**The Vale of Bliss**

**Setting:** This is a hidden place, about a day’s travel on a north to south axis. Either you are born here or stumble into it by accident. It is a beautiful place, an oasis of eternal spring amidst snowcapped, torn mountain ranges. A shimmering fine mist permeates the valley, sometimes thickening into fog or rain and playing tricks with time itself, creating wondrous artifacts or changing people at their core. It is a relic of the power of the ancients, thirteen towers humming with old tech transmitting voices from the past, the present, and the future. There is the transmuter, creating ores and metals from all kinds of matter. Several little hamlets of huts build from wood, bricks and sheets of a silvery alloy scavenged from former buildings of the ancients. In a cave below the midst of the valley rests the Kind One, a gargantuan mushroom who is bled for its spores by the Guardians to keep the temporal anomalies of the Vale.

Oh, and there is one more thing: Once you find your way into the Vale as an outsider you may never leave.

**Boss:** The Kind One is a fungoid-lichen type of being that grew in the cave below the valley well before the cataclysm. This event changed it forever, though, turning it into a sentient, self-aware being who is able to shift its consciousness freely between past, present and future and act at that stage in time (all-knowing, albeit within the confines of its growth). The Kind One is only able to grow further when it does not bleed … If for some reason all rods should be destroyed or taken away without replacement, the Kind One would be free to use its full powers, it could use concentrated bursts of spores to creating major time dilations on the folk hit by them, mainly causing rapid aging to those it perceives as enemies. Folk who destroy the rods might be perceived as friends and be allowed to leave, as well as those who support them. For every folk that stays in the Vale once the Kind One is free, life becomes much more risky, with fog eventually covering the bottom of the Vale and rain occurring much more frequently.

**Antagonists:** The Guardians are an order of folk and tree-folk-sized beings whose uniform badge is a bleached-out white sash worn mostly as a scarf or bandana, only occasionally as an armband. They are, apart from the current Elder, the only ones who know about the Kind One and its effect on the Vale. They placed the rods to bleed the Kind One as well as the exhaust vents that pull the spores into the Vale, thus creating the mist. The rods are made from a metal that is toxic to the Kind One. The spores cause minor time dilations that serve to dislocate or disintegrate the rods. However, the Guardians take care that the rods are replaced soon enough and the Kind One is pinned in place and its growth kept in check. Centuries of torture pushed the Kind One to the brink of insanity. The Guardians know that the Kind One is an intelligent and feeling being. They consider their service as a sacrifice out of compassion for the other inhabitants of the Vale – the Guardians carry the shame and protect the Vale. Their base, a small fort, is at the northern end of the Vale, close to the Transmuter.

**Allies:** The Explorers are a motley crew of Vale-folk of all sizes and trades united by one dream – to venture beyond the mountain ranges and discover the world beyond the Vale. Most of them are experts at hiking, hunting, tracking, and hiding to avoid the Guardians. If anyone has managed to escape the Vale it is not known to the Explorers, for they have not returned. This has led some explorers to turn inward and thinking about changing the way things are run in the Vale. “The Crossroads,” the Vale’s inn has become a venue of revolutionary talk in the quiet hours.

**The Ones sitting on the fence:** Ruu’nahn, a treefolk looking like a roughly hewn wooden humanoid, are the Elder of the Vale. As is customary, they have been elected for ten years by all the folk of the Vale. As is also customary, they have been initiated to the secret of the Vale and been asked whether they will comply with the orders of the Guardians (Note: elders who refuse to do this tend to have very short terms due to unfortunate tragedies). Ruu’nahn was taken to be slightly dumb and malleable, and their thoughts are slow indeed, but persistent. They have grown to be convinced that the Explorers might be right. As of yet, they have not found the courage or the initiative to act. *Plot hook*: Ruu’nahn might be willing to confront the Guardians if the player characters can come up with a safe escape plan for the Vale if things go south.

**Places:**

The **Transmuter** rests half-sunken in the ground. From afar it looks like a giant, iridescent beetle crawling out of the earth. At the front is a big round door with two rows of many blinking buttons around it. The Transmuter is tended by the Guild, craftsmen whose lifelong task it is to learn all known combinations of buttons pushed to create the metals needed for their work. A Guildmaster is one who has learned all combinations, an Honored Master is one who discovers a new combination with an unknown effect. There has been no Honored Master for several generations. *Plot hook*: Kr’tkik would be very interested in finding a new combination and thought about asking the Oracle. Unfortunately, she was told by the Oracle, that she has to wait twenty years for her next turn (she was extremely unlucky ..)

NPCs: One master, Kr’tkik (she/her), a lobsterlike blue grassfolk with tiny hands on its legs, big claws and multiple lensed goggles, gruff, very focused on working the Transmuter

One apprentice, Marv (he/him), a folk-sized bipedal Otter, charming and talkative, a spy for the Guardians. *Plot hook*: Marv might be turned into a double agent if offered some artifact with multiple ideas that give him an edge over Kr’tkik.

The **Humming Towers**: Thirteen of these are scattered in no discernible pattern throughout the Vale. One theory among the Explorers is that may resemble a stellar constellation of importance to the ancients. The towers are in different stages of ruin. They have been made of a substance that seems both bonelike and metal and look rather as if they grew out of the earth. There is a constant droning of white noise around the towers, sometimes melodies, sometimes speeches from people at other places in the valleys and from other times. One tower is home to the Oracle, a Node, that is a featureless humanoid of folk-size.

NPC: The Oracle calls itself “Assistant,” it can answer one question per session. It will answer truthfully, but its knowledge is restricted to the Vale and the purpose of the towers. In addition, the question must not exceed ten words, the answer will not exceed ten words either. The Oracle does not know the secret of the Vale but may offer an opinion on the characters’ hypothesis. After asking a question let the player roll two D6 for determining when their character is allowed another question: first for the amount, second for the time unit: 1: minutes, 2-3: hours, 4: days, 5: weeks, 6: months.

**“The Crossroads”** is the one place to gather and hang out in the southern part of the Vale. It is multistoried building with rooms having been added and wall removed or rebuilt through the generations. The place feels like a cozy hive which never seems to rest. At the heart of the Crossroads it the Frame, a portal made from the same material as the towers. The Frame stands freely in a more quiet corner of the inn. It is the alternative way to the front door for entering the inn, as it is connected to several similar portals scattered throughout the Vale. So far eleven portals are known, some patrons think that there should be thirteen to match the towers. [Rule idea: The portals work in both ways, exiting from The Crossroads is done by thinking about the portal you want to go to. There is a chance to exit to one of the unknown portals 12 and 13. Roll two D20: If both show a “1,” it is one of the secret portals]. *Plot hook*: Maybe there is a pattern to the placement of the portals and the location of portal 12 and 13 can be calculated.

NPC: Talon (xe, xyr), the innkeeper, is an ancient humanoid folk marrow witch with the features of an owl, though scrawny and molting. Xey have come from outside the Vale and made it xyr mission to protect the Crossroads as a safe haven. *Plot hook*: A guardian suspects that Talon supports the Explorers. Talon would need some folk willing to help xem making the guardians testimony dubious. In no way would xey condone violent actions.

**The Hideout** is an Explorer’s secret: A cave halfway up the mountains, the path leading to it being well-hidden from the bottom of the Vale. In the cave is work in progress, a collapsible kite big enough to allow a grassfolk or lighter folk fly.

NPCs: Mara (they/them), a catlike folk and Kitano (he/him), a Kitsune grassfolk who built this kite with the help of Kr’tkik. *Plot hook*: They need a few more parts which are stored at the Guardians’ headquarters.

**The Cave of the Kind One** can be entered through a pathway close to the Guardians’ headquarters (in the northern end of the valley). A long passage to the south leads into the center of the Vale (a bit north of the Crossroads).

**Features:**

**Things in the ground:** Every so often, folk tilling the fields stumble upon relics of the ancients. In most cases, these objects are turned into decorative pieces, jewelry, simple tools. However, sometimes an artifact is uncovered that has some effects mirroring minor marrow magic (e.g. for 2d6 charges). *Plot hook*: Players might go into harvesting artifacts themselves.

**The Mist** can cause time dilations when condensing into fog (minor, temporary, effects) or rain (major, permanent, effects), possible effects might be (also *Plot hook*: Hindering foolish folk from venturing into the rain, ):

* character ages or gets younger (1d6 units of days, month or years)
* character becomes slightly sped up (advantage in feats that require speed, disadvantage in those that require steadiness) or down (advantage in feats that require steadiness, disadvantage in those that require speed)
* affected part of the body casts a “shadow” in time, confusing other folk
* objects left in the rain for a longer time are either unaffected, replaced by a version from the future (according to one popular theory in the Vale), or grow into something with unexpected or major marrow magic effects (e.g. for 1d6 charges)

Original notes:

- Zeit theme

- Zeitverschiebung

- Selbst-begegnungen

- Leute die adapted sind

- Ausnutzung einer EntitÃ¤t

- System-orientiert

- Tal der Winde

- Science Fantasy

- (Numenera)

- VerÃ¤nderung von Materialien

- "Regen"

- Dimensionshopping?

- Tal

- Aus irgendeinem Grund beschÃ¼tzt

- EntitÃ¤t

- Pilzartiges / Kristall

- Antagonisten:

- Wissen Ã¼ber EntitÃ¤t

- HÃ¤lt die EntitÃ¤t davon zurÃ¼ck sich zu expanden

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- Leid der EntitÃ¤t vs. Sicherheit von der AuÃŸenwelt

- Propaganda und Ãœberwachungsstaat

- Bossfight

- Sporen effekteÂ³

- Entweder entkommen lassen/genozid erlauben, oder aufhalten

- Frei lassen

- "Moralisch" -

- Aufhalten

- Tal schutzlos

- Context

- Tal

- Kleines hochgebirge (schneebedeckt)

- Klimatische Anomalie

- Wohl temperiert

- Dauerhafter frÃ¼hling

- Versteckt

- MonstrÃ¶se version von shangrila

- Valley of Bliss

- isolationist

- Appearance

- Konstante FrÃ¼hling

- in unregelmÃ¤ÃŸigen abstÃ¤nden TÃ¼rme

- Aus metall oder Stein oder organisch? (unklar)

- schlichte HÃ¼tten

- Patchwork mit teilen die abgebrochen sind von der alten technologie

- Purpose

- Siehe oben

- Characters

- Cult

- Offen, disguised oder versteckt? Open – present themselves as guardians who protect the valley by preventing its inhabitants from leaving. Trained in martial arts, if the valley should ever come under attack from outside, they would be ready to fight

- Potentiell Gegenwind aus der Population?

- The elderfolk: One folk in charge of managing daily affairs, organizing harvest groups, communal work, officially elected by the vote of all folk, de facto only elders that are malleable to the guardians’ orders tend to survive in office. More independent minded elders have accidents …

- Gegner des kultes

- Nicht notwendiger weise aktiv, sondern nur im sentiment: explorers – folk of all ages that venture beyond the beaten paths and explore the mountains. Quite good in hiking, tracking, and hiding from guardians. Some have secretly started to train fighting with farming tools.

NPC: Ru’unahn (they/them), a treefolk towering as figure of roughly hewn wood. Very strong, the guardians want to press him into their service but so far Ru’unahn stayed independent. On the verge of joining the explorers.

Was muss getan werden

- Genereller vibe

- 3-5 Notable Locations

- Pro location 1-2 NPCs

- 2-5 Plothooks