

Part One

Chapter One


The Two Moons

Act Number: 1

Scene Number: 1

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: pp. 1-5 : 1%

Scene Context: Opening Scene

Scene Color: 

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

There must be a rise and a fall. It must involve one or more specific characters.

#

Stanley Phoenix Quinn goes into the Two Moons to drink. He knows the Saskan Lands are dying. He knows why and he knows how to save them. It is hopeless to explain his solution to

the authorities in Beshquohoek or to the wise councils in Juuj and Borted. They don't believe him. Shown of the BivaWing Runes hears him and believes him. Waleran overhears him and initiates a plan to help.

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The Conflict. > <

There must be some kind of conflict or contradiction. It may or may not be resolved in this scene.

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Stan is taken away by Volunteers of the Night Watch. We're not sure where they are taking him or why. A brawl nearly erupts in the pub over it.

The Ending.

How does this scene end?

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Tooner and Waleran take Shown into their confidence and promise to help.

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The Funny.

What is the laugh line or amusement in this scene?

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Visual. Octopus-like bartenders and the bluster of the diminutive Kirill Geckster.

The Truth.

What is the realness in this scene?

#

The threat of ecocide in the face of an uncaring oligarchic bureaucracy.

The Connection.

What makes the reader care in this scene? Is an emotional, aesthetic, or an idea?

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Tooner and Shown's concern for Stan's safety. Waleran's concern that Stan's ideas could be suppressed.

The Beauty.

What is beautiful in this scene?

#

The strange magic of Kirill's inner sanctum.

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

#

Should have names for the two moons.

#

Chapter Two

The old gray cur slipped quietly into the Two Moons, dropping a small handful of tubits into the backhanded open palm of the off-duty basherbazooki watching the door.

The basherbaz’ mumbled a greeting to the old bard: “Barqo. Been a while, dog. Where ya been to?”

“Grrrrr... Yer mother’s a bullock. Mind yer own business,” the dog-sint story teller replied in a barely audible growl.

In reply the bouncer smirked and stomped a foot hard enough to give the old man a start. With their sizable musculature, one might be forgiven for thinking that a basherbaz’s formidable leg-ends, shod in well-fortified Hadaki combat boots did indeed, as Barfalot had implied, end in hooves rather than the kind of feet appropriate to a humo-sint. Few folks in the Land Between Two Rivers speculate on such matters with such a person, much less joke about it to their face.

The old man sometimes called Sir Barfalot was well-known as a joker.

An old dog can thrive in place like Rikila by knowing how to push things up to the limit of decency, or perhaps a tad bit more, but not any farther. Just enough to get a rise. Maybe glean some info. Not enough to get a stomping.

Once inside the Two Moons, Barfalot found the Jax he was looking for. Turning on his story-teller charm, he took a seat at a long table and shared a free wisdom lesson with the young Lookie.

The Jax listened carefully, trying to make out words from Barfalot's thick Growlish dialect: "Listen, Jax, did you hear me teasing that basherbazooki at the door about his gigantic feet? See 'em? Know why he keeps 'em hidden in those boots? Because a sint who appears to be fully human gets better grub and earns higher rank than one with an obvious mix of, say, humo and bos in their family tree. Know what I mean? That's why your basherbaz' hides his hooves. See? Get me? Now listen. I let him know I know because that gives me some leverage. In case I need a friend. Y'see what I mean? That's how you earn leverage. That's what I'm teaching you today. For free."

Barfalot was aware that, despite their limited mental and verbal capacity, every free Jax wants to improve their understanding. A Jax is forever trying to separate out in their little piece of the collective Jax mind. Teasing out bits real knowledge gleaned by lived experience from implanted memories acquired at the Farm can furrow the brow of a Jax in an aha way. Barfalot knew that seeing that expression was one of the small pleasures that can make a difficult day more bearable.

The Lookie wrinkled its forehead in concentration.

A smile swept over the old man's face as quickly as a biverfolk-crew shoots the rapids of

the Bloo on their way back to Bivertoon.

They stared blankly into the old feller's eyes with a look that said, "I understood about a tenth of that." What they actually said, entirely predictably, was, "Well met! Say, friend, my name's Jax. Are you planning an adventure? Do you need some assistance? I understand that you may need a friend, yes? Am I right?"

Barfalot's countenance resumed its weary road-worn look.

#

In a mean space like the Bishopric of Saskantinon, in its cruel towns like Rikila, it's not unusual for folks to take advantage of Lookalikes. Telling them lies in order to gain their confidence, to get them to do your bidding. A typical scam was to take one on as an expendable crew member to do the dangerous work.

He tipped the clone an abeyt and instructed them to let the proprietor know he'd arrived.

#

As he waited, Barfalot let his thoughts wander. He bore a name that's just a joke to puro, as they liked to call themselves. The so-called "pure" humos who dominated politics within the Ring. It had been assigned to him by a none-too-kind puro who'd discovered his canine features and then enslaved him as an impuro, as a pet and an unpaid worker. That was many, many moons ago. Long before he'd become a song-catcher, and a bard and had - for better or worse - gained the reputation of a mage.

He sometimes wondered if he'd had a name prior to that. He couldn't remember. He suspected that the whole 'naming' thing was a humo habit anyway, and considered, as he studied the intricately-wrought beams of the bar-rooms ceiling, that when he visited the extensive

warrens of the Alfer strongholds well to the south of the Ring, collecting the new songs made popular by their resistance movement, nearly every rabbit-sint he'd met introduced each other only as 'my brother', 'the noble sister', 'our leading comrade', 'hero platoon leader' and so on.

With his long experience of pain and suffering, Barfalot had a lot of pity to spare for all the "moon-spawned, star-born creatures of the night", as the Heliop slander put it. He didn't believe a single one of the Sun worshipers' ill-informed explanations for the many variations of life that had emerged since the Event.

He knew enough about the Land Between Two Rivers, and many of the Lands Beyond, to have some pity for the puro-humos too, who, despite their illusions of superiority, also suffered in this life and, as far as Barfalot could make out, met their end as surely and often as swiftly as any other sints.

Well. Except maybe those tied into the genetic line of terrapins and sea turtles. He suspected them of having inherited something like a gem of immortality from their sea-born ancestors.

#

It was time to have a bit of fun.

Barfalot threw back his head, cleared his throat, and recited, loudly, in the sing-song way of an experience bard, while tapping out a beat on the table, a bit of doggerel in oBark, the forbidden "language of the animals", from the age-old Bard Songs of the Givakola, known and loved by all sints regardless of their station and community.

Practicing the kind of showmanship that earns a bard a pile of tubeys now and again, he included in his recital some canine sounds that would be interpreted by most iBar-speakers as

dog-sint, or possibly even the sounds of a natural non-sentient dog, expressing some level of disappointment: that mournful country-yodel that only dogs can do with full justice to the form.

It was the kind of performance that would get a sint reprimanded by the Day Watch, or hauled away by the Night Watch, in a Heliops-controlled town. It was the kind of performance that the patrons of the Two Moons reveled in and it earned him a loud round of cheers.

From the murky depths of the bar room came a chorus of especially growlish chuckles. Those denizens of the Two Moons who had a bit of oBark quickly picked up on his take on the old favorite, joining in on the well-known refrain with a harmony of various animal-toned inflections, “Oh if I had an abeyt / for every stupid thing a Jax said / I’d be richer than a Watcher / in the Fire Lands!”.

#

The Jax had returned to his side during the recital. They told Barfalot, as the chorus wound down, that the proprietor would be with him shortly.

He reached into his small money-pouch, extending small retractable fingers from gloved hands to manipulate the coins once the paw-like protrusion of his palm was out of sight from prying eyes. To a casual observer watching across a smoky bar room, he was just an ordinary old fellow scratching his belly.

At 60-plus solar turns, ancient by typical measures. Barfalot’s secret to longevity included concealing his 20-some-percent canine mix not only from the Night Watch, but from anybody else who didn’t have a need to know the extent of his *impuros*.

In perfectly fluent iBar with only a hint of an iBark accent, the multilingual and multi-talented bard said, “Jax, my friend. I would very much like a bowl of s’lah while we wait for

Master Kirill. Can you help me with that? Here's a kite for the barkipper and a kite for your troubles," he said, deftly passing the small coins along to his front paw and handing them over.

#

The Jax beamed with delight as they sauntered over to the bar, to all appearances pleased as punch to be helping with a mission, and returning in a jiffy to hand his new friend a bowl of the ubiquitous drink of the Saskan Lands.

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"You scruffy old mage!", said a very small voice in a syrupy iBerk.

#

Bewitched from slurping the initial tippie of s'lah, Barfalot glanced up with a half-smile. A delicious sip of the Two Moons' famous spicy s'lah has a fermented wallop that's enough to sit an old dog down on his hindquarters.

The friendly Jax was gesturing in a confusing way. His mind adrift with the initial wafts of a cinnamony s'lah buzz, Barfalot watched the gesticulations with amusement before his attention focused the liquidy accent saying, "Down here, old boy. I haven't grown an inch since we met last. And at my age, I'm not likely to have any growth spurts."

#

His head clearing, Barfalot looked down. The proprietor stood next to the Jax, the top of the ornament adorning his cavalier hat just barely reaching above the Jax's knees. How a diminutive gecko-sint had come to manage the most notorious Inn in the most infamous part of the Rikila bazaar was an enduring mystery to many. Not to Barfalot, who knew a great many things. But to many other folks it was an enduring mystery.

Still emerging from the initial s'lah-induced wave of nostalgic feelings, Barfalot considered that maybe he knew too many things for his own good. Then he considered just the opposite.

Neither thought helped to explain how he'd managed to forget the diminutive size of Master Kirill Geckster-of-the-Manifold Ways, proprietor of the Two Moons, prominent member of the Free Innkeepers community, and - some folks say - mover of recently acquired goods.

#

Ever the coarsely-ground diplomat of song, Barfalot greeted his old pal with, "So. Still crawling through the cracks of the system, you fookin basimi scoundrel? Or have you seen the light? Tell me brother-sister, that you're ready to embrace the Sacred Fire and I will fetch the Night Watch. Let's let them know you're ready to submit. Yes-good?"

#

The proprietor's human features were distinctly gecko-sint, particularly his head, which was considerably elongated. It melded into the torso in a way that would be extremely unusual for a purros. The skin had a distinctly greenish and slightly scaly quality as well.

And of course he was very tiny.

Taking just the opposite approach to being impuros from Barfalot's, the Master of the Two Moons chose to accentuate and celebrate his-her appearance with various fashion accessories: along with the exotic hat, it featured a swashbuckler get-up featuring an over-sized and brightly-colored cape and boots, a bandalero tool-belt holding little knives and other contraptions. To top it off Kirill carried a, relatively speaking, large stick whose knobby jeweled end emitted a slightly blue and shimmery aura. Whacking the Jax's hip with his glow-stick,

which clearly gave them a jolt, Kirill signaled the Lookie that the boss was to be raised up to the level of Barfalot's nose.

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The free Jax squatted, then carefully lifted Kirill so that the Master of the Manifold Ways could stand on the clone's thigh.

"Master Kirill, thank you for making time for me," Barfalot whispered, switching to an Iberk argot known only to animal-sint convicts who've spent a number of turns in the Beet, "I have serious tidings. Is there a place we can confer in private?"

"Let's go," said Kirill and then yelled into the ear of Jax: "Take us to the garden!" and then gently whacked the clone on the head with that glowy little stick.

#

Master Kirill rode on the Jax's shoulder while Barfalot slunk along behind. As they passed the long bar on their way towards the back of the bar room, Barfalot cast a studious eye on the cetantionishy squad of barkippers.

Visitors expect to encounter the unexpected in the Land Between Two Rivers. It is a land of contrasts, a melting pot of cultures, languages and species and a relatively safe bulwark for enterprise, agriculture and trade.

At the Inn of the Two Moons, deep within the Bazaar on the 'starry' side of the rebellious town of Rikila, one would expect to meet the unexpected. Nonetheless, few things are quite as striking as the first sight of the barkippers at the Two Moons.

In a world where humo-sints have evolved from many special cross-pollinations, in a time when science and superstition merge and mix to such a degree that distinctions between the

two are largely conceptual, it could still be startling to encounter, to put it poetically, if not quite correctly, a fish out of water.

#

To be more precise, if less poetic: an octopus-person out of water. Much less six of them forming a kind of conga line rapidly serving drinks to a busy crowd of clientele.

When a visitor orders a bowl of s’lah at the long bar of the Two Moons, it’s likely to be served by a team of multi-brained eight-tentacled denizens of the deep, creatures whose DNA is as much 40% from the order Octopada. Those patient enough to listen might even enjoy, along with their spicy intoxicating drink, a lugubrious story or two regarding the epic migration of the Tetricus family from their homeland, which they claim to be on the other ‘side’ of the world, that is, from beyond the Edge of It All. They’ll tell tall tales of having traveled through many “oceans” to arrive the Bay of Bar and up the River Bloo. Settling at last, of all of the s’lah joints in all the lands, at this particular curve of the Ring of Saskantinon.

#

A lot of sensible sints laugh at their stories. Obviously, nothing can simply swim into the Mantemar from out there, from Beyond the Edge, Where Nothing Lives. Every educated sint knows that the navigable world-ocean ends where the Great Wall of Fire meets the Cataracts of Doom, right near the Edge.

#

Barfalot allowed a brief smile as he pondered the common wisdom. He recalled what he’d learned from his years sailing The Forg with a crew of practical, if somewhat piratical, Shanowan mariners, regarding the Familia Tetricus. He’d learned for example, that not entirely

unlike the most hard-core Heliops among the puros, who prefer to keep their sexes binary and separate, the male and female members of the Tetricus clan tended by and large to avoid each other, except when mating.

Unlike the puros sun worshipers, though, who do so for religio-political as well as economic reasons, the story Barfalot'd learned was that the eight-leggers did so because the octo-lasses had the habit of occasionally dining on the octo-lads after engaging in the octo-sex act.

#

As they made their way through the crowded room, he quietly shared some rare linguistic and sintological observation for the Lookie's entertainment and education. The Jax nodded knowingly as Barfalot explained,

"They have big eyes, short torsos, over-sized craniums, eight nearly sentient-in-themselves limbs each with a myter-long arm-span, not to mention a cozy habit of tightly co-inhabiting a space. Tetricusi octopods make for a formidable bar-keeping crew. They exhibit humo characteristics like air-breathing gills in a more or less humo-like facial configuration. Three legs are used to stand and perambulate. They have very basic vocal chords, and, at least in some cases, even some body hair. They typically communicate in a squishy-sounding iBar, with the Growlish accents common to sea creatures in the region of the Krbshanana Delta. They tend to use a lot of gesticulations as well plus various colorations that only they seem to understand."

#

The Jax waved his arms sympathetically, or jokingly, or in confusion, which made Master Kirill's ride a bit bumpy. The proprietor reached out and bopped Barfalot on the head with his

stick and bellowed, “Can it, canine. Nobody likes a know-it-all. ”

Doing his best to approximate the octopodo-impuros accent as he passed right by the end of the bar, Barfalot murmured loud enough to be heard by the octo-fellow at that end, “Hey man, cool scars you got. How’s the wife?”

This earned him a squishy chortling sound in reply, along with a gesture and a color display, which he thought probably meant either “Ha-ha” or “Jook off” or maybe both, followed by a spray of salty water, smelling of octo-breath, in his general direction.

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The Jax took them down an ill-lit hallway to an ornately-carved door. First using a combination of small keys on a lock that was hard to see, Kirill then tapped on a series of the decorative dentils, spoke a brief enchantment, something like “Vwah! La! Say! Saa!”, and they heard three large bolts unbolting. The door slowly opened inwards.

Once they were beyond the door, Master Kirill motioned for the Lookie to get lost. He settled onto a small ornate chair and gestured for Barfalot to make himself comfortable on a pile of pillows and throw-rugs. After circling around a few times, to get a good look at the place and because that’s what always felt like the right thing to do before sitting down, Barfalot settled himself and directed one rather large and, if you looked carefully, somewhat pointy, ear cocked in Kirill’s direction, his eyes and especially his nose taking in what he soon grasped to be rather unusual surroundings.

Stepping through the door, they’d left behind a large, noisy, ill-lit, smoky room filled with an eclectic mix of sints touching every data point on the spectrum from puros to impuros.

Sniffing around, Barfalot saw they had stepped into a quiet, tranquil space lit by an ambient

greenish-blue hue. He was entranced by the sound of quietly gurgling water.

#

Once his eyes adjusted to the light, he saw they were surrounded on three sides by a see-through enclosure, with walls of a solid but clearly transparent and largely scent-free substance. Could it be ice?

The transparent walls were neither freezing-cold nor melting. They were, however, holding back a sizable body of water. On the other side of the ice-but-not-really-ice walls were varieties of shell-like enclosures, and what Barfalot recognized from his journeys on the Krbshanana Sea as coral structures. A light source emanated from within the watery realm.

Kirill said nothing while Barfalot sussed out his surroundings. As he surveyed the scene, the old song catcher searched his mind to recall a word he'd heard used for the first time during a retreat, many moon-turns back, with a small team of mostly puro adepts from the Society for the Reinvention of Aesthetics. They'd spent several days and nights, adorned only in simple purple cloaks, discussing and debating a proposed "revolutionary strategy for developing fully autonomous inter-sentient art forms as a means towards strengthening the post-structural transformation of private and inter-subjective spaces with an eye towards developing a popular communicative rationality that would, in time, lead to..."

Well, let's just say, to good things for all the sints. At least that was the idea.

Barfalot noticed something moving about in the water, half-hidden among the shells and coral. It had tentacles. Much like those of the octo-boys at the bar.

#

"This is where the barkippers live when they're not working," Kirill squeaked. "As far as I can

tell, only the males leave the water-garden. The females never do. That's their deal. I call it the water-garden because..."

"Ah! Yes. It's an aquarium!", Barafлот interrupted in standard iBark, remembering at last the ancient word he'd been searching for.

"Ah. Kwaa. What?"

"It's a word from one of the Ancient Tongues," Barfalot explained, "Aqua meant water and Rium meant, we believe, something like a watch-hold. So an 'aquau-rium' is where they imprisoned water-dwelling creatures, either for amusement or in preparation for slaughtering and eating them."

"Oh, sure, like a fish tank. We have one out back. We keep the eatables from the Bloo in there until we're ready to serve them to our flesh-eating customers. Mostly we buy from Bivertoons. Some from indie flesh-hunters." Kirill matter-of-factly explained.

Barfalot, who, after a great deal of internal grappling with ethics, had abandoned flesh-eating many turns ago, looked down sadly for a few moments, but didn't say anything.

"Well, yes, but an aquarium was... well, evidently it had magical walls... like this material... a watery enclosure that you could see through. I had always thought that was just ancient myth. But here it is."

Barfalot didn't bother to share how one of the SRA adept had also posited that aquarium "was a potentially useful metaphor for developing an modified ontology that opens a space to create inter-subjective ironic distances for bridging communicative gaps regarding power and equality without over-disrupting deeply-programmed structural-identity concepts of terra/torial permanence".

“Yeah, dunno how they did that,” Kirill said. “Octopoo multi-brains, you know? Whatever. They did the set up. Super-duper smarty pants of the sea and all that. Cost me a pretty bucket of kubytes, I’ll tell ya that. But worth it. Best barkippers in the business. Keep to themselves too. Not always up in your business like some busy-bodies.”

He stared rather dramatically at Barfalot at that point.

Choosing not to take the bait, Barfalot looked around some more and said, “So you call it a water-garden, eh? That makes sense. I suppose. Hmmmmmm. Yes. Because it’s like being under the sea, isn’t it? In an octopus’s garden.”

Barfalot stared at his host with an quizzical look on his face.

#

Kirill stood up and tapped his glowy stick on the floor boards as he spoke, betraying some impatience with Barfalot’s tendency toward analyzing everything to within an inch of its life, then making obscure jokes that nobody got.

“Anyway. You said you had something important to tell me?”

“First. Remind me. You are pledged to the sacred bonds of the Annaka Intimi, are you not, old friend?”, Barfalot asked.

Sitting back down but with is back held up very straight, in a commanding manner, Kirill said very quietly and entirely seriously, “You know very well that I am.”

“And as the Master of the clan of the Manifold Ways, not to mention as proprietor of this renowned establishment, you have a large community to whom you are responsible as well.”

“Yes, that is also true. And I am dues-paying member of the Free Innkeepers Guild too. And if you must know, I supply the good s’lah to all the basherbazooki barracks on the sly as

well. And at a handy profit. Any other nosy questions?”

“The Free Innkeepers Guild charges no dues payments that I am aware of,” Barfalot growled, a bit menacingly.

“Figure of speech. Figure of speech. Moons and stars. Wanderers and bards. You don’t have to be so freaking literal about everything. What is this, some Bivertonian inquisition into my business affairs? Damn Mages.”

“As I’m sure you are well aware,” Barfalot lied, “there is no such things as a Mages Guild. And you know very well that I am a rationalist and that I make a perfectly honest living with the Bards.”

“As the ancients said, ‘Potayto. Potahto.’ All right then. Let’s not play word games. To be precise, I am a senior consultant to the eastern free innkeepers bookkeepers fraction of the Free Hostelries Cooperative Council. So. As I am sure you know, that means I pretty much have to provide free goodies to whatever Riders show up at my door. So. Pretty much the same thing as paying dues, innit? Wouldn’t you say?”

“Fair enough. I see what you mean,” the old philosopher concurred. “It is your role as an, err, umm, let’s say as an honest broker, and as head of an important sint-clan, that interests me more than your fealty to Bordered.”

“Fealty? Fealty! Now, that’s a bit strong, Barfie. I know the old songs as well as you do. I have plenty of friends in Beaverton and even a few Alferine acquaintances too, as I am sure you are aware. But. Submitted. Yes. Cross-born. True. As charged. I supposed I do prefer doing business with the Riders rather than moons-forsaken, sun-sucking Heliops whenever possible. But ‘fealty’? Really, old friend? Really?...”

#

Barfalot trained his soulful brown eyes upon the diminutive Gekkota-sint's big pupils, whose wide-awake nature was so characteristic of the Squamata order. He pondered for a while life without eyelids, trying to have compassion for what it must be like to never close ones eyes.

He blinked automatically himself when he saw Master Kirill, seemingly without thinking about it twice, lick his eyeballs clean.

"Holy Jook", Barfalot thought to himself, "this little guy could never pass for puros in a million moons."

In a quiet voice, using the Beetish argot lest any of those octo-lasses had ways of listening in to their conversation through the bizarrely warm ice, Barfalot told Master Kirill what he'd learned about the so-called Royal Wind Riders.

He confirmed that the longstanding rumors were, in fact, true.

Or true-ish at any rate.

Or might have some inkling of truth about them.

More pertinent to a confidential chat with a fearsome leader of one of the larger basimi guilds, he described what he'd discovered in the ancient ruins far to the South, deep in the fabled Grumsh-speaking Lands of Groomsh: what appeared to be some sort of ancient apparatus for communicating remotely over long distances.

As he'd hoped, the potential for profits to be acquired from the combination of these two tales quickly caught Master Kirill's close attention.


#

As they talked on into the night, their good s'lah being refreshed from time to time by the Jax,

and just as Barfalot had hoped it would, the possibilities for serious political and cultural impacts resulting from these discoveries, if certain arrangements could be taken and various alliances forged, also began to take shape in the large and active mind of the diminutive Supreme Warden of the Annaka Intimi.

Chapter Three

The Trees are Falling

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 6-30 : 4.5%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Theme Stated</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

There must be a rise and a fall. It must involve one or more specific characters.

Iohane and Henqu exhibit acts of heroism and bravery, treating all they encounter with equanimity. Beks and Sints all around the Ring tell stories and sing songs of their fairness and helpfulness. They crossed the line too many times -- when looking the other way at Eelani dealings with southerners, when helping Kahrn and Allane, drawing accusations from the Sun

Guards that they were assisting rebel rabbit-sints and thus threatening the food supply. They are taken away by the Night Watch. The Council in Bordered abandons them, refusing to intervene.

#

The Conflict. > <

There must be some kind of conflict or contradiction. It may or may not be resolved in this scene.

Bordered protects the Ring, but Beshquohoek feeds it and keeps Bordered in the money.

The Ending.

How does this scene end?

Otto Trucent has a shit-fit. Angry that Iohane and Henqu have caused a scandal, angry that Tonedo is using it to send a message to the Riders Council, he decides to let them go to their fate rather than stirring up trouble with the Helioptic Center.

#

The Funny.

What is the laugh line or amusement in this scene?

A poor peasant fishing in the Pawan discovers that the fish he caught is made of metal and has a difficult time cutting its head off. When he finally does, there are sparks and its insides look to be inedible. Disgusted, he tosses it aside. We see it wriggle back into the water and get consumed by a larger... fish?

The Truth.

What is the realness in this scene?

Crops are failing. Trees are sickly and falling. People eat bugs to survive.

#

The Connection.

What makes the reader care in this scene? Is an emotional, aesthetic, or an idea?

In a difficult world, people need heroes.

The Beauty.

What is beautiful in this scene?

There is music to the Ring. Each town that the two Riders visit has a distinctive key or mode.

Despite all the hardships, these people have songs to fill the air.

#

The Loose Ends.


What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

This is a fairly lengthy section. Plenty of room to get lost. Be careful to not just have a lot of description. Introduce plenty of interesting generic characters who are actually doing something. Iohane and Henqu are basically nice cops. Give them plenty of cop work to do.

This section is as much about introducing Otto and Tonedo as anything else. Be sure to give them some action. The remaining major characters should be encountered in such a way that we get a sense of their region -- Azron Gurdon, Mother Hare, Mikel Moballeq, Monmar Massachawa, Kahrn, Allane, Kam, and Sáamal Wytetitiri. In all cases, bring it back to the theme, the thing that everybody is talking about -- why are the trees falling?

Chapter Four

Enclosures

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 31-45 : 2.5%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Set-Up</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

There must be a rise and a fall. It must involve one or more specific characters.

Waleran sends word to Bordered, pleading with Otto Trucent for help with SPQ's case and asking if it is true that Iohane and Henqu have been arrested. The heroes are sent to Beet then condemned to suffer the Gleaming, in a quick secret trial.

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The Conflict. > <

There must be some kind of conflict or contradiction. It may or may not be resolved in this scene.

Though Kam relies on the Traveling Sisters but still puts his hopes in the Heliocastron. The Pool at Juuj is deep with mysteries. Do only the Sun worshippers swim in it? What is the device that Kam is working on?

#

The Ending.

How does this scene end?

The Heliopic Tribunal at Beet condemns Iohane and Henqu to the flames.

#

The Funny.

What is the laugh line or amusement in this scene?

Barqo of the Robeye is a fellow inmate, accused of collaborating with Iohane and Henqu on shady deals in Eelan. Mine him for gallows humor.

The Truth.

What is the realness in this scene?

Somebody's gonna dive into the pool (the abyss).

#

The Connection.

What makes the reader care in this scene? Is an emotional, aesthetic, or an idea?

We meet wonderful, beautiful heroes, of a classical type. They are unjustly condemned by a brutal, uncaring bureaucracy. There should be tears for the loss of something good.

#

The Beauty.

What is beautiful in this scene?

The allure and mystery of the Pool. The fierce independence of the Eelani.

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

Introduce Bu'ruq in this scene. Is being released from Beet after serving time for some minor infractions. Recognizes the famous prisoners.

#

Waleran read Birakay's message again. Then made a dozen copies for sending out with the next bunch of runners.

#

Stay still and wait for them to return. That's what Lukando'd said to do. Just stay out of sight and wait for them.

#

A close look showed rations left added up to two weeks worth of beast jerky and road gruel.

Waleran's tummy growled at the discovery.

#

Was Birakay's message was true? Or a fantastic malark dreamed up before ascending, if that was to be believed. Waleran conjured up a phantasm of the image, doting especially on Birakay's infectious grin as he faded away into the mists, carried off on the bridge of the Chrome Ark.

#

Yeah, fair play. Give the starman a full run, Waleran mused.

#

The light faded to dusk as he finished scribbling the last of the copies. Ehewing studiously on a bite of good Giváklan beast jerky, it was a small comfort to gaze at the fading phantasm. To recall that scene as night was falling, alone in a strange woods said to be full of dangering-folk, far from the warm homelands of far southern Uitbarbo.

#

Waleran'd hard tones playing from the hidden Kahila watchtowers of the Barbakal forest. It didn't sound like Aranzen Doribah, the singing language Waleran knew well. And it sounded nothing like the garbled, growlish Oobarq drumming that the Alfer's and other half-baked rebel groups liked either.

#

There'd been snippets of song too, lilting sporadically through the distant woods. Hard to make out. Possibly a ritualistic Old Eeber that one can hear in the River Temple of Barbol during quadrennial liturgical celebrations of the Earth-Soul. Yet more distant than that. Resonant of

optimism, but with a melancholic rather than triumphant uplift.

#

Waleran lit the tip of his brightwand and consulted the day's star-telling charts.

#

This is ludicrous. He sniffed and snorted, trying to make light of the reading and of his sense that somebody out there in the dark might be watching him.

#

I need to keep moving. Get through the Kahilabarbakal. Pass through the Juujal. Get into Róntana without getting snatched. Deliver a copy of Birakay's lyrics directly to the contact in Rútonik. Get across the river into Eeber.

#

Righty-oh. Great waters, I wish Barqo was here with me.

#

Then what? Head on up into the battle zone north of Big Tree. Get past the Most Loyal Volunteers and their pharking mercenary thought-cops. Pharking Night Watch meat-eaters. Hook up with Mur'ray and the Big Tree Heliop Volunteers.

#

Easy-peasy. Rolling on the Barbo.

#

And if. When. No, if. No, if I should get snatched they'll find Birakay's little poem here is not exactly "brightly rendered sapient-realist literature". I'll end up at the next Gleaming as the star attraction.

#

So. I can't get caught. That's all. Moons runes! Wish I could've just handed this off to the Independent Scribes of Blue Bar. Barqo said they're the best in the business. And he knows things.

#

Could get it translated into Oober and Eeber and the 'barqs. Baybe a few of the little 'berks too. Then once the Bards start to spread it around... Who knows? It'll spread along the rivers, all around the Ring, maybe to other lands. Perhaps it'll mean something to somebody somewhere. Then. Stars 'n jars! Yeah! That's the song.

#

Hmmm... Maybe I could earn a few bits too. I've heard they pay well for good material in Blue Bar. Argh. Nah. Can it, you old dodger. Can't waste time heading to the coast. Lukando'd turn a blue cow. I'd never make it across into Blubaroon anyway. Damn Watcher's mind-pharkers'd pick me off the moment I left the forest.

Calm yerself, wizard. Plenty of wanderers and refugees and Fool-Knows-Who's scurrying all around in these Barbakal woods. Don't worry. No fear. Trust the Stars. Those message-runners will be back before too long. Good runners too. Freaky-deaky little rabbit-people.

#

Feeling the heft of its holster, Walleran's next comforting thought concerned the two boxes of good metal Bordered slings nestled at the bottom of his kit.

#

My lucky night when I got a rapid peg-slinger from that Norgyte bang-runner at the Candlemakers Hall in Givákala. Ha! What a character. What was the name? Shloe-Thirteen? Kept talking about the bear-riders he used to run with. Yikes. I'll need it though. Probably. Oh Jexa! Oh Mother of Mercy! What am I saying? I mean hopefully not, hopefully won't need it.

#

Probably will though... Shits on a sun dial. I should do some practice shooting.

Birakay's new song spoke in the elliptical and poetic prose of well-crafted High Eeber, of the Riders and the Heliops, and of the Kahila, the Bivers and Mabals, of all the various Barbarosans, travellers and refugees putting aside their differences in order to turn back on a hideous onslaught of shadowy creatures.

#

As dark clouds roll in from the Lewshan mountains, lovers of knowledge from the ancient traditions meet to find common ground. Waleran pondered the brutal conflicts he'd witnessed during his travels with Barqo. Enough of a star-math to accurately predict when fine words might be the prelude to serious fireworks.

Despite singing fine songs, he muttered to himself, people can be real shits. The finest words can lead to the greatest betrayals. The ancient legends say that a raven-sint will befriend a wolf-sint

just in order to tease it and steal its breakfast... Out of old nervous habit, he looked around to see if anyone might've heard him mention the long-extinct flying species — something that can get a traveler in trouble in a Heliop town, and laughed-at in many others.

The Sun had fallen completely. Waleran peered through the leaves for a glimpse of the night sky, trying to read the position of the far wanderers. A falling star on the eastern horizon caught the astrologer's attention. A quick calculation. A quietly-breathed chant to the Goddess of the Seventh Wanderer. A careful listen for its mental echo. He concluded that the Goddess was preparing a love potion for all the demented hucksters of the Saskan Lands.

#

How had that verbose smarty-pants Engineer Quinn put it? "With their outmoded belief systems and lousy bio-programming, their disease has become malignant. Any healing potion might take a long while to effect a cure."

#

Waleran breathed a melancholy sigh.

#

I guess that's a kind of optimism, he thought, eyes fluttering to a close.

#

Resting in the certainty that cool, defiant, courageous ones. Like oneself. Like Birakay and Lukando. Like Barqo. Like Phoenix Stanley Quinn and his friend, that argumenter from Biverton, Showan Biver-Wing. Like all the wise, brave, courageous, talented performers and

players and teachers. Soon we'll be able to turn the present disorder into opportunity. To make our way to safe harbors and good havens. We'll enjoy one another's company until the love-potion begins to work.

#

Drifting off, Waleran imagined the watchtowers of all the great towns announcing a special song sung by the handsome talented Pilot of the Chrome Ark, Birakay of Qurol. Sung for all those carrying their hidden torch lights in the caves of resistance. A great Hum will arise across all the Lands of Saskantinon.

#

His thoughts picked up on his standard starry mantras as he drifted into sleep.

#

The true reading will be revealed.

All one has to do is be cool and courageous.

A little patience goes a long way.

Follow the purple light of the deep knowledge.

#

Imagining all the bards around the Ring singing the new tune, as Waleran drifted off, the wafting of a distant song still playing in his head.

At a hidden turtle-sint campground two clicks to the northwest, the ancient Dance of the Declaration of the River's Springs continued to unfold. A very, very slow-moving but deeply

rhythmic Terrapin bop, it dancer-singers send out waves of gentle sonorous tones aimed at soothing the listener's sorrows. Like a souvenir of happier times that settles the tremors of a troubled mind.

#

Chapter Five


Breaking Away

Act Number: *I*

Scene Number: *4*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 45-50 : 1%*

Scene Context: *Catalyst / B-Story*

Scene Color: 

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

There must be a rise and a fall. It must involve one or more specific characters.

After getting back home from Beet, Bu'ruq once again runs afoul of the Sunguards after telling Qu'rub about seeing Iohane and Henqu in Beet and they go on a tear. Mu'ray rescues them and takes them away to join the Basimi.

#

The Conflict. > <

There must be some kind of conflict or contradiction. It may or may not be resolved in this scene.

Mu'ray squabbles with Kirill about having an existential raison d'être. Are they in it just for the loot? Do they have a responsibility to help the sints? Should they care about what is going on in the northeast?

The Ending.

How does this scene end?

Bit of an upbeat. Bu'ruq and Qu'rub get a kick out of their Basimi training, deep in the Kahila Forest. But some trees are falling there too. And Bu'ruq sees some things among the Basimi that he doesn't like.

#

The Funny.

What is the laugh line or amusement in this scene?

Gallex's kids run some corny light hazing routines on the new recruits.

#

The Truth.

What is the realness in this scene?

Brutality. A captured Sunguard is executed.

#

The Connection.

What makes the reader care in this scene? Is an emotional, aesthetic, or an idea?

The Basimi are deliriously free. They don't believe in anything we've seen so far. Their hierarchy is a loose one, run by a kind of casual democracy. They are not quite mercenaries, though, and there's the rub.

#

The Beauty.

What is beautiful in this scene?

The family of Gallex have escaped from their troubles, so perhaps Bu'ruq can do the same.

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

How is this a catalyst for the main events? Need to show a resolution (or more likely, the indication of a resolution) of the Mu'ray / Kirill debate. This scene should trigger the decision to organize a sea voyage or a journey to the South in order to figure out how to both save SPQ and contribute to the defense of the Lands against the monsters.

#

Chapter Six


Legends of Massachawa

Act Number: *I*

Scene Number: *5*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 51-56 : 1%*

Scene Context: *Catalyst / B-Story*

Scene Color: 

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

There must be a rise and a fall. It must involve one or more specific characters.

Bu'ruq and Qu'rub soon grow to dislike the Basimi culture. Too much crime. Not enough sublime. Monmar Massachawa tells the story of Harmonies in the Light of the Moons, rescues them and introduces them to an even greater mystery -- the Circles of Five.

#

The Conflict. > <

There must be some kind of conflict or contradiction. It may or may not be resolved in this scene.

Arguments and discussions between Mu'ray and Monmar reveal that the Agency exists, that it is rife with rogue agents as well as dedicated agents, that it has an incompetent bureaucracy as well as conflicts "at the top".

The Ending.

How does this scene end?

MM leads the boys directly to the Pool (at Juuj?) and orders them to dive into it. They find the underground river that takes them to (a secret exit near the Northern Ring). They travel Westerly on the Ring, the land getting flatter and flatter until they encounter the rift near Eelan, where suddenly everything seems to be written differently even though it sounds the same. They begin to ascend.

#

The Funny.

What is the laugh line or amusement in this scene?

Some Hitchhikers' Guide level laughs at the incompetence of our galactic overseers.

#

The Truth.

What is the realness in this scene?

The Pool really is a portal, not a metaphor, not magical and not mystical -- well, maybe a bit mystical.

#

The Connection.

What makes the reader care in this scene? Is an emotional, aesthetic, or an idea?

An aesthetic one. The thing that ties together the themes hinted at so far -- new songs, the reason for the musicality of the ring, the mystery of the deep pool -- is that they are all connected to the Catastrophe, which was largely man-made. Each of them represents a way back from the Fall, but none of them are what they seem. The Moonsinger is a botched alien intervention. The Pool of the Sun is nothing of the sort -- it is a cenote that connects to caverns and an underground river. Its importance was understood by the early settlers of the Saskan Lands and later mystified by the Sunnies.

#

The Beauty.

What is beautiful in this scene?

The story of the Moons Dance is our first major introduction to the Flowlands culture, first hint at the deep strangeness of life forms in this world. *Massachawa's Song*

#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

This section may be too long. Some of it might go better into Scene 4. The story of the Moon Dance could be tightened up, maybe turned into a song or something. This needs to be a catalytic section --> it anticipates the Journey to the West in the way that Scene 4 anticipates the

Journey to the South.

#

#

Sure of their clever disguises, six Specials strolled into Eelan Town cloaked in the unassuming garb of the Rutotnik weaponsry guild.

#

“Ho there young slahbekka!”, shouted Special Number Three, in what he mistook for a jolly western Eebar tone, to a local he’d mistakenly taken for a provider of fresh drink. “Please. We are buyers from Rutotnik and we’ve heard of the Great Moon Dance. Could you tell us where it will be done this season? And kindly point the way? And do you know who will dance the Antelope?”

#

Having expected them, and curious, not having previously seen the enemy up close, the young Eelani bekka stared the Special in the eye, then eyed the others too, marking their faces and features. A spotter born and bred, she could smell their duplicity.

#

“Forewarned is forearmed,” she replied.

#

Pouring the hatreds of generations into her gaze until satisfied they’d caught her spell, she spit on the ground easterly, in the direction of the Saskan capitol and gestured as the Eelani do to show

that something tastes bad, with a pop of all five fingers towards the sky, as if letting go of their disgust. She walked away muttering the ancient Eelani oath, “Fire under ground, fire in the sky. Beyond the wall of fire, there’s fire on the mountain.”

#

All the Specials shuddered as she walked away. Number Three, who’d questioned her, had a shiver down his spine. Special Number One smacked Number Three upside the back of the head to stop the spell-sent shiver.

#

Having got his attention, “Don’t be such a dunce,” he said, “they have spies everywhere. Thanks to you they know we’re here.” He directed the Junior’s attention with a subtle jab of the chin. They watched her in whispered conversation with a lad who quickly ran off.

#

“Every mine, freehold, farm and manufactory in the Hills of Eelan will know we’re here within a few hours, you fooking goober. Word spreads through these hills like a winter storm blowing down from the Krunkinotto.”

#

They walked on. Stopping in a street of vendors selling everyday wares to purchase a knick-knack for pulling up carrots Special Number One asked in a careful monotone, “Which way to the Dance?”. The vendor pointed in the direction of the low hills west of town.

Chapter Seven

(This is a "western" story. Probably belongs later? But... it can be told from a Mobalbesq perspective, so perhaps OK to introduce earlier.)

A cadre of Helioptic Specials wore disguises as buyers of raw materials for the Brothers of Pure Fear, a widely-known weapons manufacturing guild out of Rutonik.

They strolled around Eelan Town trying to be nonchalant as they asked random townsfolk for directions to where the Dance would be held and inquired as to who might be performing this turn. Their disguises failed to fool the Eelani locals. Quickly detected by numerous Eelani Sunspotters, both amateur and professional, who'd been doing business with folks from the central provinces for generations. They could spot a phony from a hundred leaps.

Despite the good business brought by their Holistic neighbors, the Eelani were a reserved people holding deep historical grudges towards the Sun worshippers.

Beyond a few friendly nods in the direction of the Path out of town towards the Weyrlands, and even more not-so-friendly nods in various random directions, no Eelan Town residents were forthcoming.

#

The counter-espionage Sunspotters Network of Eelan acted like a central nervous system for the eastern hill country. Without any orders, acting on instincts as old as the hills themselves, Eelani freeriders were soon sharing far and wide, throughout the western hill country, bemused stories about the newly arrived Helioptic spies.

At mines, freeholds, farms and artisan manufactories throughout the region, the word spread like a spring breeze.

Among those hearing the news were the comrades of the Old Mill Cooperative on the Upper Blue, upstream from Mabkhol on the Eelan side of the river. The Mill had ceased operations for the season once preparations were completed for the annual Feast of the Full Moons.

Folks meeting at the mill were a mixed group of Co-op members and others from the area who'd volunteered for provisioning a variety of vendors setting up during preparations for the dance, and for those handling the great feast that would follow. Preparing for the Dance was a major entertainment for the hill folk.

Among their number at the Mill was one who, unbeknownst to the rest, reported back to a Circle of Fives known as the Clockwise Sixth, code-named for obscure bio-musicological reasons as The Bees.

Six other members of the Bee cohort rendezvoused further upstream. Making their way to

Eelan Town along the path from the Upper Weyrlands, the Bees mixed in with growing crowds traveling to the festival from the hill towns and villages around New Weyr, sharing the buzz of excitement generated by the impending festivities.

#

Azron Gurdon traveled on the path from the Weyr Highlands too. Setting out once again on an obscure mission from the Agency, he liked to joke, quietly, and typically only to himself, that it was a “Mission Inscrutable”.

The old man joined a sizable group of festival-goers camped together for safety during the evening. They were still nearly a day’s walk to the site of the Dance. Azron stifled a yawn while wandering from camp-fire to camp-fire, dutifully persisting in information-gathering efforts amongst groups of the tight-lipped hill people. They were seldom willing to share anything of interest. And were jolly good at not revealing not much at all about anything, Azron thought with an internal sigh.

He wondered if he’d ever have an interesting conversation again, or if he was going to be stuck among these country rubes forever.

#

The Eelani and Weyring hill people did take exceeding delight in teaching the old man with the odd accent about the sacred importance of the river-fish-on-a-stick.

Once they deigned to speak, they never tired of babbling *ad nauseam* in their sing-songs accents about their favorite Holy Hills too. Azron’d heard it all before, dozens of times, no, hundreds of times, over multiple generations.

It was an old hill country prank. Having heard many of the same droll stories from the

great-great-grands of these festival-goers, he was bored to the point of tears. Still. A job's a job. The Agency would want to hear all the dull details. Again.

Pulling on something resembling a happy face, Azron greeted another group of campers with a hearty version of the standard local greeting: "Hello fellows, well met! Do you have a song today?"

Which in the local vernacular was understood to mean "Could you spare a splash of s'lah?", of which there was plenty to go around and Azron was satisfyingly soused soon enough.

#

The Bees had been notified, through their liaison to another Clockwise Fifth cell referred to as the Sharpies that a person sent from the Agency would probably show up at some point en route.

Azron's description was known to them. Once arriving at the camp-site they picked up on Azron in short order.

Carefully, one by one, they casually made their way towards him, wandering about in a fashion mimicking his own. As instructed, they greeted him with shy smiles and the odd remark, "Hey fellow! Have you heard a new song *clearly* today?"

Azron knew something was up with these strangers. But even Old Gurdon of the Lost Planet, as his boss had mockingly referred to him at the last staff meeting, couldn't quite place it exactly.

They seemed quite familiar with local customs, yet they carried themselves distinctly from regular hill people. And seemed to be doing so purposefully. Like they wanted to be noticed by anyone who was really looking for them.

They moved too much like Weyrlings to be Heliopsic Specials. Were way too loose and

easy in their manner to be Riders. And didn't act like southerners trying to "Be More Weyrie", as southern kids liked to say, either. And that odd remark they made in greeting, "have you *heard* a new song *clearly*", not only was not a typical hill country phrase but seemed very much a wink-wink-nudge-nudge sort of acknowledgment regarding his former trade in his former... umm...lands.

They seemed to be feeling him out in some subtle way, perhaps studying him for a response.

#

Intrigued and hoping buy a bit of time in order to study them in return, Azon tried a trick of the trade that sometimes helped to create a psycho-physical space in which he could observe folks more closely.

The next time it happened, he heartily laughed at their odd remark, then asked his new acquaintances if they'd like to learn a game from his native region. When they turned to his notice, he claimed to be from a remote fishing village just off the coast of the Isle of Wye. The agent — or whatever it was — quickly agreed to the game. The cohort gathered near him, along with others intrigued by his performance.

#

Azron announced, with a dramatically disdainful tone and loudly enough so that other folks near them in the camp could hear, that in his opinion his game was *ten times more interesting* than discussing the *ridiculous* mystical properties of a fish-on-a-stick. And *eight times more fruitful* than a walk up any *so-called* holy hills.

The local sing-song and hub-bub quieted down as a small crowd drew near. The hill folk

could see he knew their pranks. They wandered closer to see if, as the saying went, perhaps the old man had “an auspicious ninth” — their colloquial way of saying “a clever retort”.

#

If only they knew where my home village *really* was, the intergalactic traveler thought, as he placed a drinking cup on a nearby stump and explained to the audience that the game was called “silently-stare-at-the-mug-until-you-blink”. In a serious deadpan tone, Azron explained that this was a favorite pastime of the Wye fisherfolk and that doing it right brought *interesting* rewards.

Dramatically pulling a pair of seeing-spectacles from his over-sized coat and placing them on his nose, Azron proceeded to stare intently at the drinking mug, the spectacles dramatically enlarging his eyeballs to the on-lookers. Humming an old Wye ballad about the folly of falling in love with a lawyer from Biverton Town, and seeming to be looking for something in one of the large pockets of his oversized overcoat, Azron subtly adjusted their setting to scan the crowd for implants, machinic prosthetics, or other out-of-place weaponry.

The supposed business delegation from Rutonik took a room at the Inn of the Great Resistance near Eelan Town’s southern gate. They pretended to admire the ancient murals adorning the walls of the common room depicting the events of the First Great Terror. They remembered to keep their opinions about The Great Wall of Fire to themselves, though one of them almost laughed out loud as a snarky remark occurred to him.

The crafting of the murals was exquisite, the paintings kept fresh and adorned with emphatic embellishments done in the Eelan style, using shiny metals and stone-stuff to elaborate

the motifs.

Once gathered in their room, with the door carefully closed, the thoroughly disgusted lead Watcher spoke. As one who'd mastered Western styles and accents more thoroughly than the others, had plenty of experience with the Night Watch, and might even be able to pass for a Salofessian Loyalist who'd migrated to Qurol or Sungyte, he contested, with the firmness and determination of one aspiring to become an Elder of the Supreme Council of Besquohuk, as to the quality of their training and their lack of results so far in information-gathering.

He berated them in the way that a "Father of the Real People" was expected to: "You fools, idiots and weaklings! Have you been staring at the stars? For Sun's sake, find your fire! We know the Western Witch will be here. Be alert! Our job is to find it and subdue it and break up it's network. Do not fail in your duties to the Eternal Flame!"

#

The others bowed deeply in acknowledgment of the leader's Authority, committing themselves to the stated Correction. After completing ritual abasements, they made their way back to the Common Room for an evening meal and to mix with the locals. None of them had ever tasted the western delicacy known as *chillah*, a stacked bunch of thin fried maize-cakes, layered between various types of local plant-food, dripping with the melted churned cheese of the Eelan mountain goat, and flavored with local chilis and herbs.

They tried, somewhat ridiculously, to balance their new-found delight with the delicious Eelani cuisine and their desire to not appear as foreigners, with their desire to not appear like foolish gluttons under the watchful eyes of the Leader.

A difficult balancing act.

Later that night, the youngest of them, who was just fresh out of Guards Training and had been sent with the Watch due to exhibiting cleverness in languages, whispered appreciation to a bed-mate for the Eelani cuisine. This earned a shushing, as well as a secreted hand grip of agreement. They muffled their giggles, hid their smiles and continued to hold hands long after the Leader announced, “Quiet!”

#

The Sun began to set. The Moons of Mantemar rose in their double-glory, almost at twin full. Signaling the start of the festival days, early arrivals from the Lower Weyrlands and Western Barboskanti, dressed in colorful robes and capes and fanciful costumes, paraded onto the performance grounds.

Southern dancers flowed to an area of trees forming the backdrop where the Great Dance would be held the next evening. They broke into a ritual of chanting and twirling meant to bring happiness to the tree-spirits living there. The dance and the chants thanked the tree-sints for allowing the multitudes who were about to descend for the use of this space. And they promised to take good care of the area.

Eager scribes and bards, mostly from the southwestern lands, had also arrived. They were busy sketching depictions or developing new lyrics describing the details of this year’s festivities to bring back to their communities.

A pack of translucent, nearly-invisible white wolves had traveled for many days down from the Krunkinotto in the hopes of disrupting this event with a gory feed. Hungry and ready for a good slaughter, they licked their chops anticipating the glory of taking trophies back to their masters.

Lurking in the woods, they were suddenly spooked when the tree-spirits, awakened from their year-long hibernation by the revelers, detected the bad dogs. In their whispering windy way that no dog could ignore, they ordered the wolves, in no uncertain terms, to flee back to their masters if they didn't want to suffer a barrage of broken limbs.

#

Jonn Jariqol was from a small village between Barbol and Terpinol, not too far from the Aran Sea. Born with a bit of coyote and also trained, as occultation teachers from the village liked to put it, in "detecting unsung notes".

Smiling as the wind whipped up Jonn noticed something of the unfolding drama between the tree-sints and the nether-wolves more clearly than most others did. Whispering to a dance-mate as they twirled past on another, Jonn shared that "One day I'd like t'kill them wicked wolves once 'n for-all."

#

#

A group from the Devotees of the Purple Flower, an herbalist cult centered in villages not far from New Harvest, circulated among the others, celebrating the awakening of the tree-spirits and bartering their trademark purple clothing and accouterments in exchange for food, drink, tools, news and new songs or stories.

#

The widely-respected Riverside Actors Guild of Barbol, working together with a small group of bug-crossed villagers from the hilly weyrlands to the east of New Harvest, assembled a 6-person

team to drive a huge puppet depicting a mythical cricket-creature of a long-eared type. The long tawny pale green face of the hugely over-sized bug, with its remarkably piercing orange-yellow eyes and seemingly alert ear-tufts, gave a good impression of seeing-all and hearing-all while being utterly other-worldly.

The great green cricket turned its gaze upon each of the dancers in turn as the puppet-team made it duck and weave and occasionally shake its herringboned patterned armor. When it stopped moving, so did all the dancers. They'd unfold its formidable wingspan while the revelers chanted all together, ever so quietly, and so powerful for that quietness, soft "chirp-chirp" calls, after which the wings would fold back in and the whirling dance resumed.

At the finish of the ritual of the blessing of the trees, the Cricket Dancers retreated to just inside the tree-line, where the giant facsimile stood perfectly still, almost hidden, throughout the rest of the festivities.

#

Travelers from throughout the Weyrlands, Barboskanti, Eelan and Bordaloon began arriving at the fair-grounds south of Eelan Town that night. They continued to pour in all night and into the next day. The air filled with rippling sounds of songs and conversations exchanged. The aroma of tasty morsels and hot spicy s'lah prepared on small cooking fires wafted all over the festival grounds.

#

The Bees and the Sharpies arrived in their meandering way.

The Helioptic Specials-in-disguise set up a booth purporting to sell faux-armor from Rutonik, to delight of a number of young ones in the gathering.

The old man from the Agency and others on a variety of occulted missions, mingled throughout the crowds.

Actors and bards always on the lookout for new materials. Plus a fair number of more serious scribes. Many watched, listened, learned and in some cases recorded the goings-on.

#

Many of the arrivals were napping, having traveled a long distance and not wanting to sleep through the events of the night to come.

Azron Gurdon was too tall, too old, too well-equipped and too obviously, outlandishly from “far away” to simply melt into the crowd. The Bees continued to circulate around him in an individual fashion, still without openly revealing themselves. He kept a keen eye on them in return.

He also spotted several Jaxen working with Innkeepers and Brewers collectives who’d set up stalls to serve the festival-goers. In itself, the appearance of a few clones working with their employers at such a gathering was not the least bit out of the ordinary. The fact that at least one of them appeared to be, according to his instrumentation, of a new model not previously entered into the Agency’s data base, however, merited extra attention and observation.

So far he’d not detected any other noteworthy enhanced mechanics or implants. Just the usual assortment of concealed weapons and light armor typical of travelers through the western lands.

#

As the gathering began to settle in, not too long before Full Moons Rise, troupes from hither and yon put on smaller performances prior to the main events. After delivering several cart-loads of

supplies to their customers, a group identifying itself as the “Festival-Going Comrades of the Old Mill Cooperative on the Upper Blue” unfurled a fancy bilingual banner. In elegant calligraphy it declared in both Eibar and Oober an upcoming show called, simply, “Dance School”.

A cantor stood next to the banner, intoning the announcement in the two major languages of the Saskan Lands, and alternating those with the same announcement in a beautiful, lilting classical high-country Ahber. This caught the attention of Azron Gurdon, who’d not heard the ancient forms of Ahber intonations in many years. Intrigued, he made his way towards the Old Mill banner.

The Bee who’d been embedded with the “comrades”, having spotted Azron coming their way, turned to one of the local kids milling around their fire, pressed a nibble in their hand and whispered, “Go tell the others to inform Our Mother that the Old Man is here.”

Azron noticed the young one scurrying away but didn’t give it much account. At an event like this folks were constantly sending kids dashing around with messages, deliveries and invitations. His attention focused when he saw the runner stop to whisper to one of the strange-acting hill people on whom he’d been keeping an electronic eye. Tuning in to that conversation with a brief tap on his aural implants, he smiled and thought to himself,

“So, maybe she’s here. This could get interesting.”

#

As the crowd coalesced around the small pavilion of the “Comrades of the Old Mill”, Azron easily picked out the spies from the Center.

He gave a wee laugh, this time with a slight shake of the head. Bemused by their facile comprehension of Eelani capabilities, even after all that had passed between the Westerners, the

Riders and the Heliops, he wondered how the Watchers managed to keep so many folks afraid of them.

He pondered the means by which these great communities of humos, who'd lived so closely together for so long, and who'd faced so many trials and tribulations in common, after all this time, still understood so little about each other.

He lost his reverie when the cantor switched first to Oubarq, and then, startlingly, to full-fledged Growlsh.

#

The hard consonants of the far southern dialect, followed by the gnarling, rolling bellow of True Growlsh felt like a smack to the back of the head for many in the crowd, who laughed and roared their approval. The Heliopic spies were visibly shaken. The use of Oubarq was highly suspicious in their home towns. Speaking Growlsh utterly forbidden. At a stern glance from the Watch Leader, they quickly recovered their composure and attempted to fit in by offering a few mild hurrahs.

Switching to a mildly-inflected Ourbar in the popular flowing, soothing rhyme-and-rhythm style of the "Sacred and Secular Songs of the Eastern Riverside Kahilabek", the cantor introduced the story of "Baleran and Rooma Go to Dance School", a musical comedy wherein said young sints from a bucolic Herbalists' village in the gentle southern weyrlands learn to stomp and snort like angry horses, among other poses.

The performance unfolded with a great deal of falderal concerning herds of "wasted" antelopes involved in a complicated plot having to do with a bumper crop of canteloupe and cosmic retribution. Nearly every line in the songs dripped with double or triple entendres, many

of them utterly ridiculous, a few bordering on the obscene, a few crossing that line, many a bit stupid, and even more of them very funny, especially if you'd had a cup or two of s'lah.

#

One of the Clockwise Sixth made their way to Azron's side during the performance. Azron smiled at their approach as he tapped out the rhythm of the drama's final chorus on his knee, incidentally activating a recording device and sending a ping to the monitoring station to let them know his current location, to upload his previous recordings, and to clear his cache.

After the applause and snaps and hand-waving and shouts of encouragement were done, he turned to the Bee and said in what he hoped was a friendly way, "Nice, eh? But I don't really know what to say. So stupid. And yet so fun!"

The Bee was about to respond when a junior scribe, who'd evidently dipped well into an entire bucket of s'lah, tripped over a rock and stumbled between them. The young one apologized profusely babbling away in a learned Krbshside Eibar with the tell-tale school-boy inflections of a freshly-minted Terpinol Academy graduate.

Said he'd been trying to make his way through the crowd to observe the "Dance School" up close, but unfortunately had had little sleep the night before, and *possibly* too much s'lah during the day, and so on and so forth, all in a much too forward way.

Azron was not amused. Drunk young scribes were one of his pet peeves.

And he certainly didn't need anyone from the East Coast asking too many questions about his cover story.

Taking a deep breath, and recollecting his mission, he turned back to the Bee, rolled his eyes, and said, "You'd think the Masters of Terpinol would teach these little twerps some

manners, eh?”

#

The operative from the Circle of Fives stared at Azron, seemingly unamused. Then leaned in very close and began to whisper rapidly and urgently in his ear. Halfway through the earful, Gundron noticed the lack of a red dot in his eyepiece and realized that his recording device had been switched off after that young scribe had “accidentally” bumped into him.

Annoyed and little bit nervous at not having detected someone who knew his gear that well, he glanced about trying to spot the young scribe. But they’d seemed to’ve melted away into the crowd. Too late now, he thought, and re-focused on listening carefully to the odd message being muttered into his ear.

“A new one has been brought in as a member of the revolutionary community supporting the comrades of the Old Mill on the Upper Blue. Tell them. The new one is multiple. One is Two. Emerging from the Void, they will be the natural leader of the Workers Council of Greater Eelan. The Materially Masterful Mother held a partnering ceremony, but the grooms did not appear since they were occupied with urgent affairs in Mabhakol. Number One has smoked non-sint sea-catch with the Fisherfolk and she has drunk air-s’lah with the Royal Wind. Everything is in place. The next offensive will be decisive. The groom’s sisters stood in for them at the partnering feast. All is ready.”

#

As he began to figure out the import of this message, without turning his head, and trying very hard to not just let go with his dislike for the whole Saskantinonian tendency towards obfuscation and bizarre metaphors, Azron softly and simply asked if that was all.

“The comrades of the Old Mill are packing their bags now,” was the only reply.

#

Azron saw that the Comrades who’d put on the “Dance School” were indeed packing up their equipment. Evidently that last bit was just an observation, not part of a cryptic missive he’d need to decode.

Having caught at least some of the cryptic allusions, and trying to think of way to ask what they knew of his old friend Mikel Moballeq’s current whereabouts, or whether the infamous Monmar Massachawa would actually be making an appearance here at the Dance, he turned to look the Bee in the eye, ready to say, using appropriately cryptic analogies, “Say friend, where do the Fisherfolk smoke their catch now? And will Mother be joining the Dance?”

#

To his annoyance, the messenger had also vanished.

“Dammit all to Betelgeuse”, he thought, both worried about what he’d learned, annoyed that this would probably mean an extension of his mission, and concerned that somebody might’ve heard what he said, Azron muttered, “Stick this damn sing-song serenade on a gravity shell. Why can’t these Saskanese just speak plainly?”

#

#

As they packed up their things, the various comrades and hangers-on from the Old Mill discussed the highlights and low-lights of their performance.

Consensus was that they needed to brush up on the canonical “fish-on-a-stick scene”,

which hadn't got as many laughs as they'd hoped it would. There was also some goodhearted joking about the antelope/cantaloupe conundrum.

Once they'd finished tidying up, and after checking with various customers to make sure everybody'd been supplied as expected, the crew settled in around their campfire for evening snacks — a version of the famous local *chillah* provided by the Inn of the Great Resistance in Eelan Town — and some freshly-brewed s'lah, using their own special blend of spices and herbs.

Azron who'd been wandering for a bit until he located their camp, asked if he could join them, offering to contribute some special spices to their pot o' s'lah. They cheerfully welcomed him.

#

A well-dressed scribe from Boreded stopped by their fire too.

Following a hearty “Well met!”, they handed their guest a full slurp-spoon. The gang were enchanted to hear that the scene from “Dance School” concerning the river-baby who'd calmed the antelopes would be a key part of the Scribe's review. And it would be read out a few days hence at the Riders Retreat! The comrades tittered with pleasure. The Riders Retreat was a famous Inn in Qurol catering to Rider-folk from Bordaloon, Salofess and Mabalbesq as well as to more adventurous and less-quick-to-judge younger — and younger-in-spirit — Heliopicons from the Inner Ring towns of the Borda Woods. To have their work reviewed there! It was quite an honor for mere hillfolk.

#

“Oh my stars! Do you think Birakay will be there?”, the delighted young comrade in charge of lighting for their production asked. Everybody got excited at the thought that Birakay might hear

about their “Dance School” number.

Perhaps he’d make a new song about it!

They would soon be sung throughout the Ringlands!

The scribe demurred, not making any promises.

#

Upon urging from the weird old man with the oddball Wye accent, they agreed to a round of Azron’s game. They referred to him as “the old fisher from Wye” and to the Bordered Scribe as “the fancy one”. Setting a drinking-mug on the edge of campfire, they all stared at it intensely and asked the fancy guy to be the judge of who blinked first.

This went on for some time.

#

Shortly before Three Bells, having made some surreptitious repairs, and not too long before the Dance was to begin, Azron’s equipment notified him that the gang of Helioptic spies were edging closer and closer to the “Old Mill” contingent.

But the surreptitious lurkers he assumed now to be agents of Monmar Massachawa were nowhere to be seen. If they were still at the gathering, they had cloaked themselves.

#

The mill-comrade who’d played Rooma pointed at the one who’d played Baleran, laughing and shouting “You blinked! You blinked!”

“DRINK! DRINK! DRINK!” was the refrain as “Baleran” was handed a skin of Barbakal spirits and took a long draft of the potent liquor.

Azron, who had had his fair share of s’lah and had helpfully contributed a bit of his own

potent special spice mix to the night's brew, but was not as inebriated as he pretended to be when he stood up and urged the two stars of the Old Mill's production to join him in his favorite Wye dance.

"Come now, young ones! Let me show you the steps of the Isle of Wye Dance School! First we will flow... thus... like one of the great creatures of the Deep!"

#

The one known a few generations back amongst certain singers of somewhat ill-repute as "the Comrade of the Light" pulled out his mirrors and reflected light from the campfire onto them. His hope was that this distraction would pull some eyes their way, and perhaps alert the Eelani rangers he knew must be watching the crowd, in case of shenanigans on the part of the Helioptic agents.

As they began to spin about, a drunken young scribe stumbled into their camp, nearly falling face-first into the fire. "Goopers!", he explained, then belched.

Azron recognized the interloper and was on his guard right away. Deftly dancing away from this "scribe" as he twirled about with the young folks, he considered sending off an urgent report to the boss about this one.

He put it off as his attention seemed to be required for a developing situation at hand regarding the approach of the Helioptic watchers.

He then he also felt a slight twinge of, what, could it be... no... he thought, really? It had been so many years since he'd felt that particular kind of longing for, well, for a boybek. Especially for one who must certainly be centuries younger than he.

Probably the s'lah talking, that's all.

#

The “trade delegation” from Rutonik had arrived at the Mill folks’ camp carrying serious looks on their faces.

A bit in his cups, yes, but even more so trying and failing to dislodge a certain obsessive vision of the boybek’s cute bubble butt from his corrupt old mind, Azron found himself thinking,

“These idiots look like that weirdly forlorn creature from my home world (so sad it is gone! Just gone! an entire civilization gone! Gone!!!... And here I am... alone... in this forsaken enclosure with these idiots who don’t even know they’re being experimented on...) Oh, what was it called, so gloomy-looking (damn, I am losing my memory... I’m so old....), yeah, an Unqnard, or Uggnorod, or something...”

#

Somebody was handing one of the Helioptic agents a slurp-spoon.

Despite Azron’s best efforts so far to avoid him, the sloppy student scribe had made his way to Azron’s side, and was joining in their dance.

The boy, who didn’t smell drunk at all, pressed up against Azron.

As they slowly whirled around in one another’s arms, the cute young thing pulled Azron to him tightly, and pressed up against him, whispered, distinctly, clearly, without the slightest hint of inebriation, into his ear,

“I am the groom”.

#

Then all hell broke loose — for an instant — as the Mill crew were rapidly rustled and hog-tied by the Helioptic interlopers.

The undercover Watchers had positioned themselves such that when they took out their long knives and binding ropes, they made short order of immobilizing the Old Mill comrades, the scribe from Bordered who'd promised to make them famous, as well as the "drunken scribe" and Azron.

Seated behind the captured crew, the Leader of the Watch instructed his captives to keep their eyes on the fire and their voices quiet, lest they wanted a "correction". They all knew enough Helioptic gibberish to know this probably meant a quick knife in the back.

#

Azron noticed that huge, thick red clouds were rolling in front of the two Full Moons. He tried to discern an Agency ship hidden inside them, but it was futile. They'd never been spotted in a million years on hundreds of thousands of planets. Why should they be visible now?

Maybe I am drunk?, he thought.

He was curious, though, when he noticed tendrils of the red clouds seemed to creep downward, downward, spiraling slowly towards them.

The "drunken scribe" winked and smiled sweetly at Azron.

Azron could see a boner pressing up in the boy's pants.

"Holy crap," he thought, "this can't be real."

#

He turned his head to watch as a tentacle of the red mist wafted around the ankle of one of the thugs from the central provinces.

"We know you lot know where the Witch is. Tell us and you'll be spared. Lie to us and you will be repenting at the Festival of Reconciliation."

The Watch Leader was trying to impress his captives by using his “Father” voice. They weren’t having it, most of them ignoring him, seemingly either not sure what was going on, thinking it was another game, or just not too concerned about it.

“Which witch is that?” one of the comrades asked, which caused a loud round of laughter.

The “drunken scribe” scootched closer to Azron, rubbing their thighs together and nuzzling his ear.

“Liar, liar, pants on fire.”, another said, giggling,

“You know you’ll be in a Bivertoon docket getting out-argued before you get any of us to go to a fooking Burning in a fooking Heliop Town so fook you and your fooking band of ignorant, murderous wild-beasts....”

#

Azron interrupted the Mill-player’s drunken tirade.

“Excuse me. What exactly do you intend to do? Murder us all here in this enormous crowd of westerners, Riders and southerners? You know the Eelani Rangers already have you targeted in their sights, right? Rhere must be a dozen stone-throwers and cutters aimed at you right now. You know that, right? If any one of these sints is so much as injured, you’ll be hauled off behind a hill, never to be seen again, before this young one here — he nodded towards the “drunken scribe” at his side — can say, ‘You are violating the Great Argument of Bivertoon’”.

Having become adept at making his spine quite flexible, over the eons, Azron was able to turn his head almost 180 degrees to look directly at the Specials’ boss. He could see that at least a couple of the Helioptic agents were visibly getting nervous. At the same time, he was curious

why they'd picked out the Old Mill Comrades to interrogate. His information-gathering instincts were on fire.

He wondered if any of them knew that Monmar Massachawa was not "the Witch" whom they sought, as they put it, even if she probably was "the Mother".

#

The Watcher spy who's ankle had been wreathed by the red mist suddenly screamed in pain. "My leg! Oh Holy Fire! I am being consumed!"

At this, the "drunken scribe" laughed, stood up and discarded his bonds like they were paper.

An ethereal kind of cloak unfolded around him and lifted him up into the air, transforming his appearance along the way into a naked female form, which, to top it off, glowed in the darkness, and a mist rose around her as her cloak continued to undulate.

"Shit," Azron mumbled to himself, "Jesse K. She's been here the whole time. No wonder I was getting horny. That old witch. What a hot ticket."

#

Producing a long thin saber from inside her billowing cloak, she freed the comrades and Azron and the Bordered Scribe from their bonds with several quick cuts. Turning to the Watchers and shouting "I love the Dance!", she twirled about, once, twice, and the third time left a spray of red where the boss watcher's head had recently rested.

Looking at each of the astonished Specials in turn she said, "Who wants to dance with me?"

#

They scattered in every direction, disappearing into the night. Azron had little doubt they'd all be picked up Eelani irregulars before they could leave the fair grounds. He stared at the decapitated body of the Lead Watcher. Its severed head was slowly rolling towards the camp fire.

As Jesse K continued to twirl about, declaring "It's the Dance! It's the Dance of the Antelopes! Let's dance!", her cloak wound ever more tightly around her and the mist rose higher.

When the mist had enveloped her entirely, she gave one last look at Azron, who reacted strongly to her direct gaze, and then she vanished.

Azron was glad it was dark. He didn't think the discharge in his pants would've been visible anyway. But still. It was a little embarrassing.

"Damn," he thought, pondering his oddly erotic encounter with the famous Agency rebel, "No wonder the Agency is after her."

Later he erased part of his materials and neglected to mention Jesse K's appearance at all in his report, noting only that the comrades from the Mill had overcome and scattered their captors.

Later still, as he considered what had happened, he found that he couldn't quite separate out in his mind the sight of the naked floating woman brandishing a sword from that of the young man pressed up against him.

"Let it go, you old goat. It doesn't really matter," he concluded. "After all, they more or less only have two genders on this planet anyway."

#

The comrade in charge of costumes gave a big sigh, and said,

“What. A. Mess”

A chest that had been neatly packed away was unpacked. They pulled out several blankets and cloaks, covering up the dead Heliop agent. The crew held a whispered conference about what to do, then quietly and neatly “re-packed” their things, leaving neither head nor headless body lying on the ground.

#

A series of fireworks shot up into the sky.

Controlled bonfires were lit near the edge of the woods.

The great cricket made a chorus of gentle chirps and responding “hoo-hoo’s” and “weep-weep’s” rippled throughout the throng.

All eyes turned towards the stage for the Great Dance.

Few took any notice of a small group of hill people taking their leave, carrying their things away in hill-country-style hand-carts.

#

When a customer selling loaves of festival bread made from their flour hailed them, asked after their songs, and queried why they were leaving so early, the comrade who’d played “Baleran” said,

“Turns out a baby is going to born at the Old Mill in three measure’s time, so we’re going to prepare the newsongs.”

“Let there be harmony in your brood!”, came the traditional blessing.

“And let there be songs to fill the air!”, they responded. The troupe headed north, towards the River Blue, into the festive well-lit night.

#

Watching from not too far away, enveloped in the dark, melting away into the crowd, the agents of the Clockwise Sixth, thinking always of the next victory on the next hill, dispatched runners in the twelve directions to share the news of the Encounter and to gather intelligence amongst all those Below who could be expected to have a voice in the upcoming Event.

Chapter Eight


The Splendid Boys

Act Number: *I*

Scene Number: *6*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 57-67 : 2%*

Scene Context: *Debate (1 of 4)*

Scene Color: 

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

There must be a rise and a fall. It must involve one or more specific characters.

Showan is introverted, nervous about putting himself in conflict with the Helioptic authorities, and afraid of the consequences. But he uses his connections to get information to Birako. Then he fears for Birako's safety after the Song of Henqu is heard.

#

The Conflict. > <

There must be some kind of conflict or contradiction. It may or may not be resolved in this scene.

Sure enough, a song stirs up trouble. There is an Argument around the Pool.

The Ending.

How does this scene end?

Around the deep Pool of Juuj (?), a minion of Tonedo -- Gil Tractacus maybe? -- tries to convince SPQ to give up his argument, assuring him that the Center knows what is best.

#

The Funny.

What is the laugh line or amusement in this scene?

Have some overlap with the events in Scene 5. The kids are escaping from the Helioptic Center while Gil is waxing poetic about how the mystery of the Pool reflects the Sun, oblivious to its function as an escape hatch.

#

The Truth.

What is the realness in this scene?

Love can mean sacrifice.

#

The Connection.

What makes the reader care in this scene? Is an emotional, aesthetic, or an idea?

Will Gil convince SPQ to give it up? Will Birako's star diminish if he is seen as a traitor?

Will SPQ suffer the same fate as Henqu and Iohane? Pose lots of unanswered dilemmas. Open up the debate in multiple directions.

#

The Beauty.

What is beautiful in this scene?

The power of song. Once Birako performs his new piece, people are blown away. Like the diva scene in *The Fifth Element*.

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

I kind of removed SPQ from the action at the beginning of the story. Is that smart? Should we hold off on him being taken by the Watch until this scene? The love triangle aspect might be a lot stronger if he is actually there at the auction in Sellaroon. May be hard to highlight my Splendid Boys if one of them is remote?

#

I am thinking we relocate the Pool, maybe into the disputed territory in the Kahila Lands. SPQ goes there in order to convince the (neoliberals) within the Heliopsis to evaluate his evidence, his arguments. It is a sub-rosa operation that happens around the Pool, not an arrest and trial -- that will come later.

#

This helps to put the panache around the Pool that I want. And it gives PQ some freedom of movement so I can have him more directly involved in the action, especially in Act I.

Chapter Nine


Coming Home

Act Number: *I*

Scene Number: *7*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 68-83 : 3%*

Scene Context: *Debate (2 of 4)*

Scene Color: 

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

There must be a rise and a fall. It must involve one or more specific characters.

At the Great Auction, Birako learns the details of SPQ's mission and he begins to question his loyalty to the Center.

#

The Conflict. > <

There must be some kind of conflict or contradiction. It may or may not be resolved in this scene.

The Heliops, the Bordered Council and the Basiji leaders all choose to focus their actions on countering the threat from Lewshan, ignoring both the injustice of the arrest of Henqu and Iohane and the urgency of SPQ's appeal to "heal the lands".

The Ending.

How does this scene end?

Sexy times for Birako and SPQ (and maybe a Jax too?). Disappointment on that score for Showan.

#

The Funny.

What is the laugh line or amusement in this scene?

All the Animal Lib Front concern about carrots.

#

The Truth.

What is the realness in this scene?

Existential angst of the rabbit folk. Their kind are hunted as food.

#

The Connection.

What makes the reader care in this scene? Is an emotional, aesthetic, or an idea?

Emotional overloads. Invasion is imminent. The lands are dying. The heroes are under attack or dis-believed. A love triangle. The allure of the southern culture. Is there a "way out"

that can simply develop naturally? Is there an alternative?

#

The Beauty.

What is beautiful in this scene?

Perhaps (?) it is the anticipation that there really is a New Song in the works? Hope.

#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

There is a lot going on in this scene. Work out some kind of montage approach to the Mother Hare part of the story. Keep the main focus on Birako and SPQ.

Chapter Ten


A Deep Dive

Act Number: *I*

Scene Number: *8*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 84-99 : 3%*

Scene Context: *Debate (3 of 4)*

Scene Color: 

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Alone, SPQ is interviewed by the Elders of Juuj at the Pool. He finds courage in the depths.

#

The Conflict. > <

Word spreads of disturbances in Besquohoek. The Elders, some of who have been

convinced to at least take SPQ seriously, are over-ruled. SPQ is to be taken to Besh and the formal Argument will be led by religious authorities, not by the Elders.

The Ending.

SPQ is taken away to Beshquohoek by the Sunguards.

#

The Funny.

In the dialog between SPQ and the Elders, do a series of stand up routines. Work on making the setting, the characters and the event all comedic. Focus on what is absurd in all of this.

The Truth.

What is the realness in this scene?

SPQ's nervousness addressing the Elders --> does "prayer" work?, does rational argument work?

Rejection of his appeal by some of them --> no, it doesn't.

Acceptance of his appeal by some of them --> yes, it does.

Arrest of SPQ --> the system seeks to protect itself before all else.

#

The Connection.

The setting is majestic and deeply symbolic. This scene is the core of the debate.

The Beauty.

SPQ is being heard by hidden supporters -- the new Basiji recruits in the caves below the Pool can hear everything. He is not alone. They hear him being taken away and get the word out.

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

Tie the threads of the story together better. Do some continuity editing. Make sure each action is tied into a consequence, a follow-on, a connection that drives the plot forward.

Chapter Eleven


Blessed Fire

Act Number: *I*

Scene Number: *9*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 100-115 : 3%*

Scene Context: *Debate (4 of 4)*

Scene Color: 

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Iohane and Henqu's hopes for rescue perish in the flames. Waleran fears that SPQ will be next.

#

The Conflict. > <

There must be some kind of conflict or contradiction. It may or may not be resolved in

this scene.

A rising erupts in Beshquohoek.

The Ending.

A new song is heard in Beshquohoek.

#

The Funny.

The bold defiance of the doomed Riders in the face of absurd accusations.

The Truth.

The deadliness of the system. It will take more than reason to undo it.

#

The Connection.

Death of a hero.

#

The Beauty.

The haunting melody of the new song.

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

As with scene 8, this and other scenes in Act I all need to be reviewed for continuity, flow, rhythm. Each scene should push towards the next one or a future one.

#

A heavily armed squad of Beshquo day watchers called, only during the time of the Gleaming, the First Day's Watch, accompanied them every step of the way. The loyal protectors directed their leading examples, Iohane and Henqu, along with eleven other accused to the site of the blaze. In loosely enveloping robes woven from the rough wool of Salorizan mammoth goatfons, ankles and wrists enchained, the prisoners were marched slowly from their dark dank cells, out into the winding alleyways of the Beshquohuk bazaar at the heat of mid-day.

#

For the Gleaming, the loyal protectors of the righteous wore rare and expensive armor made from multiple layers of shells of giant Borda arns. Henqu hadn't had a good bucket of s'lah in days and needed something to keep himself amused. He considered how the peculiar all-black armor made the day watch contingent look like big awkward bugs.

#

Whispering "creepy-crawly bugs" a few times under his breath, he smiled. Though few might recognize that slight fluctuation in his typically stern grimace as amusement, Iohane picked up on it.

#

The mid-morning sun was approaching its high point, exciting the crowd. The faithful had traveled to the capital from far and wide for the high holy days. From the fertile fields of

Rotannablue, from the deep woods of Borda and from the bloody plains of Givakala, and beyond. The prisoners heard the crowd's babble bubbling up from the center of town, gearing up for the rituals. A hub-bub of excitement. Rhythmic shouting and chanting as they drew nearer.

#

Iohane and Henqu had seen Gleamings before. They'd both been raised in Helioptic broods prior to joining the community of Riders. They knew what was going on. They knew what to expect.

#

At this point, a professional agitator from the Heliocastron performs on the great round dias in the center of town, a symbolic representation of the Great Deep Pool in Juuj. The official speechifying, detailing their crimes and the reasons for their punishment, goes on and on, riling up the faithful. Still pouring in from the rural villages of Tobaloon and Borda, the first-timers stare in awe at the monumental architecture and statuary of the Helioptic capital.

#

Pure and Ordained Cacographers of the Center practice their trade on every street-corner, chanting the age-old diatribes and slogans, their faces towards the Sun, slowly beating their shoulders and backs with stalks of the giant red spurge, a sun- and heat-loving plant, whose small bright yellow blooms on a dark velvety red background form the core symbology of the First Day.

#

Iohane surreptitiously scanned the low rooftops for signs of rescuers. Their hopes were not high.

#

A last-minute appeal, much less any active interference from the Riders was unlikely. A public condemnation from the High Council in Bored for having made their relationship known had not helped things. Nor had Henqu's failure to disclose his "unnatural" powers of persuasion. Their less-than-heroic reputation among the Kahila bands and other rebel types meant that any action on their behalf from a starry quarter was unlikely too, despite Henqu's quasi-heroic reputation in Rikila.

#

But.

#

Early that morning they'd found a message in their cell. Scribbled on a tiny piece of leathered jackskin in a script used by those who'd been initiated into the prison life of Beet, and in a dialect of Eebarq unique to the camps of Beet and Mizry, it simply read, "Have no fear. Help is near".

#

The prisoners march turned a corner onto a slightly less-narrow street, moving closer to the broad avenues of the town center. Curious townsfolk and visitors lined the way. Jazzed up by Cacographers' assurance that the burning of sinners would cleanse their own souls. Anticipating the day's entertainment. They stared at the examples. Some made rude gestures. When the tall and imposing Riders at the lead of the group of prisoners came close to them, more than a few took a step back.

#

One worked-up and ancient loyalist stepped forward, though, spit on the ground as the Riders

passed and shouted, “Burn for your sins, animal-loving heretics!”

#

Henqu looked the old codger in the eye. And winked.

#

Then he bolted forward as if to attack, straining against his chains. The befuddled heckler fell back onto his bum-side with a crude oath. The Watch pushed Henqu back with their fancy ceremonial basher sticks. Which had been manufactured by and purchased from, Henqu realized, from the Rider’s Armory in Givakal.

#

He laughed loudly.

#

And started singing.

#

It was a bit from the obbligate at the conclusion of the tragic “Song of the Lost Miners”, a sad northwestern ballad popular with members of the Bordali Mining Cooperative. Most often sung as a dirge following deaths due to accidents. A long and convoluted tale, its leitmotif revolves around the sneakiness and perfidy of the Royal House of Wind Riders, a commonly-held prejudice held by the miners of Eelan and Bordaloon.

#

In a loud, clear, ringing Eebar that echoed through the narrow streets, the celebrated singing “Rider You Can Trust”, as he was called in at least a few of the less reputable pubs in Rikila, put on a show for his Helioptic captors and the crowd, intoning in a fine deep baritone:

#

“They were dead on arrival,
The Royal post had never come,
In a hole in the mountain,
To the sound of the drums,
They went through the motions,
That lost miners know,
In turn,
In vain,
They let go.
They let go.”

#

“Shut your tooky hole, you star-spun heretic,” a junior member of the Day Watch barked at Henqu. Having bravely put down the disgraced Rider, the young guard looked around with a grin for the approval of his mates. Who seemed to be ignoring him.

#

Listening to the confusing murmurs arising among the townfolk following the young guard’s rebuke, Iohane understood in a flash then that Henqu had just done something entirely unusual for a Gleaming. He’d taken it lightly. He was mocking them. Refused to show either contrition or fear. It had confused the watchers and the crowd.

#

The imposing Rider tossed her head back, throwing off the itchy cowl.

#

Glaring at the junior with all the fierceness that a hardscrabble upbringing on the Norgyte frontier instills she shouted at the junior loud enough so that everybody on the street could hear, “Let him sing his song, you measly excuse of a Guard-fart! The Sun must’ve been behind clouds the day you were born! The Rider Henqu is twice the warrior you will ever be, you scrawny pipsqueak of a shit-stained ratfon!”

#

“Let him sing!!”

#

Taken aback by Iohane’s ferocity, the senior Day Watch again hesitated before moving to push her back and pull the cowl back over her head. They further stalled their blows when cries erupted among folks in the crowd, startling them,

#

“Let him sing! Let him sing!”

#

Not missing a beat, Henqu launched into a rendition of a rather silly tune recently made quite popular throughout the northern and eastern lands by Birakay, the popular performer from Qurol. Derived from a rather raunchy “riding song” of the Kahilabarbakal Song Cycle, Birakay had dialed it down to make it acceptable in the more open-minded hosteleries and inns of Qurol, Sungyte and the other more cosmopolitan Helioptic venues close to the Ring.

#

It was the kind of song young Helioputer could sing and feel a bit rebellious. But without

immediately incurring the condemnation of a Lawful Scribe and creating possible troubles with the Authority.

#

It even had one line sung, rather shockingly for a Heliopic audience, in Ooberq. Iohane joined in with Henqu on the chorus.

#

“Oh, we are rough and ready riders,

We love to drink our cider.

Hey, listen to my Ooberq

As we ride through the stardark

#

From time to time!

From sea to sea!

#

Don’t get in our way!

Or soon you all will pay.

Go to it! Face the music!

Don’t be stupid! Fire away!

#

From time to time!

From sea to sea!”

#

It was a clear provocation. While many in the crowd were laughing and a good number of younger folks lining the way had started singing along, most were furious.

#

The song ended as the First Day Watch, having recovered their composure, rained blows down on the excommunicated Riders. A bit of mayhem rippled through the crowd as people shouted and yelled and those further back pushed forward to find out what had happened.

Chapter Twelve


Cool Waters

Act Number: *I*

Scene Number: *10*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 116-120 : 1%*

Scene Context: *Break into Act II*

Scene Color: 

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Bu'ruq, Qu'rub and M. Massachawa encounter a terrifying unknown in the dark underground. They set off a rockslide, sending ripples upward to the Pool.

The Conflict. > <

An omen appears in (rises up from!) the Pool. The Wise Elders read it an on omen -- but of what?

The Ending.

Big bubbles lift up from the Pool and burst over the heads of the Elders.

#

The Funny.

The terrifying dark mystery is a collection of cute little mechanical bugs that just happened to make big echo. Be sure that we have seen the little critters before.

#

The Truth.

What is the realness in this scene?

We often don't really know what's really going on. We can react strongly to something we think is a threat, when it really isn't. ...or is it?

#

The Connection.

Something is happening underground. Something will arise that can change the system.

#

The Beauty.

Weird rippling, bubbling, rising, bubbles popping above the Pool.

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

Need character descriptions, feeling for the Wise Elders.

ACT TWO-a

Chapter Thirteen


The Glorious Sky

Act Number: II

Scene Number: 11

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: pp. 121-133 : 2.5%

Scene Context: Fun and Games

Scene Color: 

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Flashback --> Mikel Moballeq encounters a quandary when handed an unexpected foster child. He discovers that he is the lucky one.

#

The Conflict. > <

An Agency Vice-Regent (who is...?) intervenes against SPQ's Argument for fear that it

will uncover the true nature of the Enclosures. Trouble brews up above / on the second Moon.

The Ending.

A secret agent (who is...?) from the Agency arrives in Besh to join in the Argument.

#

The Funny.

Something along the lines of "Use. The. Fucking. Spell. Check!!!"

The Truth.

What is the realness in this scene?

The Connection.

Adopting a wanderer. A child who has escaped hardship. Breaking the rules to abide by a higher law.

The Beauty.

What is beautiful in this scene?

The terrible beauty of looking back at the shattered planet from vantage point of the "second moon" (the Agency's moon base).

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

Define new characters, or get clarity on the roles handled by those already designated as Agency reps, or reassign some minor/unused characters to be agents.

Chapter Fourteen

Journey to the West

Act Number: II

Scene Number: 12

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: pp. 134-149 : 2.6%%

Scene Context: Fun & Games

Scene Color:



#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

There must be a rise and a fall. It must involve one or more specific characters.

Panna Bearbek is not playing this game. No sir-ree. Outta here. Gone to the New Place. Done with it. But she ends up playing this game, along with the catty new friends she makes along the way.

#

The Conflict. > <

Snek sees many things pass by. Love amongst the androids is one of the stranger things.
Is PB a man or a woman or neither? Are Biff and Dex lovers or friends? Who is really sentient?
Does a Jax have agency? Can a Jax reprogram itself?

The Ending.

The Traveling Sisters direct our happy wanderers towards the New Place.

#

The Funny.

Read Cyrano de Bergerac and steal a bunch of stuff from it.

The Truth.

Reflect Judith Butler's radical thoughts on gender, then push it to the next level by
introducing trans-humanism into the mix.

#

The Connection.

The profound idea that human (and other sentient) evolution may involve merging with
automata.

The Beauty.

It is restful and light-hearted. A break in the storm. It's (mostly) about people discovering

how much they like each other, making new friends.

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

How the New Place / New Harvest, whatever we're going to call it, really fits into the overall narrative.


How to tie the story of PB, Dex, Biff, the New Place into the next one, about Karhn.

How to tie this story into the previous one --> is Biff or Dex from Mobalbeq? Is one of them related to Mikel Mobalbeq in some way?

#

Chapter Fifteen

A Crack in the Wall

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>II-a</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 150-163 : 2.5%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Fun & Games</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Karn's encounter with the Traveling Sisters comes back to haunt him after the troubles in Beshquohoek ripple into Heliohan. He is happy that his parents have come to visit, angry and upset when they are interrogated. They are happy to have found him, angry and upset that he is being held as a forced laborer.

#

The Conflict. > <

A work mate catches on to Karn's cloven feet and rats him out. The Watchers start to keep tabs on him.

The Ending.

Heliohan is a walled town. Kahila insurgents have sapped it, and try to blow it using (?) potassium chlorate and sulfur. That doesn't work. They blow themselves up. But the wall develops a crack wide enough to slip through.

#

The Funny.

#

Dialog between the southerners (Karn's parents) and Heliopic volunteers is an exercise in faux amis leading a conversation astray.

#

The Truth.

Drive home how much intensive manual labor is required to pollinate the agro.

#

The Connection.

Finding a lost child only to lose him again.

The Beauty.

#

Karn's parents see large trees for the first time.

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

What part of the narrative does this scene drive us towards? Who are the Kahila bombers? Does this help us to understand the differences between Kahilabek and Kahilabarbakal? Why are the Borda Woods so beautiful?

Chapter Sixteen

Lands Smile on the Sacred River

Act Number: II-a

Scene Number: 14

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: pp. 164-176 : 2.5%

Scene Context: Fun & Games

Scene Color:



#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Karn only wants to help and gets punished for it. Allane wants out and finds her opportunity when there is a crack in the wall.

#

The Conflict. > <

Carrots are the key to the underground economy. But rabbits reproduce quickly, work hard, and are tasty. Can Karn and Allane justify fleeing when so many are enslaved?

The Ending.

There is a rabbit uprising in Heliohan.

#

The Funny.

Armed rabbits are wicked funny.

#

The Truth.

Personal liberation vs. liberation of all the oppressed. Which side are you on?

#

The Connection.

See the Truth.

The Beauty.

What is beautiful in this scene?

Jail break. Rabbit run!

The Loose Ends.


What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work

better?

Not sure the whole Allane as trans bit really works. See other notes about "New Harvest". The feminist-separatist thing just doesn't feel right for this story. How about if New Harvest (or whatever) is kind of an alternative to the Academy at Terminal, a kind of New School. It is the home base of the Traveling Sisters of All the Ways.

Chapter Seventeen

Mother Knows Best

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>II-a</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 177-190 : 2.5%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Fun & Games</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Karn wants to work with the herbs. Allane wants to escape. They both want to help the Afflicted, especially the rabbits.

#

The Conflict. > <

Their discovery of the Forgan Weed has many repercussions, including the assassination

of a high Heliopic official by the gang around Monmar Massachawa.

The Ending.

The burning of a large supply of the Forgan Weed attracts terrapins, arns, sleeths, rabbits and others from the deep woods, from the river, and from the wild lands south of the Setta.

#

The Funny.

The Forgan Weed makes people act a little nutty. Play this up as much as possible.

#

The Truth.

Drugs can seem like an alternative to liberation.

#

The Connection.

Laughter is the best medicine. This scene should give the reader a giggle and a pleasant buzz.

#

The Beauty.

The terrible beauty of an uprising of the wild things.


The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

What the heck is Forgan Weed? Where did it come from? How did Karn and Allane discover it? Need to work this into the whole set of scenes (II-3 thru 5) dealing with Karn and Allane and Heliohan.

Chapter Eighteen

Rolling on the River

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>II-a</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 191-203 : 2.5%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Fun & Games</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

There must be a rise and a fall. It must involve one or more specific characters.

SPQ makes his opening argument. It is rebutted.

The terrapins, sleeths and other river folk create a slow mosaic of flow.

The arns and jacks come on strong and fast. Many are shocked to see flying things.

#

The Conflict. > <

The nasty side of bugs and jacks leads to too much blood. Are Devos the true wind riders?

The Ending.

The sack of Heliohan. The commune. The restoration of order.

#

The Funny.

"We are Devo."

#

The Truth.

A revolution without a revolutionary party seldom succeeds.

#

The Connection.

Revenge is sweet. A failed revolution is a bitter pill.

#

The Beauty.

What is beautiful in this scene?

Karn and Allane slip away. Love percolates amid the ruins.

#


The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

#

Chapter Nineteen

Towards the Sun

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>II-a</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 204-216 : 2.5%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Fun & Games</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

It's all going to shit. The rebellion in Heliohan only made things worse. Kirill bets everything on a trip to Eastern Komexenon, on the southern Oober peninsula -- SPQ's homeland. Waleran and Showan head west, looking for help from High Weyr, abandoning both SPQ and Birakay for a greater reward.

#

The Conflict. > <

Waleran has it out with the Bivers' over their waffling and negotiating. Birakay decides to do an unannounced tour of the southern provinces to showcase the New Song. Showan (unwittingly?) betrays him.

The Ending.

How does this scene end?

The journey to the south ends at Time Village (which has a cooler name than that..), where ancient terrapins, wolves, jaguars, bears, and raven-like creatures have been protecting the Jars, along with a sizable population of seagull-sints.

#

The Funny.

The terrapins talk really, really slowly.

The Truth.

Bees.

#

The Connection.

This is the first scene where utterly non-human sints play a central role. It should be the most "magically real" of any scene in the story. The terrapins are Yoda.

#

The Beauty.

Flowers. Kirill and the gang have never seen flowers before.

#

The Loose Ends.


What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

Need a backgrounder on [Time Village]. What is its connection to SPQ? Why/how do they have bees? Why haven't they been released more widely? Why hasn't the Agency done anything?

#

Chapter Twenty

From the Depths

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>II-a</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 217-230 : 2.5%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Fun & Games</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Flashback. The stowaway Snek was discovered on the landslip. He tells the commonly-known version of the story of the Seffs (octopuses) and demonstrates that it is false. The Seffs are not from a great undersea kingdom. They are reclusive introverts -- becoming bartenders is the greatest thing that's ever happened to them.

The Conflict. ><

During the journey, Luvcando and Grim Malek clash with Kirill over how to divvy up the "spoils". All except Snek are surprised when the "booty" turns out to be bees and other insects.

The Ending.

Arrival at Time Village and presentation of the Jars.

#

The Funny.

Snek tempts the crew with knowledge. Encourages them to eat it up. They arrive at a garden where the means to bring life back to the Lands is found.

#

The Truth.

The hubris of the Seffs. False hopes.

#

The Connection.

We have to get back to the garden.

#

The Beauty.

#

The Jars are exquisite. They are the apple.

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work

better?

May want to switch the order of scenes IIa-7 and IIa-8. See how it feels. A flashback might work OK -- more of a cut/cut/cut to relate the journey southward.

Work on the Seffs stuff. Needs to be a running gag. They should be played up as oh-so-smart, pretending to be superior and so on. When in fact they routinely kill each other, have short life spans, live solitary lives.

Chapter Twenty-One

Land Ho

Act Number: *II-a*

Scene Number: *19*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 230-233 : 0.5%*

Scene Context: *Midpoint*

Scene Color:



#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Otto Trucent is bewildered when the Kahila crew return from the Southlands carrying only bee hives.

#

The Conflict. > <

The Sea Watch at the Bar of Pawan freak out when raven sints begin flying in. Appalled

when flows of gulls arrive too, squabbling and carrying on.

The Ending.

The Kahila crew along with their allies from Komexenon sail into the Bar of Pawan.

The Funny.

Squabbling seagulls.

The Truth.

OT's concerns are real. He thought the southerners were going to bring an army. The invasion from Lewshan is real.

The Connection.

Is the existential threat of foreign invasion more important than the existential threat of biological extinction?

#

The Beauty.

What is beautiful in this scene?

The flight of the bumblebees.

The Loose Ends.


What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

What is it exactly that the bees and other insects can begin pollinating?

Maybe the Kahila crew brought seeds with them as well?

Chapter Twenty-Two

From the Heights

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>IIa</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 234-237 : 0.5%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Midpoint</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

The Weyr Lords refuse Waleran's appeal, arguing that the Jaxen threat outweighs the Lewshani one. When Waleran reveals a secret, the Weyr Lords relent.

#

The Conflict. > <

SPQ makes an impassioned plea for new thinking, openly criticizes the fear of flying

(sending the Agents into a panic), and calls for widespread system change as part of fighting biological extinction.

The Ending.

The secret is that the Academy has deployed an AI to embed compassion in the Jaxen. Our first visit to New Weyr or Babbling Brook or whatever we're going to call it, where Jaxen are being re-trained.

#

The Funny.

The gods must be going crazy. Mayhem on the moonbase.

#

The Truth.

SPQ's big voice is the main "point" of this story -- this is where he becomes KSR.

The Connection.

The truth is the big idea.

#

The Beauty.

Our first view of High Weyr. It is spectacularly weird.

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

Need to drop some hints about the work going on at Terpinol.

New Weyr <-- becomes High Weyr, the realm of the Weyr Lords.

New Harvest, etc. <-- becomes New Weyr (or something nicer), the Traveling Sisters commune. Cool Waters... something like that? Have they been working with Terpinol all along, providing a place where Jaxen can be taught, reprogrammed, reconditioned?

#

On the side of a Mount Eelan, its imposing eastern cliffs visible equally from Eelan Town and New Harvest (Lavega), not all that far from the Ring Road, marking the line where the Great Wall of Fire subsided centuries ago, an enormous portal slowly slides open.

#

Displacing rock, dirt, trees and shrub, a small avalanche of debris cascades downward as the giant doors, their movement driven by some unknown internal mechanism that — given the size of the doors — itself must be on a scale nearly unthinkable in most of Saskantion. The grinding and screeching of the mechanism echoes through the hills, sending animals scurrying and causing sints far and wide to look towards Eelan in wonder.

#

As the terrible sound screeches to a halt, travelers on the Eelan Road stop and stare, at a huge cloth-covered wagon emerging from the side of the mountain. It moves smoothly, in an unworldly fashion, more like a ship than a wagon. And making no sound at all.

#

Into the air.

#

Drifting out of the side of hill like a cloud. The size of an enormous boat of the type that could only be sailed on Biver Lake, or one of the Southern Seas.

#

The ... thing ... drifts straight out from the side of the hill, not falling, not rambling down the side of the incline as a wagon would. A cabin of sorts hangs from *below* it, and there is smoke coming from it, and the dancing lick of fire.

#

When the enormous wagon clears the mountainside, it drifts *upwards* towards the clouds. On its sides, carefully embroidered into the sails, visible for dozens of kicks in every direction: the Royal Seal of the Lords of New Weyr (which is...?).

#

“It’s the Wind Lords!”, a traveler gasps, pointing up at the sky.

#

“They’re real!”

#

From the peak of Mount Eelan, a shadow moves. Something odd. Moving around in the air like smoke or ash from a fire. Some *things!*... are soaring high above. *In the air!* Like a kite. But moving determinedly, in a steady direction. And not just one. Not just several. Are you seeing that!? A *flotilla* of gliding things.

#

Those with far-reaching eyesight could discern that each of the flying vessels was carrying a sint of some kind. And they were making a subtle roar.

Azron Gurdon began to record what he was seeing, whispering furiously into his recording device: “Tuke Forsake Me! Blast-it-all! They’ve tiking done it. Notify Planning immediately! And schedule me for a pick-up. We’re going to need to re-evaluate everything. Tuke-in-Ganymede and throw me in a black hole!! They’ve figured out flight. And right under our noses too. Collapsing Galaxies!”

#

Part Two

Chapter Twenty-Three

Wings of Glory

Act Number: II-b

Scene Number: 21

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: pp. 238-253 : 3%

Scene Context: Bad Guys Close In

Scene Color:



#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Showan unites many of the southern factions, convincing them to join the fight to save Ilyushan from the Lewshani. There is no word from Waleran and the westerners.

#

The Conflict. ><

There must be some kind of conflict or contradiction. It may or may not be resolved in this scene.

Resistance forces from the southern provinces ride to Ilyushan and help to turn the tide. They sing the New song and announce their support for SPQ's Argument, calling for widespread changes in the relations between the Lands. Some Agents and Heliops are favorably impressed. Others are appalled.

The Ending.

The Heliopic Center circles the wagons.

#

The Funny.

The bourgeois Biverunes look a bit silly in their armor.

#

The Truth.

Defense of the Lands wins over the intermediate forces.

#

The Connection.

An ominous signal from Beshquohoeck raises an emotional alarm.

#

The Beauty.

What is beautiful in this scene?

Masses singing the New Song.


The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

As noted elsewhere, we need more characterization of the Heliops. Having the "Inquisitor" is not enough. The Helioptic Center is something like the Politburo in the declining days of the Soviet Union -- convinced of their rightness, oblivious to their weakness.

Chapter Twenty-Four

Holy Terror

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>II-b</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 254-269 : 3%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Bad Guys Close In</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Resistance leaders are betrayed. Gil Tracticus reveals their location to the Guards.
Showan stays with them and is killed. Kirill and others escape.

#

The Conflict. > <

The Helioptic Center calls for Holy Fire to quell the rebellion(s) and stop the spread of

the New Song. Massacres and programs shock beks and sints alike throughout the Lands. The truth of events in Ilyushun is covered up.

The Ending.

Showan's agony, along with that of other resistance leaders and fighters. Many rabbit dead.

#

The Funny.

Even the most loyal of Helioptics look upon the members of the Center with disbelief. An urchin is heard whistling the New Song in the streets of Stanbul.

#

The Truth.

A lie repeated often enough becomes a truth. Severe repression silences even the brave.

#

The Connection.

Stanley's life is also threatened. Is everything collapsing?

#

The Beauty.

A seed sprouts along the Setta.

The Loose Ends.


What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work

better?

Why is it the "New" Song? Can this be emphasized more? We have Tooner out collecting songs -- is he only collecting traditional ones? Are there restrictions within the Heliopic provinces on what is permitted to be sung?

Chapter Twenty-Five

High Tide

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>II-b</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 270-285 : 3%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Bad Guys Close In</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Young Gallex the Nylander (be sure to mention them earlier in the sections on the Kahila gangs) rallies the southern resistance. The Riders of Bordered repel a barbarian attack and then Otto Trucent leads a group of them to join in with the forces fighting the Lewshani in the northeast. Kali Wilder, a Helioptic commander, leads the counter-offensive against the Lewshani hordes, disobeying orders from the Center to attack the remnants of the resistance forces moving

north from Ilyushan.

#

The Conflict. ><

Cracks in the walls of tradition in both Besh, Bored and even Biverland, where the masses are inspired by the Kahila Nylander. The Resistance lives; it has survived the initial onslaught.

The Ending.

Tonedo is in a panic at the news of Wilder's refusal, as well as Trucent's independent action and the fortitude of the southerners.

#

The Funny.

More portly and comfortable Biverunes are startled by the militancy of their youths.

#

The Truth.

There's a light shining in the darkness.

#

The Connection.

Is anybody paying attention to the fact that life itself is collapsing? Show the bees and other pollinators starting to do their work -- ultimately that is more important than fighting the barbarians.

#

The Beauty.

A seed sprouts along the Pavan.

#


The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

It is fine to tell a story using new characters at this point (Gallex, Otto Trucent, and Kali Wilder) -- a typical "ACT TWO" take -- but we should at least make sure they have been introduced earlier so it is not a jarring "deus ex" kind of thing.

Chapter Twenty-Six

Arguments

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>II-b</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 286-300 : 3%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Bad Guys Close In</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Tonado denounces Stanbul in an impassioned final argument. SPQ defends himself eloquently, echoing the themes of the New Song. The popularity of Birakay's song spreads throughout the Lands (mosaic, mixed cut) and the Singer appears in Beshquohoek, calling for SPQ's vindication.

The Conflict. > <

Losing control of the songbook and letting go of traditional ways are the price of adopting the survival strategy. The Enclosure could fall, bringing in fresh, new dangers and challenges. Humanity (bekdom) itself may need to be transformed.

The Ending.

People are singing the New Song in the streets of Beshquohoek, despite persecution by the Sunguard.

#

The Funny.

Tooner arranges a medley of southern music in Sungyte, which leads to a happy riot.

#

The Truth.

Music is universal.

#

The Connection.

A new aesthetic arises that recognizes the beauty and charm of mixed sints. Youths in multiple Helioptic towns begin to renounce the eating of rabbits.

#

The Beauty.

A new queen bee appears near Qurol.

#

The Loose Ends.


What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work

better?

Consider reducing the number of towns and regions. Only keep the ones that have a purpose, some depth. Even those that don't play a role in the story should fit into the overall mythos.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

Judgements

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>II-b</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 301-316 : 3%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Bad Guys Close In</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

The Center condemns Birako to death and orders his detention. He is taken away for execution. Tooner and Mikel Mobalbeq intervene to prevent it. Stanbul is found to be in error. Orders are sent out to suppress the New Song, destroy the pollinators and occupy Mobalbesq, which is declared to be the "homeland of heresy".

The Conflict. > <

The Eelani rebel against the do-nothing faction of the Bordered High Council and are joined by the forces around Otto Trucent, whose forces have reached Jivakal. It is revealed that some riders have been using ravens to communicate. Otto T. sends a detachment towards Beshquohoek.

The Ending.

Chaos in Bordered. Chaos in Besh. Chaos on the Moon.

#

The Funny.

The Eelani like to use absurdist arguments, don't take much seriously. Basically, they're Irish.

#

The Truth.

Never give up.

#

The Connection.

Eelani towns and villages are the only ones that are not surrounded by walls. Fortune favors the prepared mind. Also, it is helpful to have a high vantage point.

#

The Beauty.

Birakol and Stanbul are reunited.

#

The Loose Ends.


What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

How does Birakol get saved? Do Tooner and Mikel go to Aaron Gurdon for help? How else could they evade Heoliptic controls in the Heoliop stronghold? The divisions amongst the Agency end up playing in favor of our heroes, which foreshadows how the divisions amongst the Jaxen will be the key to solving the extinction crisis.

#

Chapter Twenty-Eight

The West is Red

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>II-b</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 317-332 : 3%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Bad Guys Close In</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

In a desperate attempt to hold back the rebellion, the Heoliopsis lights, for the first time in 300 years, the Great Wall of Fire in the hopes of preventing a western advance in the Heolioptic Lands. Boreded responds by declaring it is allied with the Eelani.

The Conflict. > <

The Jaxen assault on the Weyrlands is dire. The forces of High Weyr are in retreat

towards New Weyr. There is panic throughout the weyrlands. All is lost all over again.

The Ending.

Chaos in Eelan -- do the hill folk cross the wall of fire to join with Otto Trucent, or do they turn westward to help their neighbors?

#

The Funny.

In Qurol, they announce a great bar-b-q to take advantage of the Wall Fire.

#

The Truth.

It's not easy being neutral. And it's not easy not being neutral.

#

The Connection.

The bad Jaxen move quickly, stealthily and with deadly force. Much more frightening than the "monsters" from Lewshan, who are big and smelly, but move slowly and you can hear them coming.

#

The Beauty.

An old Eelani song provides an answer.

#

The Loose Ends.


What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

What is the answer?

#

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Gemstone Pods

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>II-b</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 333-348 : 3%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Bad Guys Close In</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Mother Hare returns from visiting the Aranzen with an army of mixed sints, trans-humanists (liberated Jaxen) and mages, along with Sáamal Wititiri at her side. High Weir is upset at having to rely on the southerners and on strong women.

The Conflict. > <

Reflections in the Pool, recursions and repetitions with a twist. (See scene 17) The New

Peoples Army (LOL) drives back the bad Jaxen.

The Ending.

Chaos in the Jaxen underground Control center. Consternation in High Weir as they welcome Sáamal Wititiri to the High Table.

#

The Funny.

Heavily armed rabbits. Ode to Gamma World.

#

The Truth.

Solutions may come from unexpected sources. It helps to have an imagination.

#

The Connection.

The good Jaxen also move quickly, stealthily and with deadly force.

#

The Beauty.

Sáamal Wititiri is a very impressive giant.

#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?


Do we have enough background to understand what is going on here? Does it need to be prepared better -- see previous notes about New Weir (New Harvest, etc.) and make sure that the

"Jaxen Liberation" theme has been set up well. Look at the stories of people escaping (Allane, etc.) and see where to develop a parallel story of Jaxen escaping.

#

Chapter Thirty

To the Heights

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>II-b</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 349-363 : 3%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Bad Guys Close In</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Berko Robeye of Skatterling in the Eelani Hills initiates an Argument with the High Council of Bordered, convincing them to back SPQ and Otto Trucent. The New Song rings out in the hills of Eelan after they threaten to go on strike.

The Conflict. > <

The Great Wall of Fire triggers the Eelani.

The Ending.

The High Council comes around to the rebel side.

#

The Funny.

Berko manages to lift a few precious things from the Bordered emissaries.

#

The Truth.

The workers know the real deal.

#

The Connection.

By stressing the importance of backing SPQ, and not only focussing on the monsters from Ilyushan, the Eelani help to act as the big voice of the story.

#

The Beauty.

The New Song arising from every hill and dale as the Eelani make their way en masse towards the Wall of Fire.

#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

As noted elsewhere, we need more background and characterization of the High Council in Bordered. If Otto Trucent represents the progressive side of the Riders, who represents the

conservative and neo-liberal sides? May also need more background on the Eelani.

#

Chapter Thirty-One

Go With the Flow

Act Number: *II-b*

Scene Number: *29*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 364-380 : 3%*

Scene Context: *Break to Act 3*

Scene Color:

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

The Herbalist Collectives and the masses of sints in the Flowlands reject the calls for war against the Heliops but embrace the New Song and issue a great Cry for Reason. The Gemstone Pods are broken open, caterpillars, butterflies, moths and other insects emerge, including machine-enhanced ones. Time Jars are distributed throughout the region. New seeds sprout all along the Setta.

The Conflict. > <

Kahila leaders want revenge and recovery of their lost lands. They see the wisdom of the Herbalists' Cry too. An internal Argument erupts amongst them. Radical Kahila rebels and uitbeks see an opportunity to attack the Heliopicon. Some of the rationalists and others feel SPQ's existentialist argument, echoed by the Herbalists, while others fear a loss of profits should the Heliopicon fall.

The Ending.

The Elders of Terpinol celebrate the arrival of the New Things, send a message to the Agency stating that they can handle things from here... request that the Enclosures be removed.

#

The Funny.

A wild party in Brokilly gets a little out of hand. "If you ever leave me along all night..."

#

The Truth.

The Herbalist Appeal makes it clear that even with the Gemstone Pods and the Time Jars, it will take many generations to heal the Lands. Their appeal is not a pacifist one.

#

The Connection.

The Herbalist Appeal builds on the Eelani Argument in Bordered, echoing again the voice of future generations.

#

The Beauty.

The New Song is sung on boats traveling along the Setta, and refrained from the Flowlands to the Mobalbesq.

#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

The Herbalist Collectives need to be personalized. Find, define some additional characters to show that. Likewise, the Elders of Terpinol. Probably need some additional background on the relationship between Terpinol and the Agency too.

#

Chapter Thirty-Two

Together We Rise

Act Number: *II-b*

Scene Number: *30*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 381-395 : 3%*

Scene Context: *Break to Act 3*

Scene Color:

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

The United Houses of Biver, the Communes of the Mobalbesq, and the secret societies who lead the Kahila Lands officially renounce their ties the Heliopicon. The Isle of Nye remains neutral. Serious troubles erupt throughout Pavanarune after the Town Council of Pavanabar issues an Appeal to Reason. Small incidents pop off throughout the Heliopic Lands. A rebel army starts to move north from Kahilabek towards Beshquohoek. Fierce fighting erupts at the

Guard posts on the border.

[The Conflict.](#) > <

The Agents based in the Isle of Nye prepare an exit strategy.

[The Ending.](#)

Some panic sets in as the planet-bound Agents finish taking down the Enclosures and await a ship to take them to Moon base and beyond.

#

[The Funny.](#)

Tooner lets his hair down in Khaliro, where a near-riot turns into a open-air party thanks to his intervention.

#

[The Truth.](#)

Will warfare and bloody revolution will retard progress towards stopping extinction. Is revenge worth the cost?

#

[The Connection.](#)

The thrill of mass revolt. Get swept up in the justifiably angry mob.

#

[The Beauty.](#)

Here's a good spot for Mother Courage to make an appearance. Who will feed and heal the rebel army?

#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

Define specific characters to represent the various rebel groups, the Pavanabar Town Council and so on. Even if we don't actually meet them by name, make sure they have a voice and so on.

Have I done enough to explain, feel the antipathy that the Kahila and uitbek rebels have for the Heliopicon? It should be clear why their anger is stronger against the Heliops than is their fear of the Ilyushan or of extinction. Maybe play up the Gotterdamerung Syndrome more...
"Well, if we're going to perish anyway, let's take out those goddamned Heliops...."

#

Part Three

Chapter Thirty-Three

Like a Phoenix

Act Number: *III*

Scene Number: *31*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 395-405 : 2%*

Scene Context: *Finale*

Scene Color:



#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

The big big voice. SPQ's soliloquy. Plunge deep into the Cool Waters. In the face of fear and death threats, Stanbul presents his concluding Argument for social ecology, the introduction of flight and pollinators, acceptance of evolution and trans-humanism, an end to killing, a dedication to reason and science and future generations.

The Conflict. > <

The themes converge. Threats are all real but ecocide is extinction. The best and brightest of the Agents see that their work is done.

The Ending.

Birako sings the New Song in Beshquohoek.

#

The Funny.

Tondeo gnashes his teeth -- and breaks one.

#

The Truth.

SPQ's speech.

#

The Connection.

The calm uncertainty of science and reason.

#

The Beauty.

Butterflies make an appearance in Beshquohoek.

#

The Loose Ends.


What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

What are we going to do with Tonedo?

#

Chapter Thirty-Four

Tear Down the Wall

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>III</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 406-416 : 2%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Finale</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Berko Robeye and the miners of Eelan take two paths. One group extinguishes the Wall of Fire, bridging the passagio, and the other group joins an army of rider-knights, mages and carrot-eaters heading east to free SPQ and defeat the Ilyushianae.

The Conflict. > <

The Eelani realize a need to reinvent themselves as well, to open up to new ways,

rejecting revenge for renewal, rejecting isolation for co-operation.

The Ending.

The Helioptic folk of Bordakal come out to help extinguish and bury the Fire Wall.

#

The Funny.

Tondeo flees in disgrace from the fighting at the Guard Post just east of Beshquohoek.

#

The Truth.

The northeast provinces are being overrun by monsters. That threat is still very real.

#

The Connection.

Solutions are not always single-threaded.

#

The Beauty.

The southern rebel army halts its assault on the outskirts of Beshquohoek when Birako sings the New Song from its walls.


#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

Chapter Thirty-Five

The Flood

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>III</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 417-427 : 2%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Finale</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

A detachment of Riders arrives in Beshquohoek. The expeditionary troupe reaches Juuj. There is an enormous downpour and the Eelani have opened their dams. The Pawan threatens to flood. Tonedo is caught and killed by disgusted Sunguards. A popular uprising in Beshquohoek ends the threat of assault on the city. SPQ is freed and united with Birako.

The Conflict. > <

Montage of all those who have died.

The Ending.

Montage of Mother Courage, Rollo and other Healers cleaning up the mess. Carnage continues in the northeast.

#

The Funny.

Tooner has to pee.

#

The Truth.

Flood waters help the new seeds to grow.

#

The Connection.

Relief that peace has arrived. Shock at the cost.

#

The Beauty.

All the forces unite to fight the shadowy monsters.

#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?


Have I provided enough on the damage being done by the Ilyushianae? Probably need to cut in more of that throughout the story. Hadika, Two Trees and Big Tree should fall. Ingur

(needs a new name) is on the brink. They are coming from Rutionik. If they reach the Pawan, it will be a catastrophe.

#

Chapter Thirty-Six

Ilyushan's End

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>III</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 428-438 : 2%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Finale</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

The Ilyushianae suffer terrible losses when the united armies attack. They retreat back across the Lewshan River to their mountains and swamps. Mur'ay and Gabriella/Jesse K go with them, having obtained copies of both the New Song and SPQ's notebooks .

The Conflict. > <

The "monsters" were fighting extinction too. Conditions outside the Enclosure are even

worse than in the Saksan Lands. They were the losers in the evolutionary developments -- huge bodies, few resources, kept away from the promised land.

The Ending.

At last, a view inside the Ilyushan camp, as Jesse arrives.

#

The Funny.

Mur'ay has to pee.

#

The Truth.

Even demons suffering in the hells can find enlightenment.

#

The Connection.

Get a look inside the mind's shadows.

#

The Beauty.

The shadowy monsters are in our minds, a reflection of our own character defects and ethical flaws.

#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

Have I shown the suffering on the Ilyushan side? What did it take for them to break

through the Enclosure? What the heck is the Enclosure anyway? Their assault increased when the Enclosure was taken down.

#

Chapter Thirty-Seven


Sunny Days

Act Number: *III*

Scene Number: *35*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 439-449 : 2%*

Scene Context: *Finale*

Scene Color: 

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Kambul Carpenter and Qu'rubi Walker are elected local worker-representatives to the New Helioptic Council, winning a place on the list along with conservative/traditionalists from their towns (Givákala).

The Conflict. > <

Nothing is settled for good. The new bourgeoisie emerges from within the Party.

The Ending.

Something like a Red Guards movement sprouts up in Sungyte, young radical Heliops seeking to purge their town of the all the "olds".

#

The Funny.

Bu'ruq Butcher pees on the announcement of the New Helioptic Council, which is greeted with widespread derision in Ríkila.

The Truth.

The class struggle continues even after significant reforms, even after revolution.

#

The Connection.

The thrill of getting elected or appointed to a position of authority, when it had always seemed an impossibility.

#

The Beauty.

Balloons over Sungyte.

#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?


Follow up on Scene 33, showing how the announcement of the New Helioptic Council emerged. Show who are the new leaders of the Helioptic Center, why/how they came up with

this approach. What are the class, gender, other divisions *within* Heliopic society -- have they been adequately depicted up to this point? Is this part of the popular unrest?

#

Chapter Thirty-Eight

Sunny Days

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>III</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 450-460 : 2%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Finale</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

Stanbul and Birako celebrate the release of the Time Jars, arrival of the pollinators, unification of the armies, creation of the New Council with a joining ceremony, at which they quarrel in an Apollonian/Dionysian way.

The Conflict. > <

Mosaic, zoom in on the various pollinators, new seeds. Reinforce the idea that a good

number of the bugs are "bugs", some introduced by the Agency, some by the good Jaxen and their allies, some by the bad Jaxen.

The Ending.

Sexy time for our heroes.

#

The Funny.

Natural and mechanical bees collide. Mechanical bees from different manufacturers collide.

#

The Truth.

Love conquers all.

#

The Connection.

A happy ending.

#

The Beauty.

Ultralights are used to sow seeds. Fighters are going home and getting re-commissioned as farmers, planters, builders.

#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

Provide some kind of foreshadowing of a joining ceremony. How do each of the various tribes, species handle such things? For the Heliops -- it is more or less a state-managed affair, for others... How does the Birako/SPQ union break with tradition? (And *not* because it is "gay".)

#

Chapter Thirty-Nine

Farewell to All That

Act Number: *III*

Scene Number: *37*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 461-471 : 2%*

Scene Context: *Finale*

Scene Color:

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

The last Agents exit the surface from the Isle of Nye. Aaron and a few others choose to stay behind. They exit the Moon as well, leaving for their next assignments, but MM has provided some stolen Agency technology to a few key individuals -- some carpenters, some miners, some fighters.

The Conflict. > <

On their way to the next project, Agency managers continue to squabble over what worked, what didn't, who should get credit for what, how to report the results up the chain.

The Ending.

Azron goes fishing.

#

The Funny.

Middle-management ridiculousness.

#

The Truth.

There will be other planets with similar problems. Perhaps we find out they are on their way to a place called.... Earth?

#

The Connection.

Perhaps someone is watching out for us?

#

The Beauty.

Sunrise on the Krbsh Sea. Long shot of Aaron fishing at the sea-end of the Nye Canal. Birds appear for the first time in Azron's memory.

#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

Who build the Nye Canal? When? Describe the Lakes in Bordalune (Pawwabol, Pavnatoune, ...).

#

#

Agent's synopsis #745?

#

Maybe move (something like) this to around scene 29.

#

Having seen to the liberation of a cohort of Jaxen, and spent a good bit of time studying the Nature of Things with adepts of the Order of Monkeny, PB next sought for a way to engage the southern herbalist communities in the great struggle against the monstrous invaders.

#

She travelled the southern lands for several weeks, stopping at every herbalist village to share her enthusiasm for wind-catching devices. In more cases than not, her ideas were dismissed as "unnatural" but there were a few, both elders and younger ones, who understood the importance of developing more robust irrigation systems if appreciation for the herbalist way of life was to ever penetrate the thick skulls and stubborn attitudes of the northerners.

#

Through these travels, PB developed a network of contacts amongst the herbalists and she began to have a deeper appreciation for the songs and legends about Morning Thunder. During a trip into the southern reaches of the Weirlands, PB encountered for the first time the Terrapin

Community centered in the ponds and creeks northwest of New Harvest. After many slow and careful discussions, she began to understand that the fantastic rumors of a "secret town" were more than wild stories.

#

She came to know of the existence of the Jexans, a warrior tribe of women, both bek and mixed, who tended to view all of the major forces-that-be in the Saskan Lands as various versions of the same patriarchal nonsense, when they rescued her from an assault by bandits. PB saw in the Jexans the potential for reducing the Ascendancy of the Windlords, to check the power of the Riders, and to potentially deliver a significant blow against the Heliops, whom she had long detested. She was determined to recruit the Jexans not only to assist in defeating the Lewshan Menace, but to change the political landscape of the Saskan Lands by doing so.

#

The first part of her plan she spelled out in a message to her mentors in the Order of Monkerly:

#

"Esteemed comrades, let us reach beyond the possible and blow our collective breaths on the embers of the impossible. A concerted campaign of song, speech and occult messaging should be undertaken throughout the southland, especially to the west, where herbalists are most numerous, detailing in particular the mistreatment of the Feminine Principle -- and of feminine sints -- by the monstrous invaders from the Lewshan Hills. We need only tell truthful tales about this Bad Treatment, drawing on facts gathered by our own Agents and by those in whom we trust, gleaned from the frontline fighters and from the refugees now fleeing the northeast by every means available.

#

"Our campaign should commence at the earliest possible moment and take Priority amongst all of True Friends of the Monkeny. We should devise the campaign such that in no more than a Half-Turn of [Large Moon], Her Majestic Healer and Warrior, the Jexan Mother might receive favorably the following private communication from me.

#

I have passed into her area, have some small influence with her tribe and expect she would be favorable to hearing a song sent by me."

Written in the florid elegant style of the region's songs, PB's missive to the Jexan Chief was passed along by members of the Balancing Bards of the Barbo, a traveling troupe whose shtick often involved appearing to float on water or air, balancing on beams, stones and other perches -- and sometimes being cleverly suspended by ropes -- while singing their verses.

#

A popular and well-connected group, their invitation to [the secret town] was brought to them by a emissary of Zada, who explained that the great healer had set out on a journey to the northeast to bring comfort and solace to the refugees on the roads.

#

In due course, a "stage" of logs and rocks and a couple of cleverly-concealed rope bridges was prepared near a scenic weir made of two huge stones and engineered in such a way, it was said by the locals, that its falling waters played a harmony suitable to accompany any truly *fine* song.

The Jexan Chief and her entourage emerged from the woods just as the company was tuning up. She motioned for them to proceed using a gesture that could perhaps be described as a small dance in and of itself, her hands flowing in a rotation that culminated in a gesture of acceptance.

#

They sang the words that PB had composed, using a localized version of an old Kahila tune made popular by Birakay at a scandalous performance in Qurol in which he had taken on a female presentation and sung a new song -- telling a love story between a northern boybek and mer-maid who lived in the Barbo. If the Jexan leader was aware of the implications of using such a tune, made famous in such a way, she made no sign of it, maintaining a calm, cool composure while listening carefully to the brief presentation.

#

It went something like this:

#

"Your most majestic Jexan Queen

The Saskan Lands face foes unseen

The Forces of Women must be felt

When the Forces of Men are buckling

Confronting Evil that comes to slay

And seeks to see both bek and obek kneeling

Before the muck of its monstrous spray.

#

"The voices of the free are harshly

Shut by foolish utterings partially
Thought-out but brashly boasted by Men
Who in the coming conflict will play
The same old games of yesterday
And omit to think that never again
Could it be the Female Might which wins the day.

#

"Lend your aid and wisdom now

To let all the girlbeks know
That victory over the Lewshanic foe
By Heliopsic Force alone
Means a prelude to a Southern War
Means a song of Fire and Horror
For Southern folk, for the Forests and the Weirs.

#

"Oh Sister! Heed Mother Zada's call

Cry the beloveds' downfall
Cry the enslaved
Cry the abused
Cry the dispossessed
Cry the murdered
Above all, her cry for justice.

#

"Let the Women's Might be felt

In this just and terrible fight

And let not the huffing Riders' cries

Nor the windy Westerners' claims

Nor the vain Watchers' boasts

Be the bardsongs sung for the ages

Without a woman's word to the Wise.

#

"I am a proud girlbek

Whom your wanderers rescued

In the wild woods of the weir lands

When I was surrounded by ill-intentioned men.

I pray on the day I can visit your woodland court

To share the deepest joys of the True

To celebrate the victory of the New."

#

When they were done, the Jexan Chief performed a kind of windmill-style hand-motion, flowing in several large circles as if gathering up energy from the waters and then letting it disperse around her, ending with her hands crossed over her breast, and then releasing towards the players a kind of fluttering wave as she and her entourage melted back into the woods.

#


Six days after the presentation had been made, a lone Rider approached PB's camp in the Kahila Woods astride a fast beast. The Rider slowed down and rode once around there camp, singing out several times, "The secret song has been sung in Freedom. The Original Ring will be restored. There will be a Great Dance under the Full Moons. Let there be True Songs to fill the Air."

#

Panda took this as a good sign. She told her companions that they'd be heading north at daybreak. And to prepare for hardships.

Chapter Forty

A Tree Grows in Xominon

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>III</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 472-477 : 1%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Finale</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

A rare seed has been dropped and watered. A trees grows rapidly there. Massive. Sending out roots in every direction. Blotting out the sky. Tearing things up.

The Conflict. > <

Mother Earth is not happy. Monmar Massachawa has been a busy little bee herself.

The Ending.

The tree's roots reaching towards the town of Kursol in the Uitibarb.

#

The Funny.

Nomads surprised at the fast-moving roots.

#

The Truth.

Gaia will have her revenge.

#

The Connection.

Perhaps we will be punished for our sins?

#

The Beauty.

The startling anger of Kali, the Destroyer.

#

The Loose Ends.


What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

Emphasize the wild nature of Monmar Massachawa, her uninhibitedness, and her power. Why is she convinced that even SPQ's Argument is not enough, that the whole place needs to be uprooted?

#

Chapter Forty-One

Renaissance

<i>Act Number:</i>	<i>III</i>
<i>Scene Number:</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Pages Numbering : Pct of total:</i>	<i>pp. 478-483 : 1%</i>
<i>Scene Context:</i>	<i>Finale</i>
<i>Scene Color:</i>	
	<i>#</i>

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

In the underground labs of the Krunkinott, the southern Weirunes, and the Aranzen Lands, the progressive Jexen faction and their allies are making artificial bees, insects, birds and other creatures to help the sints and beks survive. They are working on implants that can help the organic life forms heal, replace limbs, enhance senses, and so on. Further north, in their ancient strongholds, the traditionalist faction are developing rocketry and explosives.

The Conflict. > <

An old dog, an ancient rabbit queen, and their pals are keeping an eye on both factions.

The Ending.

Bumper crop of carrots. Birako is working on another new song.

#

The Funny.

Tooner has to pee again.

#

The Truth.

We will always need new songs.

#

The Connection.

That classic sci-fi ending -- the monsters are still out there.

#

The Beauty.

Mosaic. Renewal of life, especially along the Setta. Birds are returning in greater numbers. Pollinators have arrived in Ilyushan.

#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

How does Tooner get around so much? How much high tech do the Elders of Terpinol

have available? Exactly what kinds of tech did MM distribute and to whom? Why did she plant the killer tree AND help various factions?

Chapter Forty-Two


Credits

Act Number: *III*

Scene Number: *40*

Pages Numbering : Pct of total: *pp. 484-490 : 1%*

Scene Context: *Finale*

Scene Color: 

#

The Emotional Up & Down. +/-

The teaser -- the Agents get their next assignment: a devastated watery planet near a yellow star...

The Conflict. > <

Some of them think it's a hopeless case.

The Ending.

A picture of the planet on their screens -- ofc, it's Earth.

#

The Funny.

Somebody has to pee.

#

The Truth.

This has been about us all along.

#

The Connection.

That classic sci-fi ending, redux. The monsters are still out there. And it's us.

#

The Beauty.

Azron waves farewell to the shooting stars.

#

The Loose Ends.

What needs to be figured out, or defined, or described for this scene to work, or to work better?

#

* * *