Chapter IV

22-3-414. You return to the Material plane and learn that Jeffers had killed Ragnarok about two weeks earlier. Halifax agrees to help you get to the island, however he asks a week to prepare and plan.

24-3-414. Baron approaches Yorick. “After father died…was killed, I brought it upon myself to clean up his things. After you went to Hell, he said that he had left some things at one of our old neighbor’s houses. We went and picked it up. I though you should have it.” He hands you an old leather roll, bound up by a coord. “It’s his old cloak. That was the only thing.” The cloak is long and worn, the bottom stained and beginning to fray. It is double layered over the shoulders, the middle of the second layer coming to a point at the middle of the back. It is trimmed in red cloth, but besides that, the cloaked seemed an unremarkable off-white.

If he puts it on, he hears a whisper in his head: “I am the cloak of the Blood Crusader, the Blood-red Phoenix, passed to him by the Sword of Pelor, the Golden Pheonix, and to him by the First Phoenix of Uzai. I am the cloak that shall shield you from the rain, the armor that shall keep you from harm, and the sword that shall pierce the hearts of your enemies. Once you are ready to face your challenges as a true hero, I shall serve you.”

25-3-414. Isabella begins to feel a throbbing—no, a tapping in her mind. An incessant tapping, as if someone were knocking on a faraway door with thrown pebbles.

You feel that you can open this door—that you can let in whatever is tapping. Or—you can ignore it.

If she lets it in: You collapse to the ground, and your mind is flooded with a vision: *The one-eyed bard climbs into a dark cave carved from the black glass of volcanoes. The cave opened to a grand sanctum, the walls and domed ceiling more ornate than anything you have ever seen. Along the walls are small coves, each holding a sarcophagus. A thin bridge arches towards an island at the center of the room, the rest of the area drops into nothingness. A stairway spirals downwards, hugging the walls. Downwards, into an untold number of chambers. But those chambers do not interest the one-eyed bard. The floor is smooth and reflective, and his footsteps echo in the dark. He reaches the island in the center of the room. On it are two sleek black sarcophagi. The vision blurs and crackles and cuts—the one eyed bard leans over an open tomb and grabs a huge black sword.*

*The image changes. You open your eyes—and they’re your eyes, your own blue eyes. Your blue hair whips in front of your face as the horrible energy swirls around him, the raw force of it moving the air like a storm. Dust and glass and bits of rock from your once-beautiful mansion fly through the air, but none of it hits you. An arm robed in soft grey holds you tightly around the waist, another is held high, creating a perfect white shield to keep you from harm. You could hear him yelling over the wind—cursing you, crying at you, pleading you. Just yesterday he had been fine, sitting in his chambers surrounded by mirrors—but that was before. Your wrist still throbbed with pain where he had left his mark just a few hours before. His beautiful golden eyes now shone like suns, almost blinding you, and his neat white hair moving like a fire, untamed and unpredictable. You hold your arm up to shield your eyes—and you’re gone. You’re back at home, in your room. Your savior lays you down in your bed and looks at you, one last time with his kind golden eyes before you close yours.*

*The image flashes. A town in the midst of a dry mountain valley. The buildings are run down, barely houses at all. The people stagger through the streets, hungry, poor, anguished. In the center of the town rises a castle of luxury, parapets rising high over the gloom below them. The image flashes a glimpse of a lonely road through a valley, then a glimpse of an archway higher than the mountains it guards.*

30-3-414. Halifax returns to the guild house. After gathering everyone, he says, “I think I know how we’ll get to the island—though the portal in Brund. Before we go—now that Isabella’s awake, I believe I can share this. Floy, could you fetch a wash pan and some water?” The gnome scurries off and soon returns with the shallow wash pan filled with water. The warlock takes out a small black crystal, about the size of a pea, and drops it in the dish. The crystal sizzles and sputters, and the water begins to swirl upwards. The water begins to form shapes in the air, and it replays a scene before you:

Waves crash against the sides of a ship amidst the chaos of a hurricane. Jeffers stands at the wheel of the ship, yelling orders to his crew. A huge beast rears out of the water—a massive whale with a mouth large enough to swallow a ship whole. It has the arms of a crab, with claws that could snap a ship in two. The ships and monster seem to have been in battle long—the ship’s main mast lost in the waves, the beast’s face red with blood and gore. The Hell’s Queen dodges the beast, and as the behemoth slams down into the water, the ship rides the wave and fires its broadside cannons. The metal rips at the monster’s face, and it dives down into the depths, its tale slapping the waves and sending the Hell’s Queen careening off. The crew throws row boats into the water and begins to evacuate—leaving only the crew needed to fire the cannons. The dread pirate captain screams at the waves, urging the beast to rear its head once more. The maelstrom summons a wave three times the height of the ship, and it sweeps the Hell’s Queen into its grasp, crushing the masts and nearly turning the ship onto its side. As the wave passed, the great whale showed its mighty head once more, and it rammed into the side of the Hell’s Queen, splitting the ship in two. Jeffers called for the cannons to fire once more, and the whale was filled with metal. Jeffers grabbed a rope and swung alongside the mighty beast, and he slashed at its eye, cutting a bleeding gash in the jelly. He let go of the rope, and sailed through the air, landing in the eye of the monster. He slashed and dug and was lost in the beast’s head. The whale dove into the black waves in anger, the sound of its pain deafening. It twisted and turned and writhed under the waves, but the island’s guardian could not get rid of the dread pirate in its brain. Jeffers hacked and stabbed and gouged and tore and the beast died under the sea, its brain ripped apart. Jeffers swam upwards, and was swept by the currents to the surface.

The scene changed, and the water formed a forest of mushrooms strewn with strange stone faces. Words echoed through the water vison, distant and slurred, as if spoken through water: “These faces have stared…since the Doom,” the last words echoed, like repeating ripples in a pool.

The scene changed, the water swirling to form a familiar mansion, the grand hall was in ruin, stones strewn across what remained of the fine marble floor. The great stained glass windows at the far end were gone, only the stone framing remained. Dust notes floated through the clear moonlight, and each footstep sounded like the dropping of a stone in the night. Jeffers’s voice echoed, distant, “Down here, if I remember correctly…”

They saw dark stairs descending into the cold. Breaths turned to mist, and footsteps echoed like thunder. The darkness gave way to a light, as the water reflected the memory of the red sunrod. The walls of the stairwell seemed to change and warp with the watery light.

The water turned, and the vision changed again—to a less ruined place, warm and lit, but filled with shadows. The vision formed a single man sitting lightly in a chair. His words were garbled, but understandable, “You come…again…but what you come here for, I do not know.”

The vision turned, and showed the dread pirate, his sharp face outlined in shadows. “…told me I was to draw twice, but…only draw from the deck once. How then?” The dread pirate stood before the seven figures, staring them down unafraid.

The figure in the center smiled, and put his hands together. “I don't believe I told you any such thing…answer to your question is a wish…” the man spoke quietly.

The vision flashed short scenes—a man lying dead on the floor, his throat crushed to black, a man clawing at the wood table as he sunk into the floor. A man laughing, showered in gold in riches before he vanished forever.

Five words echoed spitefully in the water: “I will draw ten cards.” The vision turned into a blur, flashes of cards and swords and shadows swirling in the vision, as if the time was sped up. The dread pirate stood in front of the hooded man, his back facing the memory’s eye. The pirate spoke, “I invoke…the vizier…one question before I draw my last card.” Distant words rattled off in the pirate’s voice, “You are not…person that we met that day…I can tell. That man with white hair and golden eyes…to answer any question…was nigh omniscient—yet, you said that you did not know the reason...” The pirate paced in front of the room, two swords in his hands. “You said the same when Tapo came to you... You do not possess the same expanse of knowledge that the man we killed did.” The vision blurred, and the pirate’s words became slurred, unrecognizable. Jeffers pointed a thin black sword at the hooded man, his voice clear, “So, you are not the man we know as Fairfox, though you go by that same name. If you were not the one that we killed that day, then who are you?” The hooded figure drew back his hood and smiled widely. His gold eyes reflected the dancing torchlight. The air in that room whispered to the pirate, and the tenth card flipped from the deck.

The pirate stiffened, then spasmed. The swords dropped from his hands and his back arched, as if he was hit by a lightning bolt. The world around him seemed swirled like a vortex, as if the reality of the room was draining like liquid. A strange laughing echoed through the water of the memory, and the dread pirate fell to his knees. He screamed in pain and began to claw at his eye, and even looking from behind could you see that his fingers came away red with blood. Then, he stopped. He stood, shakily, as if new to his legs. He ran a bloody hand through his blond hair, the red streaking in. The pirate staggered forward, then turned. The right side of his face was red with blood, the scars ripped into his flesh seeping. His eyes were closed, and he took a deep, long, breath, as if tasting the air for the first time. He spoke, “The air is so sweet…” He smiled, and blood ran over his lips and into his mouth. He opened his eyes and looked at the memory’s eye. “You have no idea…how horrible death is when you don’t have a soul. Hell cannot compare, warlock. At least in Hell, you’re somewhere.” His left eye was like molten gold, his right a pure black orb, like an eye carved from onyx. Inset upon the black surface, instead of an iris or pupil there was only a golden symbol. An “F.” He speaks, but his voice begins to slur. A burst of green fiery energy bursts forth towards the pirate.

“Arassil…to the hallway. Now!” The room began to crackle with power, and the dread pirate became cloaked in a swirling storm of energy. The image cracked and spun, and the memory’s eye ran into a hallway. It turned, and it braced a staff towards the room. A wall of force materialized in the doorway, but it made no matter—for the small silver amulet of time at the center of the room spun, and everything in the sanctum disappeared.

The water splashed back into the basin.

Halifax looked calmly at them. “I felt that I should wait until Isabella was with us. I hope that put your minds at rest. I meant nothing to you by dodging your questions—I am only trying to help in the best way that I can. Anything you would like to ask?”

-If they ask what he did afterword:

“Who do you think made the map that we used to get to the island in the first place? Arassil and I were left outside the range of the time turner—we were stuck in 410. So, we traveled the island. Studied it. Used the three years to learn what we could about our enemies, and out potential allies. Come. Let’s be on our way.”

You step outside. The sky is grey and clouded over, and a light rain is falling. You lock hands in a circle, and Halifax takes out Tapo’s staff of Passage. He focuses momentarily, and then the world disappears. The heat of the desert sweeps over you. A ruined desert temple half sunken into the dunes sits in front of you, a relic of a lost age. You walk slowly through the sand of the temple, high dunes rising along the walls. Ancient carvings were etched on the walls, stories of long ago. You reach a hole in the floor of an open, web-filled chamber. A huge stone seal lays off to the side. A tunnel leads off from the bottom of the hole. It opens into a massive chamber holding a stone archway etched with runes. In front of it lies a sarcophagus, the lit blown apart.

The archway hums, and the runes glow blue. A film of energy appears in the gate.

Tapo: “Beautiful, isn’t it? We’re in the mountains of Brund—the southern ones. This is a living memory left for us by our once-piratey friend turned psychopath. Didn’t know the mansion could teleport, huh? Yeah. Its master rarely kept it in one place when it was still intact.

Don’t even try attacking me. No use when I can’t die. I’m here because you need my help, whether you know it or want it or not, you need it. That, however, must wait for later. Inside the mansion there are two beings who are not what they seem. One is from our time; one is from their time. Both are important. Find out what message our one-eyed friend has left us in this illusion, and find out what present he has left us as well. After that, we’ll speak again. Oh—you might want to put these on— “he hands you a bag of holding”—it’s improper to go to a ball dressed like that.”

As we speak, the one hope that you have left is in the hands of the One Eyed Bard. The world is on the brink of cataclysm, and I’m sorry to tell you that you were part of the cause—and, of course, was I. Vecna will soon return, more horrible than ever, and you

Isabella—your vision. What did the last part show? I may be able to tell you where it is.

Notes:

**In the memory, the players look and practically are the people they portray. While disguised they have none of the abilities of their players but will have the abilities of the people they portray, however they can throw off their disguise at will. Discarding the disguise will allow their true form to be seen *by others of their time.* Those in the memory will still see them as the people they portray. Casting off the disguise will essentially detach the players from the people they portray—in the memory, the facades will remain there, standing still, almost frozen in time, while the players leave. In this detached state, the memory seems super blurry while moving.**

**At the time of the memory, Hera’rontan had applied an anti magic field to the palace to prevent magical tampering by the guests. T**

1st night: The ball. This is a chance for the PCs to explore a little bit, but there won’t really be too many formal introductions unless they talk to people. Sul will give a round-about introduction of the factions—at least one person in each faction will.

During this time, the grey elf Lord Luthion sneaks from the hall and across the yard to the entrance hall. He pads down the stairs, trying to locate what he believes to be an augur, but what is actually Experiment Two, Fairfox.

PLOT: The grey elves are Vecna worshipers seeking knowledge to bring Vecna back to the material plane. They have heard from divination by Vecna of an augur at the mansion—they are seeking it out. Fairfox, mostly insane by this point, gives them one question, like he does to many people he meets. Luthion’s question: “What can we do to bring Vecna back to this plane?” His answer: “Kill the arch-consula of Erresea.”

During the first night, Luthion discusses with the other grey elves. They decide to send him out to personally kill Galedir Il’Vass. Luthion is a trained assassin. He grapnels down from his window, leaving slight marks on the sill. He sneaks behind the stables, and the horses nicker slightly, though barrely noticeable. He climbs up the wall of the mansion to Galedir’s window. He picks the lock and poisons Galedir with Dreaming Death. He sneaks out, climbing up onto the roof and back to his tower. Galedir wakes an hour later from the poison, 3 AM, and he stumbles from his room looking for a blade.

Sul attempts, after the meeting, to sneak out and stop Luthion. He is caught by the vrolikai, however, and is attacked. His arm is injured, but he escapes. He continues towards the Erresean residences. By this time, however, Luthion has already used magic to climb

**Erreseans**: During the first night, all Erreseans are asleep—besides Teithion and his five Vardin. He and one other Vardin patrol the top floor, the floor with the princess and Arch Consula. The other three patrol the lower two floors.

**Tirish:** Everyone is asleep but for Clareth Thicketh and his eight guards. One guard is stationed on each floor of the tower, with Clareth at the top.

**Brundi:** Everyone sleeps but for Akhtane and the other Winds.

**Vrolikai:** The vrolikai stalks the halls, its form cast off to use his abilities. It has been magically chained to the palace by the One Eyed Bard, so, since it was tasked to kill him, it wants to get free. **During the first night, it does not know that the PCs are from the present.** It will agree not to kill the PCs if they help free it. Then, it will help them find the One Eyed Bard. Upon first meeting them, however, it will try to kill them. They will have to battle it, and bring it down to negative hit points before it will help them. So, to try to escape the memory, it has decided that it should murder people to pass the time.

2nd set of visions:

Present

The Present: One Eyed Bard has found sword, now to find the Sybyl Eye. Goes to library to find it! The only record that would have knowledge of the sybyl eye and the sybyl gate would be a record of the Naa’waith or Lemba’waith—a tree of knowledge. One of the last trees of knowledge is the Legacy Tree at the bottom of Ali’s Tears, in the ruins of the ancient city of the Entula’waith.

E2 SCENE:

The room is covered in mirrors—the walls, the ceiling, even the floor. The scene is given an almost surreal light by the strange blue candle alight in the center, reflected infinitely in every direction. The candle burns with a light blue flame, and the shadows it casts seem to be deeper and darker than the shadows of the sun. They give everything in the room a sense of lucent individuality, as if each thing is strictly separate—the chair, the table, the mirrors, the man. He sits in the lone chair, bathed in the ghostly blue light. The mirrors give a strange disconcerting feeling, like the room has no end to it—an infinite set of hallways and rooms below the palace, each with the man and the candle in them. He is dressed in a fine suit, pin-striped black with blue accents, that is unbuttoned and messy. His collar is open, and the fine tie loose. His white hair is tousled and mussed, but his golden eyes are sharp and cold. His hands are gloved in white silk, and they rest together under his chin.

If in memory face: “Don’t you know it’s late? It’s dangerous to be wandering about the palace at night—especially with these murders happening. Now, tell me why you’re here.”

If she remains in the memory face, he will ask her if she wants to know the answer to one question. If she drops her memory face, or if she asks about things her memory face should not know, E2 gets suspicious. “Now how have you come to know that?”

Goes on form there. If she never reveals herself, he never knows.

***E2’s knowledge is nigh omniscient, however, somewhat like Elea’roilmani, E2’s knowledge is based on what he is asked or what is said to him. If he is asked a question, he knows the answer. If something is said to him, he knows everything about the topic. Unlike Elea’roilmani, he cannot ask himself questions and get their answer. Also unlike Elea’roilmani, he can reveal whatever he wishes.***

If she reveals herself: “Don’t you know it’s late? It’s dangerous to be wandering about the palace at night—especially with these murders going on.” He looks at you inquisitively, then his eyes widen slightly. You feel a slight numbing feeling in your mind—DC 21 Will or her mind goes numb—she is unable to move or take any actions—she can make saves, but at a -5 penalty.

If E2 succeeds: She feels a tingling—then an abrupt piercing, as if he was probing into her mind. DC 23 Will or he knows all her thoughts and experiences.

If E2 succeeds that, he knows EVERYTHING. He knows this is his memory, and he can take advantage of that.

If E2 fails, his expression falters, and he moves to probe her mind.

If E2 succeeds this, he can get 3 answers before she blocks him.

-What happened to you?

-Why are you here?

-What circumstances brought about the creation of the One Eyed Bard?

If E2 fails both psionic powers: He attempts to talk to her normal like.

“Hm. You seem different, Isabella. What happened to you?”

He plays off of her conversation, staying calm at any freak outs. The more she talks, the more he learns. He will try to steer the convo towards why she is there. He wants to confirm she is in a memory. If he confirms she is in a memory, he will say something like this: “Memories can be quite mysterious things. Unreliable, vague things. Say, do you know how a living memory works? It’s a very powerful piece of magic. The creator molds the memory around one of their own memories or a memory they took from another. Others can enter the memory, but they themselves cannot. It’s one of the few limits of the creation. What I’m trying to get at here is that if the person whose memory it was figures out that it is their memory…well, they remember whatever they remember.” He smiles broadly. If he figures out that it’s a memory and he’s the pilot, he will do the psionic mind wiggle if he failed previously. If he did not fail, he knows about Mul and all that. He will let her talk for a bit, asking questions and blaming him for stuff. He will confirm that he killed Rowan and did all the bad stuff in her life. As the conversation draws to a close, of if it feels like the proper time, he will say :

“Isabella, I believe there’s someone at the door for you.” If she checks the door, he uses a psionic teleportation (or uses memory manipulation) to appear just about an inch in front of her, looking down with his sparkling gold eyes. “Don’t you hear that tapping?” He presses his thumb to her temple and his first two fingers to her forehead. Will 20 to keep Mul out. Otherwise, VISIONS. If she stays, she stays afterward. If she leaves, E2 says, “Isabella, one last thing: what do you see in the mirrors?” If she replies normal shit, he says: “Then you have something to look forward to.”

If she ever asks who he is: “I haven’t chosen a name yet. The others call me Ita’Kanetar, but I find the name boorish and old fashioned. What do you think, my sweet Isabella? What would you name me?” He does a little bow with that.

*The water is heavy and dark, swirling in infinite currents below the white crested waves on the surface. The One-Eyed Bard walked along the bottom of the waves, harboring himself in a swirling orb of air. The vision shifted away from the pirate, like a fish swimming away from a shark. The bard walked through a city under the waves, its spires like mithril needles stuck into the sand. The city was dark, and tall sea plants tickled at its walls. The heart of the city glowed with a soft light, a cold, blue light. The vision swam inwards, towards the light. It swam through the kelp, through the ancient walls, under the dark figures circling the city. The One-Eyed Bard pushed through the kelp to the clearing at the city’s heart. His face lit with a smile as he approached the tree. Its leaves pulsed with a dancing light, and its trunk was lucent and webbed as he ran his hand over the smooth bark. The bard sat and crossed his legs beneath the whispering water, meditating. The vision blinked away.*

*A circular stone tablet, carved with a language more ancient than any, rests overgrown with dry vines and prickly shrubs adapted to the harsh winds of the desert. The tablet stands vertically, set deep into the sandstone wall of the cave, immovable to all but those who’s need is truest. The image flashes and shifts. Tall pine trees, calm and silent, stand watch over the thick forest. The undergrowth is thin, and tame. The grass is soft, so impossibly soft, and the water is clear and serene. The image jumps. A small ruined temple stands as testament to those who walked through the doors, and those who stood here, here by the pool. The pool that stood before anything, the pool where all things spread from. The water is shallow and unmoving, yet untouched by any contamination. It is the water that feeds the world. The image swirls.*

*You open your eyes, and you’re looking at the ground in front of you. The muscles in your legs feel tight as you sit cross-legged in the grass, your soft, baggy pants rippling in the breeze. Your feet are bare against the green blades, and your forearms rest easily in your lap. You take in a deep breath. The air smells fresh and pleasant, but it bitters as you remember why you’re here. You await him. Elea’roilmani told you he’d find you here. He said that there was no point in leaving or avoiding it. Even Hera’rombar agreed. He would find you, wherever you went. So you await him, here in the open bluff overlooking the rolling, treeless plains. He who will take you away from Isabella. You meditate as you wait, thinking back to memories long buried. When you open your eyes again, he is standing in front of you, the runed chain in his hand and a wide smile on his face. He, who will take you away from Isabella. He, who was your greatest mistake. He, who you created with your own face, your own golden eyes, your own white hair. The clouds pass over the sun.*

**en’lye’Ered en’lye’Lindale en’lye’Agar Neithan’luume: E L A N—of our Seed, of our Music, of our Blood, We Without Time.**