaaarrghh!", Spyke screamed in agony. His arm began to throb. "What the hell...!"

"Spyke..." Draster started. "Your eye..."

Spyke's eye had turned purple and green, and his face surrounding his eye had begun to change colour.

"I'm in control...", Spyke said, in the same voice that hissed in his ears.

"What?!", June said, slowly backing away from him. Spyke's arm had slowly begun turning green now too.

"Aaaarrgghh," Spyke struggled, he was losing control of his body. "I... can't... move..."

"Draster...", June whispered to him, keeping her eyes on Spyke.

"I don't know what we can do," Draster replied.

"I'm in control...", Spyke hissed again. He slowly reached for his broadsword with his green hand.

June and Draster both readied their stance.

"Looks like Spyke is struggling to control his body!" Draster yelled to June. "We need to subdue him!"

"Shit... Spyke!?", June was watching him in disbelief.

Spyke's eye and arm had both turned a shade of green. He looked into June's eyes with his broadsword now in his green hand.

"I'm in control...", Spyke hissed one more time, as he jumped at June attacking her with his sword.

June parried and evaded the attack.

\*\* Boss battle - June and Draster vs Spyke. The player must defeat Spyke without killing him.

When his HP is low, his movements will begin to slow down, the player must back off and let Spyke try to regain control of his body. He will recover HP a few times before regaining control. Killing Spyke will mean game over. The glyphs shine brightly on the wall \*\*

June and Draster subdue Spyke and have him down on one knee, the voice in his breath slowly begins to return to him. He struggles to fight off whatever possessed him before saying, "No... I'm in control!!!" His eye and his arm slowly return to normal as June and Draster both breathe a sigh of relief.

Spyke looks up at them, with his normal glare that looks deep into the soul.

"Are you alright Spyke?", June asked, still concerned.

"Yeah...sorry about that, just a little interference...", Spyke replied, still gasping for breath and looking at his hand.

"Interference!", June gasped. "Half your body turned green and you tried to kill us!"

"You reacted to the glyphs on the wall", Draster said.

"It's like in that dream I had... something in me is trying to control my body", Spyke remembered. "Is that what the voice meant when they said 'the one with blood must gain control'?"

"Maybe it was some kind of test from the ancients", Draster concluded.

"Maybe" Spyke said standing up. "I'm usually able to suppress it."

Spyke rubbed his eye and sheathed his sword.

"Don't you want to rest for a bit first?" June asked.

"No. Let's continue," Spyke said firmly, leading the way.

\*Player must navigate to the end of the shrine, where they will find the Gem of Cancer awaiting them\*

"This is the gem similar to the one we found in the other shrine", Spyke said. Spyke took it, and suddenly, the cave began to shake.

"Whaaaaat's going on?!", June mumbled, shook by the tremors. Rubble began to fall all around them.

"Let's get out of here!", Draster yelled.

\*The player must escape the shrine in a cinematic\*

The trio escaped shrine in tact. The cliff had fallen, allowing for a way back up.

"That was a close one", June said, huffing and puffing.

"Yeah, but at least we don't have to climb back up the cliff now", Draster beamed.

Spyke now possessed two of the gems from the shrines. He didn't know what they were or how he could use them, but he had a feeling they would come in handy when the time comes.

"Let's make our way to the nearest outpost and get some rest", Draster suggested.

"Alright, let's get going," Spyke said, leading the way.

\*Player can decide to rest or continue to the last shrine on the continent. The next time the player rests at an outpost, the game will trigger Draster's Past\*

The trio drop by an outpost on their way to the next shrine in the East. They sit down by some decking area and are treated to some food by the cafe owner.

"So, Draster..." June started. "What's your story eh?"

"My story?", asked Draster.

"Yeah. Why did you want to join the Formican Army? Back when they didn't seem like such a dodgy organisation...", said June.

"Heh...", Draster chuckled.

Spyke looked at him, interested.

"Well it's a long story," Draster said. "You sure you wanna hear it now?"

\*Player decision - skip the story, or listen. If the player skips, they can do it later\*

"Let's hear it," Spyke ordered.

"Alright, I guess."

## \*\* Draster's Past \*\*

So when I was a kid, I was really fat. I was different to everyone else. I had a different skin colour and my hair was silver. Naturally I was bullied in school for being different. Everyday, there would always be something missing from my locker or pockets and I would be teased by the other kids, segregated for being and different and I had no friends. Even the teachers would give me "special treatment" for not fitting in with the other kids.

"That's horrible! Even the teachers?!", asked June. "That's right," Draster continued.

My mum didn't do anything, though I didn't blame her. She was an obedient housewife who did what she was told by my dad. My dad was a controlling man, he used to beat my mum in front of me, blaming her for giving birth to a fat child, and he would look at me with disdain. I would go up to my room, only to be bullied again via social media. Then go to school, and the same would happen. I had to find a way to break the cycle.

One day, I just had enough. I decided to run away from home. I took my bag, packed some food, took some of my dad's money and left. I was around 15 years old when I left. I walked to the train station, bought a ticket to anywhere, I didn't even see the destination, and hopped on the train. I felt free.

The train inspector came around to check the tickets. Apparently I had the wrong train ticket for the train I was on, but I didn't really care. He told me to get off at the next station, so I did, and that's when I made Welldon Bay my new home.

Welldon Bay was a small, cozy town. It had everything you needed. Shops, a farm, and an inn. I got the cheapest room. The innkeeper didn't ask why a 15-year-old was staying at an inn on their own, they just took my money and showed me the room. I could just about afford to stay a few nights.

The first night, I lay in bed wondering what I had done. I had taken my dad's money, hopped on a train, and travelled half way through the country on my own. I thought about what mum and dad would do when they found out. Whether they would be angry or happy to be rid of me. I didn't care anymore. The next day was the beginning of my new life, I thought.

When I woke up the next day, I asked the innkeeper if he had any work going.

"Any work?", the innkeeper said. "Shouldn't you be in school? Where are your parents?"

"Dead," I lied. I didn't want there to be any chance that they could find me.

"So you're an orphan huh? I'm sorry to hear that...", said the innkeeper.

"Nevermind," I said quickly, swerving the subject. "Do you have any work going? I won't be able to continue staying here if I don't earn some money. I'll do anything..."

"Alright boy," the innkeeper grunted. "You can stay here for free as long as you take care of some of my errands. And I'll pay you a little something so you can eat. Got it?!"

"Yessir!" I said feeling elated. I had finally been acknowledged by someone.

The tasks he had me doing were menial as hell. I was cleaning the inn from top to bottom, everyday. Cooking, and serving, pouring pints, doing the laundry, buying ingredients and

gathering the crops. But I didn't complain. The innkeeper even bought me books for my birthday so I could continue my education. I was thankful to him.

I was there for 2 years, doing the same thing everyday. But I didn't complain. It made me lose a lot of weight and made me really appreciate hard work.

One day, I finally plucked up the courage to tell George that I wasn't an orphan, but that I actually ran away from home.

"I know son," George smiled. "I've seen your face all over the news! Hahaha!"

"What?! You knew?!" I said in disbelief. "This whole time I was feeling guilty..."

"Serves you right! You shouldn't lie!", George said, clipping me over the head. "Why do you think I made stay indoors doing all that work?"

"You were protecting me?", I asked.

"Of course!", George said, then pulling a serious face. "I'm a lonely old man... and I enjoyed your company anyway..."

"Thank you!", I blurted, bursting into tears. I was overcome with emotion at that point. I had never felt like anyone ever cared for me. I gave him a huge hug, almost knocking him over in the process.

"Hey," George said. "There's no need to thank me son. Anyone would have done the same."

One day, George gave me a couple of bounties to put up on the wall. I didn't know what they were at first.

"What are these?", I asked.

"Bounty posters," George replied. "There are some pretty tough monsters out there and people are willing to pay huge amounts to get rid of them."

"Monsters...", I thought this might be a good opportunity to get some more money, and learn to deal with monsters if I ever encountered them myself.

"Don't get any ideas," he said as if he read my mind. "Monsters are dangerous, so stay away from them."

I did as he asked. While I was cleaning, I very short man dressed in a long cloak with a pointy hat walk into the inn.

"I'll have an ale please," he said in a old croaky voice.

"Yes sir," I said, pouring and passing him the ale. He spotted the bounty posters on the wall and looked over to them. He made a couple of grunts and took all of them down. The man then downed his ale and left. That man knew how to get rid of monsters, I thought. He was a bounty hunter.

A few weeks later, George gave me some more bounty posters to put up.

"More bounties...", I muttered.

"Yeah, we get paid just for advertising them!", George said, excited.

I was more excited about seeing that bounty hunter again. A few days went by, and sure enough, he came back.

"Hello sir," I said to him courteously. I immediately began pouring his ale, remembering what he drank the last time he came.

"Ah, thank you," he said as I passed it to him. "You have a good memory...". He looked up at me with squinted eyes. "Unfortunately, I don't! How much will that cost?"

"Ah it's on the house sir," I said to him.

"Why?", the man said suspiciously.

"Well sir," I started mumbling. "I... err... kinda saw... umm... that"

"Spit it out boy!", the man said impatiently.

"I want to learn how to deal with monsters," I said as quick as I can.

"Deal' with monsters?", the man said with an emphasis on the word 'deal'. "Or destroy monsters?"

"Destroy them," I replied.

"Why is that boy?", he asked, seemingly interested.

"If I ever encounter a monster, I need to be able to... destroy it," I started. "I also would like to take on bounties myself for some extra cash."

"Fine. I want you to run for one hour, twice a day, every day for 30 days," the man started.

"Then on the 31st day, meet me at Trotters Road at 4am," he said downing his ale.

Before I could even reply, he turned around, grabbed all the bounty posters by the wall and left. I sat down and thought about what he said. Run for two hours for 30 days, then meet him at Trotters Road. 'What did that have to do with learning how to destroy monsters?' I thought. The next day, I got up at 3am and started running around Welldon Bay. After 2 minutes I was already out of breath! I had lost a fair amount of weight but I was still chubby and terribly unfit. I ran as much as I could until I couldn't run anymore, walked to catch my breath, then ran again.

"Are you training for a marathon or something?", George asked me.

"No," I said huffing and heaving after a session. "Just trying to get in shape."

"Oh I see... there's a girl you're trying to impress eh?" he said, teasing me.

Five days had passed, then ten, twenty, then on the thirtieth day I was so excited that I couldn't sleep. I had lost two stones in those thirty days of running and had become slim like I am now. I woke up the next day, at 3.15am. I couldn't get much sleep as I was too excited! I got my stuff ready and was out the door by 3.30am, and got to the corner of Trotters Road for 3.45am. I didn't know which part of Trotters Road to wait, so I walked up and down looking for the old man. It was a crisp, starry night with few clouds overhead.

As I looked up, I could see a small glint in my peripheral vision. It was the old man, with a small flame hovering above his finger. I squinted to confirm whether I was seeing things, but it was indeed a flame that he had in control on the end of his index finger. He gestured for me to come over back towards the corner, so I obliged. At the corner of the road was an old abandoned pub that had gone out of business. As I approached the man, I was mesmerised by the flame at the end of his finger, wondering how he did that. He didn't say a word to me, but smiled and pointed towards the pub.

"Let's go inside boy," he said softly.

I nodded and he led the way inside.

The pub had really old tables and chairs, stacked together and covered by spider webs. The man walked behind the bar, lighting the way with his flame and opened a hatch leading to the basement. We descended down the creaky stairs down to a level floor and walked a few paces forward. It would have been pitch black if not for the man's flame. He suddenly extinguished the fire and after a few seconds, cast a multi-flame spell at the lanterns that hung up either side of the wall. The fire illuminated the entire room to reveal a huge open space with burn marks everywhere.

"My name is Thaconion," the short old man said stroking his mustache.

"My name...", I started.

"Is Draster, I know," Thaconion cut me off. "You are the young boy who ran away from home aren't you?"

"Umm...", I stuttered and was taken aback that he knew who I was. I thought it was best to be upfront and honest with him. "Yes".

"OK," Thaconion said, nodding. "I don't care about that, so you can relax. So, you want to learn to destroy monsters eh?"

"Yessir!", I said enthusiastically.

"Good," he said, taking a few seconds to look me up and down. "I see you've been running. For thirty days, for one hour, right?"

"Two hours sir," I corrected him.

"Ah yes, you had some weight to lose. I remember," I felt awkward but he was right.

"So...", Thaconion started, pulling a glove out of his pocket. "This is a Plasma Glove. Have you seen one of these before?"

"No sir," I said.

"Quit calling me sir would ya?" he said, getting annoyed. "I told you my name."

"Sorry, Thaconion," I said apologetically.

"Are you aware of Plasma?", he asked impatiently.

"The energy source sir.... err... Thaconion?", I replied.

"Yes. We humans have been using Plasma since our fossil fuels ran out years and years ago. Plasma comes from the planet Terra," Thaconion explained. "This Plasma Glove can manipulate Plasma and the elements to form elemental properties, like the fire you saw earlier." I nodded, struggling to follow what he was saying, but he could sense my confusion.

"Probably better to show you," he sighed.

He put out his hand and slowly conjured a small fireball in the palm of his hand.

"Wow...", I couldn't believe my eyes!

"With this glove, I can conjure fire using the elemental properties in our atmosphere, everything around us," Thaconion continued, blowing the fire out. He then conjured water droplets together from his hand and formed a water ball.

"Can you tell me what the other elements are?", he asked me.

"Ummm...", I stuttered, still mesmerised by what he was able to do in his hand. "Fire, water... wind and Earth?"

"Yes..." he said unimpressed. "But there are others too. Thunder for example." He then applied a thunder property to the water ball levitating above his hand that made the water spark with electricity.

"So you see, there is no limit to what you can conjure using Plasma," Thaconion concluded. He then cast the electrified water ball at the wall, and it dissipated with a loud bang, leaving another mark on the wall.

"Now... you came to me to learn how to destroy monsters," Thaconion asked.

"Yes," I said, snapping out of the trance I was in.

"This is certainly a way. Monsters can only be destroyed using Plasma. As Plasma Glove cannot purely conjure Plasma by itself, but it can mix and mold with the elements around us to create a devastating weapon."

"I see," I said, fascinated. "So you use elemental Plasma to destroy them, like magic in a video game?"

"Do not compare this to magic from a video game boy!", Thaconion said angrily. "Plasma is a very dangerous weapon, and in the wrong hands can be lethal!"

"Sorry, sir...", I said again, apologetically.

Thaconion sighed again and he tossed me the glove, "Put that on."

The glove looked like a regular black and leather glove. It had grippy parts on its tips and palms, and was singed in a few places. I put it on as he instructed. Thaconion walked away to the other end of the room.

"Now I want you to think of fire," he grunted from afar. "Think about the fire in the palm of your hand, illuminating and almost burning the glove from your palm."

"OK!", I yelled from across the room.

I put out my hand and looked at it, thinking about the fire burning my hand. Nothing happened. I tried again, tensing my muscles and focussing my attention on my hand and a fire appearing.

"Try closing your eyes," Thaconion tipped. "And feel the fire throughout your body and into your palm."

I did as he said, but still nothing.

"Ten days," Thaconion said out of the blue. "You have ten days to figure out how to do it, otherwise I will cease to teach you and you will return that glove to me."

Surely I could figure this out in ten days, I thought.

"OK," I said to him.

"Return here in ten days, either with a fire or the glove," he said. "I do not need to tell you to keep this a secret do I?" He then walked back up the stairs and left.

I didn't know what to make of him or his teaching style, but this was something I had to figure out on my own.

I kept at it until it was time for me to open up the inn.

"How is the early morning running going?" asked George.

"Fine," I said to him, still trying to figure out how to conjure a flame in my hand by the third day. In the mornings, I would get up and practice, and when closing up shop, I would practice in my room. I just had to do it!

By the seventh day, I was running out of ideas. I searched online, in books, everywhere for an answer and I was getting desperate.

By the ninth day, I was just about ready to give up. Then I had a moment of inspiration. It was one of the local's birthday party at the inn and we were hosting. I was tasked with managing the inn and the food while George was in charge of the drinks. The organiser signalled to me to bring out the birthday cake, so I layered some candles and had to light them. I got the lighter, and tried to light the fire. It didn't light, so I did it again, and again but it wouldn't light, much like my Plasma Glove!

Then I noticed a small spark where the flame was. I focussed on the spark and tried again and again, trying to get the spark bigger and bigger, and then it finally lit.

"Aaahhhh!!!!" I yelled.

"Draster?! What are you doing," George asked running in after he heard me shout.

"Oh, nothing, just trying to conjuring a flame..." I said cheekily.

"Well make it quick will ya?! We're about to start singing!," George said.

"Will be right out!", I said excitedly, having finally figured it out.

I lit the rest of the candles and brought the cake out to the party guests, then quickly ran up to my room and put on the Plasma Glove.

"A spark..." I muttered to myself as I looked at my glove.

I tried clicking my fingers together. Nothing happened. Then I tried it again, with the tips that Thaconion gave me. "Feel the fire throughout your body...". I did then imagined the fire sparking in my fingertips. I clicked my fingers, and there was a spark!

"Oh shit!", I said loudly, hoping George and the others downstairs wouldn't hear me.

I did it again, and again, the fingertips of the glove sparked.

I then tried with all my might, to conjure the fire in my hand. I thought of fire, in my body, around my body, my soul, thought of nothing but fire. I clicked my fingers.

And I did it. A huge ball of fire sat in the palm of my hand.

"Wow..." I said to myself.

It was hot, but it didn't burn through the glove. I just sat there watching it for a few moments, breathing a huge sigh of relief. I conjured fire for the first time.

Then I quickly wondered how I was going to get rid of it. I couldn't just throw it at the wall. I quickly ran to the bathroom and started the shower, to see if the fire could be doused by water. But no luck.

"Ah shit!" I said.

Suddenly George walked in. "Draster, what the devil...". He then saw the huge fireball that was in my hand. "Wwwwwhaat the hell?! Why is your hand on fire?! Run it under the tap!"

"It's not working!", I said to him, beginning to panic.

"There's a river just down the road! Go and jump in there! But don't let the guests see!" George said hurriedly.

I quickly did as he suggested, running towards the back and out the rear exit. There was a small stream that flowed under the bridge. I got to the river, and tried to throw the fire into the river, but it wouldn't work. The fireball still levitated above my hand. I then tried dunking it into the water, and the fire slowly began to die down, with huge puffs of steam melting my face.

After about ten minutes of dunking, the flame finally died down. I breathed a huge sigh of relief and sat there for a moment, contemplating what had just happened, and how I will explain everything to George. I was dreading going back but I plucked up the courage and walked back, removing my Plasma Glove and hiding it away in my pocket.

"Draster!", George yelled. "What the hell were you doing?!"

George had waited for all the guests to leave before giving me a lecture.

"It's a long story...", I said sighing.

"Well I've got all day and night!"

I explained the situation to him and that I only had a few hours to figure out how to conjure a flame.

"So you decided to do it in my inn?! You could have burned the bloody place down!", George ranted.

"I know, I'm sorry..." I said apologetically.

George huffed and puffed but he eventually softened up.

"Good job," he eventually said.

"What?" I was slightly taken aback.

"You persevered and figured it out. Make sure you're there tomorrow bright and early to show that man what ya got," he said smiling.

I nodded and smiled back.

"Now clear up this mess!!!"

It was the morning of the tenth day. The day I would meet Thaconion again to show him what I learned. I had not practiced since the debacle at the party, but I was confident and ready I could do it again. I got up, got ready, equipped my Plasma Glove and walked to Trotters Road.

Thaconion came out of the doors to the abandoned pub and gestured for me to follow.

The lights were already were already lit and we made our way to the big open area.

"So, you can conjure fire from your palm?", Thaconion said expectedly.

"Yes," I said calmly.

"Let's see it then!", he replied.

I took a deep breath and looked at my hand. Focussed. I thought of fire. I imagined my whole body pulsating with flames and focussed those thoughts into the palm of my hand. I then clicked my fingers and the giant fireball was conjured within my hand.

"Ah the old snap of the finger eh?", Thaconion said. "Well done, you pass."

"Thank you sir... err... Thaconion," I said, relieved.

"There are a few things we need to work on but that will do. Now, throw it here," he gestured to me.

I tried to throw it as if I was throwing a basketball, but the fire continued to levitate above my hand.

"It's not a basketball you know," Thaconion said as if to read my mind. "You cast it, like this..."

Thaconion then conjured a flame of his own and stuck out his hand. He then braced his body and made a pushing gesture with his hand.

"You need to cast it, push it out of your hand with your thoughts," he said. He then cast the fire into the wall, leaving burn marks up the wall before the fire dissipated.

I braced myself the same way he did, stuck my hand out towards him and imagined myself pushing the fire out with my hand. Then, I cast it directly at Thaconion who was taken aback and deflected the fire with an ice like shield onto the wall, leaving a huge hole and causing the building to shudder.

"Good... very good in fact," he said smirking as his icy shield dissipated. "You lack control, but your thoughts, your belief and your body are one."

"Huh?", I muttered confused.

"... forget it, let's just say that I've agreed to take you on as an apprentice," Thaconion said.

"Wha... really?! Thank you Thaconion!" I said, ecstatic.

From that day, I learned all about Plasma and magic. He didn't teach me any new spells, but he left it to me to learn it on my own. I eventually learned how to conjure water and ice, and cast spells with control. We then went on some bounties together, and he taught me about monsters and how to defeat them.

Even though I thought George was against it, he actually supported me and allowed me to take some time off from the pub. I could eventually take on bounties on my own with Thaconion's

supervision and we split the profits. Six months later, I had a burning question I wanted to ask Thaconion.

"Thaconion," I started. "Who taught you how to conjure magic?"

"I learned it myself of course! Haha," he said smiling.

I waited a while for him to tell me, but nothing came.

"Really?" I asked. "You were not an apprentice at some point?"

"Not an apprentice like you," Thaconion started. "But I was part of a group, a mastermind you could say..." Thaconion then tailed off, his smile vanishing. "We all learned together, about Plasma, monsters, and what the Earth now is."

"What do you mean?", I asked him, interested.

"Draster, questions and curiosity is good. But sometimes you need to read the situation! And keep your mouth shut!" Thaconion said abruptly.

He then stormed off back towards Weldon Bay. I had never seen him so angry before, so I made sure not to bring up his past again.

One day, I saw a Formican Army recruitment poster. I knew that they were taking on people who could dispatch monsters and that they paid well.

"No," Thaconion said. "Do not join the Formican Army, you will lose your will and your freedom." Of course, Thaconion didn't bother to explain himself. I was growing tired of him telling me to do this or that, but not explain why. This did not deter me and made me think about joining them even more.

That same day, we had an argument that spilled over.

"You can't just say something and then not explain why!", I said to him in a stern voice.

"If I explain everything, then you will learn nothibg for yourself!" Thaconion replied.

"I get that when teaching me magic, but this is different," I said. "You told me not to join the Formican Army, but you won't explain why!"

"I..." Thaconion stuttered for the first time. He then took a deep breath. "Fine, go ahead and join them."

"Are you just gonna miss me?" I joked.

"Of course not!" Thaconion replied in a stern voice. "But, you will see for yourself what I meant."

"This is a great opportunity! We don't know when they may be recruiting again."

"As I said, do as you wish. I cannot force you to do anything," Thaconion said solemnly.

I looked at him and his eyes were in obvious pain. "Why won't you tell me what happened?", I asked him.

Thaconion then turned away and was silent.

"Well I'm gonna pack my things and find a train back to London, it's been a long time since I've been back home," I said to him.

Thaconion remained silent.

"Goodbye Thaconion. And thank you for everything."

"Wait," he whispered. He then pulled out a Plasma Glove, the matching glove to the other he gave me.

"Whenever you are facing adversity," he started. "Or are ever in any doubt, remember to think. Think things through. And whatever you think about can be brought to fruition. Just like the fire in your hand."

Thaconion then turned away, his long cloak spinning around from him and he left the pub without saying a word.

I told George about my decision to go back home. He took the news hard but was understanding.

It had been a number of years since I had not been back. I still had the clothes that I wore when I ran away, too big to fit me now that I was no longer short and fat. I bought a suitcase, packed all my clothes, and said goodbye to George who saw me off.

"Make sure you come back to visit!" he told me as we were at the train station. "You will always have a home here if things don't work out."

"Thank you George! For everything!" I said with a tear in my eye.

I jumped on the train and made my way towards London. I could just about remember my way home, having walked home by myself from a young age.

I eventually arrived at the house I lived in throughout my childhood. It looked exactly the same. My dad's vehicle wasn't outside so he must have been out, I thought. My mum was probably still in though. I walked up to the front door, and knocked twice.

My heart was racing as I stood there waiting for someone to open the door. I hadn't even thought what I would do if my parents didn't live there anymore. I waited and waited, for what felt like a decade. Finally I heard someone walk up to do, and the door slowly opened.

"Hi mum," I said. "Long time no see."

My mother stood in the doorway, her head peeking out the door.

"D... D... Draster?", she stuttered.

I nodded.

"Oh Draster!", mum cried as she gave me a huge hug. I dropped my suitcase and gave her a big hug back. "I thought you were dead... Where have you been?"

"Nope, I'm still alive mum," I whispered in her ear. "Is dad home?"

"No," mum shuddered at the sound of him.

After a few seconds, she ushered me into the home and sat me down.

I explained everything to her. How felt before and after I left, the kind hospitality of George and the time I spent learning about magic with Thaconion.

"It certainly sounds like you've had quite the adventure!", mum said, beaming. "But I've been worried sick about you! My life has been on hold since you left..."

"I'm sorry mum," I said. "I probably should have sent a letter or something. But it was something I had to do."

"I understand my dear Draster," she said, still teary.

"Where is dad?" I asked.

"Gone," mum replied.

"Huh?"

"He left me for some other woman," mum said angrily.

"You are much better off without him mum," I told her. "The way he treated you was..."

Mum then burst into tears. I gave her another hug as she sobbed into my shoulder.

"You've grown so much! You look so handsome," mum said through the tears. "Tell me, did you have a girlfriend?"

"No mum," I answered embarrassedly.

"Well you won't have any trouble now," she said smiling. "Just remember to be good to her when you meet her."

We talked for a little while longer. Then I took my suitcase and went up to my old room. It was still the same. The same bedsheets, wallpaper, desk and carpet. The room that I used to escape from reality. I burst out into tears as all the painful memories of the bullying I received flooded back. I swore that I would become strong, and never be the victim of bullying again. Joining the Formican Army would see to that, I thought.

So, I enrolled in the Formican Army program, developed my skills and was accepted to take the exam... and here I am.

\*\*\*\*\*

"My mum probably thinks I've run away again. I hope she's OK," said Draster, looking up at the sky.

"I'm sure she's fine," June said. "So what happened with Thaconion? You never got back in touch with him."

"No. Even if I did, I had no way of contacting him. He never carried a phone," replied Draster.

"So we all had our own but very different reasons for joining the Formican Army," Spyke concluded.

"Indeed," concurred Draster.

\*\*\*Sleep sequence. \*\*\*

## Chapter 12

The last shrine on the continent was a considerable distance away. The trio had to find another mode of transport, otherwise it would take at least a week to arrive.

"Do you know where we can rent a vehicle?" June asked the shop attendant at the outpost.

"Try Stockwell Town," the attendant said. "It's not too far from here. But make sure you're equipped! We have items here in case you need them..."

"OK thank you," June said in a hurry before the attendant could finish his sales pitch.

Spyke and Draster were outside waiting for her.

"Stockwell Town," June said.

"Alright, I'll mark it on the map," said Draster.

"Let's move out then," order Spyke.

\*\*\* Player gains control and must travel by foot or rideable monster to Stockwell Town \*\*\*

The trio arrives at Stockwell Town, a bustling town full of people. The Formican Army's reach was not present here it seemed. There were various shops and merchants selling everything from food to antiques. It seemed more like a big market than a town.

"Cars! Bikes! Get your vehicle here!", Spyke heard in the distance.

"Did you guys here that?", Spyke asked the others.

"Yeah, sounds like our guy," Draster replied.

The trio walked down to the merchant selling vehicles but he didn't appear to have a shop.

"Hello there!", the \*elf\* merchant said. "What are you looking for today?"

"We want to rent a vehicle," Spyke said. "How much is it?"

"Woah woah hold on sir!" the merchant said annoyingly. "What kind of vehicle do you want? And for how long? I don't usually allow rentals..."

"I want the cheapest one, enough to transport the 3 of us, for 2 days. How much is it?", Spyke said bluntly.

"Woah woah sir!", the merchant said again, which really ticked off Spyke. "Do you need air conditioning?"

"No I don't need air conditioning...", Spyke replied.

"Do you need airbags?"

"No..."

"Do you need..."

"Just tell me the damn price of your cheapest vehicle or we're walking away!", Spyke yelled, causing a scene. June and Draster both sighed as Spyke lost his cool.

"100,000 gil sir," the merchant said.

"That's too expensive. Bring it down to your lowest price," Spyke said losing patience.

"That is the cheapest I can do sir. To rent for 2 days for 3 people..."

"Spyke...", June began. "Let's go. He's not our guy."

"Fine," Spyke agreed, glaring at the merchant, who looked fearfully down.

The trio walked away from earshot.

"Let me try this time," Draster said. "I've been a pretty good haggler in the past."

They eventually walked up to another seller and Draster began the negotiations.

"150,000," the next merchant said.

"We can't afford that," Draster replied. "Can you do a good deal for us and we'll return your vehicle in mint condition..."

"140,000 final offer," the merchant replied.

"There is a guy down the road selling for much cheaper..." Draster started.

"His vehicles are garbage," the merchant stated. "Mine will get you to wherever you need to go in one piece."

"Forget it," Draster sighed giving up.

"Way to go..." June said as the trio walked away again.

"Do you reckon they are just bumping up the prices because they're human?" Draster asked.

"Maybe," Spyke concurred. "We will need another plan. Renting one is not an option."

The trio walked around town and stocked up on supplies, thinking of ways they could acquire a vehicle.

"Well... we could always 'borrow' one," June suggested, gesturing air quotes with her fingers.

"You mean steal..." Draster replied.

"No, borrow... we take it and bring it back," June said.

\*Player decision - "That's a good idea" or "That's the last resort". This decision will affect other decisions later on\*

"That's definitely a last resort," Spyke said.

"Hello, but I couldn't help but overhear you earlier," a young man said walking up to the trio. He was wearing a top hat and a strange suit like outfit.

"I believe you would like to acquire a vehicle?"

"That's right," Draster said, the trio all looking back at him with interest.

"There is a competition happening soon," the young man started. "And guess what the prize for first place is..."

"A vehicle?" June asked.

"Correct! That means if you win the competition, you won't have to resort to stealing from one of the merchants."

"Borrowing!" June said embarrassed.

"What kind of competition is it?" Spyke asked.

"A hunting competition," the young man replied. "All you have to do is defeat monsters! You'll be ranked on the number of monsters and difficulty. It starts tomorrow, but there is still some time for you to sign up."

"Alright let's sign up!" June said enthusiastically.

"Maybe we should all sign up," Draster suggested. "It will give us the best chance of winning."

"Fine with me," Spyke said.

"Wonderful!" the man said. He then pulled out a charter with a list of names. "If you could just tell me your names, I'll get you signed up immediately!"

The trio told him their names and asked them where it's being held. The competition took place in Feral Forest to the north of Stockwell Town. The competition organisers will release monsters into the forest and allow competitors to capture them. There was an obvious risk of death, so competitors signed up at their own risk.

"Do you have any more questions?"

\*\*\*Player can ask more questions if required, like what kind of vehicle they will win \*\*\*

"No," Spyke replied.

"Well then, please be present at sunrise at the north exit of Stockwell Town. We will all convene then and then make our way to the forest. Get plenty of rest and good luck!", the young man said smiling as he bid the trio farewell.

"Well, that was convenient!" June said. "Not only do we get to take part in a competition but we have a chance to win ourselves a vehicle!"

"Yes, almost too convenient," Draster said suspiciously.

"In any case, let's equip ourselves and get some rest ready for tomorrow," Spyke suggested. June and Draster agreed.

\*Player gains control and can browse shops before needing to retire at the inn\*

\*Do you really think you can win that competition?\*

"Of course I can," Spyke replied to the voice in his dreams.

\*Hmph, you can't even control yourself...\*

"I can, and I am in control," Spyke said sternly.

\*That's what you think...\*

The trio woke up just before sunrise, equipped their gear and made their way to the north exit of Stockwell Town. They could see there was a group of people already gathered and the same young man who turned out to be the organiser.

There were \*elves\*, \*dwarves\* and humans among the pack. Spyke glossed his eyes around some of the humans, but he didn't see any he could recognise.

"Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls," the organiser started. "I believe we are all gathered, so we will make our way to Feral Forest now."

The organiser led the way as the group of hunters followed include Spyke, June and Draster.

The party enter the Feral Forest, filled with overhanging trees of blue and red leaves.

"I will take you to your starting areas," an assistant appeared to tell them. "You've all been giving an ID card yes? OK good!"

The party walked around the edge of the forest, dropping one person off at a time.

"Miss June, please this way!" the assistant said.

"Good luck guys!" she said to Spyke and Draster as they continued to follow the other organiser.

The pair gave her a salute as she walked to the edge of the forest.

"You can enter the forest once the klaxon sounds, understood?" the assistant asked.

"Got it," June replied, checking her equipment. She was ready.

"Mr Draster, this way please," another assistant said to him.

"See you soon, Spyke!" Draster said to him. Spyke nodded in approval.

"And finally, Mr Spyke," the organiser said, showing him to the starting position.

"Please wait for the klaxon to sound before entering. Best of luck!"

The organiser then ran off into the forest, disappearing behind the trees.

Spyke doubled checked his equipment and waited, taking slow, deep breaths. He looked up then closed his eyes. For a moment, it was quiet and peaceful. He could even hear his own heartbeat.

Suddenly, the klaxon sounded and Spyke leaped into the forest.

\*\*\*Player will play through the hunting competition as Spyke alone. Player must eliminate monsters to gain a high score with as much finesse as possible. The other competitors will appear on a leaderboard. Player has 45 minutes to get as many kills as possible. With 8 minutes left, Spyke will encounter a boss. If he does not defeat it within 5 minutes, June and Draster will appear to help. The player must defeat it in order for Spyke to win. Spyke must also get the final blow. If they fail, they will get a rental vehicle instead \*\*\*

"Times up!" the event organiser said. "And the winner is... Spyke! With 2000 points."

"Alright!" June clapped excitedly.

"Good job guys! We got first place!" Draster said.

"I could have taken him alone you know..." Spyke said, cheekily. He sheathed his sword after mimicking his Master's victory move.

"Hmph, same old Spyke! Haha," June said, leering at him.

"Indeed," Draster concurred. "Let's get outta here."

\*Player will teleport to Stockwell Town\*

As the hunting party returned to Stockwell Town, there were crowds of people around the entrance congratulating the brave hunters.

"It seems like the competition was televised," Draster thought out loud.

"Of course!" the event organiser said. "The competition is televised through out Terra!"

"Wow, this was really a big deal then," June said. "I should have put more effort in..."

"I still would have won," Spyke muttered under his breath.

"Oh please!" June blurted.

The party were ovated as the towns people created a guard of honour for them. The organiser led them through the crowd that split as they progressed.

"Wow, that was amazing!" Spyke heard from the crowd.

"That sword is so cool," another was heard.

"He's really handsome in real life..."

"I'm not sure about the ginger hair though..."

"I think they're talking about you Spyke," Draster said.

Spyke sighed.

The party eventually made their way to town hall where the winners were to be announced.

There was a huge crowd seated to watch the presentation, who stood up and applauded the hunters.

The organiser led them to a seating area at the front designated for the hunters and ran off backstage.

Spyke looked through the crowd.

"Oh there he is!"

"He's looking this way!"

Spyke sighed again and turned back around.

After some time, the event organiser appeared on stage.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he started. "Thank you for your patience. What a spectacular event we held this year! Right?!"

The crowd cheered at his request for applause.

"We're now going to announce the hunter who finished in 3rd place. And that person is...

Draster!"

"Oh, I came in third? Not bad," Draster said, standing up on stage. The organiser reached over to the medal table and hung it around Draster's neck.

"Thank you," Draster said, bowing. The crowd applauded as he waved to the them.

"And in second place... Micki!"

A huge \*elf\*, about 7 foot tall then stood up from the back of the room. Everyone gasped at the sheer size of him. Spyke didn't know how he could have missed him. He slowly glided over to the stage as the crowd applauded.

Micki had a huge bow strapped to his back that covered most of his body, and wore tight leather that showed off his muscles. He squatted down to receive his medal, then took his place next to Draster.

"And finally... the winner of the Feral Forest Hunting Competition is... Spyyyyyyke!"

The crowd let out a huge roar as Spyke stood up.

"Wooooo!" June cheered beside him.

Spyke let out a long drawn out sigh to himself before meandering towards the stage. He really hated the attention.

Spyke could hear the cheers and individual comments of the crowd, as if his hearing was heightened. He reached the stage, making eye contact with Draster and nodding before accepting his award. He then spun around to look at the crowd as they cheered and clapped. Spyke, for the first time in a while, felt elated.

\*Feels good doesn't it?\*

Spyke heard the voice within, but his eyes scanned the room in case it was someone else.

\*Being congratulated... Loved by everyone.\*

Spyke's face then turned sour.

\*You will never be loved, Spyke. Because soon, you will no longer be in control of yourself...\*

Spyke, June and Draster caught up with the event organiser after the crowd was clear, who could be seen trying to scurry away from Micki.

"You lied to me?!" Micki growled.

"N-n-no sir we just don't have it yet...", the organiser stuttered.

"How can you offer a prize and not have it?!" Micki responded with rage.

Spyke's heart dropped.

"Hey!" Spyke yelled, running over to the pair.

"Oh no..." the organiser gulped.

"Where is my vehicle?!" Spyke demanded angrily.

"Errr... uuum... vehicle?" he stuttered. "I don't know what you're..."

"This guy offered a crazy prize to you guys too?" Micki asked the trio.

"Yeah," Draster replied. "He said we'd win a vehicle if we came first."

"Hahaha," Micki laughed. "This weasel and his brothers have done one over on us. There were no prizes!"

"Thaaaat's not true...", the organiser chimed in.

"Shut it!" Micki growled. "This guy offered me a shiny new bow if I came first or a hunting tunic if I came second. Here I am to collect, and he says he knows nothing of it!"

"Bastard..." Spyke muttered, glaring at the organiser. "He offered us completely different prizes."

"There must be some mistake...", the organiser said. "One of my colleagues should know, so if you just allow me to..."

"No," Micki snapped, he then turned to the trio. "So what should we do with this weasel?"

"Hmph..."

\*Player decision - let him go or beat him up. If player chooses to beat him up, Micki will disagree and will not help Spyke later.\*

"Just let him go. He's not worth wasting anymore time on," Spyke growled.

"You hear that?" Micki said to the organiser. "You're lucky the winner isn't some savage this time."

"I'm so so sorry!", the organiser began to cry. "We had to get hunters enrolled but no one has been interested since the Formican Army was here, we had to convince you to enroll somehow..."

"Just go! Before I change my mind!" Spyke hissed at him. The organiser then ran off with his tail between his legs to the exit.

"Unbelievable," June sighed. "I probably would have signed up anyway if he hadn't lied about it. "Indeed, same here," Micki said.

"Well now we're back to square one," Draster muttered.

"Yeah... I guess we're gonna have to 'borrow' a vehicle from one of the merchants," June said.

"Haha, you mean 'steal'?" Micki laughed.

"B-O-R-R-O-W," June said annoyed.

"Well I know someone who might be able to help," Micki explained. "Back at my hometown in Sherryville, we have a mechanic who likes to build these kind of things."

"Alright, how far is Sherryville from here?" Draster asked.

"Not too far from here, a couple of clicks south-east," Micki replied. "I'm going back there myself so I can meet up with you there or come with you if you want."

\*Player decision - Travel with Micki or meet him at Sherryville - if you choose to meet him, he will not help you later on\*

"Take us there," Spyke said. "We need to get back on track."

"You got it," Micki replied. "I haven't formally introduced myself. My name is Mickitarius, Micki for short."

"Spyke," said Spyke. "And this is June and Draster."

"Pleased to meet you," Draster said.

"When you're ready to leave, let me know. I'll be at the exit," Micki said. He then saluted the trio and walked away.

"Well it's a shame about the prize, but we're fortunate to have met Micki," Draster said when he was out of earshot.

"Yeah," June said.

"Indeed," Spyke concurred.

\*Player gains control and must prepare their gear before meeting Micki at the exit of Stockwell Town.\*

"Yo!" Micki yelled, as Spyke, June and Draster walked towards the entrance. "Are you guys ready?"

\*Player decision - Ready or not?\*

"Yeah, let's go," Spyke said.

\*Player gains control and must travel to Sherryville with Micki, or by themself if they have chosen to meet him there. When travelling with Micki, they must not veer off the path too much, otherwise Micki will refuse to go\*

"So I take it you guys are not with the Formican Army," Micki said to Spyke.

"Definitely NOT!", June butted in before Spyke could answer.

"I see," Micki replied.

"There was a time when we on Earth..." Spyke began. "When we all wanted to join the Formican. But since arriving on Terra and learning the truth about what they do, we have no interest in joining them."

"I see," Micki stated. "They have caused a lot of pain and anguish here, for human and no."

"We plan to do something about it!" June blurted out.

"Oh?" Micki asked. "How do you plan on taking on an entire army that liberated all Dukedoms of this planet?"

"We'll think of something..." June said, shying away.

"We've encountered Morkain, their leader, a number of times before," Draster said. "No doubt we will meet again."

"You encountered Morkain and lived?!" Micki asked, astonished.

"Yes," Spyke confirmed. "But..."

"Say no more," Micki interrupted. "I understand."

Spyke and Micki both looked at each other as if there was an unspoken mutual understanding between them.

\*Player arrives at Sherryville\*

Sherryville was a farm-like town with a couple of shops and wide open space between small buildings.

"My friend, Cid will be at the garage," Micki said.

The trio follow Micki to the garage as he briefly explained where he grew up.

"I have a couple of brothers and sisters who I helped take care of in the little house over there," Micki said pointing to the distance.

"Where are your parents?" June asked.

"Dead. Killed in the war by Morkain and his army," Micki replied.

"I'm so sorry to hear that..." June tailed off.

Spyke looked at Micki, into his eyes and could see a determined look on his face. He then took a deep breath.

"I don't know how yet, but I'll find a way to bring him down... Morkain," he said.

The trio accompanied by Micki arrive at the garage. It was an open workshop with broken down car-like vehicles and bikes. There seemed to be a man working on one of the cars.

"Cid! Cid!" Micki called out.

The man stopped working and had a look at who it was.

"Ah Micki!"

Cid then jumped up and walked over to the party. He was a middle-aged man, balding and dressed in dirty overalls.

"It's been a while. Who are your friends?" Cid said smiling.

"Cid, this is Spyke, June and Draster. They are in need of a vehicle. Do you have any spare?" Micki asked.

"Hahaha a spare vehicle? What do you think I am, a salesman?", Cid laughed.

"I know you must have something back there," Micki said.

"Yeah, I might have something, but it needs work," Cid replied. "Something for you three?"

"Yes," Spyke said, nodding.

"And where is it you are going?" Cid asked.

"Deadbane Desert," Spyke replied.

"Ooooh boy!" Cid started, "You'll definitely need a vehicle to travel across that desert. They say you will die if you touch the ground with your feet. So you'll need something that levitates then..."

"Can you help us?" Spyke asked impatiently.

"Follow me," Cid said gesturing.

"Hey, Spyke," Micki whispered to him as June and Draster followed Cid. Spyke joined him so they were out of earshot of the others.

"If you ever need a hand with anything, you let me know OK? Especially if it's to do with the Formican Army," Micki whispered, offering a hand.

"Will do," Spyke said, shaking Micki's hand with a strong grip.

"I have matters that I must attend to, farewell for now," Micki said, raising his voice so June and Draster could hear. They both waved and thanked him.

"Thank you," Spyke said, nodding with his eyes firmly on Micki's. Micki nodded back and departed.

Cid showed the trio the vehicle. It was a beat down motorcycle.

"This is it!?" June screamed. "That thing won't start, let alone carry the three of us!"

"Ah but you don't see the potential!" Cid countered. "All we have to do is fix it up, and attach a passenger pod next to it. Two of you can sit on the seat. Piece of cake!"

"How long will that take?" Spyke asked.

"That depends on you. You'll have to help me get the parts!" Cid said excitedly.

"Why are you so excited?" Draster asked. "It looks like it's gonna be a lot of work."

"Exactly," Cid replied. "This will be an interesting project for me and I'll get to help out friends of a friend at the same time."

"Fine," Spyke interjected. "Just tell us what you need and where to get them."

"I'll mark the parts and spots on your map," Cid said.

\*Player gains control and must collect the items from the locations specified by Cid to continue\*

"We have everything," Spyke said.

"Excellent! I'll get right to work," Cid replied. "Come back tomorrow and it should be ready in the morning."

"Alright, thanks Cid," Draster said.

"Let's rest up at the inn," June suggested.

\*Player decision - rest at inn (this will teleport the party to the inn at Sherryville. The player can do this if choosing to decline) or not\*

"Alright let's rest at the inn. We'll be back tomorrow Cid, see you then," Spyke said.  
"Yuuup! Smell ya later!" Cid replied.  
The trio leave Cid's garage and head to the inn.

\*Player sleep sequence\*

"Soon, I'll be in control..." the voice rang in Spyke's ears.  
"Get lost, I don't want to hear you anymore," Spyke said bluntly.  
"No, you are the one who will be lost..."  
"I said, fuck off!"

"Spyke...?" June murmured in the bed opposite.  
"Sorry, bad dream," Spyke said.

The trio woke up bright and early, ready to continue their journey. They ate breakfast at the inn where they encountered Micki.

"Hey Spyke!" Micki called over to the trio. He came over to join them.

"Micki," Spyke greeted the \*elf\*

"Have you seen the vehicle? It looks amazing!" Micki said.

"Oh really?" June asked. "We've not had a look yet."

"Check it out as soon as you can," Micki said. "I must go, fare thee well friends."

"Take care Micki, and thank you," Spyke said kindly.

Micki then grabbed a slice of toast from the inn bar and dashed off outside.

"Let's go check it out," Draster suggested. The others agreed. They got up and left the inn and headed towards Cid's garage.

As they approached it, they could hear a loud engine running towards the back. The trio walked to the back and saw their new vehicle.

The vehicle was now a big polished looking beast of bike.

"Ah, you're here!" Cid said excitedly. "Just in time to test it out."

"Wow!" June said smiling.

The bike was big enough to carry three people on the seat, and it had a passenger pod to the right for another person. It was a silvery, shiny colour with huge wheels and shiny looking handle.

"This runs on Plasma," Cid said. "It can run on wheels and levitate for a while, but that will drain its Plasma considerably. You will need it if you are to traverse Deadbane Desert, there is no way you can travel by foot there."

"It can levitate?" Draster asked.

"That's right!" Cid said. "Go ahead and try it!"

\*Player gains control and is able to test out the bike\*

"What do you think?" Cid asks.

\*Player can adjust settings on the bike and retest\*

"Works just fine," Spyke said.

"Wow! Can I try it?" June asked.

"Later," Spyke replied. "Cid, how much do we owe you?"

"Not a thing for a friend," Cid smiled.

"Surely there is something..." Draster started.

"The only thing I want..." Cid came in close to whisper. "...is for you to kick Morkain's butt!"

The revelation that Cid knew what was going on shocked the trio.

"We will!" June said.

"Good," Cid replied smiling. "Now there will hopefully be outposts where you can fill 'er up with Plasma. You won't be able to drive it around in towns or cities without drawing attention to yourself so don't do that. If you have any problems, just contact me or any mechanic. They'll see this sign on the bike and will be willing to help," Cid finished by pointing to the insignia on the bike.

"Cid..." Spyke started.

"Don't worry about it!" Cid butted in reading Spyke's mind. "You guys get outta here and do what ya gotta do!"

Spyke nodded and the trio left the garage, waving to Cid with their new vehicle that will assist them further down the line. Spyke wheeled out the bike and trio continued.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Chapter 13

\*Player has the freedom to travel wherever they want on the continent and trigger side quests - some of the side quests will lead to new members offering their assistance to Spyke later on.\*

Finally equipped with their vehicle, the trio make their way towards Deadbane Desert where the next shrine is. They could have walked to the desert, but it would have taken at least a week. And then to traverse the desert itself by foot would have been painful. Luckily, there was a road that allowed the trio to get close to the shrine, but they would have needed a Plasma vehicle to traverse the rocky, spiky and hot terrain.

Spike drove the bike with June behind him and Draster in the passenger chair. The bike allowed the trio to bypass any monsters they encountered and cover ground quickly across the terrain.

\*Player must levitate over the rocky terrain to get close to the shrine\*

"The map says it should be here," said Draster as they hovered to the shrine location.

"There is nothing here but spikes and rocks...", June replied.

"Let's look around," Spyke said.

The trio hovered above the spiky terrain around the shrine location, looking an entrance. Spyke then saw a gap within the spikes. He squinted his eyes to peer closer, and he saw a glint of red. "Over there, in that gap," Spyke said. "Draster, can you look closer?"

Draster poked his head over the passenger side and looked closer.

"There certainly is something there," Draster said.

"I'm going to set this down somewhere safe and we'll take a closer look," Spyke told the others.

He navigated the bike to a flat part of the terrain and the trio dismounted.

\*Player must walk towards the spot that Draster marked\*

The trio approached the marked spot. Suddenly, an earthquake shook the ground as Spyke, June and Draster were pushed and pulled by the rocky terrain. One wrong step and they could be impaled by the spikes surrounding them.

Then a great chasm opened up where Spyke spotted the glint of red, and a set of steps leading down into the ground.

“So this must be it,” Spyke said having been all shook up by the tremors.

“Finally,” June sighed.

“Are we all ready?” Draster asked.

\*Player decision - enter or not\*

“Let’s move,” Spyke instructed. He led the way down the steps with June and Draster behind him.

\*Player gains control and must navigate towards the end of the shrine\*

\*\*Plasma... is the beginning and end\*\*

“The voice of the ancients...” Spyke said.

“They started talking to you again?” Draster asked.

“Plasma is the beginning and end...” Spyke repeated aloud.

\*\*Plasma is eternal, the creator, the destroyer, the universe\*\*

“What does that mean?!” Spyke yelled.

The walls of the shrine were lit with red symbols and glyphs as the trio descended further and further into the ground.

\*\*Plasma is absolute. Plasma cannot be stopped\*\*

“Plasma cannot be stopped... do you mean the catastrophe?!” Spyke shouted. “Answer me!”

\*\*The catastrophe marks the end and a new beginning\*\*

“These ancients...” Spyke began, “are just talking gibberish.”

“There must be a meaning to their words,” Draster said. “We just need to figure it out.”

The trio got to the end of the shrine and saw the crystal of Leo awaiting on a pedestal. Spyke approached the crystal and reached out for it. Suddenly, Spyke got a vision in his head.

\*\*Vision - A huge matter of Plasma was travelling directly towards Terra. The civilisation of the past gather to try to stop the catastrophe. They gather a huge magical spell and attempt to cast it at the Plasma ball, but it is merely gobble up by the oncoming matter. The Plasma hits Terra

and takes away half of the planet with it, destroying all but a few living things on it. Terra then consumes the lifeforce of its coupled planet, and the other planet withers away.\*\*

"Spyke? Are you OK?" June asks as he's brought back to the present.

"Yeah," Spyke started, shaking his head. "I just saw what happened in the past. The catastrophe."

"What happened?" Draster asked.

"The people tried to cast a huge spell on it, but it was ineffective," Spyke replied. "Then the catastrophe hit and destroyed half of the planet with it, killing almost everyone. Then Terra absorbed the energy of the 'Gaia' it was coupled with, and that planet died."

"So at least we know what won't work..." Draster thought to himself.

"There must be some other way..." Spyke said. "But that Plasma energy looked big enough to destroy Terra, but somehow it survived."

"Ah," Draster said. "So maybe there is a way to minimise its damage."

"Either way, it's still catastrophic enough to destroy an entire civilisation," June explained.

"Let's figure it out later and get out of here," Spyke said.

\*Player gains control and must navigate towards the exit\*

The trio see the sunlight at the end of the shrine and head towards it.

Suddenly, a huge demon walks out from beyond the exit and charges into the trio knocking them back down into shrine.

\*\*\* Boss battle - player's defenses are weakend \*\*\*

The trio defeat the demon and again make their way towards to the exit of the shrine. They once again reach the spiky terrain of Deadbane Desert.

"Made it...", June said exasperated.

"Yeah, but let's get back to our bike," Spyke insisted.

\*Player must navigate back to their bike\*

"Where to next then?" Spyke asked Draster.

"The next shrine is not on this continent," Draster explained. "We need to figure out which one to go to next and how we're going to get there."

"Let's go to an inn and figure it out?!" June suggested, desperately.

"Yeah let's find somewhere to rest up," Draster agreed. "The nearest town is a few clicks away."

"Fine, mark it on the map," Spyke said.

\*Player must head towards the exit of Deadbane Desert\*

Suddenly, the ground began to shake and a huge sand pit opened up underneath the trio.

"What the hell?!" Spyke yelled.

"Quick! Get away from it!" June shouted.

"It's all around us!" Draster said.

Spyke enables levitation but the gauge almost runs out. He accelerates to try and escape the huge chasm opening up beneath them but they start to descend. They sink, deeper and deeper into the sand. Then suddenly, a giant eye appears from the sand.

"Holy shit! What's that?!" June yelled.

Spyke looked into the enormous eye staring back at them. It was green and purple, similar to the colour he saw in his own eye.

Spyke continues to try and levitate the bike, but to no avail. "This damn thing is out of Plasma!" he yelled

Spyke tried and tried to reignite levitation in the bike until suddenly his Master's katana began to pulse a yellow light from within his sheath.

Finally, Spyke found the Plasma to levitate the trio out of the sand pit and into the clutches of the giant eye. They accelerate faster and faster until they're get clear of the pit.

"Oh my god!" June shouted. "What the hell just happened?!"

"I... I... dunno," Spyke uttered.

"Nice work Spyke..." Draster said. "If you had given up..."

"Yeah..." June agreed.

"That eye... was similar to mine," Spyke said.

"The ancients again?" Draster wondered. "Sometimes I wonder whether they're trying to help or hinder."

"I think they're just testing us," Spyke said. "If we fail here, then we'll never be able to take on whatever is next."

"True," June concurred. "So... what now?"

"We have all the crystals on this continent," Draster said.

"What do these crystals even do anyway?" June asked.

Spyke pulled them out. The symbols for Leo, Cancer and Sagittarius were imprinted within them.

"Something tells me we'll need the rest of them before they do anything," Draster said. "And to obtain them, we'll need to get to the other continents. Including Bazzleworth where the Formican Army are holed up."

"So where are we going Draster? You're the navigator!" June said.

"We'll need to get information on how to travel outside of this continent. We should head to a big city. Let's see..." Draster explained, pulling out the map. "There is Greyshore not too far from here. Or there is Hemington that is slightly further but seems to be bigger. Spyke? Where should we go?"

\*Player decision - Choose to go to Greyshore or Hemington. Choosing to go to Hemington will allow the player to recruit another character\*

"Let's go to Hemington," Spyke replied.

"Alright," Draster said. "I'll set a marker down. If you change your mind, just replace the marker."

"Let's get out of here... this desert is giving me the creeps."

\*Player gains control and must travel to either Greyshore or Hemington to continue the story.\*

Spyke, June and Draster reach Hemington. Spyke parks up the bike alongside some other vehicles. The trio enter through the gates and reach a bustling city with all sorts going on.

The path was lit with streetlamps and greeny took up the middle portion, with pedestrians walking either side. An inn was located conveniently next to the entrance with a pub and bar on the opposite side to the path. There was also snack shops and clothing stores nearby with people walking in and out with shopping bags.

"The inn then?" June asked the others.

The others agreed, so the trio headed to the inn to ask for some more information.

Spyke walked up to the barman.

\*\*Player dialogue multiple choice mini game\*\*

"What can I get ya'?" the barman asked.

"I need some information," Spyke began. "How do we travel to the others continent?"

"The other continents?" the barman repeated. "Hmm... well... usually you would just hop on an airship that was going there, but...", the barman tailed off and leaned over towards Spyke.

"Because of the Formican Army..." he continued, whispering. "The Formican Army controls the skies and the ports now. You can't just cross the ocean without their permission by air or water."

"Is there some other way?" Spyke asked.

"Hmm... there might be a way," the barman replied slowly.

"What is it then?" Spyke said impatiently. Draster put his hand on Spyke's shoulder to signal to him to calm down.

"Umm... well... rumour has it that there is an underground system running through Terra," the barman said, slightly frightened.

"Will that take us to the other continents?" Spyke asked.

"Yes sir, if the rumours are true," replied the barman.

"And how do we get there?" Spyke asked.

"I'm afraid I don't know," the barman said.

"Then who does? Where did you hear this rumour from?" Spyke asked, getting impatient again.

"I'm sorry sir, I do not know. I only overheard a conversation between some of customers," the barman said.

"What did these customers look like? Were they human?" asked Spyke.

"Yes," the barman answered. "They looked to be engineers working at the port."

"Of the Formican Army?" Spyke asked.

"No sir, just contractors native to Terra."

"And where are they likely to be?" Spyke interrogated.

"They are engineers, I guess you'd need to look out for any construction going on...", the barman replied.

"So look around the city for any construction or something being built..." Spyke muttered to himself. He then looked at June and Draster. They both nodded, satisfied with the information they have extracted from the barman.

"Thank you," Spyke said to the barman.

\*\*Player dialogue end\*\*

"So we just need to explore this city, and find an engineer? That's easier said than done!" June said.

"A human one," Draster replied. "It may take some time but we should be able to find him. There can't be many humans around."

\*\*Player gains control and must search the city for a human engineer working on a construction site.\*\*

The trio walk up to a church-like building. They look around for any engineers or workers in the area, but fail to find any humans.

"I guess this isn't where he is," Draster said.

"Hmm," Spyke concurred. "Let's move on."

Spyke, June and Draster walked up to a bridge that connected the two sides of Hemington city. They noticed there was construction and scaffolding present, but again, didn't see any workers. "There's no one here either," June said.

"Alright...", Spyke replied. "Let's carry on."

The trio eventually find a construction worker, walking out of a shop wearing fluorescent overalls.

"Look! A construction worker!" June said pointing him out.

The worker was an \*elf\*. He looked around as if he were trying to avoid being spotted. He then walks gingerly in the opposite direction to the trio.

"Wait," Draster said as Spyke was about to approach him. "That was a bit weird, don't you think?"

"Yeah, he did seem a bit dodgy," June agreed.

"Let's not approach him directly, let's tail him and see where he's going," Draster suggested.

\*\*Player decision - tail the worker or approach directly. Tailing him will yield more experience, and the player will not have to search for the hidden entrance themselves. Player must not get caught, otherwise the worker will reset or run off\*\*

The trio tail the worker to an alley secluded from the rest of hustle and bustle of the city. He looks around before disappearing behind a wall.

"Shit... where did he go?" June asked rhetorically.

"There must be a hidden passage somewhere. He can't have just disappeared," said Draster.

\*Player must look around for the secret door leading to an underground passage.\*

"Here we go," Spyke said, as the door to the entrance swings open. The trio hear a man being scolded at.

"How many times do I have to tell you! Remove your overalls before you leave otherwise you'll draw attention to yourself! What if someone followed you!"

"I'm sorry sir, but I double and triple checked! No one followed me."

"You'd be dead if someone did... now get back to work!"

"Sounds like we shouldn't be here, hehe," June said cheekily.

"Indeed," Draster replied. "Let's keep our wits about us."

Spyke leads the others down the passage that lit the rough, stone walls by yellow lights. The trio could hear the sound of heavy duty drilling and hammering as they cautiously ventured deeper into the tunnel.

They noticed a small locker room to their right that smelled of sweat and body odour. They peeked inside to ensure they could not be followed and swiftly continued on, put off by the smell.

The trio reached an opening and then discovered where the city's construction workers had been relocated.

A giant network of rail tracks had been installed in the underground cavern. There were construction workers drilling the foundation, mixing cement and piecing together the rail tracks. "This must be the underground network..." Draster whispered.

"So this will lead us to the other continents?" June asked.

"Should do," replied Draster. "But we should try and find out more."

"This must be the Formican Army's doing," muttered June. "Look." She pointed towards a human dressed in the Formican blue uniform.

"So they're trying to control the underground as well," said Spyke.

"Naturally," concurred Draster. "Morkain is a power freak after all."

"Let's see if we can learn more about this network without getting caught," said Spyke.

\*Player gains control and must discover more information by eavesdropping on conversations without getting caught\*

"So this tunnel will take us to the Eastern Continent," said Draster, after the trio had eavesdropped on some workers. "We can steal one of their carts and take it down."

"Hey! Who are you three?!" a worker yelled, surprised at the sight of the trio hiding behind a corner. It was a human worker.

\*Player timed decision - take him out, in which case the player will need to fight their way through to the tunnel entrance, or say they are workers. Saying they are workers will make him join Spyke later on\*

"We're here to work," Spyke said calmly.

"Oh yeah? Is that why you're hiding and peeking behind corners?!" the man said.

\*Player decision - keep calm or take him out\*

"We didn't know where to go, and we just thought we'd have a quick look at the construction before we began," Spyke said coolly.

"Hmmm," the man said.

\*Player decision - say nothing, or try to convince him more (and mess up)\*

"Alright you three, follow me. You'll need to put on some fluorescents and hard hats before you can go down there," the man said, spinning on his heels. With his back to the trio, Draster patted Spyke on the back as if to say "well done".

Spyke, June and Draster followed the foreman up towards the entrance and back to the smelly and sweaty locker rooms.

"You'll find some gear in here," he said, gesturing towards the room.

"Thank you," Spyke said.

"My name is Bob by the way," the foreman said.

"I'm..."

"Spyke... right?" Bob cut him off.

Spyke's eyes lit up in horror. This man knew who they were and that they were up against the Formican Army. Spyke grasped his katana by his side, ready to strike if necessary.

"That won't be necessary," Bob said. "I'm on your side."

"What?!" Spyke reacted, surprised.

"You've really caused a stir among the Formican Army, and they're on the lookout for you. I've heard the guards talking about you," Bob began. "But I'm sick of these Formican bastards ordering us around when half the city is still under construction and we're getting paid diddly squat..."

Bob sighed.

Spyke eased up a bit and allowed him to explain.

"It's about time someone stood up to them. I don't know how you're gonna do it, but I want to help anyway I can. They've given us humans a bad name here on Terra."

Spyke glared at him looking deeper into soul. June and Draster remained mute but prepared, allowing Spyke to handle the situation.

\*Player decision - take him out or stay silent\*

"You seem like a very calm person," Bob said. "Just what are you doing here?"

"We need to get to the other continent," Spyke said, remaining calm.

"And you heard about the rumour I spread around town?" Bob replied, chuckling.

"So it was you," Spyke said.

"It seems fate has brought us together," Bob continued chuckling. "You can reach the Western continent through this tunnel. But it's dangerous and hasn't been fully vetted yet. No one that I know has actually gone through the tunnel and come out the other side..."

"Why is that? Monsters?" Spyke asked.

"Yes, that's right," Bob answered. "And structurally, we don't know how stable the tunnel is. It's just a giant hole in the ground."

"We need to get through that tunnel..." Spyke said sternly.

It was now Bob's turn to stare into Spyke's eyes and see the determined look on his face.

"I see," Bob said. He walked in the smelly locker room and grabbed some gear for the trio.

"Put those on, and I'll get you to the tunnel. Keep your weapons hidden and heads down," Bob said, fired up by Spyke's determination. "Do as I say, and you'll get to the Western continent in no time."

Spyke, June and Draster decided to entrust Bob with the task of leading them to the tunnel undetected. Getting caught now would surely alert the Formican Army and Morkain of the trio's location. Spyke couldn't be sure of Bob's intentions but something about their short interaction made him seem dependable.

"Follow me," Bob said to the trio as he marched back down the ramp. Spyke obliged, followed closely by June and Draster with their builders gear equipped.

Bob led them through a partition in the wall and into the main construction pit where the rails were being built.

"This is going to become Morkain's underground network," Bob said amongst the noise and drilling.

"When will it be finished?" Draster shouted back.

"Still a while yet!" Bob replied.

"Where is the tunnel that leads to the Western continent?" June asked.

"We'll get there!" Bob yelled back over the noise.

Bob led the trio along the outskirts of the pit, gesturing to the trio to mind their step. There were other construction workers hammering and drilling away further down the pit, with a huddle of them at the bottom where the tracks were being built. There were no signs of Formican soldiers around.

As the trio made their way down circling the pit, they could see the vast chasm in the wall.

"That there is the tunnel!" Bob shouted back to the trio.

Standing in front of the hole were two Formican soldiers, arms crossed and fully equipped.

"Formican soldiers..." Spyke muttered.

"It's fine! I'll get them to move!" Bob said confidently.

As the trio finally made it to the bottom of the pit, Bob turned around.

"Alright you three!" He yelled, loud enough to be heard by the soldiers. "Pick up a drill from over there and start drilling over there 'till I tell ya to stop! Hahaha!"

Spyke looked at him confused, but he did as he was told, with Draster and June closely behind. Bob then marched to the crowd of workers and began talking to them.

Spyke kept his head down, and glanced at the soldiers as he went to pick up the drill. Both of them were watching him.

"What did you just call me?!" Bob yelled at one of the workers. He suddenly pushed one of them into the crowd.

"Do you know who I am?! I am a damn human!" he yelled.

"You're just the Formican Army's bitch!" the worker said in response. This drew the attention of the Formican soldiers.

The trio then realised what was going on, and quietly continued to do as they were told, Bob and his workers provided the distraction.

"Are you calling those soldiers bitches too?!" Bob yelled pointed at the soldiers.

The soldiers were then propped up and began to slowly walk towards the ruckus.

"All you damn humans are scum!" the \*elven\* worker said.

The trio edged closer towards the tunnel.

"How dare you!" Bob said, pushing the worker again. Then another worker pushed Bob in retaliation.

"You want a piece of me too?!" he shouted.

The soldiers were drawn to the ruckus as the trio edged closer to the chasm.

Suddenly, another of the human workers pushed the \*elves\* as they retaliated. The pushing turned into punching and slapping.

"Hey!" One of the soldiers jumped into the ruckus and got punched in the process. The other soldier then came to his aid.

Spyke, June and Draster seized the moment. They made a quick dash towards the empty tunnel entrance. Then, Spyke heard the sound of a sword being unsheathed and stopped. One of the Formican soldiers began waving his sword among the workers as he threatened to slash them. He then slashed at the arm of one of the \*elven\* workers who had been on the ground.

"Spyke...", June said, wondering what the trio should do.

\*Player decision - escape through the tunnel, or help the workers. Helping the workers and defeating the soldiers will allow Bob to join them later\*

"Come on!" Spyke yelled back at June and Draster, as he darted towards the ruckus. They swiftly followed as Spyke attacked the soldier head on.

\*Boss battle - vs two strong Formican Soldiers\*

After defeating the soldiers, Draster tended to the injured worker's wound.

"Why didn't you go on?! Now they'll know you came through here..." said Bob anxiously.

"I couldn't let that guy injure your workers for us," Spyke replied. "That's not on."

Bob looked Spyke directly in the eyes, trying to suss him out. His face then softened.

"You're a good man, but sometimes sacrifices have to be made for the greater good," Bob said in a deep voice.

"I know that," Spyke said defiantly. "But I couldn't stand by and let that happen. We'll deal with the consequences later."

"Hahaha..." Bob bellowed. Spyke and June twitched at his loud laugh.

"Well, the way is clear for you now, you'd better hurry before the other soldiers catch on!" Bob suggested.

"Right, we will," Spyke replied. "Thanks for your help."

"I was right about you..." Bob began. "Maybe you can make a difference. If you ever need any help, call on me."

Bob stuck out his big, rough hand and Spyke grasped it as they shared a strong handshake. Spyke nodded in approval.

"We're sorry for the trouble," June said to the workers as they began to depart.

"Hahaha don't worry about these guys, they're tougher than they look!" Bob bellowed back. "On yer way now!"

Spyke, June and Draster head through to the entrance of the tunnel to continue their journey to the Western Continent.

The tunnel was pitch black. The trio lit their torches and marched on.

\*Player must travel through the tunnel - this will be similar to FF9 where the party travel through to the outer continent from Qu's Marsh via Fossil Roo. Player will encounter monsters and will be able to use carts to get back and forth. The player will be able to go to Greyshore but must continue towards the Western continent. The player will battle the odd Formican soldier that they encounter. The player will battle a boss and use a cart to burst through to the Western continent. TODO\_DESIGN\*

"Ouch..." June muttered as the party finally reached daylight. The cart they were riding in had reached a dead end and clattered into the barrier.

"Everyone alright...?" Draster asked.

"Mmhmm," replied June, rubbing her head.

"Yeah," said Spyke, climbing out of the cart. He looked around at the landscape they had just entered. They were surrounded by tall and brown, rocky cliffs. "Draster..."

"Yep, it looks like we're on the outskirts of the Western continent," said Draster.

"We made it then," said Spyke.

"Phew!" June breathed a sigh of relief.

"There should be an outpost nearby. Let's make way, and then plan our next move, shall we?" Draster suggested.

\*Player gains control and must make their way to the outpost\*

The trio arrive at the outpost. They see a sign saying "No Humans Allowed" with a big red cross going through it.

"No humans allowed huh?" Spyke said upon reading the signage.

"Out! Out!" An old \*gnome\* came running outside with a shotgun in his hand. "None of your kind are allowed here! Get lost!"

"Hey wait a minute! We just wanted to rest!" June said to the \*gnome\*.

"Get out of here or I'll shoot!!" The man said, pointing his gun at the trio.

Spyke was unmoved.

"Listen, all we want to do..." Draster started.

"I won't say it again!!" The man removed the safety, ready to shoot.

\*Player decision - Leave or continue to reason with him (story - Spyke talks to him)\*

"We're not from the Formican Army. We're fighting them," Spyke said.

"What?!" the man said, slowly lowering his guard.

"We're not here to make trouble, or hurt you..."

"Liars! Why should I believe you?!" the man replied, raising his gun again.

"Because if I was of the Formican Army, YOU WOULD ALREADY BE DEAD!" Spyke yelled at him, losing patience with him. The words resonated and echoed in the distance. It's as if the words had reached the man's soul. He immediately lowered his guard and looked at Spyke, as Spyke glared back at him.

"Why?" The \*gnome\* whispered. "Why do you fight your own kind?"

"They are not our 'kind'", Spyke said sternly. "They may be humans, but they are led by a demon. To say that all humans are the same and ban all humans from coming here is ludicrous!"

The man was suddenly out of breath, suffocated by Spyke's aura.

"Don't put me in the same bracket as that monster, Morkain!" Spyke yelled.

"I... I'm sorry," the man whispered.

Spyke was fuming and could see that the little gnome was petrified of him. Spyke eased up a bit and turned towards June.

"We're going," he said. "Draster, find the next shrine."

Spyke began walking away.

"Wwwwaa... wait..." the man stammered. "I'm sorry, you're right."

Spyke stopped in his tracks.

"It's just that... humans destroyed my home," the man said.

"Yeah, that's all I've been hearing since we arrived on Terra," Spyke began. "But to say that all humans would do the same thing..."

"Please, come inside will you?" the man butted in, gesturing towards his shop. "Allow me to apologise by welcoming you to my home."

Spyke looked at June and Draster, getting their nod of approval, before following the man into the shop.

"My name is Dibblepot," the \*gnome\* said, as he began pouring three mugs of juice. He then served the drinks to the trio. "Please..."

Spyke took the drink and looked at it suspiciously.

"Do not worry, I wouldn't dare poison you," smiled Dibblepot. "Especially if you're fighting those imbeciles."

"What did the Formican's do to you?" asked Draster.

"What haven't they done would be a better question...", the gnome muttered as he poured himself some juice. "This used to be an outpost to the grandest city of this continent. Now it's the outpost to nowhere."

"What happened?" quizzed June.

"The war, of course. He ordered troops to raid and ransack our city of our wealth. We fought them off though and they had trouble breaking our resolve. There were many nights where their soldiers would infiltrate the walls of Delton, just a few clicks from here. But we fought them off every time with our technology," Dibblepot said, taking a sip of his juice.

"Then once he discovered that we would not fall without a monumental effort, Morkain showed our kind no mercy," Dibblepot reminisced. "While he was out in the front lines fighting the south, he ordered his troops to nuke the gnomes with a comet."

"A comet?!" June cried.

"He dropped a comet?" Draster repeated. "With magic?"

Spyke was unmoved, listening intently.

"Yes," Dibblepot said. "He dropped a comet on our city, almost completely obliterating the continent of life. Only but a few survived."

"But how could he have summoned a comet from space and drop it on a specific location?"

Draster wondered. "That's madness!"

"The ancients," Spyke said. "They said something about being able to control celestial bodies."

"So the shrines hold the answer," Draster said.

Spyke remained silent.

"Shrines?" Dibblepot butted in. "You're going to the shrines?"

Draster nodded.

Dibblepot gasped and began pacing back and forth. Thinking to himself in his own world.

"This means one of you have the blood of the ancients?" Dibblepot asked hurriedly.

"Yes... so what?" Spyke blurted impatiently.

"Then...", the \*gnome\* whispered to himself. "Maybe... all is not lost..."

"What do you mean?" Spyke replied, loudly.

"Well..." Dibblepot began. "Morkain went to these shrines, and acquired the power to drop a comet on us. If you're also able to enter and survive the trials of these shrines, then technically you could acquire the power to do the same."

Silence broke out as the trio contemplated this.

"That's a pretty scary thought," June whispered.

"All we have so far is these gems," Spyke said impatiently, grabbing them and pulling them out.

"How do we make these drop a comet?!"

"There's a way to activate them, but I have no idea how," Dibblepot replied.

"Then who does?" Spyke replied.

"Morkain," Draster butted in.

"For fuck sake!" Spyke yelled. He got up and began pacing towards the back of the room.

"Spyke...", June started. "We just need to try and be patient. We'll eventually find the answers we need and bring that sumbitch down!"

"Indeed," Draster chipped in. "We just need to continue and trust that we'll figure it out."

"I know...", Spyke said calmly. Master would have said the same thing, Spyke thought to himself. "Where is the next shrine Draster?"

"The map is fuzzy so I can't tell exactly," Draster said. "But it's not far from here."

"That'll be the radiation of the comet," Dibblepot said. "You might encounter some interference with your Plasma while on this continent."

"Great," June sighed. "Any more good news?"

"I can take you to the shrine," Dibblepot suggested. "I have an idea of where it could be."

"Perfect!" June exclaimed.

"Just let me know when you want to go," said the \*gnome\*.

"Spyke, do you want to go there now?" asked June.

\*\*\* Player decision - go now or later \*\*\*

"Let's move," Spyke said.

The trio began their journey to the next shrine accompanied by the last surviving \*gnome\*, Dibblepot.

The landscape was barren, scarred forever by the fall of the comet. There were pockets of radiation that interfered with Draster's map, and caused the trio's health to deplete.

\*\*Game note: whenever the player approaches a radiation spot, their health will drop.\*\*

Suddenly, the trio could hear a massive rumble of thunder directly overhead.

"What the hell is that?!" June yelled among the noise.

She looked up at the dark clouds overhead as the noise became louder and clearer, it sounded more like machinery. There it was. A massive airship came crashing through the clouds, pushing them out of its path.

"An airship?" Draster said, staring at it.

"We're wide open, take cover!" Spyke ordered, as the party dashed behind some rocks.

The airship resonated a loud humming sound as it drifted over the party, who had taken cover behind some nearby rocks. It began to descend about two miles north of Dobblepot's cafe. It was so big that it could still be seen in its entirety from so far away.

"The Formican Army... what are they doing here?" June thought out loud.

"I wonder if they've caught wind that we're here?" said Draster.

"Over there is where Delton, our capital city is... or was," said Dobblepot.

"What could they be doing?" June asked.

"Maybe they're waiting for us..." Draster thought.

"If they were after us, then they would be stationed at the shrine," Spyke said. "So we need to watch our backs."

"What should we do Spyke? Go and see what they're up to? Or continue to the shrine?" June asked.

\*Player decision - go to the Shrine, or investigate the Formican Army. Investigating the Formican Army will lead to the player receiving a reward and they will then be able to visit the shrine. Going to the shrine first however will mean the Formicans will be gone when they get back and Dobblepot's shack destroyed, meaning he will not join later\*

"We'll investigate what the Formican Army are doing," Spyke decided. "The shrine isn't going anywhere."

"What about the radiation?" June said. "If we spend too long in those radiation pockets, we'll get radiation poisoning."

"I have something back at the shop that will reduce the effect of the radiation," Dobblepot stated.  
"If we swing by, we can pick it up."

The party agree, and make their way back towards Dobblepot's shop.

\*Player must travel back to Dobblepot's shop\*

Suddenly, as the party approached the shop, they heard the sound of a motorbike approaching from the airship. Two Formican soldiers appeared from over the hill, both on motorbikes and shooting towards the shop.

"My shop!", Dobblepot cried.

\*\*\* Player scene event - player must select the correct buttons at the correct time in the following phase - begin \*\*\*

Draster and June began shooting magic and bullets respectively towards the motorbikes, but were deflected by a shield. The soldiers continued shooting the shack, wreaking havoc on its foundation, ignoring the party.

Spyke attempted to draw the attention of the soldiers, casting sword art on one of them, but that was rendered ineffective.

"You guys!" Spyke yelled. "Protect it with some Earth magic! I'll go in on foot!"

He then dashed towards one of the motorcyclists, as one of them spotted him, starting aiming at him. June dashed in behind Spyke, protecting him with a shield.

"Don't go in on your own!" she yelled towards Spyke as she drew her blade.

Spyke hadn't drawn any weapon in his arsenal yet, so as not to give away his intentions. He predicted the movement of the motorcyclists that were circling the shop and cut him off with a made dash, closing the space between them. The soldier started shooting at Spyke, but June's shield held firm, deflecting the bullets.

"It won't hold forever Spyke!" June shouted.

Draster, who was more adept at magic, held off the other motorcyclist with his shield and was able to slow him down with environmental ice magic while the Spyke and June dealt with the other solder.

Spyke continued towards him, watching the bullets deflect. He counted how many had bounced off and predicted when the shield would wear off as it began to crack.

The soldier slowed down and focussed his aim towards Spyke's head, as the shield almost began to break, Spyke accelerated at pace, entering \*\*Adrenaline Mode\*\*.

It shattered, and at that moment, Spyke swerved and was now a few metres in front of the soldier who had now come to a stop.

Spyke placed his hand on his Master's katana, as the soldier refocused his aim, Spyke had momentarily disappeared. Suddenly, a flash of light glinted from the katana as he pierced through the motorcycle's shield, causing it to shatter, and then the soldier's body, taking him off his bike.

June looked on impressed as Spyke took control of the bike. He grabbed June and pulled her towards the back seat of the bike. They then dashed towards the other motorcycle that was still shooting towards the shack and Draster.

The soldier hadn't seen what happened and was so focused on taking down the shack that he didn't spot Spyke and June driving head on towards him, with Spyke's enormous sword drawn, it was clear what he was gonna do.

"June, take control of the bike," Spyke said to her, as she looked perplexed. Spyke drove alongside the bike, approached it as the soldier finally noticed what had happened, it was too late.

Spyke jumped from his motorcycle and totally cut through the soldier's shield, his motorcycle and the soldier in one big cleave, decimating all in it's wake.

Spyke rolled and took control of his landing, as he stood tall and sheathed his sword, watching the soldier squirm to his death. Spyke's eyes slowly dimmed from red back to it's usual green colour, only realising now that he was in Adrenaline Mode.

\*\*\* Player scene event - end \*\*\*

Dobblepot ran to his shop to check the damage.

Luckily, the structure was still intact but with bullet holes everywhere.

Spyke looked at the soldier lying on the ground then turned towards the shop. June steered the bike and headed towards the shop also.

Draster headed inside, inspecting the damage. A lot of mess had been made inside, but it was nothing that couldn't have been repaired.

"Thank you...", Dobblepot said as Spyke and June entered the shop.

"This is our fault..." Spyke begun. "We drew them here..."

"No..." Dobblepot cut in. "You must never apologise for Morkain, that tyrant. Besides, if you hadn't decided to come back, my shop would've been destroyed by now. He wanted to kill one of the last \*gnomes\* standing... well he will have to try better than that!!"

Dobblepot's anger was apparent. His face and eyes begun turning red. He dashed behind the bar to the store room and picked up four bottles.

"This will protect us from radiation, but only for a short time," he said. "Let's take out them damn Formicans!"

Spyke nodded and Dobblepot dashed past them and out the shop, the trio following him.

"What shall we do with the bike?" June asked.

"Probably best to leave it here, we don't want to draw attention to ourselves before we get there," Draster suggested.

\*Player must travel to the edge of Delton, the \*gnome\* capital city where the airship landed\*

"There it is", Dobblepot said as the trio arrived at the edge of the massive crater where the comet hit. The crater was as deep and wide as a city. The Formican airship was positioned near the centre, with soldiers moving around everywhere like ants.

There was a big contraption drilling through the impact point. They were obviously looking for something.

"Dobblepot, what are they looking for?" Draster asked, sensing he was keeping something from them. "Tell us."

Dobblepot hesitated for a moment. He looked towards the trio, catching Spyke's glaring eyes that pierces any soul that looks deep into them.

"There is an artefact that we \*gnomes\* were entrusted with," Dobblepot started. "It was kept in a vault deep underneath Delton. I was one of the guards that kept watch."

"What kind of artefact?" Spyke asked impatiently.

"...", Dobblepot didn't know if he should continue.

"I asked you a question," Spyke said.

"One which can summon the Guardians of Terra," Dobblepot blurted out.

"Guardians of Terra?" Spyke repeated. He then has a \*flashback\* of one of the murals in a shrine.

"Beasts, monsters..." Dobblepot continued. "Huge monsters that cannot be stopped."

"Something like that exists down there?" asked Draster. "Wouldn't the comet have destroyed it?"

"It is locked away in a safe that cannot be destroyed so easily," Dobblepot said. "You need a powerful magic spell to open it, one which only the king knows. Morkain cannot open it himself, even if he threw another comet at it."

"And the king is dead?" June asked.

"Yes... he was caught in the blast," Dibblepot said solemnly.

"So you're saying there's no other way to open it?" asked Draster.

"There is no other way," Dibblepot replied.

"There is a way," Spyke said, looking down at the soldiers. "Since we've been here, how many times have we been told something is impossible, only for it to have been proven wrong?"

A moment of silence hushed the party.

"Why would Morkain send an airship full of soldiers here... heck, why would he drop a comet here, if he knew there was no way to get that artefact?" Spyke continued. "Of course there is a way... there always is..." he whispered to himself.

"Spyke is right," June concurred. "He obviously knows of a way to get it. Or at least, is confident he can find a way."

"Either way, we need to stop what's going on down there," Draster said.

Dibblepot looked on, shocked at the trio's conversation and how they quickly deduced the predicament. There was a slim ray of hope after all with these three, he thought.

"Dibblepot," Spyke snapped him out of his trance.

"The radiation pills."

Dibblepot hurriedly handed Spyke the pills, handing one to June and Draster also.

"So, what's the plan?" June asked rhetorically cracking her knuckles. "Just beat them up?"

"That contraption..." Draster begun, looking down the crater. "We need to destroy it before it drills down to the safe."

"They'll try to stop us before we can get to it," Spyke said.

"Let's wait until it's dark," Draster suggested. "It will surely take a while to find it. Or we can go down, all guns blazing and take them out. Your call Spyke."

\*Player decision - wait for night time, or go in head-on\*

"We'll wait," Spyke said. "But we need to come up with a plan."

"Sure," Draster said.

The party formulated a plan as the sky turned dark. The Formican soldiers were still working away like beavers during the night. Their little white lights moving around the huge drill that was still digging. A few of the soldiers had retired for the night into the airship while a few had stood watch. They must have noticed that the other two soldiers were gone for some time now, so the trio went back to check on Dibblepot's shop and while they were at it, picked up some explosives he had hidden away in case he ever had the chance to blow up Morkain.

"Let's begin," Draster said.

The plan was to sneak up behind the drill, find a weakspot, then detonate it so it was no longer useable.

"That should put a halt to Morkain's plan, at least for a while yet," Draster finished. "We'll need to be silent until we can detonate the bomb, which means no guns or magic. So guys... use your blades only, and discrete ones."

"What will you do then? You can only use magic..." June asked.

"I'll keep watch and advise on any approaching soldiers," Draster replied. "You two will have to take them out. Dibblepot you stay here and signal to us if there are any guards approaching."

Dobblepot nodded.

"Are you ready Spyke?" asked Draster.

\*\*Player decision - start/go over the plan again\*\*

"Fine, let's get started," Spyke said.

\*Player must carry out the operation. They will travel down to the bottom of the crater, taking out guards swiftly before engaging them in full combat. Player must do it quickly or they will mess up the operation and will need to go in all guns blazing as mentioned before.

When the player gets close to the drill, Spyke will plant the bomb. Exploding the drill before more guards come out of the airship.

The party must then escape, fighting through soldiers to get to the top\*

"I think we shook them off," said June looking back as the trio reached the top of the crater. Dobblepot had ran to join them.

"T-t-that was incredible!" he cried in joy.

"That should put a stop to that for a while," Draster said.

"Heh, that was pretty fun," smiled June. "But won't they retaliate? What if they come back for the shop?"

"I doubt it," Spyke replied. "They sent two soldiers to take it down. They must believe that it's been dealt with."

Suddenly, the ground shook as the airship began to ascend. The party took cover behind the crater, confident they wouldn't be spotted. The airship climbed the crater and soon the sky, as it began flying towards the direction it came from towards the north-east.

"Maybe they're headed back to base..." June said.

"Over that way is Bazzleworth," concurred Draster.

Dobblepot still looked dumbfounded. How these kids could so easily have infiltrated a Formican camp, destroy their machinery and take out so many soldiers and escape... and they described it as "fun"!

"What is it Dobblepot?" Spyke interrupted him in mid thought.

"I am still amazed at what just happened..." Dobblepot muttered. "Let us return to the shop and rest. You three have earned it."

\*The party travel back to the shop\*

"I will prepare some beds, and some food right away!" Dobblepot said of his new found heroes.

"Would you like some help?" asked June.

"No, no," Dobblepot stammered. "It's been ages since I've had guests."

The \*gnome\* rustled up some rations he had back in his store cupboard. He let that cook while he laid out three sheets for the trio to sleep on.

It had hit home to Spyke that Dobblepot really was alone, his race wiped out by a savage, and here he was giving his last rations to three strangers.

"Dobblepot..." Spyke began.

"Yyyes?", he replied.

"Why did you stay here?" Spyke asked.

"This is my home," Dobblepot said. "I have nowhere else to go."

\*Player dialogue decisions - these will influence whether Dobblepot will join Spyke later\*

"But this..." Spyke continued. Draster gave him a look to say Dobblepot hadn't finished yet.

"I know," Dobblepot started. "This is no way to live, but this is where I belong. Next to my city where I've spent my entire life. I can't just up and leave."

"Why?" asked Spyke.

"Like I said, I have nowhere else to go..."

"But you don't know what's out there. There could be many other \*gnomes\* out there who could have survived," Spyke interrupted.

Dobblepot remained silent, contemplating this.

"I... I just..."

"Dobblepot," Spyke said, reaching out a hand. "I..." Spyke paused for a second. "I know we'll need your strength. I want you to come with us to the shrine. After that, you can do want. But something tells me if you travel with us, it would be mutually beneficial."

Dobblepot stared into Spyke's eyes. Searching beyond those eyes to try and find some kind of malice or deceit, but he could find nothing. Spyke was brash, but he was always honest, Dobblepot decided. He took a deep breath.

"I will accompany you to the shrine and we'll see from there," Dobblepot smiled, taking Spyke's hand. "Now, allow me to finish cooking your food! Hehe."

June and Draster smiled. Spyke's face softened from his usual, hard glare. He looked at the other two and they nodded in approval. Although Dobblepot's worth may not be apparent right away, befriending one of the last \*gnomes\* on the planet might prove to be a crucial move.

\*Dobblepot hands the trio their food and the party sleep\*

The party awake and set off for the shrine for a second time.

\*Dobblepot will now use magic and assist the player in battle\*

The party approach a cavern located in the mountains.

"I guess this is it," Draster says looking at his map.

"The Forgotten Cavern..." Dobblepot muttered. "So it's here..."

"You know this place?" asked Spyke.

"Yes, this is the place where warriors would test their strength," replied Dobblepot. "There are some pretty strong monsters in here, so I've heard."

"Great..." sighed June. "And there's me thinking we would have an easy trial this time."

Draster chuckled. "We're used to this kind of thing now Dobblepot."

"I see," replied Dobblepot.

The party continue into the cavern.

\*Player must pass the trial in the cavern and will discover a door that leads to the proper shrine. Dibblepot will advise the player on the monster's weaknesses.

Spyke hears the voices of the ancients again in his head, telling him to beware of what lies beneath the ground.

The player will get to the end of the shrine where they will encounter a boss. The boss casts a debuff on the player, reducing their attack power. The player must defeat the boss with Dibblepot's magical assistance.\*

The cavern's walls begin to shake, as Spyke nabbed the Gem of Gemini.

"What's happening?!" Dibblepot yelled.

"We've gotta get outta here!" June yelled back.

The party began running back the way they came until Dibblepot stopped.

"This way!" the \*gnome\* pointed. "There's a shortcut!"

The trio followed Dibblepot's lead, jumping past roots and dodging falling rocks. They saw a spec of light up ahead. They began a mad dash towards the exit as the boulders began falling all around them. Dibblepot was getting left behind due to his short legs and trouble getting over the rocks.

Spyke saw this, so he dashed back behind the others, picked up Dibblepot and slung him on his back.

"Hey...!" the \*gnome\* screamed. "What are you doing?!"

Spyke remained silent, concentrating on making the exit. June and Draster had snuck through.

Spyke drew his Master's katana and unleashed a Flash of Light attack on a nearby boulder towards the exit, splitting it in half and teleporting himself and Dibblepot into the daylight.

When the party had been reunited safely outside the shrine, Spyke let Dibblepot off his back and noticed he was knocked out.

"He's out cold..." June observed.

"What happened to him?" asked Draster.

"Hmm," Spyke thought to himself. "Maybe it was the Flash of Light. The sudden change of speed probably knocked him out."

"Ohhhhh...", Dibblepot began to sigh and slowly opened his eyes.

"Are you alright?" asked June.

"Uuurrghhhh... what happened?" Dibblepot asked, still groggy.

"It doesn't matter, we made it thanks to you," Draster explained. "If you hadn't known about that shortcut, we might have been too late."

"Just how did you know about that shortcut?" asked June.

Dibblepot, still groggy, slowly rose to his feet and dusted himself off.

"I accompanied the king to this cavern a long time ago," Dibblepot started. "Now that I think about it, I didn't fully understand why we did go down there at the time. He just said that 'it is our duty to know the ins-and-outs of the region'. Maybe the king knew of the shrine the whole time."

"You had been there before and you didn't tell us?!" June said, agitated.

"Well, you never asked," Dibblepot replied cheekily."

"Grrr!" June grunted. Spyke and Draster took the news in jest.

"We should probably make camp somewhere and figure out our next move," suggested Draster.

"Right," agreed Spyke.

The party make their way away from the cavern and set up camp.

\*\* Player rest sequence \*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Chapter 14

Spyke was the last to rise the next day. He joined June, Draster and Dibblepot outside the tent.

"Morning Spyke," June said, feeling refreshed and smiling at him.

"Morning," Spyke replied, nodding at her and to the other two.

June then gave a smirk as if to suggest she wasn't satisfied with Spyke's greeting.

"Spyke," Draster began. "The next shrine is quite far away by foot. There are a few towns on the way there where we can maybe pick up another vehicle. In any case, it will take us a while to get there."

"Do you have a route sorted?" asked Spyke.

"Yeah, the town we'll get to is Thicklewig," explained Draster.

"Thicklewig..." Dibblepot muttered.

"Do you have something to share about Thicklewig Dibblepot?!" asked June in a stern tone.

"Oh, nope!" Dibblepot replied.

"Then let's move out," ordered Spyke.

\*Player gains control and must travel to Thicklewig town\*

The party arrives at the entrance to Thicklewig. A small rundown town plagued by the desolate surroundings that the comet left. The party walked through the entrance. Spyke was expecting to see a gnome or two but there were only \*elves\*, \*dwarves\* and humans, although there were few and far between. One or two people were manning their shops, but otherwise, it was a deserted town.

"This town is dead," June muttered to herself.

"Indeed," concurred Draster.

"It seems like the radiation has hit this town pretty badly," said Dibblepot. "Thicklewig was a town full of life."

Spyke remained silent, leading the way through the town path.

"What are you thinking Spyke?" asked June.

\*Player decision - say nothing or "that bastard Morkain"\*

“...”, Spyke elected not to speak. His mind racing about what Morkain has done. Spyke thought to himself:

“How can I help this town?”

“How do I stop Morkain and prevent this from happening?”

“How can he stop the impending catastrophe?”

“What would Master do?”

“Where is my father?”

June sighed.

“He is probably deep in thought,” whispered Draster.

“Let’s continue,” Spyke said finally. “We have no reason to stay here.”

“Wait,” Dibblepot interrupted. “Let’s go to the inn. I might know someone who can help us there.”

“And who might that be?” June asked, agitated again at the withhold of information.

“An old friend who specialised in magic,” Dibblepot stated. “He used to travel around a lot and visit every inn to try the ale. I don’t want to just pass by without visiting...”

“Fine, let’s go,” Spyke said sharply. “We could do with a break anyway.”

“Great!” Dibblepot cheered.

\*Player must travel to the inn\*

The party get to the inn. A beat up, rundown building. It was deserted. Spyke walks up to the counter and presses the bell. Suddenly, a dwarf popped up from nowhere under the counter. “W-w-welcome! How may I help?” the dwarf asked.

\*Player decisions - player can probe for information which will eventually start an optional quest they can complete. The quest is called “Restoring Thicklewig” and will be a line of quests to help kill monsters and gather materials to help restore the town to what it once was. If the player completes the quest line, the innkeeper, Thermadore will join the player later, after a handshake\*

\*\*\* Thaconion quest line - in order for Thaconion to join Spyke later, the player must visit every inn in the world and order an ale - starting and ending in Thicklewig \*\*\*

Spyke orders an ale and the party rest for a while after doing the round of tasks for Thermadore.

“Let’s continue,” Spyke ordered, as the party left Thicklewig in a better state than when they arrived.

\*Player gains control and must continue to the next outpost\*

The party arrive at the next outpost, surrounded by cliffs and mountains. There was a shop and a caravan, manned by a dwarf.

“We ought to rest here before continuing on,” suggested Draster.

"Yeah I agree," concurred June. "How far are we from the next shrine?"

"Still quite a bit away," explained Draster. "It's important we rest fully here in comfort so we're ready for what lies ahead."

Spyke reluctantly agrees, and the party rest in the caravan.

Spyke struggles to sleep. He looks out the window and sees the stars glimmer in the night. He opts to get out of bed and sit outside in one of the deckchairs in solitude.

Spyke was used to being by himself. Travelling the Earth, searching for answers. For his Master's killer, his father. All of that had taken a backseat. He is now gaining the power to defeat Morkain and prevent the perpetual catastrophe. Still, his father was at the forefront of his thoughts.

"What are you thinking?" June suddenly said, creeping out of the caravan.

Spyke remained silent as he watched June join him on one of the deckchairs.

"You know," June began. "I always see you deep in thought. Sometimes it good to just let things off your chest."

June got comfortable on one of the chairs.

"What the hell are we doing here eh?" June asked rhetorically. "One moment, I'm taking the Formican Army exam, hoping to be enlisted one day, and now here I am, fighting them and trying to save these two worlds from catastrophe."

"Yeah..." Spyke agreed. "It's pretty crazy isn't it. I had been looking for my father and trying figure out what happened to Master. And now here we are."

"Spyke, your father..." June started. "What will you do when you see him?"

\*\*\* Player decision - remain silent, "I don't know", "kill him" \*\*\*

"I don't know," Spyke answered. "But I need answers. Why he locked me up, why he's helping Morkain... I might try and kill him before he tells me all that though..."

"Do me a favour and hear him out first," June suggested.

"I know..." Spyke sighed.

"Spyke... have you ever...?" June tailed off.

"What?" asked Spyke.

Spyke's eyes met June's for a moment, his green eyes piercing deeply into June's soul.

"Nevermind," June said.

"Now you're the one not talking!" Spyke said agitated.

"Heh, sorry. It doesn't matter," June said. She stood up and walked slowly back to the caravan.

"Thanks for talking to me Spyke," she said, turning away and entering the caravan.

Spyke was a bit bemused by that episode. He sat back looked up at the stars again.

"Wake up sleepy head!"

Spyke gingerly opened his eyes. He had fallen asleep on the deckchair.

June came over to him and shook him up.

"I'm awake! I'm awake!" Spyke cried, devastated that his slumber was interrupted.

"You slept out here?" Draster asked.

"Yeah... I couldn't deal with June's snoring," replied Spyke, cheekily.

"I don't snore!!" June replied, shocked.  
"How do you know?" Draster asked, going along with the joke.  
"Well at least I don't fart in my sleep..." June said, looking at Spyke.  
Spyke yawned, choosing to ignore June's comeback.  
Dobblepot joined the trio outside.  
"You lot are chirpy this morning," he said.  
"Are we ready to rock and roll?" Draster asked Spyke.  
"Yeah, let's continue," Spyke said.

\*Player gains control and must continue to the next town through the desolate mountains.  
Player will encounter radiation and monsters when passing through.\*

"We're coming up to our old allies at Knadville," Dobblepot said as the party approached the next city walls. "This is where the \*dwarves\* hail from, their captial."  
"(\*Gnomes\* and the \*dwarves\* used to work together?" asked Draster.  
"Yes, they helped us when the Formican Army invaded Delton. But that left themselves vulnerable... and then..."  
"The Formican's attacked Knadville..." Draster finished.  
"Yes...", Dobblepot sighed. "I believe it was just before Morkain dropped the comet."  
"So this city is occupied by Formican soldiers now?" quizzed Spyke.  
"I do not know, we had best be cautious," advised Dobblepot.

\*Player continues to the entrance where it is left unguarded\*

The party continue through the city path. It was deserted. Suddenly, a pair of Formican soldiers appear.  
"State your business!" One of the soldiers ordered.

\*Player decision - say: nothing, say: we were just looking for a place to rest, say: to kick your ass!\*

"To kick your ass!" Spyke yelled defiantly, drawing his sword.

\*Battle against Formican soldiers\*

"Well that answers the question about Formican soldiers being here," said June.  
"Let's look around for \*dwarves\*" suggested Dobblepot. "They must be holed up here somewhere."

\*Player must look around for the dwarves hiding spot. Player will encounter Formican soldiers until they spot a small figure move around in the fog\*

"Over there!" yelled Dobblepot, pointing into the fog.

The figure disappeared behind the fog. The party venture into the fog until they are completely engulfed. Outside was no longer visible. All that could be seen was thick smog.

"Make sure to stay together," said Spyke, looking back at the others. But they were already gone.

"June?! Draster?!" Spyke yelled in distress, but there was no reply. "Shit..."

Spyke tried to retrace his steps but he couldn't find an exit to the mist.

\*Player runs around for a while in the fog\*

Suddenly, a huge roar is heard to the west. Spyke is alerted and heads towards where the roar was heard. He runs, sprinting, hoping that the others were fine.

"Damn it!" June is heard in distress.

"June!" Spyke yells as he continues sprinting.

He finally finds a way threw the mist and is confronted by a huge behemoth.

June is down on the ground holding her leg, while Draster is kneeling clutching his arm.

Dobblepot is nowhere to be seen.

"You're late Spyke!" June yelled, but she was relieved to see him.

The great behemoth lets out a huge roar and attacks Spyke.

\*Boss battle - behemoth vs Spyke, June and Draster

When the behemoth is low on health, the player will go through an action sequence to subdue him.\*

"Even after all that, he still won't go down?" said June.

"This beast is persistent!" Draster yells as the behemoth roars.

"Damn it, not enough..." Spyke mutters to himself, panting.

Suddenly, Dobblepot appears through the thick fog. He surveyed the area, before looking up at the beast. The beast noticed the miniature \*gnome\* and reacted in a frightened way.

Dobblepot reached out his small hands, healing the party before turning to the behemoth, whose demeanor began to soften as it quietly grunted.

"It's been awhile, Fluffy!" Dobblepot said to the beast.

The beast suddenly became silent, staring at Dobblepot through one of its gigantic eyes. It suddenly realised who it was and began to howl and breathe like an obedient dog.

"Fluffy?!" June cried.

"What the hell?" Spyke murmured, looking up at the now obedient monster he tried to kill.

"You know this monster?" Draster asked.

"Fluffy? He and I go way back," explained Dobblepot.

June's rage was about to boil over.

"And where were you when your friend "Fluffy" tried to kill us?!" she yelled.

"Hehe, sorry, I got lost in the fog," Dobblepot replied calm.

"Grrrrr youuuuu!?" June couldn't contain her anger at Dobblepot anymore.

"Someone's coming," Spyke alerted the others. They hastily readied themselves in case another threat approached.

"Good Fluffy..." a Scottish \*Dwarven\* voice was heard from the mist. Eventually, a little dwarf emerged from behind the fog.

"Ah Dibblepot! I thought it was you I saw!" the \*dwarf\* said in delight. "You were with humans so I couldn't be sure..."

"Hector!" Dibblepot cried in delight.

"So you know this guy we've been chasing as well?!" June yelled, but she was ignored as the \*gnome\* and \*dwarf\* embraced.

"How the heck are you alive?!" Hector cried. "After what happened to Delton, I figured there would be no survivors!"

"I was away on an errand when the comet hit," Dibblepot replied. "I haven't found any other survivors."

"Not yet," Hector corrected him.

"Indeed..." Dibblepot replied, sighing.

"Aren't you going to introduce me to your friends? They seem pretty strong if they survived against Fluffy," Hector asked.

"Ah don't mind us!" June said, annoyed. We're just here, almost dead, you know. But you guys finish catching up! Please!"

Draster began the introductions, "I'm Draster, and she's June. Don't mind her, she's a bit annoyed at something."

"I'm Spyke," said Spyke, looking up at Fluffy as if he was talking to the beast. Fluffy returned the piercing glare, as if to give a sign of respect.

"Hector," the \*dwarf\* replied.

"So what the devil happened here?" Dibblepot asked. "We ran into Formican soldiers on the way here."

"Yes, they're lurking around looking for the others," Hector replied.

"Others?"

"My brothers and sisters of course! We've been in hiding since they invaded a while back. This fog and Fluffy's roars keep them away," finished Hector.

"I see," Dibblepot said.

"You guys look pretty beat up, so let's head back and rest eh?" Hector suggested.

"Will that be okay with the rest of your kin?" asked Draster.

"O'course! Any friend of the \*gnomes\* is a friend of the \*dwarves\*. Let's go," Hector said.

\*Player must follow Hector to the dwarven hideout. Hector explains how the fog was conjured (using magic) Fluffy remains within the fog\*

The party of Spyke, June, Draster, Dibblepot and Hector arrive at the edge of the fog protecting the \*dwarf\* haven. It was on the edge of a cliff with a huge drop into nothingness beckoning anyone who dared get to close.

"This way," Hector led the way onto a small ramp that took the party downwards towards the edge of the cliff.

"Shit!" June cried. "This is a bit dangerous isn't it?"

"No shit..." Spyke mumbled.

"Just don't look down," Draster said.

Hector and Dibblepot seemed unmoved at the drop, since they were so small and able to walk across without trouble.

Spyke led the way for the humans, side-stepping across the cliff.

"We're almost there," Hector shouted at the others still trying to reach them.

The party circled around the cliff and made it to a cove.

"Here we are," said Hector, as he led the party into a dark cave. The cave was lit by torches either side of the walls. Suddenly Hector stopped and said something in Dwarvish.

"*Umya gryyah!*" he said.

Suddenly, the floor beneath had disappeared and the party fell into pitch black. The screams of Spyke, June and Draster echoed throughout the cave. After falling for what seemed like an eternity, the party landed on a jelly-like substance, breaking their fall, bouncing them up and allowing them to land on their feet.

"What the hell..." June sighed panting. "You couldn't tell us we would drop 200 feet beforehand?"

"Hector!!" A female \*dwarf\* came running to the party. "What are you doing?! You've brought humans..."

"Calm down dear," Hector butted in. "They are friends."

"Oh! Dibblepot!", the female \*dwarf\* scurried over and gave Dibblepot a big hug. "I thought you were dead!"

"I will be if you squeeze any tighter!" replied Dibblepot, gasping for air.

She released Dibblepot and immediately looked up at Spyke, exchanging glares.

"And you are... good humans?" she asked.

\*Player decision - nod and say yes, remain silent, evil humans\*

"We're really, really...", Spyke began.

"I just told you Bella! They are friends!" Hector butted in. "They're fighting the Formican army..."

"You three? Really?" Bella said in disbelief. "Why would you fight your own kind?"

"Later Bella, please!" bellowed Hector. "Let's go back to camp."

"Alright, alright," Bella agreed. "Let's walk and talk."

\*Player follows Bella and fills her in on the details.\*

The party continued down the lit cave until they began to hear pickaxes striking stone. They eventually came to a wide open area where a myriad of \*dwarves\* were digging.

"This is the Bernholdt Mines," Hector explained. "Before the Formicans invaded our city, we were digging these mines to connect the underground passages with the rest of the world. Now this is our home, and Fluffy protects us from any intruders"

"The Formicans are digging on the other side as well," said Spyke. "Won't they be able to invade this place too?"

"We have sealed off our end of the tunnel," explained Hector. "And it is protected by a similar fog-like magical barrier that you saw above. But we fear it is just a matter of time..."

"Why are they bothering with these tunnels?" said June.

"We believe Morkain is trying to get closer to the core of this planet," Hector replied. "The tunnels on the Southern continents, what happened to the \*Gnome\* capital, and the desire to take this place. All of them connected to this underground system. It all leads to him getting closer to the centre. For what, I do not know."

"If he's trying to get to the core, why not just dig any hole that is already Formican territory," asked Draster.

"That's a good question," Hector replied, thinking.

"The core is encased in a high concentration of Plasma," said Dibblepot suddenly. "You need to know exactly where to dig, otherwise Plasma will come pouring out like a volcano."

"So he's using the tunnels to get an indication of where to dig to the core," finished Spyke.

"Clever," Hector said. "It seems Morkain will stop at nothing to get what he wants."

The party stayed silent for a while as they headed to a small cove in the cave. A few \*dwarves\* walked past the party, giving a smile and a wave to them. Since they were walking with two other \*dwarves\* and a gnome, Spyke thought that he would get the odd look here and there, but he was pleasantly surprised.

"You can rest here," Bella said. "I'll leave you to talk and strategize our renaissance!"

"Renaissance?" Spyke replied.

"We're plotting to take back our land, our home," Hector began. "The others are digging for materials to make weapons, forging the weapons, and honing their magic."

"So what's the plan?" Spyke asked.

"We strike them twice," Hector continued. "We dig a hole right beneath the Formican camp and bury them. And then finish off all the other soldiers by attacking and retreating through the magic fog, with Fluffy backing us up."

"Interesting..." Draster said, intrigued.

"And you want us to help you with that?" asked Spyke.

"Straight to the point I see," said Hector. "Yes, you've proven your strength against Fluffy, and I trust you that you won't turn on us. Will you help us? To help us get our home back?"

\*Player decision - Help, or don't help. If the player decides not to help, they will be free to leave and they will not get the help of the \*dwarves\* later on. Player will have another opportunity to ask for help\*

Spyke looked at June and Draster for their approval, before nodding.

"We will help," Spyke said.

"Wow, that is splendid!" cheered Hector. "Thank you very much."

"I have some questions about the strategy," asked Spyke.

"Yes of course, what would you like to know?"

\*Player decisions:

- What if the camp is deserted
- Explain the tactics on foot
- Explain the tactics underground
- What if they survive the blast

\*

"That's it," said Spyke. "When do we begin?"

"We are soon ready to begin actually," Hector said. "You've come at just the right time."

"Really? That's convenient," said June, suspiciously.

"W-We can begin whenever you're ready," Hector replied, ignoring June's quip.

Spyke glared at June, trying to read what she was thinking. It was a bit 'too convenient' that they had showed up just as the \*dwarves\* had plotted to retake their home. Were they being used? Obviously, they were to some extent, but they both had a common enemy in Morkain and the Formican Army.

Spyke then looked at Dibblepot, who was unusually quiet and hadn't said a word since they arrived. He then glanced at Draster, who he knew had his back whatever decision Spyke made. Spyke then turned to Hector.

\*Player decision - Let's move out, let's wait a bit\*

"I don't know what it is, but I know that you're using us," Spyke began. "Whether it's as bait, or you do genuinely need our help. In the end, we need to put a stop to the Formican Army and their antics, and in the end, I'll do whatever it takes."

Spyke paused for a moment, as he chose his words carefully.

\*Player decision - call out Hector, trust Hector\*

"I trust you Hector," Spyke continued. "So let's carry out the operation immediately."

"Excellent Spyke," replied Hector. "You won't regret it. Now, we need two teams. One to carry out the underground operation. Spyke, your team will carry out the operations above ground with some of my men. I'll have the rest of my men detonate the bomb underneath their camp. You finish off any survivors. Is that understood?"

\*Player decision - Understood or not.\*

"Understood," Spyke replied.

"I have a scout that will tell us if the camp is full or not," explained Hector. "When he reports back, we will begin. Prepare yourselves!"

\*Player can buy items etc from the other \*dwarves\*. Play will continue when confirming with Hector.\*

\*New game mode - infantry battle. The player will be able to control a number of troops in an RTS style minigame. Once the bomb has detonated under the camp, the player will gain control of team \*dwarves\*. Player must win the infantry battle to continue TODO \*

Spyke had led the \*dwarves\* to victory. The Formican camp had been buried with rubble. "Good going Spyke," said Draster. "We just successfully carried out our first operation against the Formican Army. And it's all thanks to your leadership."

"Indeed!" concurred June. "We did it! We can beat the Formican Army!"

Spyke softened his face a little, content that they had foiled Morkain's plans at least for a while. Hector joined the trio as he made his way through jubilant, dancing \*dwarves\*.

"Gyahahahaha!" Hector came through bellowing. "Amazing! You truly are... thank you for all that you've done. We now have our home back thanks to you" He shook Spyke's hand then held it aloft. "This is your hero! Spyke!"

All the dwarves then cheered as Spyke looked on at them. He felt happy for the first time in a long time. He felt important, wanted and significant.

\*Spyke is now allies with Hector and the dwarves\*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Chapter 15

"Spyke... Spyke..."

Spyke slowly opened his eyes. He could feel an intense heat around him. His eyes fully opened to the realisation that he was surrounded by flames in the middle of a forest.

"Spyke..."

Spyke staggered to his feet and had almost tripped over June, who was covered with blood and bruises. She's the one who had been calling him.

"JUNE!" Spyke yelled, jumping to her aid. "What happened?!" He reached for a potion but he had none equipped, and his weapons were nowhere to be seen.

"June... what the hell happened here?" asked Spyke, beginning to panic. June could barely breathe as she lay on the ground face first.

"Dammit!" Panicked Spyke, as he looked around. They were both surrounded by flames.

"Go..." June muttered.

"What is going on..." Spyke wondered. "This can't be real..."

Spyke then looked back down at June, and she had turned into a monster, snarling at Spyke before jumping at him. He was able to evade and instinctively reached for his sword, but he was unequipped.

As the monster spun around preparing for another attack, Spyke kneeled and grabbed the dagger he had hidden in his leg brace. The monster growled and ran straight towards him, Spyke was able to easily evade and strike the monster on top of the head, instantly killing it.

"You really are armed to the teeth..." Morkain hissed behind Spyke.

Spyke spun around with his dagger, taking a slash at Morkain, but he was able to evade.

The two men glared at each other with hatred for one another. Neither of them spoke for what seemed like an eternity.

"If you ever mess with my plans again...", Morkain began.

\*Player decision - remain silent, or stand defiant\*

Spyke defiantly replied, "Morkain, your threats mean nothing to me. We're coming for you and your army."

"Well said, child," replied Morkain. "But what will you do about the impending catastrophe? I am already executing a plan that will save Earth and you're doing nothing but get in the way!"

"You're creating monsters and killing the people of this planet and Earth! Do you really expect me to believe that?!" Spyke yelled back.

"You are just insignificant trash who refuses to see sense!"

"If I'm so insignificant, then why did you bring me here?! Why don't you just kill me?!"

"Tinwall."

Spyke gasped and his face was horrified.

"That's right. Your father asked me to bring you here."

"Why?!" Spyke ordered.

"He's waiting for you in Bazzleworth. Why don't you ask him yourself." Morkain then began to turn and walk into the fire.

"Hey! Wait!" Spyke yelled, running towards him. But he suddenly woke up.

He was in a small cove deep in the \*Dwarven\* underground camp, lying on one of the sleeping bags opposite a raging camp fire. Spyke grabbed his left eye, which had been pulsing with pain. "What are these dreams I'm having?" he thought to himself. "Are they really dreams?"

"Hey you're finally awake!" June said, strolling into the cove looking at Spyke with her hands on her hips. She could see the look on his face as he held his eye.

"...Another one of those dreams?" June asked, sitting beside Spyke.

"I don't think these are dreams," Spyke began. "These are visions or something... Morkain appeared in this one. He was pissed at what we did to the Formican camp and reminded me that my father is waiting in Bazzleworth."

"So you're saying he can somehow communicate to you while you're asleep?" Draster asked, rocking up behind them. "Given everything we've encountered since arriving on Terra, it doesn't sound impossible."

"It's too much of a coincidence for it to be a random dream," Spyke said. "Right now, we're putting a dent in his plans and he's trying to lead me to Bazzleworth. My father... Tinwall..."

"Bazzleworth..." Draster thought to himself. "Maybe the \*dwarfs\* will know the best way to get there."

"But what will we do when we get there?" June asked. "It's the Formican Army's base. We'll be playing right into his hands."

"...We need our own army..." Spyke thought out loud.

There was a moment of silence among the trio. They contemplated this statement.

"Our own army..." Draster thought, looking towards the ceiling. "Well technically, we already have one."

"What do you mean?" June asked.

"The \*dwarves\*... we just lead a successful operation with the \*dwarves\* under our command," answered Draster.

"We will need more than just the \*dwarves\* to take down the entire Formican Army," June replied.

"I see..." Spyke said.

"Yes..." Draster said as they had both come to the same realisation.

"See what?!" June spat out feeling left out.

"Zena and the others at Juniper village, the kids at Gunners Green, Micki and the others at Stockwell town, Bob and the other workers in the tunnel, the former Prime Minister of Terra," Draster explained. "Spyke, what did they say to you?"

"If I ever needed their help, call on them," Spyke replied.

There was another moment of silence between the trio.

"I see," June said, breaking the silence. "So if we gather more allies, we'll stand a chance against the Formican Army!"

"But they are strong as hell," Spyke said, both in strength and in numbers. It won't be as simple as that."

"We definitely can't take them head on," June said. "But if we can pull off operations like this, we can do this!"

"We'll also need more allies," Draster said. "The whole world is pretty much against Morkain and the Formicans, they just need to be united."

"So... we're really going up against an entire army..." Spyke muttered to himself.

"We've been up against them since we arrived here," June said. "Spyke, since you were a kid!"

Spyke let out a sigh. He wondered whether this had been his fate all along. His father, "Tinwall", a general of the Formican Army who kept him locked up since birth. Now he's calling for him to find him at Bazzleworth. "Why me?" Spyke thought to himself. "What the hell are we even doing here?" Spyke thought out loud. June and Draster were taken aback.

"Spyke...", June started.

\*Player decision - complain about their situation, or remain silent\*

"...We need to make our next plan of action" Spyke said, ignoring the little moment of doubt to creep into his head. "We still have to get to the remaining shrines, and on the way, recruit as many people as we can."

"Indeed," Draster concurred. "Leave that with me, but first let's talk with Hector. He's at the \*Dwarven\* capital surveying the area."

\*Player gains control and must make their way outside the tunnel and find Hector\*

The trio make their way to the town, now clear of the magical fog the \*dwarves\* had cast. It was now bustling with \*dwarves\* running around helping each other, carrying logs and materials to make repairs to their homes, and provide food and water for the workers. Many of them greeted Spyke as the trio walked through the main pathway to the town centre.

It was there where Hector was looking up at a statue of a \*dwarf\* standing tall and holding a sword planted in the ground.

"Ah, Spyke!" Hector cheered as he saw the trio approaching. "Good to see you."

"Hector," Spyke greeted the \*dwarf\*. "We need to talk."

"Of course," Hector replied. "We've won this battle, but the war with Morkain is far from over. I understand."

"...Right," Spyke said surprised at Hector for reading his mind.

"But first, let's celebrate! We have a banquet to prepare for!" Hector cried. "Will you be joining us?"

"Hector," Spyke said calmly, Morkain's words from his dream still ringing in his ears. "Let's talk now, this is more important than a banquet."

"Sure."

\*Fade to black sequence\*

Spyke, June, Draster along with Hector, sat around a table at one of the \*dwarven\* pubs, reopened from the recapture of the town.

"I see," said Hector, after Spyke had filled him in. "So we are to form our own team... an army... to battle Morkain and the Formicans..."

"Yes," Spyke replied. "We were brought to this planet for a reason, but I have no idea what the reason is yet. All I know is, Morkain is creating monsters that are killing people on Earth. And he's taken away the homes of all the people of this planet. Whatever his agenda is, we need to stop him."

"Understood," Hector said. "As the current representative of the *Dwarven* capital, I pledge to form an alliance with you. When you call, we shall be there".

Spyke and Hector shook hands, as the quartet began drinking more into the night. The dwarves were partying and dancing, drinking ale, bantering and laughing.

Spyke drank but was getting sleepy. June joined in with the dwarves in their dance while Draster was laughing with them.

Hector and Spyke continued their slurry talk.

"My master gave me this when he saved me..." Spyke said in a drunken voice to Hector. "But he's dead now"

"Ah, so you carry on his legacy..." Hector said. "I am the same, before he died, my father passed down this hammer to me", while Hector brought forth his hammer. "He was a master blacksmith, and I sought to carry that on".

Spyke nodded, his eyes almost closed. "We have a lot in common", Spyke said.

"Aye", Hector replied, as he looked on at the others. "You have good friends Spyke...".

Spyke looked up at June dancing and Draster joining in with the festivities.

"Friends..." Spyke said. "Yeah, I guess I've never had friends before. I always thought having other people would weigh me down and burden me. I've always been alone."

"Well, let's cheers to friends!", Hector said.

"Cheers", Spyke replied, bumping Hector's drink.

\*Fade to black sequence\*

"We need to discuss our next plan of action," Draster said, drinking some water around the table with Spyke and June rubbing their heads.

"My next plan is to get rid of this hangover", June replied.

"We continue on to Bazzleworth", Spyke said defiantly. "Along the way, we form allies against Morkain".

- “So might I suggest passing through the city of Draegons?” Hector suggested walking in. “I have a friend there called Boligon. Once he sees you with this, he will know that we’re allied”. Hector gives Spyke an armlet.

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