
Grigoriy Kain

You never had much respect for traditions. Blood for blood. Life for life. Equivalent exchange. All those words reeked of surrender. Such traditions only survived because generations of men and women were too weak and too complacent to challenge them. The previous elder was one such woman. She accepted her obligations meekly, choosing to drive her dagger into the hearts of pleading women instead of listening to your ideas. No, come to think of it, it was not just meekness that blocked the elder's ears; it was a matter of caste as well. You belonged to a distant cadet branch of the elder's family, and while you had decent spiritual power of your own, it was never enough to make you seem anything more than a flea in the elder's eyes.

So you took matters into your own hands. You used your years of magical research and your clever contraptions to trap the spirit of earth within an oaken staff. An extraordinary yet loathsome creature. Shivers ran down your spine as you tapped into its power. How much blood had to be spilled on the account of this creature? You only knew one thing for certain: none would be spilled for it ever again.

The townsfolk agreed with you. They worshipped your bloodless miracles and turned against the traditions the moment they saw you cure a smallpox victim with the touch of your hands. Of course, there are always a few obstinate fellows clinging to cruelty simply because it is tradition. Klara, the former elder's son/daughter, was one of those people. His/Her mother had the wisdom to step down when time came, but the boy/girl never had his/her turn and he/she wanted it so terribly. You showed him/her just how terrible the power he/she sought was. As much as you disliked sacrifices, you had to know your enemy to defeat it. You killed your first two men—both supporters of the previous elder—the way other elders killed thousands. You hadn't expected the townsfolk to react as violently as they did—you certainly hadn't expected them to kill Klara in an act of frenzied mob justice—but you felt little grief for his/her death. Let this sacrifice be the cost of your peaceful reign. Let the remaining degenerates see what they are asking to return to.

You've continued to eschew traditions even after your ascension to power. Like many other elders before you, you were supposed to bear a child with a woman approved by the rest of the great families. You had the child as planned, but unlike the others, you fell in love with the woman as well. The first time you sat beside Katerina Koslova with Vera in your arms, you realized that all you truly wanted was that little family. You asked her to marry you, but she asked you to wait until after the birth of your second child. There was never a need for such lies. Katerina left for the capital the day after Victoria was born, leaving nothing but a note. *I have borne you the child you needed*, it said. *I hope to earth below that he/she grows to be more compassionate than you*. In the end, the traditions you destroyed avenged themselves. The bitterness of it is almost sublime.

You are so tired nowadays. The steppe winds shake your bones, and you've taken to drinking every now and then to stave off the chill. You are starting to realize that anything without a cost is quickly taken for granted. As immense as the earth spirit's powers are, its binds cannot stand too much strain. You decided to limit your services and make some money for a change. You desire some good whiskey in your old age, and your children will need more than a wretched staff and a spellbook if they are to survive in the world. Especially Vera. The poor child is too spiritually weak to make good use of your powers, regardless of how much he/she wants it. He/She doesn't understand the burden, the hard decisions and the false love that come with being an elder. You're not too happy to saddle Victoria with these responsibilities either, but at very least, he/she has the aptitude for it, if not the temperament.

Dear spirits, that temperament. That temperament was likely the cause of this entire plague business. Victoria did grow up to be what most would call "compassionate." You, on the other hand, would call him/her delicate and overly idealistic. Victoria detests your pragmatism and wants nothing to do with you. He/She even asked you to release the earth spirit at one point. And now the earth spirit is free. The first morning of the outbreak, you found your powerless, empty staff lying at your door, spotted with flakes of dried blood. The signs were unmistakable. Someone had attempted a resurrection with it and lost control of the spirit in process. Only Victoria has enough power to pull such magnitude of power from your staff, and only he/she is foolish

enough to even try. His/Her compassion must have gotten the better of him/her again.

You immediately decided that word will never get out on how the plague started. You must retain your control of the town and guard your family's secrets, especially from that nosy little outsider, Dr. Filin. That little pest is so neurotic and so entrenched in his/her city science that any true magic will likely make him/her reach for a torch. Worse still, the pest doesn't know his/her place. Your reputation in the town has been dropping steadily due to your inability to stop the plague, and Dr. Filin was all too happy to capitalize on it. You agreed to help him/her establish the shelter in your home for the common good, but that is all the power you are willing to concede to an outsider. You dread to think of what the paranoid doctor might do if he/she wields too much power. Your worst fear is that the town will find the truth and rally behind him/her to kill your child like they killed the previous elder's son/daughter. You will never allow that. If push comes to shove, you are willing to die in Victoria's stead.

However, you don't want to do so when there is a far better option. Whoever the earth spirit brought to life should now be a nexus of healing powers. They cannot tap into it unless they are versed in local magic, but you can if you release that energy. The earth spirit will return for their lost powers, and that will be your chance to capture it again. You dislike sacrifice, but this is not sacrifice as much as collecting a debt. Someone's borrowed time has caused a thousand deaths already. That time will soon be over, as will the spirit's freedom.

You have no other options. Capturing the earth spirit without restoring its healing powers first would be a waste; you don't need a staff capable of only causing the plague. Letting it go and relying on its goodwill means a return to the barbaric traditions you worked so hard to erase. The city doctor seems to be trying his/her own method, but his/her success would spell the end of your leadership. Considering what the town did after the last change in leadership, you are not at all eager to let that happen. No, it will be you who saves the town and heals the sick. You are their elder. Let no one forget that.

Goals

- Find whoever was resurrected and sacrifice them to restore the earth's healing power
- Recapture the earth spirit once it has healing powers
- Protect your children
- Make sure the town listens to you, not the outsider
- Protect your family secrets from Dr. Filin
- Make sure to have a worthy successor in case something happens

Notes

- Earth's power can only be restored through your ritual sacrifice ability
- Make sure to fill out the will in your room. You don't want to leave your children squabbling over your inheritance in case something happens to you
- In addition to the items on your person, you have a plague mask and a sacrificial bone dagger somewhere in your house

Contacts

- Vera Kaina: - your dutiful older child. Has little spiritual power. You wish he/she would pick up interests other than magic
- Victoria Kaina: - your reckless, idealistic younger child. For all his/her mistakes, he/she is still your blood
- Dr. Fyodor Filin: - an outsider who thinks he/she owns the town. You will let him/her know who is in charge soon enough

Memory/Event Packets

- Open t + 1 hour into game
- Open t + 2 hours into game. If you are killed beforehand, pass this onto a random PC

Bluesheets

- Shabnak-Adyr, or the Spirit of the Earth
- The Town, the Elders and Their Duty

Greensheets

- Disease Mechanics

- Townsfolk

Abilities

- Knock Out
- Wound
- Assist
- Killing Blow
- Restrain

- Ritual Sacrifice
- True Sight
- Entrapment
- Prestidigitation

Items

- Staff (0063)
- Blood (8703)(×3)

- Coins (8703)(×5)

Stats

- Combat Rating: 2

- γ: 2