THE ELDER SCROLLS TREASURY

Corpus Tamrielicum

The Official Books, Scrolls, Journals, Letters, and Notes of The Elder Scrolls Games

Edited and annotated by

Zeph

Vol. IV

The Texts from Oblivion, its Official Plugins and Expansions

Dortmund 2012
Dedicated to all devs of The Elder Scrolls series
and
all lore-friendly modders.
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[1] The Adabal-a

The Adabal-a

Editor's Note: The Adabal-a is traditionally believed to be the memoirs of Morihaus, consort to Alessia the Slave Queen. While this cannot be historically verified, the Adabal-a is certainly among the oldest written accounts to come down to us from the early First Era.

PELINAL'S DEATH

And in the blood-floored throne room of White-Gold, the severed head of Pelinal spoke to the winged-bull, Morihaus, demigod lover of Al-Esh, saying, "Our enemies have undone me, and spread my body into hiding. In mockery of divine purpose, the Ayleids cut me into eighths, for they are obsessed with this number."

And Morihaus, confused, snorted through his ring, saying, "Your crusades went beyond her counsel, Whitestrake, but I am a bull, and therefore reckless in my wit. I think I would go and gore our prisoners if you had left any alive. You are blood-made-glorious, uncle, and will come again, as fox animal or light. Cyrod is still ours."

Then Pelinal spoke again for the last time: "Beware, Morihaus, beware! With the foresight of death I know now that my foe yet lives, bitter knowledge to take to my grave. Better that I had died believing myself the victor. Although cast beyond the doors of night, he will return. Be vigilant! I can no longer shield the host of Men from Umaril's retribution."

ALESSIA'S YOUTH DURING THE SLAVE-YEARS

Perrif's original tribe is unknown, but she grew up in Sard, anon Sardarvar Leed, where the Ayleids herded in men from across all the Niben: kothri, nede, al-gemha, men-of-'kreath (though these were later known to be imported from the North), keptu, men-of-ge (who were eventually destroyed when the Flower King Nilichi made great sacrifice to an insect god named [lost]), al-hared, men-of-ket, others; but this was Cyrod, the heart of the imperatum saliache, where men knew no freedom, even to keep family, or choice of name except in secret, and so to their alien masters all of these designations were irrelevant.

Men were given over to the lifting of stones, and the draining of the fields, and the upkeep of temple and road; or to become art-tortures for strange pleasures, as in the wailing wheels of Vindasel and the gut-gardens of Sercen; and flesh-sculpture, which was everywhere among the slaves of the Ayleids in those days; or, worse, the realms of the Fire King Hadhuul, where the begetting of drugs drawn from the admixture of daedrons into living hosts let one inhale new visions of torment, and children were set aflame for nighttime tiger sport.

MORIHAUS EXPLAINS ALESSIA'S NAMES

Then Morihaus said to them: "In your tales you have many names for her: Al-Esh, given to her in awe, that when translated sounds like a redundancy, 'the high high', from which come the more familiar corruptions: Aleshut, Esha, Alessia. You knew her as Paravant, given to her when crowned, 'first of its kind', by which the gods meant a mortal worthy of the majesty that
is killing-questing-healing, which is also Paraval, Pevesh, Perrethu, Perrif, and, in my case, for it is what I called her when we were lovers: Paravania."

"Though she is gone to me, she remains bathed in stars, first Empress, Lady of Heaven, Queen-ut-Cyrod."

And they considered themselves full-answered, and departed.
I am not a writer. I am a thief. I am a good thief. I am not such a good writer. Anyway, I want to write about picking locks. I read a book about designing locks once. It was good. It gave me lots of ideas.

Some guys make locks with angled keyholes. Always carry a bent lockpick. They will work good in these locks. I do, and I open lots of locks. Sometimes I carry copper lockpicks. Copper bends easy. That way I can bend it right there. Copper lockpicks break easy too. Be careful.

Sometimes the locks have weird spings. They all spring differently, which makes picking it hard. I hold my torch close to the lock. This makes it hot. When it's hot, the springs are all the same. They don't bounce so differently any more. Be careful not to burn yourself.

Some thieves can't read. If you can't read, get someone to read this book to you. It will make more sense then.

See vol. I.
This is an absurd book. But like all things Khajiiti, as the expression goes, "g zalzi vaberzarita maaszi", or "absurdity has become necessity." Much of what I have to say has probably never been written before, and if it has, no one has read it. The Imperials feel that everything must be written down for posterity, but every Khajiiti kitten born in Elsweyr knows his history, he drinks it in with his mother's milk.

Fairly recently, however, our struggles to win back our homeland from the rapacious Count of Leyawiin have attracted sympathetic persons, even Imperials, who wish to join our cause, but, it seems, do not understand our ways. Our enemies, of course, do not understand us either, but that is as we wish it, a weapon in our arsenal. Our non-Khajiiti friends, however, should know who we are, why we are, and what we are doing.

The Khajiit mind is not engineered for self-reflection. We simply do what we do, and let the world be damned. To put into words and rationalize our philosophy is foreign, and I cannot guarantee that even after reading this, you will understand us. Grasp this simple truth -- "q'zi no vano thzina ualizz" -- "When I contradict myself, I am telling the truth."

We are the Renrijra Krin. "The Mercenary's Grin," "The Laugh of the Landless," and "The Smiling Scum" would all be fair translations. It is a derogatory expression, but it is amusing so we have adopted it.

We have anger in our hearts, but not on our faces. We fight for Elsweyr, but we do not ally ourselves with the Mane, who symbolizes our land. We believe in justice, but do not follow laws.

"Q'zi no vano thzina ualizz."

These are not rules, for there is no word for "rules" in Ta'agra. Call them our "thjizzrini" -- "foolish concepts."

1. "Vaba Do'Shurh'do": "It Is Good To Be Brave"

We are struggling against impossible odds, against the very Empire of Tamriel. Our cause is the noblest cause of all: defense of home. If we fail, we betray our past and our future. Our dead are "Ri'sallidad", which may be interpreted as "martyrs" in the truest, best sense of that word which is so often misused. We honor their sacrifice and, beneath our smiles, mourn them deeply.

Our bravery most obviously shows in the smile that is the "Krin" part of our name. This does not mean that we walk about grinning like the idiotic baboonish Imga of Valenwood. We simply are entertained by adversary. We find an equal, fair fight tiresome in the extreme. We
confidently smile because we know our victory in the end is assured. And we know our smiles drive our enemies insane.

2. "Vaba Maaszi Lhajiito": "It Is Necessary To Run Away"

We are struggling against impossible odds, against the very Empire of Tamriel. Honor is madness. Yes, we loved the Renrijra Krin who died in brave battle against the forces of the Empire, but I guarantee you that each of those Ri'sallidad had an escape route he or she failed to use, and died saying, "Damn."

When the great Senche-Raht comes to the Saimisil Steppes, he will find himself unable to hunt, unable to sleep, as the tiny Alfiq leap onto his back, biting him, and running off before he has a chance to turn his great body to face them. Eventually, though he may stubbornly hope to catch the Alfiq, the Senche-Raht always leaves. They are our cousins, the Alfiq, and we have adopted their strategy against the great tiger of Leyawiin.

Do not ally yourself with the Renrij if you yearn to be part of a mighty army, marching resolutely forth, for whom retreat is anathema. We will laugh at your suicidal idiocy as we slip into the reeds of the river, and watch the inevitable slaughter.

3. "Fusozay Var Var": "Enjoy Life"

Life is short. If you have not made love recently, please, put down this book, and take care of that with all haste. Find a wanton lass or a frisky lad, or several, in whatever combination your wise loins direct, and do not under any circumstances play hard to get. Our struggle against the colossal forces of oppression can wait.

Good. Welcome back.

We Renrijra Krin live and fight together, and know that Leyawiin and the Empire will not give way very soon, likely not in our lifetimes. In the time we have, we do not want our closest comrades to be dour, dull, colorless, sober, and virginal. If we did, we would have joined the Emperor's Blades.

Do not begrudge us our lewd jokes, our bawdy, drunken nights, our moonsugar. They are the pleasures that Leyawiin denies us, and so we take our good humor very seriously.

4. "Fusozay Var Dar": "Kill Without Qualm"

Life is short. Very short, as many have learned when they have crossed the Renrijra Krin.

We fight dirty. If an enemy is facing us, we might consider our options, and even slip away if his sword looks too big. If his back is to us, however, I personally favor knocking him down, and then jumping on his neck where the bones snap with a gratifying crunch. Of course, it is up to you and your personal style.

5. "Ahzirr Durrarriss": "We Give Freely To The People"

Let us not forget our purpose. We are fighting for our families, the Khajiiti driven from the rich, fertile shores of Lake Makapi and the River Malapi, where they and their ancestors lived
since time immemorial. It is our battle, but their tragedy. We must show them, lest they are swayed by other rhetoric, that we are fighting for them.

The Mane, The Emperor, and The Count can give speeches, pass laws, and, living life in the open, explain their positions and philosophies to their people to stave off the inevitable revolution. Extralegal entities, such as the Renrijra Krin, must make our actions count for our words. This means more than fighting the good fight, and having a laugh at our befuddled adversaries. It means engaging and seducing the people. Ours is not a military war, it is a political war. If the people rise up against our oppressors, they will retreat, and we will win.

Give to these people, whenever possible, gold, moonsugar, and our strong arms, and though they hide, their hearts will be with us.

6. "Ahzirr Traajijazeri": "We Justly Take By Force"

Let us not forget our purpose. We are thieves and thugs, smugglers and saboteurs. If we cannot take a farm, we burn it to the ground. If the Imperials garrisoned in a glorious ancient stronghold, beloved by our ancestors, will not yield, we tear the structure apart. If the only way to rescue the land from the Leyawiin misappropriation is to make it uninhabitable by all, so be it.

We want our life and our home back as it was twenty years ago, but if that is not realistic, then we will accept a different simple, pragmatic goal. Revenge. With a smile.
In the first years of the First Era, a powerful race of Elves called the Ayleids, or the Heartland High Elves, ruled central Tamriel with an iron hand. The high and haughty Ayleids relied on their patrons, the treacherous Daedra Lords, to provide armies of daedra and dead spirits; with these fearless magical armies, the Ayleids preyed without mercy upon the young races of men, slaughtering or enslaving them at their whim.

On behalf of the suffering human races, St. Alessia, the first in the line of Cyrodiils, sought the aid of Akatosh, the Dragon God of Time, and ruler of the noble Aedra. Akatosh, looking with pity upon the plight of men, drew precious blood from his own heart, and blessed St. Alessia with this blood of Dragons, and made a Covenant that so long as Alessia's generations were true to the dragon blood, Akatosh would endeavor to seal tight the Gates of Oblivion, and to deny the armies of daedra and undead to their enemies, the Daedra-loving Ayleids.

In token of this Covenant, Akatosh gave to Alessia and her descendants the Amulet of Kings and the Eternal Dragonfires of the Imperial City. Thus does Alessia become the first gem in the Cyrodiilic Amulet of Kings. The gem is the Red Diamond in the middle of the Amulet. This is the Symbol of the Empire and later taken as the symbol of the Septim line. It is surrounded by eight other gems, one for each of the divines.

So long as the Empire shall maintain its worship of Akatosh and his kin, and so long as Alessia's heirs shall bear the Amulet of Kings, Akatosh and his divine kin maintain a strong barrier between Tamriel and Oblivion, so that mortal man need never again fear the devastating summoned hosts of the Daedra Lords.

But if the Empire should slacken in its dedication to the Nine Divines, or if the blood of Alessia's heirs should fail, then shall the barriers between Tamriel and the Daedric realms fall, and Daedra-worshippers might summon lesser Daedra and undead spirits to trouble the races of men.
[6] The Anuad Paraphrased*

See vol. I.
[7] Arcana Restored*

See vol. I.
On a minor but respectable plaza in the Imperial City sat, or perhaps lounged, Lord Vanech's Building Commission. It was an unimaginative, austere building not noted so much for its aesthetic or architectural design as for its prodigious length. If any critics wondered why such an unornamented, extended erection held such fascination for Lord Vanech, they kept it to themselves.

In the 398th year of the 3rd Era, Decumus Scotti was a senior clerk at the Commission.

It had been a few months since the shy, middle-aged man had brought Lord Vanech the most lucrative of all contracts, granting the Commission the exclusive right to rebuild the roads of Valenwood which had been destroyed in the Five Year War. For this, he had become the darling of the managers and the clerks, spending his days recounting his adventures, more or less faithfully... although he did omit the ending of the tale, since many of them had partaken in the celebratory Unthrappa roast provided by the Silenstri. Informing one's listeners that they've gorged on human flesh improves very few stories of any good taste.

Scotti was neither particularly ambitious nor hard-working, so he did not mind that Lord Vanech had not given him anything to actually do.

Whenever the squat little gnomish man would happen upon Decumus Scotti in the offices, Lord Vanech would always say, "You're a credit to the Commission. Keep up the good work."

In the beginning, Scotti had worried that he was supposed to be doing something, but as the months went on, he merely replied, "Thank you. I will."

There was, on the other hand, the future to consider. He was not a young man, and though he was receiving a respectable salary for someone not doing actual work, Scotti considered that soon he might have to retire and not get paid for not doing work. It would be nice, he decided, if Lord Vanech, out of gratitude for the millions of gold the Valenwood contract was generating, might deign to make Scotti a partner. Or at least give him a small percentage of the bounty.

Decumus Scotti was no good at asking for things like that, which was one of the reasons why, previous to his signal successes in Valenwood as a senior clerk for Lord Atrius, he was a lousy agent. He had just about made up his mind to say something to Lord Vanech, when his lordship unexpectedly pushed things along.

"You're a credit to the Commission," the waddling little thing said, and then paused. "Do you have a moment free on your schedule?"
Scotti nodded eagerly, and followed his lordship to his hideously decorated and very enviable hectare of office space.

"Zenithar blesses us for your presence at the Commission," the little fellow squeaked grandly. "I don't know whether you know this, but we were having a bad time before you came along. We had impressive projects, for certain, but they were not successful. In Black Marsh, for example, for years we've been trying to improve the roads and other routes of travel for commerce. I put my best man, Flesus Tijjo, on it, but every year, despite staggering investments of time and money, the trade along those routes only gets slower and slower. Now, we have your very clean, very, very profitable Valenwood contract to boost the Commission's profits. I think it's time you were rewarded."

Scotti grinned a grin of great modesty and subtle avarice.

"I want you to take over the Black Marsh account from Flesus Tijjo."

Scotti shook as if awaking from a pleasant dream to hideous reality, "My Lord, I - I couldn't -"

"Nonsense," chirped Lord Vanech. "Don't worry about Tijjo. He will be happy to retire on the money I give him, particularly as soul-wrenchingly difficult as this Black Marsh business has been. Just your sort of a challenge, my dear Decumus."

Scotti couldn't utter a sound, though his mouth feebly formed the word "No" as Lord Vanech brought out the box of documentation on Black Marsh.

"You're a fast reader," Lord Vanech guessed. "You can read it all en route."

"En route to ..."

"Black Marsh, of course," the tiny fellow giggled. "You are a funny chap. Where else would you go to learn about the work that's being done, and how to improve it?"

The next morning, the stack of documentation hardly touched, Decumus Scotti began the journey south-east to Black Marsh. Lord Vanech had hired an able-bodied guard, a rather taciturn Redguard named Mailic, to protect his best agent. They rode south along the Niben, and then south-east along the Silverfish, continuing on into the wilds of Cyrodiil, where the river tributaries had no names and the very vegetation seemed to come from another world than the nice, civilized gardens of the northern Imperial Province.

Scotti's horse was tied to Mailic's, so the clerk was able to read. It made it difficult to pay attention to the path they were taking, but Scotti knew he needed at least a cursory familiarity with the Commission's business dealings in Black Marsh.

It was a huge box of paperwork going back forty years, when the Commission had first been given several million in gold by a wealthy trader, Lord Xellicles Pinos-Revina, to improve the condition of the road from Gideon to Cyrodiil. At that time, it took three weeks, a preposterously long time, for the rice and root he was importing to arrive, half-rotten, in the Imperial Province. Pinos-Revina was long dead, but many other investors over the decades, including Pelagius IV himself, had hired the Commission to build roads, drain swamps,
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construct bridges, devise anti-smuggling systems, hire mercenaries, and, in short, do everything that the greatest Empire in history knew would work to aid trade with Black Marsh. According to the latest figures, the result of this was that it took two and a half months for goods, now thoroughly rotten, to arrive.

Scotti found that when he looked up after concentrating on what he was reading, the landscape had always changed. Always dramatically. Always for the worse.

"This is Blackwood, sir," said Mailic to Scotti's unspoken question. It was dark and woodsy, so Decumus Scotti thought that a very appropriate name.

The question he longed to ask, which in due course he did ask, was, "What's that terrible smell?"

"Slough Point, sir," Mailic replied as they turned the next bend, where the umbrageous tunnel of tangled tree and vine opened to a clearing. There squatted a cluster of formal buildings in the dreary Imperial design favored by Lord Vanech's Commission and every Emperor since Tiber, together with a stench so eye-blindingly, stomach-wrenchingly awful that Scotti wondered, suddenly, if it were deadly poisonous. The swarms of blood-colored, sand-grain-sized insects obscuring the air did not improve the view.

Scotti and Mailic batted at the buzzing clouds as they rode their horses towards the largest of the buildings, which on approach revealed itself to be perched at the edge of a thick, black river. From its size and serious aspect, Scotti guessed it to be the census and excise office for the wide, white bridge that stretched across the burbling dark water to the reeds on the other side. It was a very nice, bright, sturdy-looking bridge, built, Scotti knew, by his Commission.

A pesty, irritable official opened the door quickly on Scotti's first knock. "Come in, come in, quickly! Don't let the fleshflies in!"

"Fleshflies?" Decumus Scotti trembled. "You mean, they eat human flesh?"

"If you're fool enough to stand around and let them," the soldier said, rolling his eyes. He had half an ear, and Scotti, looking around at the other soldiers in the fort noted that they all were well-chewed. One of them had no nose at all to speak of. "Now, what's your business?"

Scotti told them, and added that if they stood outside the fortress instead of inside, they might catch more smugglers.

"You better be more concerned with getting across that bridge," the soldier sneered. "Tide's coming up, and if you don't get a move on, you won't get to Black Marsh for four days."

That was absurd. A bridge swamped by a rising tide on a river? Only the look in the soldier's eyes told Scotti he wasn't joking.

Upon stepping out of the fort, he saw that the horses, evidently tired of being tortured by the fleshflies, had ripped free of their restraints and were bounding off into the woods. The oily water of the river was already lapping on the planks, oozing between the crevices. Scotti reflected that perhaps he would be more than willing to endure a wait of four days before going to Black Marsh, but Mailic was already running across.
Scotti followed him, wheezing. He was not in excellent shape, and never had been. The box of Commission materials was heavy. Halfway across, he paused to catch his breath, and then discovered he could not move. His feet were stuck.

The black mud that ran through the river was a thick gluey paste, and having washed over the plank Scotti was on, it held his feet fast. Panic seized him. Scotti looked up from his trap and saw Mailic leaping from plank to plank ahead of him, closing fast on the reeds on the other side.

"Help!" Scotti cried. "I'm stuck!"

Mailic did not even turn around, but kept jumping. "I know, sir. You need to lose weight."

Decumus Scotti knew he was a few pounds over, and had meant to start eating less and exercising more, but embarking on a diet hardly seemed to promise timely aid in his current predicament. No diet on Nirn would have helped him just then. However, on reflection, Scotti realized that the Redguard intended that he drop the box of documents, for Mailic was no longer carrying any of the essential supplies he had had with him previously.

With a sigh, Scotti threw the box of Commission notes into the glop, and felt the plank under him rise a quarter of an inch, just enough to free him from the mud's clutches. With an agility born of extreme fear, Scotti began leaping after Mailic, dropping onto every third plank, and springing up before the river gripped him.

In forty-six leaps, Decumus Scotti crashed through the reeds onto the solid ground behind Mailic, and found himself in Black Marsh. He could hear behind him a slurping sound as the bridge, and his container of important and official records of Commission affairs, was consumed by the rising flood of dark filth, never to be seen again.
Decumus Scotti emerged from the dirt and reeds, exhausted from running, his face and arms sheathed in red fleshflies. Looking back towards Cyrodiil, he saw the bridge disappear beneath the thick black river, and he knew he was not getting back until the tide went down in a few days' time. The river also held in its adhesive depths his files on the Black Marsh account. He would have to rely on his memory for his contacts in Gideon.

Mailic was purposefully striding through the reeds ahead. Flailing ineffectually at the fleshflies, Scotti hurried after him.

"We're lucky, sir," said the Redguard, which struck Scotti as an extraordinarily odd thing to say, until his eyes followed where the man's finger was pointing. "The caravan is here."

Twenty-one rusted, mud-spattered wagons with rotting wood and wobbly wheels sat half-sunk in the soft earth ahead. A crowd of Argonians, gray-scaled and gray-eyed, the sort of sullen manual laborers that were common in Cyrodiil, pulled at one of the wagons which had been detached from the others. As Scotti and Mailic came closer, they saw it was filled with a cargo of black berries so decayed that they had become hardly recognizable... more a festering jelly than a wagonload of fruit.

Yes, they were going to the city of Gideon, and, yes, they said, Scotti could get a ride with them after they were finished unloading this shipment of lumberry.

"How long ago were they picked?" Scotti asked, looking at the wagon's rotten produce.

"The harvest was in Last Seed, of course," said the Argonian who seemed to be in charge of the wagon. It was now Sun's Dusk, so they had been en route from the fields for a little over two months.

Clearly, Scotti thought, there were problems with transportation. But fixing that, after all, was what he was doing here as a representative of Lord Vanech's Building Commission.

It took close to an hour of the berries rotting even more in the sun for the wagon to be pushed to the side, the wagons in front of it and behind it to be attached to one another, and one of the eight horses from the front of the caravan to be brought around to the now independent wagon. The laborers moved with dispirited lethargy, and Scotti took the opportunity to inspect the rest of the caravan and talk to his fellow travellers.

Four of the wagons had benches in them, fit for uncomfortable riders. All the rest were filled with grain, meat, and vegetation in various stages of corruption.
The travellers consisted of the six Argonian laborers, three Imperial merchants so bug-bitten that their skin looked as scaly as the Argonians themselves, and three cloaked fellows who were evidently Dunmer, judging by the red eyes that gleamed in the shadows under their hoods. All were transporting their goods along this, the Imperial Commerce Road.

"This is a road?" Scotti exclaimed, looking at the endless field of reeds that reached up to his chin or higher.

"It's solid ground, of a sort," one of the hooded Dunmer shrugged. "The horses eat some of the reed, and sometimes we set fire to it, but it just grows right back up."

Finally, the wagonmaster signalled that the caravan was ready to go, and Scotti took a seat in the third wagon with the other Imperials. He looked around, but Mailic was not on board.

"I agreed to get you to Black Marsh and take you back out," said the Redguard, who had plumped down a rock in the sea of reeds and was munching on a hairy carrot. "I'll be here when you get back."

Scotti frowned, and not only because Mailic had dropped the deferential title "sir" while addressing him. Now he truly knew no one in Black Marsh, but the caravan slowly grinded and bumped forward, so there was no time to argue.

A noxious wind blew across the Commerce Road, casting patterns in the endless featureless expanse of reeds. In the distance, there seemed to be mountains, but they constantly shifted, and Scotti realized they were banks of mist and fog. Shadows flitted across the landscape, and when Scotti looked up, he saw they were being cast by giant birds with long, saw-like beaks nearly the size of the rest of their bodies.

"Hackwings," Chaero Gemullus, an Imperial on Scotti's left, who might have been young but looked old and beaten, muttered. "Like everything else in this damnable place, they'll eat you if you don't keep moving. Beggars pounce down and give you a nasty chop, and then fly off and come back when you're mostly dead from blood loss."

Scotti shivered. He hoped they'd be in Gideon before nightfall. It was then it occurred to him that the sun was on the wrong side of the caravan.

"Excuse me, sir," Scotti called to the wagonmaster. "I thought you said we were going to Gideon?"

The wagonmaster nodded.

"Why are we going north then, when we should be going south?"

There was no reply but a sigh.

Scotti confirmed with his fellow travellers that they too were going to Gideon, and none of them seemed very concerned about the circuitous route to getting there. The seats were hard on his middle-aged back and buttocks, but the bumping rhythm of the caravan, and the hypnotic waving reeds gradually had an effect on him, and Scotti drifted off to sleep.
He awoke in the dark some hours later, not sure where he was. The caravan was no longer moving, and he was on the floor, under the bench, next to some small boxes. There were voices, speaking a hissing, clicking language Scotti didn't understand, and he peeked out between someone's legs to see what was happening.

The moons barely pierced the thick mist surrounding the caravan, and Scotti did not have the best angle to see who was talking. For a moment, it looked like the gray wagonmaster was talking to himself, but the darkness had movement and moisture, in fact, glistening scales. It was hard to tell how many of these things there were, but they were big, black, and the more Scotti looked at them, the more details he could see.

When one particular detail emerged, huge mouths filled with dripping needle-like fangs, Scotti slipped back under the bench. Their black little eyes had not fallen on him yet.

The legs in front of Scotti moved and then began to thrash, as their owner was grabbed and pulled out of the wagon. Scotti crouched further back, getting behind the little boxes. He didn't know much about concealment, but had some experience with shields. He knew that having something, anything, in between you and bad things was always good.

A few seconds after the legs had disappeared from sight, there was a horrible scream. And then a second and a third. Different timbres, different accents, but the same inarticulate message... terror, and pain, horrible pain. Scotti remembered a long forgotten prayer to the god Stendarr and whispered it to himself.

Then there was silence... ghastly silence that lasted only a few minutes, but which seemed like hours... years.

And then the carriage started rolling forward again.

Scotti cautiously crawled out from under the carriage. Chaero Gemullus gave him a bemused grin.

"There you are," he said. "I thought the Nagas took you."

"Nagas?"

"Nasty characters," Gemullus said, frowning. "Puff adders with legs and arms, seven feet tall, eight when they're mad. Come from the inner swamp, and they don't like it here much so they're particularly peevish. You're the kind of posh Imperial they're looking for."

Scotti had never in his life thought of himself as posh. His mud and fleshfly-bespeckled clothing seemed eminently middle-class, at best, to him. "What would they want me for?"

"To rob, of course," the Imperial smiled. "And to kill. You didn't notice what happened to the others?" The Imperial frowned, as if struck by a thought. "You didn't sample from those boxes down below, did you? Like the sugar, do you?"

The Imperial nodded, relieved. "You just seem a little slow. First time to Black Marsh, I gather? Oh! Heigh ho, Hist piss!"

Scotti was just about to ask Gemullus what that vulgar term meant when the rain began. It was an inferno of foul-smelling, yellow-brown rain that washed over the caravan, accompanied by the growl of thunder in the distance. Gemullus worked to pull the roof up over the wagon, glaring at Scotti until he helped with the laborious process.

He shuddered, not only from the cold damp, but from contemplation of the disgusting precipitation pouring down on the already nasty produce in the uncovered wagon.

"We'll be dry soon enough," Gemullus smiled, pointing out into the fog.

Scotti had never been to Gideon, but he knew what to expect. A large settlement more or less laid out like a Imperial city, with more or less Imperial style architecture, and all the Imperial comforts and traditions, more or less.

The jumble of huts half-sunk in mud was decidedly less.

"Where are we?" asked Scotti, bewildered.

"Hixinoag," replied Gemullus, pronouncing the queer name with confidence. "You were right. We were going north when we should have been going south."
Decumus Scotti was supposed to be in Gideon, a thoroughly Imperialized city in southern Black Marsh, arranging business dealings to improve commerce in the province on behalf of Lord Vanech's Building Commission and its clients. Instead, he was in a half-submerged, rotten little village called Hixinoag, where he knew no one. Except for a drug smuggler named Chaero Gemullus.

Gemullus was not at all perturbed that the merchant caravan had gone north instead of south. He even let Scotti share his bucket of trodh, tiny little crunchy fish, he had bought from the villagers. Scotti would have preferred them cooked, or at any rate, dead, but Gemullus blithely explained that dead, cooked trodh are deadly poison.

"If I were where I was supposed to be," Scotti pouted, putting one of the wriggling little creatures in his mouth. "I could be having a roast, and some cheese, and a glass of wine."

"I sell moon sugar in the north, and buy it in the south," he shrugged. "You have to be more flexible, my friend."

"My only business is in Gideon," Scotti frowned.

"Well, you have a couple choices," replied the smuggler. "You could just stay here. Most villages in Argonia don't stay put for very long, and there's a good chance Hixinoag will drift right down to the gates of Gideon. Might take you a month or two. Probably the easiest way."

"That'd put me far behind schedule."

"Next option, you could join up with the caravan again," said Gemullus. "They might be going in the right direction this time, and they might not get stuck in the mud, and they might not be all murdered by Naga highwaymen."

"Not tempting," Scotti frowned. "Any other ideas?"

"Ride the roots. The underground express," Gemullus grinned. "Follow me."

Scotti followed Gemullus out of the village and into a copse of trees shrouded by veils of wispy moss. The smuggler kept his eye on the ground, poking at the viscous mud intermittently. Finally he found a spot which triggered a mass of big oily bubbles to rise to the surface.

"Perfect," he said. "Now, the important thing is not to panic. The express will take you due south, that's the wintertide migration, and you'll know you're near Gideon when you see a lot
of red clay. Just don't panic, and when you see a mass of bubbles, that's a breathing hole you can use to get out."

Scotti looked at Gemullus blankly. The man was talking perfect gibberish. "What?"

Gemullus took Scotti by the shoulder and positioning him on top of the mass of bubbles. "You stand right here ..."

Scotti sank quickly into the mud, staring at the smuggler, horror-struck.

"And remember to wait 'til you see the red clay, and then the next time you see bubbles, push up ..."

The more Scotti wriggled to get free, the faster he sunk. The mud enveloped Scotti to his neck, and he continued staring, unable to articulate anything but a noise like "Oog."

"And don't panic at the idea that you're being digested. You could live in a rootworm's belly for months."

Scotti took one last panicked gasp of air and closed his eyes before he disappeared into the mud.

The clerk felt a warmth he hadn't expected all around him. When he opened his eyes, he found that he was entirely surrounded by a translucent goo, and was traveling rapidly forward, southward, gliding through the mud as if it were air, skipping along an intricate network of roots. Scotti felt confusion and euphoria in equal measures, madly rushing forward through an alien environment of darkness, spinning around and over the thick fibrous tentacles of the trees. It was if he were high in the sky at midnight, not deep beneath the swamp in the Underground Express.

Looking up slightly at the massive root structure above, Scotti saw something wriggle past. A eight-foot-long, armless, legless, colorless, boneless, eyeless, nearly shapeless creature, riding the roots. Something dark was inside of it, and as it came closer, Scotti could see it was an Argonian man. He waved, and the disgusting creature the Argonian was in flattened slightly and rushed onward.

Gemullus's words began to reappear in Scotti's mind at this sight. "The wintertide migration," "air hole," "you're being digested," -- these were the phrases that danced around as if trying to find some place to live in a brain which was highly resistant to them coming in. But there was no other way to look at the situation. Scotti had gone from eating living fish to being eaten alive as a way of transport. He was in one of those worms.

Scotti made an executive decision to faint.

He awoke in stages, having a beautiful dream of being held in a woman's warm embrace. Smiling and opening his eyes, the reality of where he really was rushed over him.

The creature was still rushing madly, blindly forward, gliding over roots, but it was no longer like a flight through the night sky. Now it was like the sky at sunrise, in pinks and reds. Scotti
remembered Gemullus telling him to look for the red clay, and he would be near Gideon. The next thing he had to find was the bubbles.

There were no bubbles anywhere. Though the inside of the worm was still warm and comfortable, Scotti felt the weight of the earth all around him. "Just don't panic" Gemullus had said, but it was one thing to hear that advice, and quite another to take it. He began to squirm, and the creature began to move faster at the increased pressure from within.

Suddenly, Scotti saw it ahead of him, a slim spire of bubbles rising up through the mud from some underground stream, straight up, through the roots to the surface above him. The moment the rootworm went through it, Scotti pushed with all of his might upward, bursting through the creature's thin skin. The bubbles pushed Scotti up quickly, and before he could blink, he was popping out of the red slushy mud.

Two gray Argonians were standing under a tree nearby, holding a net. They looked in Scotti's direction with polite curiosity. In their net, Scotti noticed, were several squirming furry rat-like creatures. While he addressed them, another fell out of the tree. Though Scotti had not been educated in this practice, he recognized fishing when he saw it.

"Excuse me, lads," Scotti said jovially. "I was wondering if you'd point me in the direction of Gideon?"

The Argonians introduced themselves as Drawing-Flame and Furl-Of-Fresh-Leaves, and looked at one another, puzzling over the question.

"Who you seek?" asked Furl-of-Fresh-Leaves.

"I believe his name is," said Scotti, trying to remember the contents of his long gone file of Black Marsh contacts in Gideon. "Archein Right-Foot ... Rock?"


Scotti thought that the best business he had heard of in two days, and handed Drawing-Flames the five septims.

The Argonians led Scotti onto a muddy ribbon of road that passed through the reeds, and soon revealed the bright blue expanse of Topal Bay far to the west. Scotti looked around at the magnificent walled estates, where bright crimson blossoms sprang forth from the very dirt of the walls, and surprised himself by thinking, "This is very pretty."

The road ran parallel to a fast-moving stream, running eastward from Topal Bay. It was called the Onkobra River, he was told. It ran deep into Black Marsh, to the very dark heart of the province.

Peeking past the gates to the plantations east of Gideon, Scotti saw that few of the fields were tended. Most had rotten crops from harvests past still clinging to wilted vines, orchards of desolate, leafless trees. The Argonian serfs who worked the fields were thin, weak, near death, more like haunting spirits than creatures of life and reason.
Two hours later, as the three continued their trudge east, the estates were still impressive at least from a distance, the road was still solid if weedy, but Scotti was irritated, horrified by the field workers and the agricultural state, and no longer charitable towards the area. "How much further?"

Furl-of-Fresh-Leaves and Drawing-Flame looked at one another, as if that question was something that hadn't occurred to them.

"Archein is east?" Furl-of-Fresh-Leaves pondered. "Near or far?"

Drawing-Flame shrugged noncommittally, and said to Scotti, "For five gold, show you way. Just east. Is plantation. Very nice."

"You don't have any idea, do you?" Scotti cried. "Why couldn't you tell me that in the first place when I might have asked someone else?"

Around the bend up ahead, there was the sound of hoofbeats. A horse coming closer.

Scotti began to walk towards the sound to hail the rider, and didn't see Drawing-Flame's taloned claws flash out and cast the spell at him. He felt it though. A kiss of ice along his spine, the muscles along his arms and legs suddenly immobile as if wrapped in rigid steel. He was paralyzed.

The great curse of paralysis, as the reader may be unfortunate enough to know, is that you continue to see and think even though your body does not respond. The thought that went through Scotti's mind was, "Damn."

For Drawing-Flame and Furl-of-Fresh-Leaves were, of course, like most simple day laborers in Black Marsh, accomplished Illusionists. And no friend of the Imperial.

The Argonians shoved Decumus Scotti to the side of the road, just as the horse and rider came around the corner. He was an impressive figure, a nobleman in a flashing dark green cloak the exact same color as his scaled skin, and a frilled hood that was part of his flesh and sat upon his head like a horned crown.

"Greetings, brothers!" the rider said to the two.

"Greetings, Archein Right-Foot-Rock," they responded, and then Furl-of-Fresh-Leaves added. "What is milord's business on this fine day?"

"No rest, no rest," the Archein sighed regally. "One of my she-workers gave birth to twins. Twins! Fortunately, there's a good trader in town for those, and she didn't put up too much of a fuss. And then there's a fool of an Imperial from Lord Vanech's Building Commission I am supposed to meet with in Gideon. I'm sure he'll want the grand tour before he opens up the treasury for me. Such a lot of fuss."

Drawing-Flame and Furl-of-Fresh-Leaves sympathized, and then, as Archein Right-Foot-Rock rode off, they went to look for their hostage.
Unfortunately for them, gravity being the same in Black Marsh as elsewhere in Tamriel, their hostage, Decumus Scotti, had continued to roll down from where they left him, and was, at that moment, in the Onkobra River, drowning.
Decumus Scotti was drowning, and he didn't think much of it. He couldn't move his arms or his legs to swim because of the paralysis spell the Argonian peasant had lobbed at him, but he wasn't quite sinking. The Onkobra River was a crashing force of white water and currents that could carry along large rocks with ease, so Scotti tumbled head over heels, spinning, bumping, bouncing along.

He figured that soon enough he would be dead, and that would be better than being in Black Marsh. He wasn't too panicked about it all when he felt his lungs fill with water and cold blackness fell upon him.

For a while, for the first time in some time, Decumus Scotti felt peace. Blessed darkness. And then pain came to him, and he felt himself coughing, spewing water up from his belly and his lungs.

A voice said, "Oh bother, he's alive, ain't he, now?"

Scotti wasn't quite sure if that were true, even when he opened his eyes and looked at the face above him. It was an Argonian, but unlike any he had seen anywhere. The face was thin and long like a thick lance; the scales were ruby-red, brilliant in the sunlight. It blinked at him, its eyelids opening and closing in vertical slits.

"I don't suppose we should eat you, should we now?" the creature smiled, and Scotti could tell from its teeth that it was no idle suggestion.

"Thank you," said Scotti weakly. He craned his head slightly to find out who the "we" were, and discovered he was on the muddy bank of the still, sludgy river, surrounded by a group of Argonians with similarly needle-like faces and a whole rainbow of scales. Bright greens and gem-like purples, blues, and oranges.

"Can you tell me, am I near - well, anywhere?"

The ruby-colored Argonian laughed. "No. You're in the middle of everywhere, and near nowhere."

"Oh," said Scotti, who grasped the idea that space did not mean much in Black Marsh. "And what are you?"

"We are Agacephs," the ruby-colored Argonian replied. "My name is Nomu."
Scotti introduced himself. "I'm a senior clerk in Lord Vanech's Building Commission in the Imperial City. My job was to come here to try to fix the problems with commerce, but I've lost my agenda, haven't met with any of my contacts, the Archeins of Gideon..."

"Pompous, assimilated, slaver kleptocrats," a small lemon-colored Agaceph murmured with some feeling.

"...And now I just want to go home."

Nomu smiled, his long mouth arching up like a host happy to see an unwanted guest leave a party. "Shehs will guide you."

Shehs, it seemed, was the bitter little yellow creature, and he was not at all pleased at the assignment. With surprising strength, he hoisted Scotti up, and for a moment, the clerk was reminded of Gemullus dropping him into the bubbling muck that led to the Underground Express. Instead, Shehs shoved Scotti toward a tiny little raft, razor-thin, that bobbed on the surface of the water.

"This is how you travel?"

"We don't have the broken wagons and dying horses of our brothers on the outside," Shehs replied, rolling his tiny eyes. "We don't know better."

The Argonian sat at the back of the craft and used his whip-like tail to propel and navigate the craft. They traveled quickly around swirling pools of slime that stank of centuries of putrefaction, past pinnacled mountains that seemed sturdy but suddenly fell apart at the slightest ripple in the still water, under bridges that might have once been metal but were now purely rust.

"Everything in Tamriel flows down to Black Marsh," Shehs said.

As they slid through the water, Shehs explained to Scotti that the Agacephs were one of the many Argonian tribes that lived in the interior of the province, near the Hist, finding little in the outside world worth seeing. He was fortunate to have been found by them. The Nagas, the toad-like Paatru, and the winged Sarpa would have killed him on the spot.

There were other creatures too to be avoided. Though there were few natural predators in inner Black Marsh, the scavengers that rooted in the garbage seldom shied away from a living meal. Hackwings circled overhead, like the ones Scotti had seen in the west.

Shehs fell silent and stopped the raft completely, waiting for something.

Scotti looked in the direction Shehs was watching, and saw nothing unusual in the filthy water. Then, he realized that the pool of green slime in front of them was actually moving, and fairly quickly, from one bank to the other. It deposited small bones behind it as it oozed up into the reeds, and disappeared.

"Voriplasm," Shehs explained, moving the boat forward again. "Big word. It'll strip you to the bone by the second syllable."
Scotti, desirous to distract himself from the sights and smells that surrounded him, thought it a good time to compliment his pilot on his excellent vocabulary. It was particularly impressive, given how far from civilization they were. The Argonians in the east did, in fact, speak so well.

"They tried to erect a Temple of Mara near here, in Umpholo, twenty years ago," Shehs explained, and Scotti nodded, remembering reading about it in the files before they were lost. "They all perished quite dreadfully of swamp rot in the first month, but they left behind some excellent books."

Scotti was going to inquire further when he saw something so huge, so horrifying, it made him stop, frozen.

Half submerged in the water ahead was a mountain of spines, lying on nine-foot-long claws. White eyes stared blindly forward, and then suddenly the whole creature spasmed and lurched, the jaw of its mouth jutting out, exposing tusks clotted with gore.


Scotti gasped, wondering why the Agaceph was so calm, and more, why he was continuing to steer the raft forward towards the beast.

"Of all the creatures in the world, the rats are sometimes the worst," said Shehs, and Scotti noticed that the huge creature was only a husk. Its movement was from the hundreds of rats that had burrowed into it, rapidly eating their way from the inside out, bursting from the skin in spots.

"They are indeed," Scotti said, and his mind went to the Black Marsh files, buried deep in the mud, and four decades of Imperial work in Black Marsh.

The two continued westward through the heart of Black Marsh.

Shehs showed Scotti the vast complicated ruins of the Kothringi capitals, fields of ferns and flowered grasses, quiet streams under canopies of blue moss, and the most astonishing sight of Scotti's life -- the great forest of full-grown Hist trees. They never saw a living soul until they arrived at the edge of the Imperial Commerce Road just east of Slough Point, where Mailic, Scotti's Redguard guide, was waiting patiently.

"I was going to give you two more minutes," the Redguard scowled, dropping the last of his food onto the pile at his feet. "No more, sir."

The sun was shining bright when Decumus Scotti rode into the Imperial City, and as it caught the morning dew, it lent a glisten to every building as if they had been newly polished for his arrival. It astonished him how clean the city was. And how few beggars there were.

The protracted edifice of Lord Vanech's Building Commission was the same as it had always been, but still the very sight of it seemed exotic and strange. It was not covered in mud. The people within actually, generally, worked.
Lord Vanech himself, though singularly squat and squinty, seemed immaculate, not only relatively clean of dirt and scabs, but also relatively uncorrupt. Scotti couldn't help but stare at him when he first caught sight of his boss. Vanech stared right back.

"You are a sight," the little fellow frowned. "Did your horse drag you to Black Marsh and back? I would say go home and fix yourself, but there are a dozen people here to see you. I hope you have solutions for them."

It was no exaggeration. Nearly twenty of Cyrodiil's most powerful and wealthiest people were waiting for him. Scotti was given an office even larger than Lord Vanech's, and he met with each.

First among the Commission's clients were five independent traders, blustering and loaded with gold, demanding to know what Scotti intended to do about improving the trade routes. Scotti summarized for them the conditions of the main roads, the state of the merchants' caravans, the sunken bridges, and all the other impediments between the frontier and the marketplace. They told him to have everything replaced and repaired, and gave him the gold necessary to do it.

Within three months, the bridge at Slough Point had disappeared into the muck; the great caravan had collapsed into decrepitude; and the main road from Gideon had been utterly swallowed up by swamp water. The Argonians began once again to use the old ways, their personal rafts and sometimes the Underground Express to transport the grain in small quantities. It took a third of the time, two weeks, to arrive in Cyrodiil, none of it rotten.

The Archbishop of Mara was the next client Scotti met with. A kindhearted man, horrified by the tales of Argonian mothers selling their children into slavery, he pointedly asked Scotti if it were true.

"Sadly, yes," Scotti replied, and the Archbishop showered him with septims, telling the clerk that food must be brought to the province to ease their suffering, and the schools must be improved so they could learn to help themselves.

Within five months, the last book had been stolen from the deserted Maran monastery in Umphollo. As the Archeins went bankrupt, their slaves returned to his parents' tiny farms. The backwater Argonians found that they could grow enough to feed their families provided they had enough hard workers in their enclave, and the buyers market for slaves sharply declined.

Ambassador Tsleeixth, concerned about the rising crime in northern Black Marsh, brought with him the contributions of many other expatriate Argonians like himself. They wanted more Imperial guards on the border at Slough Point, more magically lit lanterns posted along the main roads at regular intervals, more patrol stations, and more schools built to allow young Argonians to better themselves and not turn to crime.

Within six months, there were no more Nagas roaming the roads, as there were no merchants traveling them to rob. The thugs returned to the fetid inner swamp, where they felt much happier, their constitutions enriched by the rot and pestilence that they loved. Tsleeixth and his constituency were so pleased by the crime rate dropping, they brought even more gold to Decumus Scotti, telling him to keep up the good work.
Black Marsh simply was, is, and always shall be unable to sustain a large-scale, cash-crop plantation economy. The Argonians, and anyone else, the whole of Tamriel, could live in Black Marsh on subsistence farming, just raising what they needed. That was not sad, Scotti thought; that was hopeful.

Scotti's solution to each of their dilemmas had been the same. Ten percent of the gold they gave him went to Lord Vanech's Building Commission. The rest Scotti kept for himself, and did exactly nothing about the requests.

Within a year, Decumus Scotti had embezzled enough to retire very comfortably, and Black Marsh was better off than it had been in forty years.
[9] The Armorer's Challenge*

See vol. I.
[10] The Art of War Magic*

See vol. I.
The following inscriptions were painstakingly transcribed and interpreted over many long years, and are preserved here for all time.

--
Av molag anyammis, av latta magicka.

"From fire, life; from light, magic."

--
Barra agea ry sou karan.

"Wear lore as your armor."

--
Agea haelia ne jorane emero laloria.

"Wisdom learned by pain is a reliable guide in dark times." [literally, "Terrible wisdom never betrayed the loremasters."]

--
Nou aldmeris mathmeldi admia aurane gandra sepedia av relleis ye breyelis ye varlais.

"Our exiled Elven ancestors heard the welcoming gifts of peace in the streams and beech trees and stars." ["Mathmeldi" means literally "from-home-driven."]

--
Suna ye sunnabe.

"Bless and blessed be."

--
Va garlas agea, gravia ye goria, lattia mallari av malatu.

"In the caverns of lore, ugly and obscure, shines the gold of truth."

--
Vabria frensca, sa belle, sa baune, amaraldane aldmeris adonai.

"The foaming wave, so thunderous, so mighty, heralds the lordly Elves."
[12] Azura and the Box*

See vol. I.
Bark and Sap™

Bark and Sap
The Root System and the Ecology and Culture of the Gnarl

Disclaimer:
[The editors wish to express that the views contained herein belong solely to the author and have been printed posthumously and anonymously.]

Foreword:
Before this present volume, little existed detailing the Root System tunnels and Gnarl but rumors, superstitions, and outright falsities. After consideration of such rumors, and after much research and expedition into the Root Systems to see the Gnarl in their natural habitat firsthand, this author will elucidate the ecology and culture of the Gnarl, the nature of the Root System, and their symbiotic relationship.

The Root System:
Commonly believed to be a series of natural caverns and rock formations with roots and foliage growing within, the Root System tunnels are, in fact, part of a giant living organism. Not only are these tunnels a living organic root-like entity, but each of the so-called "root dungeons" represents a smaller piece of a larger whole. The roots of all the trees (indeed of most the plant life on the Isles) all connect directly to the large Root System.

The various twisting and turning tunnels have been created slowly over past millennia. Indeed, the growth and motion of the roots is imperceptible, though definitely recordable. The very fastest-growing tunnels increase at a rate of a few feet every month, and the slowest a few inches every few decades.

Amber:
Amber is a colorful resin formed from hardened sap. Much like skin bleeds and scabs over to protect a wound, the Root System tunnels "bleed" a sap that congeals and hardens into Amber deposits. Even still, the walls of the roots are very resilient; swinging a sword at the wall is not enough to puncture it. The large fissures that cause the appearance of Amber are the result of the massive pressures and frictional forces encountered by the giant roots as they push through tons of rock and dirt.

The Gnarl:
The current and best theory describes the Gnarl as the caretakers and stewards of the Root System. The creatures tend to the general maintenance and cleaning of the tunnels, clearing away excess Amber. This behavior has been observed directly, but observation time was limited due to the aggressive nature of the Gnarl. However, the abundance of Amber found on the corpses of the creatures further supports this view.

There has been some conjecture, though at present very little evidence to support the claim, that as Gnarl grow, they eventually become too large to maneuver the tunnels, and eventually fuse with the walls, becoming themselves part of the Root System. As to the recent claims of
giant Gnarl, it should be noted that no creditable sources exist to corroborate. However, even were these reports to be true, the rarity of such sightings would suggest that only a very few Gnarl ever grow large enough to ascend to this root-state.

Little is known about the natural life span of the Gnarl or their social behavior, since observational expeditions into the Root System are difficult at best. We do know with certainty that they are very territorial. The Gnarl are so protective of their tunnels that they will respond aggressively to anyone who comes within sight, which makes studying their social systems nigh impossible. This behavior has, however, provided us with an abundance of corpses to study at our leisure.

When we analyze the corpses of dead Gnarl, we can see clearly that these creatures are made entirely of plant material. They are covered in bark and leaves, and over time they decompose similarly to other plant detritus. All attempts to "plant" Gnarl or parts thereof into the ground have been proven simple folly. To date, we don't actually know how the Gnarl reproduce.

Upon examination, we have found nothing that looks like a brain as found in other sentient creatures. This does lend credence to the symbiotic caretaker theory, suggesting a kind of hive mentality -- though there have been no substantiated sightings of any such "queen-Gnarl" who might be controlling the drones. The other available explanation is that it is magic that animates these creatures, though this author finds resolving difficult questions in this manner to be counter-productive to the development of a rational theory.

Conclusion:
The complex Root is a living organism that grows little by little each month, tunneling beneath the land. Virtually all the plant life on the Isles is connected to this Root System. Severe trauma to the system walls results in the formation of Amber deposits as part of its natural defense mechanism. The Root System has a symbiotic relationship with the Gnarl, who act as its protectors and caretakers, and who may be phyletically and physiologically connected to the Root System itself. In short, we have a living system, with its own dedicated staff of protector-caretakers, growing and developing largely unnoticed beneath our very feet.

Afterword:
And now, I will venture towards that theoretical discussion which draws near heresy (which I daresay will one day be the end of me), but which I must put forward, for good or ill.

The common belief is that our Lord Sheogorath has blessed our land with two temperaments, Mania and Dementia. However, after much study and reasoning, I believe that it is the very realm itself that imposes upon us these two spheres of polar extremes!

I have devised a clever experiment, whereby I seek to prove this theory. If you take a flower from a common plant, cut it and place its stem in water with dye in it, you will notice that the
petals will slowly take on the color of the dye. Clearly, the veins of the plant transport the color to the leaves.

Now, when we look at the Dementia side of the land, colors are muted and dark, and in the Mania side bright and colorful. I believe the Root System, and the Gnarl that serve it, are draining the color from the land of Dementia and giving it to the land of Mania!

For what purpose, it isn't clear, but my experiment shows how color is transported through plant veins, and what bigger system of plant veins is there than the giant Root System tunnel network? Is it not then obvious that this System is the conduit of the forces of Mania and Dementia?

And do we not eat the plants and the fruit of the trees that connect to the Root System and the beasts that feed on them, and drink the waters that fall from their leaves? Do we not breathe the air that carries their spores and seeds? Do we not throw our own waste onto the ground to be absorbed into the soil? Thus, are we not intimately connected to the giant Root System under our feet? Surely, we are one with it!

Clearly, the Root System is feeding those of us in the Mania brilliant color, giving us our mood swings, filling our hearts with passions and sensations, and giving us powerful urges by stealing these things from our fellows in Dementia, leaving them dark, desperate, angry, violent, and disturbed!

Sheogorath is not the source of our "gifts." It is the land itself that has unbalanced us so!

The Gnarl are the servants and lifeblood of this parasitic process.

If we were to kill all the Gnarl, the balance would be restored!

Mania would be less bright, true, but so would Dementia be less dark.

We and our world would become whole again!

Let go of your belief in the collective fantasy of Sheogorath!

Let go of your belief in your own special "gifts!"

We must destroy the Gnarl and the Root System!

We must destroy those who shackle us to belief in some haughty and aloof ruler, who toys with our emotions and well-being!

To arms, brothers and sisters!

To arms!
[14] The Battle of Sancre Tor

The Battle of Sancre Tor

In 2E852, allied Nord and Breton forces crossed the borders into Cyrodiil and occupied the major passes and settlements in the Jerall Mountains. Making their headquarters for the winter at Sancre Tor, the Nord-Breton allies dared King Cuhlecain's new general, Talos, to assault them in their mountain fastnesses.

When they learned that General Talos had mustered an army in the dead of winter and was marching to assault Sancre Tor, they were elated. Sancre Tor was impregnable, its citadel on high cliffs overlooking the lower city, nestled in a high mountain basin with steep, unscalable cliffs in their rear.

The Cyrodilic army was small, poorly trained and outfitted, short on rations, and unprepared for winter campaigning. As their ragged units assembled in the lowlands beneath the citadel, the Nord-Breton allies confidently assumed that their enemy had delivered himself into their trap.

The citadel was not only protected by an unscalable cliff in front and unscalable heights in their rear, but the entrance to the citadel was magically concealed under the appearance of a large mountain lake in the basin beneath the heights. Accordingly, the Nord-Breton allies left on a small force to defend the citadel, descending through lower passages to attack and overwhelm the cold, hungry Cyrodilic forces before them. They expected to defeat, overrun, and annihilate General Talos' army, leaving no one to oppose their springtime descent into the Cyrodilic Heartlands.

Thus did General Talos lure the Nord-Breton allies to their doom.

Leaving a weak force in the lowlands to draw out the defenders, General Talos approached the citadel of Sancre Tor from the rear, descending the supposedly unscalable heights behind the citadel, and sneaking into the supposedly magically concealed entrance to the inner citadel. This remarkable feat is attributed to the agency of a single unnamed traitor, by tradition a Breton turncoat sorcerer, who revealed both the existence of an obscure mountain trail down the heights behind the citadel and the secret of the citadel entrance concealed beneath its illusory lake surface.

While the Cyrodilic army in the lowlands fought a desperate defense against the Nord-Breton sortie, General Talos and his men entered the citadel, swept aside the sparse defense, captured the Nord-Breton nobles and generals, and compelled them to surrender the citadel and their armies. The confused and demoralized Nord captives, already suspicious of the scheming High Rock sorcerer aristocracy and their overreaching dreams of Heartlands conquests, deserted the alliance and swore loyalty to Tiber Septim. The Skyrim generals joined their rank and file in Tiber Septim's army; the High Rock battlemage command was summarily executed and the captive Bretons imprisoned or sold into slavery.
Thus was the concerted allied invasion of Cyrodiil foiled, and General Talos' army swelled by the hardened Nord veteran troops that played so crucial a role in General Talos' succeeding campaigns which consolidated the Colovian and Nibenean into the core of the Cyrodilic Empire, and which resulting in the crowning of General Talos as Emperor Tiber Septim.

Historians marvel at Tiber Septim's tactical daring in assaulting a fortified mountain citadel in the dead of winter against vastly superior numbers. Later Tiber Septim attributed his unwavering resolve against overwhelming obstacles to have been inspired by his divine vision of the Amulet of Kings in the Tomb of Reman III.

The young Talos may indeed have been inspired by his belief that he was fated to recover this ancient sacred symbol of the Covenant and to lead Tamriel to the high civilization of the Third Empire. Nonetheless, this should in no way reduce our admiration for the dash and genius of this defining military triumph against impossible odds.
Before man came to rule Tamriel, and before the chronicles of the historians recorded the affairs of the rulers of Tamriel, the events of our world are known only through myths and legends, and through the divinely inspired teachings of the Nine Divines.

For convenience, historians divide the distant ages of prehistory into two broad periods of time -- the Dawn Era, and the Merethic Era.

* The Dawn Era *

The Dawn Era is that period before the beginning of mortal time, when the feats of the gods take place. The Dawn Era ends with the exodus of the gods and magic from the World at the founding of the Adamantine Tower.

The term 'Merethic' comes from the Nordic, literally, "Era of the Elves." The Merethic Era is the prehistoric time after the exodus of the gods and magic from the World at the founding of the Adamantine Tower and before the arrival of Ysgramor the Nord in Tamriel.

The following are the most notable events of the Dawn Era, presented roughly in sequence as it must be understood by creatures of time such as ourselves.

The Cosmos formed from the Aurbis [chaos, or totality] by Anu and Padomay. Akatosh (Auriel) formed and Time began. The Gods (et'Ada) formed. Lorkhan convinced -- or tricked -- the Gods into creating the mortal plane, Nirn. The mortal plane was at this point highly magical and dangerous. As the Gods walked, the physical make-up of the mortal plane and even the timeless continuity of existence itself became unstable.

When Magic (Magnus), architect of the plans for the mortal world, decided to terminate the project, the Gods convened at the Adamantine Tower [Direnni Tower, the oldest known structure in Tamriel] and decided what to do. Most left when Magic did. Others sacrificed themselves into other forms so that they might Stay (the Ehlnofey). Lorkhan was condemned by the Gods to exile in the mortal realms, and his heart was torn out and cast from the Tower. Where it landed, a Volcano formed. With Magic (in the Mythic Sense) gone, the Cosmos stabilized. Elven history, finally linear, began (ME2500).

* The Merethic Era *

The Merethic Era was figured by early Nord scholars as a series of years numbered in reverse order backward from the their 'beginning of time' -- the founding of the Camoran Dynasty, recorded as Year Zero of the First Era. The prehistoric events of the Merethic Era are listed
here with their traditional Nordic Merethic dates. The earliest Merethic date cited by King Harald's scholars was ME2500 -- the Nordic reckoning of the first year of time. As such, the Merethic Era extends from ME2500 in the distant past to ME1 -- the year before the founding of the Camoran Dysnasty and the establishment of the White gold Tower as an independent city-state.

According to King Harald's bards, ME2500 was the date of construction of the Adamantine Tower on Balfiera Island in High Rock, the oldest known structure of Tamriel. (This corresponds roughly to the earliest historical dates given in various unpublished Elvish chronicles.)

During the early Merethic Era, the aboriginal beastpeoples of Tamriel -- the ancestors of the Khajiit, Argonian, Orcish, and other beastfolk -- lived in preliterate communities throughout Tamriel.

In the Middle Merethic Era, the Aldmeri (mortals of Elven origin) refugees left their doomed and now-lost continent of Aldmeris (also known as 'Old Ehlnofey') and settled in southwestern Tamriel. The first colonies were distributed at wide intervals on islands along the entire coast of Tamriel. Later inland settlements were founded primarily in fertile lowlands in southwest and central Tamriel. Wherever the beastfolk encountered the Elves, the sophisticated, literate, technologically advanced Aldmeri cultures displaced the primitive beastfolk into the jungles, marshes, mountains, and wastelands. The Adamantine Tower was rediscovered and captured by the Direnni, a prominent and powerful Aldmeri clan. The Crystal Tower was built on Summerset Isle and, later, White Gold Tower in Cyrodiil.

During the Middle Merethic Era, Aldmeri explorers mapped the coasts of Vvardenfell, building the First Era High Elven wizard towers at Ald Redaynia, Bal Fell, Tel Aruhn, and Tel Mora in Morrowind. It was also during this period that Ayleid [Wild Elven] settlements flourished in the jungles surrounding White Gold Tower (present day Cyrodiil). Wild Elves, also known as the Heartland High Elves, preserved the Dawn Era magics and language of the Ehlnofey. Ostensibly a tribute-land to the High King of Alinor, the Heartland's long lines of communication from the Summerset Isles' sovereignty effectively isolated Cyrodill from the High Kings at Crystal Tower.

The Late Middle Merethic Era is the period of the High Velothi Culture. The Chimer, ancestors of the modern Dunmer, or Dark Elves, were dynamic, ambitious, long-lived Elven clans devoted to fundamentalist ancestor worship. The Chimer clans followed the Prophet Veloth out of the ancestral Elven homelands in the southwest to settle in the lands now known as Morrowind. Despising the secular culture and profane practices of the Dwemer, the Chimer also coveted the lands and resources of the Dwemer, and for centuries provoked them with minor raids and territorial disputes. The Dwemer (Dwarves), free-thinking, reclusive Elven clans devoted to the secrets of science, engineering, and alchemy, established underground cities and communities in the mountain range (later the Velothi Mountains) separating modern Skyrim and Morrowind.

The Late Merethic Era marks the precipitous decline of Velothi culture. Some Velothi settled in villages near declining and abandoned ancient Velothi towers. During this period, Velothi high culture disappeared on Vvardenfell Island. The earliest Dwemer Freehold colonies date from this period. Degenerate Velothi devolved into tribal cultures which, in time, evolved into the modern Great Houses of Morrowind, or persisted as the barbarian Ashlander tribes. The
only surviving traces of this tribal culture are scattered Velothi towers and Ashlander nomads on Vvardenfell Island. The original First Era High Elven wizard towers along the coasts of Tamriel were also abandoned about this time.

It was in the Late Merethic Era that the pre-literate humans, the so-called "Nedic Peoples", from the continent of Atmora (also 'Altmora' or 'the Elder Wood' in Aldmeris) migrated and settled in northern Tamriel. The Nord culture hero Ysgramor, leader of a great colonizing fleet to Tamriel, is credited with developing a runic transcription of Nord speech based on Elvish principles, and so Ysgramor is considered the first human historian. Ysgramor's fleet landed at Hsaarik Head at the extreme northern tip of Skyrim's Broken Cape. The Nords built there the legendary city of Saarthal. The Elves drove the Men away during the Night of Tears, but Ysgramor soon returned with his Five Hundred Companions.

Also during the Late Merethic Era the legendary immortal hero, warrior, sorceror, and king variously known as Pelinal Whitestrake, Harrald Hairy Breeks, Ysmir, Hans the Fox, etc., wandered Tamriel, gathering armies, conquering lands, ruling, then abandoning his kingdoms to wander again.
Eslaf Erol was the last of the litter of five born to the Queen of the prosperous Nordic kingdom of Erolgard, Lahpyrcopa, and her husband, the King of Erolgard, Ytluaf. During pregnancy, the Queen had been more than twice as wide as she was tall, and the act of delivery took three months and six days after it had begun. It is perhaps understandable that the Lahpyrcopa elected, upon expelling Eslaf to frown, say, 'Good riddance,' and die.

Like many Nords, Ytluaf did not care very much for his wife and less for his children. His subjects were puzzled, therefore, when he announced that he would follow the ancient tradition of his people of Atmora of following his beloved spouse to the grave. They had not thought they were particularly in love, nor were they aware that such a tradition existed. Still, the simple people were grateful, for the little royal drama alleviated their boredom, which was and is a common problem in the more obscure parts of northern Skyrim, particularly in wintertide.

He gathered his household staff and his five fat, bawling little heirs in front of him, and divided his estate. To his son Ynohp, he gave his title; to his son Laernu, he gave his land; to his son Suoibud, he gave his fortune; to his daughter Laicifitra, he gave his army. Ytluaf's advisors had suggested he keep the inheritance together for the good of the kingdom, but Ytluaf did not particularly care for his advisors, or the kingdom, for that matter. Upon making his announcement, he drew his dagger across his throat.

One of the nurses, who was rather shy, finally decided to speak as the King's life ebbed away. 'Your highness, you forgot your fifth child, little Eslaf.'

Good Ytluaf groaned. It is somewhat hard to concentrate with blood gushing from one's throat, after all. The King tried in vain to think of something to bequeath, but there was nothing left.

Finally he sputtered, irritably, 'Eslaf should have taken something then' and died.

That a babe but a few days old was expected to demand his rightful inheritance was arguably unfair. But so Eslaf Erol was given his birthright with his father's dying breath. He would have nothing, but what he had taken.

Since no one else would have him, the shy nurse, whose name was Drusba, took the baby home. It was a decrepit little shack, and over the years that followed, it became more and more decrepit. Unable to find work, Drusba sold all of her furnishings to buy food for little Eslaf. By the time he was old enough to walk and talk, she had sold the walls and the roof as well, so they had nothing but a floor to call home. And if you've ever been to Skyrim, you can appreciate that that is scarcely sufficient.
Drusba did not tell Eslaf the story of his birth, or that his brothers and sister were leading quite nice lives with their inheritances, for, as we have said, she was rather shy, and found it difficult to broach the subject. She was so painfully shy, in fact, that whenever he asked any questions about where he came from, Drusba would run away. That was more or less her answer to everything, to flee.

In order to communicate with her at all, Eslaf learned how to run almost as soon as he could walk. He couldn't keep up with his adopted mother at first, but in time he learned to go toe-heel toe-heel if he anticipated a short but fast sprint, and heel-toe heel-toe if it seemed Drusba was headed for a long distance marathon flight. He never did get all the answers he needed from her, but Eslaf did learn how to run.

The kingdom of Erolgard had, in the years that Eslaf was growing, become quite a grim place. King Ynohp did not have a treasury, for Suobud had been given that; he did not have any property for income, for Laernu had been given that; he did not have an army to protect the people, for Laicifitra had been given that. Furthermore, as he was but a child, all decisions in the kingdom went through Ynohp's rather corrupt council. It had become a bureaucratic exploitative land of high taxes, rampant crime, and regular incursions from neighboring kingdoms. Not a particular unusual situation for a kingdom of Tamriel, but an unpleasant one nonetheless.

The time finally came when the taxcollector arrived to Drusba's hovel, such as it was, to collect the only thing he could - the floor. Rather than protest, the poor shy maid ran away, and Eslaf never saw her again.

Without a home or a mother, Eslaf did not know what to do. He had grown accustomed to the cold open air in Drusba's shack, but he was hungry.

'May I have a piece of meat?' he asked the butcher down the street. 'I'm very hungry.'

The man had known the boy for years, often spoke to his wife about how sorry he felt for him, growing up in a home with no ceilings or walls. He smiled at Eslaf and said, 'Go away, or I'll hit you.'

Eslaf hurriedly left the butcher and went to a nearby tavern. The tavernkeeper had been a former valet in the king's court and knew that the boy was by right a prince. Many times, he had seen the poor ragged lad in the streets, and sighed at the way fate had treated him.

'May I have something to eat?' Eslaf asked this tavernkeeper. 'I'm very hungry.'

'You're lucky I don't cook you up and eat you,' replied the tavernkeeper.

Eslaf hurriedly left the tavern. For the rest of the day, the boy approached the good citizens of Erolgard, begging for food. One person had thrown something at him, but it turned out to be an inedible rock.

As night fell, a raggedy man came up to Eslaf and, without saying a word, handed him a piece of fruit and a piece of dried meat. The lad took it, wide-eyed, and as he devoured it, he thanked the man very sweetly.
'If I see you begging on the streets tomorrow,' the man growled. 'I'll kill you myself. There are only so many beggars we of the guild allow in any one town, and you make it one too many. You're ruining business.'

It was a good thing Eslaf Erol knew how to run. He ran all night.

Eslaf Erol's story is continued in the book 'Thief.'
We look down upon the beggars of the Empire. These lost souls are the poor and wretched of the land. Every city has its beggars. Most are so poor they have only the clothes on their backs. They eat the scraps the rest of us throw out. We toss them a coin so that we don't have to think too long about their plight.

Imagine my surprise when I heard the tale of the Beggar Prince. I could not imagine what a Prince of Beggars would be. Here is the tale I heard. It takes place in the first age, when gods walked like men and daedra stalking the wilderness with impunity. It is a time before they were all confined to Oblivion.

There once was a man named Wheedle. Or maybe it was a woman. The story goes to great lengths to avoid declaring Wheedle's gender. Wheedle was the 13th child of a king in Valenwood. As such Wheedle was in no position to take the throne or even inherit much property or wealth.

Wheedle had left the palace to find independent fortune and glory. After many days of endless forest roads and tiny villages, Wheedle came upon a three men surrounding a beggar. The beggar was swaddled in rags from head to toe. No portion of the vagabond's body was visible. The men were intent on slaying the beggar.

With a cry of rage and indignation, Wheedle charged the men with sword drawn. Being simple townsfolk, armed only with pitchforks and scythes, they immediately fled from the armored figure with the shining sword.

"Many thanks for saving me," wheezed the beggar from beneath the heap of foul rags. Wheedle could barely stand the stench.

"What is your name, wretch?" Wheedle asked.

"I am Namira."

Unlike the townsfolk, Wheedle was well learned. That name meant nothing to them, but to Wheedle it was an opportunity.

"You are the Daedric lord!" Wheedle exclaimed. "Why did you allow those men to harass you? You could have slain them all with a whisper."

"I am pleased you recognized me," Namira rasped. "I am frequently reviled by townsfolk. It pleases me to be recognized for my attribute, if not for my name."

Wheedle knew that Namira was the Daedric lord of all thing gross and repulsive. Diseases such as leprosy and gangrene were her domain. Where others might have seen danger, Wheedle saw opportunity.

"Oh, great Namira, let me apprentice myself to you. I ask only that you grant me powers to make my fortune and forge a name for myself that will live through the ages."
"Nay. I make my way alone in the world. I have no need for an apprentice."

Namira shambled off down the road. Wheedle would not be put off. With a bound, Wheedle was at Namira's heel, pressing the case for an apprenticeship. For 33 days and night, Wheedle kept up the debate. Namira said nothing, but Wheedle's voice was ceaseless. Finally, on the 33rd day, Wheedle was too hoarse to talk.

Namira looked back on the suddenly silent figure. Wheedle knelt in the mud at her feet, open hands raised in supplication.

"It would seem you have completed your apprenticeship to me after all," Namira declared. "I shall grant your request."

Wheedle was overjoyed.

"I grant you the power of disease. You may choose to be afflicted with any disease you choose, changing them at will, so long as it has visible symptoms. However, you must always bear at least one.

"I grant you the power of pity. You may evoke pity in anyone that sees you.

"Finally, I grant you the power of disregard. You may cause others to disregard your presence."

Wheedle was aghast. These were not boons from which a fortune could be made. They were curses, each awful in its own right, but together they were unthinkable.

"How am I to make my fortune and forge a name for myself with these terrible gifts?"

"As you begged at my feet for 33 days and 33 nights, so shall you now beg for your fortune in the cities of men. Your name will become legendary among the beggars of Tamriel. The story of Wheedle, the Prince of Beggars, shall be handed down throughout the generations.

It was as Namira predicted. Wheedle was an irresistible beggar. None could see the wretch without desperately wanting to toss a coin at the huddled form. However, Wheedle also discovered that the power of disregard gave great access to the secrets of the realms. People unknowingly said important things where Wheedle could hear them. Wheedle grew to know the comings and goings of every citizen in the city.

To this day, it is said that if you really want to know something, go ask the beggars. They have eyes and ears throughout the cities. They know all the little secrets of the daily lives of it's citizens.
Given to me by the Chief of the Deep Ones. He taught me his language and his runes. This is the ancient lore of his people which we shall follow from now until forever.

Signed in the presence of twelve witnesses,

Irlav Moslin
3E 345

Transliteration (cf. N’Gasta! Kvata! Kvakis!):

so cxiumonataj kunvenauw, sed nature ankoix pri alicj aktuasoj aktivceauw so societo. Ne malofte enahkstas krome plej diversaspekte materiao eduka oix distra.

So interreta Kvako (retletera kaj verjheauw) ahkstas unufromke alternativaj kanasouw por distribui so enhavon so papera Kv! Kvak! Sed alifsonke so enhavauw so diversaj verjheauw antoxivible ne povas kaj ecx ne vus cxiam ahksti centprocente so sama. En malvaste cirkusonta paperfolio ekzemple ebos publikgi ilustrajxauwn, kiu pro kopirajtaj kiasouw ne ahkstas uzebsoj en so interreto. Alifsonke so masoltaj kostauw reta distribuo forigas so spacajn limigauwn kaj permahkssas pli ampleksan enhavon, por ne paroli pri gxishora aktualeco.

Tiuj cirkonstancauw rahkspeguligxos en so aspekto so Kvako, kiu ja cetere servos ankoix kiel gxeneraso retejo so ranetauw.
[19] Biography of Barenziah*

See vol. I.
[20] Biography of the Wolf Queen*

See vol. I.
[21] The Black Arrow

See vol. I.
[22] The Black Arts On Trial

The Black Arts On Trial
By Hannibal Traven, Archmagister of the Mages Guild

HISTORY

Necromancy, commonly called the Black Arts, has a history that dates back before recorded time. Virtually all the earliest laws of the land make mention of it as expressly forbidden on pain of death. Independent practitioners of the arts of sorcery, however, continued its study.

The Psijic Order of the Isle of Artaeum, precursor to our own Mages Guild, also forbade its use, not only because it was dangerous, but their belief in the holy and unholy ancestor spirits made it heretical. Again, despite this, we hear many stories of students and masters who ignored this stricture. When Vanus Galerion left Artaeum, he may have disagreed with the Psijics on much, but he also refused to allow Necromancy to be taught in the Guild.

Almost 1100 years have passed since the time of Vanus Galerion, and there have been many archmagisters to lead his guild. The question of Necromancy has continued to be asked. The strictures against it in the Guild have never been lifted, but attitudes about it have shifted back and forth over the years. Some archmagisters have been inclined to ignore it entirely, some have fought very actively against it, and still other archmagisters have been rumored to be Necromancers themselves.

In my new role as Archmagister of the Mages Guild, it is my duty to set policy on this matter. Though I have my own opinions on the Black Arts, I took counsel with two of the most learned mages in the Empire, Magister Voth Karlyss of Corinth and Magister Ulliceta gra-Kogg of Orsinium, and we debated for two days.

What follows are summaries of the salient points of the debate, arguments and counter-arguments, which led to the resolution of the Mages Guild on the subject of Necromancy.

ARGUMENT

Argument by Master gra-Kogg: Necromancy is poorly understood. We will not make it disappear by ignoring it. As an intellectual institution dedicated to the study of the magickal arts and sciences, we have obligations to the truth. Censoring ourselves in our scholarship is antithetical to our mission of neutrality and objectivity.

Counter-Argument by Master Karlyss: The Mages Guild must balance its quest for knowledge with responsible caution and ethical standards. It is not 'censoring' a student's course of study to have him proceed cautiously and with purity of purpose. It is not limiting a student's freedom to set rules and boundaries - indeed, it is essential.

Argument by Master Karlyss: Necromancy is an anathema throughout the civilized world. To embrace it publicly, the Mages Guild would inspire fear and hostility in the populace at large.
Vanus Galerion wanted this institution to be unlike the Psijic Order, which was elitist and separatist. We ignore public opinion at our own risk. We will certainly lose our charters in many places including, very likely, the whole of Morrowind, where sentiment against Necromancy is very strong.

Counter-Argument by Master gra-Kogg: Yes, we should be sensitive to the concerns of the community, but they should not and must not dictate our scholarship. 'Necromancer' to many uneducated persons simply means an evil mage. It is madness to limit our work because of prejudices and half-formed understanding. It is an affront to the purpose of objective study to turn our back on a subject merely because of public opinion.

Argument by Master gra-Kogg: Necromancers are the scourge of Tamriel. Whether operating independently or in concert with the sloads or King of Worms, Mannimarco, they are responsible for many horrors, animated zombies and skeletons and other forms of the undead. To best combat this menace, we must understand the powers of the Necromancer, and we cannot do that by restricting our study of the Black Arts.

Counter-Argument by Master Karlyss: No one is disputing the threat of the Black Arts - in fact, that is the very essence of my argument against the Mages Guild making it a School to be taught to our initiates. We can and should know what our enemy is capable of, but we must be careful not to step into a trap of looking too deep into his ways, and making those ways our own. We do no one any good if by studying the evil ways, we become evil ourselves.

Argument by Master Karlyss: Necromancy is inherently dangerous. One cannot 'dabble' in it. The simplest spell requires the spilling of blood, and immediately begins to corrupt the caster's soul. This is not conjecture, but simple fact. It is irresponsible of the Guild to teach and thereby encourage a sort of magickal study which has proven itself, time and time again, to bring nothing but terror and misery on the practitioner and world.

Counter-Argument by Master Karlyss: Yes, the Schools are intertwined, but the standard spells of each School have passed the proof of time. We know that a student of Mysticism, properly instructed, will not be permanently harmed by his experience. In many ways, it is a question of extremes - how far we would permit our studies to take us. Necromancy by its
nature relies on the practitioner going further into the darkness than is wise, virtually guaranteeing his destruction. It has no place in the Mages Guild.

CONCLUSION

The risks of studying Necromancy outweigh its usefulness. The Guild does not wish to censor the study of any of its members, but it will not tolerate studies in the Black Arts, except in limited form for the purpose of combating its evil adherents. This may only been done by rare individuals who have proven themselves both highly skilled and highly cautious, and then only with my express permission and supervision.

AFTERWORD

I regret to acknowledge the truth behind the rumor that Master Ulliceta gra-Kogg was more than an apologist for Necromancy, she was a Necromancer herself. Upon this revelation, the Knights of the Lamp attempted to arrest her at the Guildhouse in Orsinium, but she made good her escape. We have every confidence in the replacement Magister in Orsinium.

Though I disagreed, I respected her logical reasoning enough to include her arguments in this book, and I see no reason to remove them. It is disappointing, however, to see that her interest in 'the truth' was nothing more than a euphemism for her slavery to the Black Arts.

This unfortunate situation merely illustrates how essential it is for Guildmembers to be wary of the lure of Necromancy, and be vigilant to its practitioners' infiltration in our Mages Guild.
Daring Waterfront Raid Fails!

Stymied in his attempts to capture the legendary thief, the Gray Fox, Captain Hieronymus Lex of the Imperial Watch raided the Waterfront. Extra Watchmen were pulled from duty in other parts of the city to search the slums of the Waterfront. A small amount of contraband was confiscated, but the Gray Fox escaped.

The Arcane University has filed a formal complaint against Captain Hieronymus Lex for dereliction of duty. The guards normally posted at the Arcane University were sent to the Waterfront during the raid. An attempted break-in at the University was foiled. University spokesmen insist that nothing was taken. They scoffed at the idea that any mere thief could make off with one of their treasures.

Fighters Guild Faces Tough Competition

The Fighters Guild has been an institution in Tamriel for as long as most anyone can remember. These brave men and women have, for countless years, always been available to do those jobs that the average citizen is simply not qualified to handle. Whether it be ridding a homeowner of a plague of rats or rescuing a wayward scholar, the Fighters Guild has always been available for anyone with enough coin to pay their modest fees. Now, however, it seems that the Fighters Guild is not the only game in town.

A new group has recently been making a lot of waves in Cyrodiil. They call themselves the Blackwood Company, and they've let it be known that they'll handle any job that the Fighters Guild will, and many that they won't.
While the Fighters Guild has always maintained the strictest standards on both the quality of their members and the legality of the contracts they accept, the Blackwood Company makes none of the same claims. They have no screening process when accepting new members, and they seem willing to accept any contract, assuming one can afford the price tag.

Some have questioned the Blackwood Company's methods. They are rumored to be reckless and indiscriminant. Many have spoken of needless damage to person and property during the fulfillment of a contract. None of those we spoke to were willing to go on the record for this article.

What the future holds for this upstart group remains to be seen. Are they the perfect solution for a quickly changing world? Will their methods force the Fighters Guild to adopt more lenient business practices? Only time will tell. Until then, if you need a job done, and the Fighters Guild won't do it, check with your local Blackwood Company!

[23.1.3] Gray Fox, Man or Myth?

Is a so-called Thieves Guild masterminding all the thefts in the Imperial City? Captain Hieronymus Lex of the Imperial Watch seems to think so.

When asked about the Thieves Guild and its mythical leader, the Gray Fox, the captain was quite emphatic. "This one man is responsible for all crime in the city!" The energetic and tenacious Captain Lex has therefore devoted himself to apprehending this masked menace.

When questioned on the subject, Adamus Phillida, Legion Commander and Captain Lex's immediate superior, had the following response. "Ridiculous! The Gray Fox is just a fairy tale. There is no such thing as a Thieves Guild, and there never has been."

Stories of an unstoppable thief called the Gray Fox have been circulating around the Imperial City for centuries. The stories claim he can turn invisible at will, shrink himself down to the size of a mouse, turn to mist and seep under locked doors, and perform any number of other truly unbelievable feats. If even half of these stories are true, Captain Lex will have his hands full capturing the Gray Fox.
Vlanarus Kvinchal recently admitted to being the notorious thief, the Gray Fox. Under questioning by the Imperial Watch, he also confessed to being the reincarnation of Tiber Septim, the love-child of Lord Stendarr, a were-shark, and the mother of Hieronymus Lex. Only after he spent a night in the Imperial prisons was it discovered that Vlanarus had recently consumed a near-lethal dose of skooma.

Vlanarus is now back home and recuperating from the hospitality of the Imperial Watch and from the close attention he received during his interrogation. He speculates that he might be able to work again in a month or two, so long as it doesn't involve walking or lifting anything heavier than a beer mug. The sometimes-dockworker has sworn a solemn oath never to trifle with Skooma again, and earnestly warns everyone to stay away from the Orum gang.

Servatius Quintilius was recently promoted to Watch Captain to replace Hieronymus Lex. Captain Lex's career was marked by frequent tirades against the mythical thief and master criminal, the so-called "Gray Fox." At the same time, Hieronymus Lex announced that he has been retained by Countess Millona Umbranox of Anvil to be her new Captain of the Guard.

Captain Quintilius is a practical man who does not believe in the Thieves Guild or its imaginary grandmaster, the Gray Fox. He has promised peace and order in the districts under his protection. Guard patrol routes will be posted so that all citizens will know where to find a Watchman when they need one.

When asked if this would also make things easier for thieves, Captain Quintilius responded, "Never. Criminals are dumb. Wouldn't be criminals otherwise, right? Stands to reason. You smart Courier boys should just leave the crime-fighting in this city to professionals like me."
[23.1.6] Palace Break-In?

The Legion Centurion in command of the Palace Guard was charged with dereliction of duty. Although the Council has officially denied the stories of a palace break-in, the rumors persist. Muddled accounts of the events and principles range from a madman intent on spit-polishing the Emperor's shoes to a master thief stealing one of the legendary Elder Scrolls.

The Palace Guard has made no arrests in connection with the break-in. However, the Watch has been making peculiar inquiries all around the city. The Guard and the Legion are in complete agreement on one matter at least... neither the fictitious Thieves Guild nor its mythical leader, the Gray Fox, could have been in any way involved. Although rumor has long insisted that the Thieves Guild has been a significant factor in Imperial City criminal activities, representatives of the Guard and Legion insist that even the mythical Gray Fox would never dare to break into the Imperial Palace.

[23.1.7] The Poor Burdened by Taxes!

Recently Captain Hieronymus Lex of the Imperial Watch collected the taxes from all citizens in the Waterfront district of the city. Although the laws are clear that all citizens of the Imperial City must pay taxes, it has been 53 years since anyone applied that law to the poor and destitute of the Waterfront.

Although members of the Watch approached by the Courier declined to comment on the success of the venture, one of the Watchmen who asked not to be named suggested the operation was "a complete... wossitsname? You know. Starts with an 'f'. Right. Complete fee-ass-ko, is what it was."

In a related story, miscreants have recently broken into the South Watchtower. An anonymous source reports that a small sum of money was stolen from the office of Hieronymus Lex. By remarkable coincidence, the sum corresponds exactly to the taxes collected by Captain Lex from the Waterfront.
The ever-vigilant Captain Lex has renewed his call to capture the infamous thief, the Gray Fox. He is petitioning for a bounty to be put on the legendary master thief's head.

[23.1.8] Quill-Weave Plans New 'Doomstones' Cycle

QUILL-WEAVE PLANS NEW 'DOOMSTONES' CYCLE

"Doomstones not Magical" Says Noted Argonian Writer

The author of 'The Goblin with the Golden Arm' and 'Red Crater' plans a new series of historical works set in the early days of the Reman emperors. The stories will center around the sorcerers and battlemages that play such a prominent part in the legends of the Reman emperors' rapid rise to power in the closing years of the Second Era. She plans to call the series "The Paths of the Doomstones."

The Argonian authoress declined to reveal any details of the characters and themes of these books. However, Quill-Weave clearly has quite ambitious plans for this series, since she plans titles to correspond with each of Cyrodiil's twenty-one Doomstones. These ancient monuments are scattered throughout Cyrodiil, and each is known in legend by its own name.

"I always carefully research my subjects," Quill-Weave says, "and I find no evidence at all to support the popular notion that these runestones were once artifacts of great magical power." She noted that thirteen of these stones are associated with the common birthsigns by which people have always marked the aspects of the heavens when children are born. "Such stones as the 'Mage Stone' and the 'Serpent Stone' were certainly associated with the primitive sky worships of the Beast Folk of the Mythic Era. Other stones, like the 'Aetherius Stone' and the 'Magnus Stone' were also doubtless associated with other long-forgotten cults."

The Courier asked Quill-Weave why she might choose to abandon the popular tales of thieves, outlaws, murderers, and low-lifes that have made her so famous in Cyrodiil and throughout the Empire. She explained that she has long sought material with more mature and epic themes to celebrate the noble virtues of Cyrodiil and the Empire. She assured the Courier that she will fill the Doomstones series with the lusty and colorful characters we've come to know and love. "But this time," Quill-Weave says, "my characters will uproot trees, devastate cities, and summon rains of boiling blood before slipping away to explore the private and intimate mysteries of the heart."
Vampire Nest in the City!

A nest of vampires was recently discovered in the home of the Earl of Imbel. The Courier is shocked to learn that Earl Jakben, a local noble of previously unblemished reputation, is revealed to have one of these vampires!

Responding to a tip by the Earl's servant, the Imperial Watch raided the Imbel estate and slew all of the foul creatures. Captain Quintilius has categorically denied the rumors that most of the terrible creatures of the night were already dead by the time the Watch arrived.
In what can only be described as a blatant assault on the security and liberty of the civilized people of Cyrodiil, retired Imperial Legion commander Adamus Phillida was brutally murdered by the secretive assassins guild known as the Dark Brotherhood. The slaying occurred in the sleepy town of Leyawiin, where Phillida had chosen to spend the remainder of his days. It was to be a life of quiet solitude, far removed from the hustle and bustle of the Imperial City, where Phillida had served the Imperial Legion proudly for more than twenty-five years.

But even in retirement, the noble Legion commander could not escape his past. Throughout the years, Adamus Phillida had become a rather vocal opponent of the Dark Brotherhood and its practices, and vowed to expose the organizations' secrets and bring its leaders to justice. Indeed, Phillida had been targeted for assassination twice in the past, but both attempts were thwarted by the commander and his Legion soldiers. Sadly, his luck ran out in Leyawiin.

When asked if there was any doubt as to the Dark Brotherhood's involvement in Phillida murder, newly appointed Imperial Legion commander Giovanni Civello had this to say:

"It was the Dark Brotherhood, all right. No question about it. This was a crime of vengeance, a despicable act of hatred and evil against a pinnacle of nobility and virtue. Adamus fought the Dark Brotherhood every day of his life, and he died for what he believed in. Adamus Phillida was a great man. He taught me everything I know, and I'll be damned if I let his dream die with him. From this day forward, I vow to destroy the Dark Brotherhood and everything they stand for!"

Adamus Phillida may be dead, but it would seem his fight against the Dark Brotherhood lives on in Giovanni Civello and the rest of the Imperial Legion. There may soon come a day when those bloodthirsty assassins have more to fear than the good people of the Imperial Province.
Bruma's Baenlin Dies in Tragic Accident!

For the residents of Bruma, a city known for its snowy avenues and frigid, Skyrim-like temperatures, nothing is quite as important as the warmth and safety of one's own home. But even the most secure dwelling can harbor a deadly secret. In the case of Baenlin, an elderly Elf nobleman who had called Bruma home for nearly forty-three years, death came not from the icy cold, nor from the sting of a burglar's blade, but from a killer far more insidious -- structural instability.

According to Gromm, Baenlin's longtime live-in manservant, the day of his master's death was like any other. Baenlin lived as a recluse, and rarely left the comfort of his home. He spent his morning breakfasting, and his afternoons reading or napping, but it was in the late evening hours before bedtime, when Baenlin relaxed in his favorite chair as was his custom, when disaster struck. A stuffed Minotaur head mounted on the wall directly over the chair came crashing down, killing the unsuspecting noble instantly.

As horrible as Baenlin's death may seem, even more horrible is the revelation that this was not an isolated incident, as previously thought. In fact, through a series of interviews and an in-depth investigation, the Black Horse Courier has learned that many of Bruma's homes are actually deathtraps waiting to spring.

"Me and my boys, we done repair work on half these houses. They're a bleedin' mess! Rotted wood, rusty nails, misaligned foundations. Them Nords, they're good for drinkin' and killin', but they can't build a house worth a damn!"

So said Antoine Dubois, owner of Dubois and Sons Carpentry, a thriving house-building business headquartered in the Breton nation of High Rock. Because of his expertise, Dubois has been known to offer his services throughout the Empire, and has visited Bruma on numerous occasions. In his opinion, this predominantly Nord city features some of the most poorly-constructed dwellings in all the Empire.

"Yeah, I know what the Nords say. It's the snow! It's rots the wood, it does this, it does that. Whine, whine, whine! The mead-swillin' savages wouldn't know oakwood from oranges. Truth is, they just don't know anything about the latest architectural methods. The work is unsafe and sloppy. That head that fell on the Elf? An infant could've secured those bindings better! It's no wonder they came loose! But I've seen this type of thing all over Bruma. Did
you know that until I came in to do repair work on the roof, you couldn't attend a service in the Chapel without getting snowed on? Now that's just wrong."

When asked what he thought of the issues, Baenlin's nephew, Caenlin, who inherited his uncle's estate and is now residing in the very house where he was killed, had this to say:

"It was a tragic, tragic accident. I always told my poor uncle that head would fall on him some day, but would he listen? Now, I've heard the rumors that some think there was foul play involved, but that's nonsense, of course. Everybody knows this city is falling apart. It could have happened to anyone."

And so, as the city of Bruma mourns the loss of one of its oldest and most respected residents, there are those who can't help but wonder -- am I next?

[23.2.3] Cheydinhal Heir Saved from Certain Doom!

Farwil Indarys, son and heir of His Lordship Andel Indarys, Count of Cheydinhal, has been delivered from the sulfurous torments of Oblivion by a questing hero. The count's courageous son and his boon companions, the Knights of the Thorn, had boldly entered an Oblivion Gate threatening Cheydinhal, intent on slaying its monstrous horrors and protecting the city and its citizens.

Sources report that the Knights were outnumbered a hundred to one, and only the dauntless courage and strength of arms of Farwil and one other brave soul managed to hold them at bay. Thanks to an allied adventurer who entered the gate to offer his aid, the Knights of the Thorn, led by the noble Sir Farwil, were able to assault the main citadel and shut the gate forever. Cheydinhal and its people are forever in the debt of Sir Farwil and his brave companions.
Rythe Lythandas of Cheydinhal, one of this period's most noted landscape painters, is finally back in his studio after an unexplained absence. He'd reportedly been missing for several days.

Neither the artist nor his wife would comment on the circumstances of his disappearance, though both expressed deep gratitude to the unnamed citizen responsible for his safe return. [The citizen remains anonymous at the request of the happy couple.] Speculation by sources within the Cheydinhal Guard of a kidnapping and ransom demand behind the disappearance cannot be confirmed.

A grateful Empire expresses its appreciation to Lythandas' anonymous benefactor. The Courier is pleased to report that Lythandas is back to work in his studio, and anticipates a new exhibition by our great living painter in the near future.

Countess Alessia Caro is a lady of great beauty, wit, and grace. Her face is known throughout Cyrodiil. Unfortunately, thanks to one deviant prankster, the rest of her has become known to a good deal of her castle staff as well.

During what started as a formal dinner party for some close friends of the Countess, an unknown assailant cast a spell that affected all who attended. Though it did no physical damage, it certainly left a lasting impression. The Countess and all of her invited guests suddenly found themselves altogether...in the altogether.
The spell apparently stripped everyone affected of all of their possessions, including the clothes on their backs. From all reports, the frightened guests handled the situation calmly, maintaining proper decorum at all times.

"Everybody was acting like ladies and gentleman," said one palace staffer who asked not to be identified. "I don't think they was trying to sneak no glances at anyone's naughty bits."

As to the identity of the assailant, castle guards have remained silent. Some reports maintain that the culprit was apprehended at the scene; others claim that he was able to escape without detection. One witness even claims that the assailant was affected by his own spell, and fled the scene in haste when he realized he, too, had been a victim.

Whatever the case, castle security has been on high alert since the incident. It is not known as of press time whether Countess Caro has any dinner parties planned in the near future.

[23.2.6] Emperor and Heirs Assassinated!

Emperor Uriel Septim VII is dead, at the age of 87, having ruled Tamriel for 65 years. He was killed by assassins unknown. At the same time, in separate locations, the late emperor's three sons and heirs (Crown Prince Geldall, 56; Prince Enman, 55; Prince Ebel, 53] were slain by other assassins. An investigation into the identity and motives of the assassins is under way, but the Elder Council, Imperial Guard, and Blades Guard have forbidden the publication of reports and rumors concerning the event until further notice.

By ancient precedent, the Elder Council rules the empire until a new emperor is crowned. No direct heirs survive, and the council has proposed no list of candidates. Chancellor Ocato, Imperial Battlemage, speaking for the Elder Council, presented an appeal to the empire's citizens for calm, and asked that the people remember the Emperor, his sons, and the Elder Council in their prayers.

Emperor Uriel's early reign was marked by peace and prosperity. The Empress Caula Voria bore him three healthy sons, was a loving companion to the Emperor, and a great favorite of the people. However, the emperor and the empire suffered terribly during the Imperial Simulacrum (3E 389-399], when he was held captive in Oblivion while the usurper Jagar Tharn assumed his appearance and ruled in his stead. Emperor Uriel was finally rescued and restored and the impostor defeated by the agency of the sorceress Ria Silmane and her
shadowy protégé, but the affairs of the empire were in great disorder, and Empress Caula Voria, exhausted by her ordeal, withdrew from public life.

The decades following the Restoration were once again peaceful and prosperous, but increasing political tensions among the petty states of northwest Tamriel finally erupted in the Wars of the Iliac Bays, resulting in the establishment of the modern borders of Daggerfall, Sentinel, Wayrest, and Orsinium, and culminating with the remarkable events associated with the Warp in the West.

The latter years of the Emperor's reign have seen a flourishing of Imperial influence in the provinces, and with the fortunate resolution of the religious wars and the Vvardenfell Crisis, and with the wise and firm guidance of King Helseth and his mother, Queen Barenziah, an extension of high Imperial culture even into the more remote parts of Morrowind.

The Emperor's murder, and the murder of his three sons, is a terrible crime, and a great tragedy for the Empire. Battlemage Ocato assures us that all the resources of the Elder Council, the Legions, the Guard, the Arcane University, and the Imperial Battle College are being employed to bring the assassins to justice. But, in the meantime, the greatest tribute we citizens can offer to the memory of our beloved Emperor is to go earnestly and diligently about our daily affairs, honoring the life of the great Empire he loved so much, and served so faithfully for so long.

**[23.2.7] Fort Pale Pass Discovered!**

Fort Pale Pass, the fabled headquarters of Tamriel's First Era Akaviri invaders, has been located by an agent of the Countess of Bruma. This fortress was thought to be long lost to the ages, buried in the frozen wastes of the Jeral Mountains. Thanks to an expedition funded by Her Ladyship Narina Carvain, Countess of Bruma, the secret entrance to this great ruin was found.

Previously, scholars have offered no persuasive account for why the Akaviri juggernaut, having swept aside Tamriel's defenders, should collapse suddenly and completely crossing the Jeral Mountains. Now evidence uncovered at the site indicates a great landslide had covered the fort, trapping the hapless Akaviri commanders within, leaving the Akaviri columns leaderless and isolated in the alpine wilderness passes.
[23.2.8] Gang of Tarts Thwarted!

A ruthless crime ring of female thieves plaguing Anvil's men folk has finally been broken. These shameless women employed feminine wiles to seduce the men, lured them to remote locations, then robbed them, leaving them without a stitch of clothing.

The gang's ringleader, Faustina Cartia, had preyed upon Anvil's male population for some time, but the shamefaced victims had been reluctant to admit what was happening. Now, thanks to an extensive undercover operation by two unnamed Anvil Guard Investigators, and with the aid of an anonymous private operative, this menace to Anvil's men has been summarily dealt with, and the wives of Anvil may rest easier knowing their gullible husbands will no longer be imperiled by predatory seductresses.

[23.2.9] Night Mother Rituals on the Rise!

The Imperial City -- pinnacle of art, entertainment, scholarship... and ritualistic murder? So says Adamus Phillida, commander of the Imperial Legion forces in the Imperial City, and a staunch opponent of the mysterious assassin's guild known as the Dark Brotherhood. According to Phillida, Imperial Legion soldiers have discovered thirteen separate instances of the macabre "Black Sacrament," a sinister rite purportedly used to summon a member of the Dark Brotherhood, in order to arrange an assassination.
Whether or not a card-carrying killer shows up on a ritual performer's doorstep remains to be seen, but the Black Sacrament itself is very real, and truly the stuff of nightmares. As documented in the rare and taboo work "A Kiss, Sweet Mother," the Black Sacrament involves an effigy of the intended victim -- created from actual body parts, including a heart, skull, bones and flesh -- within a circle of candles. To proceed with the ritual, one must stab the effigy repeatedly with a dagger rubbed with the petals of a Nightshade plant, while whispering the plea, "Sweet Mother, sweet Mother, send your child unto me, for the sins of the unworthy must be baptized in blood and fear." As gruesome as this ritual may be, even more frightening is its intention -- the summoning of a mysterious assassin (who some witnessesses claim is always clad in a black hooded robe) who will then receive money to kill an innocent victim. No remorse. No regret. It is, as the merchant's say, simply business. And that's what worries Adamus Phillida.

"This brazen increase in Night Mother rituals is an affront to the decent, peace-loving citizens of the Empire. The Imperial Legion exists for one reason and one reason only -- to protect and serve the people of Tamriel. How in Azura's name can we do that when people take it upon themselves to contact paid assassins and have innocent people murdered? How can I sleep at night knowing my Legion can't possibly save the life of someone marked for death by the Dark Brotherhood? Anyone who carries out this "Black Sacrament" makes a mockery of the Imperial Legion, and as Commander, that's something I just can't tolerate. From this point forward, any citizen found in the possession of items related to the Night Mother ritual will be incarcerated in the Imperial Prison indefinitely, and their property seized by the Empire. There's no fine high enough, no standard prison sentence long enough, for the type of malcontent who would show such a blatant disregard for our dear Emperor's laws and the wellfare of the fine people of Tamriel"

To be sure, Adamus Phillida is not one to issue empty threats. Indeed, the Black Horse Courier has learned that one Claudius Arcadia, until recently a resident of the Talos Plaza District of the Imperial City, is now residing in a cold, dank cell in the Imperial Prison, and his house has become the newest Imperial Legion outpost. So before you take the law into your own hands, dear reader, remember -- you'll go further in life with a warm smile than a cold blade. And if you've got a grudge that won't be soothed, a score that can't be settled, you can always move to Morrowind and have the government-sanctioned Morag Tong do the killing for you.
The quiet life of the idyllic Border Watch community was shattered recently by a meteorological phenomenon local experts are unable to explain. On an otherwise normal day, the skies above the small village suddenly darkened, and burning dogs rained down from the heavens.

The carnage was terrible, according to witnesses. Charred dog carcasses littered the village, and the smell alone was enough to drive many residents into their homes. When asked about the event, local mage and weather expert Castus Philidus had this to say:

"There seems to be no precedent for this in all of Tamrielic history. While there have been stories of insects, frogs, and the occasional wayward mage crashing to the earth, I've never encountered tales of burning dogs raining from the skies. It is possible that the dogs were the part of some mage's experiments with summoning gone bad, or perhaps the dogs were swept up in a great wind and hurled into the sky. This might explain the dogs falling onto the unfortunate Border Watch community. Of course, that still doesn't explain why they were on fire."

While the experts seem puzzled, the residents of Border Watch see only one explanation.

"It is the end of the world!" said one resident, who asked not to be named in this article. "The K'Sharra Prophecy tells us that this will happen! The rats! The sheep! We are all doomed! Doomed!"

Prophecy? Mages? Freak weather occurrence? We may never know. And the small village of Border Watch will definitely never be the same.
[24] The Book of Daedra*

See vol. I.
Bravil is one of the most charming towns in Cyrodiil, sparkling in her simple beauty, illustrious by her past. No visit to the southern part of the Imperial Province is complete without a walk along Bravil's exciting river port, a talk with her friendly native children, and, of course, in the tradition of the village, a whispered word to the famous statue of the Lucky Old Lady.

Many thousands of years before the arrival of the Atmorans, the native Ayleid people had long lived in the vicinity of modern day Bravil. The Niben then, as now, provided food and transportation, and the village was even more populous than it is today. We are not certain what they called their region: as insular as they were, the word they used would be translated to simply mean "home." These savage Ayleids were so firmly entrenched that the Bravil region was one of the very last areas to be liberated by the Alessian army in the second century of the 1st era. Though little remains of that era culturally or archeologically, thank Mara, the tales of debauchery and depravity have entered into the realm of legends.

How the Ayleids were able to survive such a long siege is debated by scholars to this day. All, however, grant the honor of the victory to one of the Empress Alessia's centurions, a man called Teo Bravillius Tasus, the man for whom the modern town is named.

It was said he invaded the village no less than four times, after heavy resistance, but each time upon the morning dawning, all his soldiery within would be dead, murdered. By the time more centuria had arrived, the fortified town was repopulated with Ayleids. After the second successful invasion, secret underground tunnels were found and filled in, but once again, come morning, the soldiers were again dead, and the citizens had returned. After the third successful siege, legions were posted outside of the town, watching the roads and riverway for signs of attacks, but no one came. The next morning, the bodies of the invading soldiers were thrown from the parapets of town's walls.

Teo Bravillius Tasus knew that the Ayleids must be hiding themselves somewhere in the town, waiting until nightfall, and then murdering the soldiers while they slept. The question was where. After the fourth invasion, he himself led the soldiers in a thorough inspection of every corner, every shadow. Just as they were ready to give up, the great centurion noticed two curious things. High in the sheer walls of the town, beyond anyone's ability to climb, there were indentations, narrow platforms. And by the river just inside the town, he discovered a single footprint from someone clearly not wearing the Imperial boot.

The Ayleids, it seemed, had taken two routes to hide themselves. Some had levitated up to the walls and hidden themselves high above, and others had slipped into the river, where they were able to breathe underwater. It was a relatively easy task once the strange elves' even stranger hiding holes had been discovered to rout them out, and see to it that there were no more midnight assassinations of the Empress's troops.
It may seem beyond belief that an entire community could be so skilled in these spells hundreds and hundreds of years before the Mages Guild was formed to teach the ways of magicka to the common folk. There does, however, appear to be evidence that, just as the Psijics on the Isle of Artaeum developed Mysticism long before there was a name for it, the even more obscure Ayleids of southern Cyrodiil had developed what was to be known as the school of Alteration. It is not, after all, much of a stretch when one considers that other Ayleids at the time of Bravil's conquering and even later were shapeshifters. The community of pre-Bravil could not turn into beasts and monsters, but they could alter their bodies to hide themselves away. A related and useful skill, to be sure. But not so effective to save themselves in the end.

Very little is left of the Ayleid presence in Bravil of today, though archetectural marvels of other kinds are very evident. As beautiful and arresting as the Benevolence of Mara cathedral and the lord's palace are, no manmade structure in Bravil is as famous as the statue called The Lucky Old Lady.

The tales about the Lady and who she was are too numerous to list.

It was said she was born the illegitimate daughter of a prostitute in Bravil, certainly an inauspicious beginning to a lucky life. She was teased by the other children, who forever asked her who her father was. Every day, she would run back to her little shack in tears from their cruelty.

One day, a priest of Stendarr came to Bravil to do charitable work. He saw the weeping little girl, and when asked, she told him the cause of her misery: she didn't know who her father was.

"You have kind eyes and a mouth that tells no lies," replied the priest after a moment, smiling. "You are clearly a child of Stendarr, the God of Mercy, Charity, and Well-Earned Luck."

The priest's thoughtful words changed the girl forever. Whenever she was asked who her father was, she would cheerfully reply, "I am a child of Luck."

She grew up to be a barmaid, it was said, kind and generous to her customers, frequently allowing them to pay when they were able to. On a particularly rainy night, she gave shelter to a young man dressed in rags, who not only had no money to pay, but was belligerent and rude to her as she fed him and gave him a room. The next morning, he left without so much as a thank you. Her friends and family admonished her, saying that she had to be careful, he might have even been dangerous.

A week later, a royal carriage arrived in Bravil, with an Imperial prince within. Though he was scarcely recognizable, it was the same young man the Lady had helped. He apologized profusely for his appearance and behavior, explaining that he had been kidnapped and cursed by a band of witches, and it wasn't until later he had returned to his senses. The Lady was showered with riches, which she, of course, generously shared with all the people of Bravil, where she lived to a content old age.

No one knows when the statue to her was erected in the town square, or who the artist was, but it has stood there for thousands of years, since the first era. To this day, visitors and
Bravillians alike go to the Lucky Old Lady to ask for her to bless them with luck in their travails.

Just one more charming aspect of the charming, and very lucky village of Bravil.
[26] A Brief History of the Empire*

See vol. I.
[27] The Brothers of Darkness*

See vol. I.
[28] The Buying Game*

See vol. I.
[29] Cherim's Heart of Anequina*

See vol. I.
[30] Children of the Sky*

See vol. I.
[31] Chimarvamidium*

See vol. I.
[32.4] The Chronicles of the Holy Brothers of Marukh IV

The Chronicles of the Holy Brothers of Marukh, Volume IV
Or, The Cleansing of the Fane

[Editor's Note: This is the only surviving fragment of the chronicle of this First Era sect of the Alessian Order. It seems to have been kept at their great monastic complex at Lake Canulus, which was razed during the War of Righteousness (1E 2321) and its archives destroyed or dispersed.

Note also that Alessian scribes of this time customarily dated events from the Apotheosis of Alessia (1E 266).]

Here is recorded the events of the Year 127 of the Blessed Alessia.

In this year was the day darkened over all lands, and the sun was all as it were Masser but three days old, and the stars about him at midday. This was on the fifth of First Seed. All who saw it were dismayed, and said that a great event should come hereafter. So it did, for that same year issued forth a great concourse of devils from the ancient Elvish temple Malada, such had not been seen since the days of King Belharza. These devils greatly afflicted the land such that no man could plow, or reap, or seed, and the people appealed to the brothers of Marukh for succour. And then Abbot Cosmas gathered all the brothers and led them to Malada, also known as the High Fane in the Elvish tongue, and came against it with holy fire, and the foul demons were destroyed, and many devilish relics and books found therein were burned. And the land had peace for many years.
Marobar Sul and the Trivialization of the Dwemer in Popular Culture
By Hasphat Antabolis

While Marobar Sul's Ancient Tales of the Dwemer was definitively debunked in scholarly circles as early as the reign of Katariah I, it remains one of the staples of the literate middle-classes of the Empire, and has served to set the image of the Dwemer in the popular imagination for generations of schoolchildren. What about this lengthy (but curiously insubstantial) tome has proved so captivating to the public that it has been able to see off both the scorn of the literati and the scathing critiques of the scholars?

Before examining this question, a brief summary of the provenance and subsequent career of Ancient Tales would be appropriate. First published around 2E670, in the Interregnum between the fall of the First Cyrodilic Empire and the rise of Tiber Septim, it was originally presented as a serious, scholarly work based on research in the archives of the University of Gwylim, and in the chaos of that era was taken at face value (a sign of the sad state of Dwemer scholarship in those years). Little is known of the author, but Marobar Sul was most likely a pseudonym of Gor Felim, a prolific writer of "penny dreadful romances" of that era, who is known to have used many other pseudonyms. While most of Felim's other work has, thankfully, been lost to history, what little survives matches Ancient Tales in both language and tone (see Lomis, "Textual Comparison of Gor Felim's A Hypothetical Treachery with Marobar Sul's Ancient Tales of the Dwemer"). Felim lived in Cyrodiil his whole life, writing light entertainments for the elite of the old Imperial capital. Why he decided to turn his hand to the Dwemer is unknown, but it is clear that his "research" consisted of nothing more than collecting the peasants' tales of the Nibenay Valley and recasting them in Dwemer guise.

The book proved popular in Cyrodiil, and Felim continued to churn out more volumes until the series numbered seven in all. Ancient Tales of the Dwemer was thus firmly established as a local favorite in Cyrodiil (already in its 17th printing) when the historical forces that propelled Tiber Septim to prominence also began to spread the literature of the "heartland" across the continent. Marobar Sul's version of the Dwemer was seized upon in a surge of human racial nationalism that has not yet subsided.

The Dwemer appear in these tales as creatures of fable and light fantasy, but in general they are "just like us". They come across as a bit eccentric, perhaps, but certainly there is nothing fearsome or dangerous about them. Compare these to the Dwemer of early Redguard legend: a mysterious, powerful race, capable of bending the very laws of nature to their will; vanished but perhaps not gone. Or the Dwemer portrayed in the most ancient Nord sagas: fearsome warriors, tainted by blasphemous religious practices, who used their profane mechanisms to drive the Nords from Morrowind. Marobar Sul's Dwemer were much more amenable to the
spirit of the time, which saw humans as the pinnacle of creation and the other races as unenlightened barbarians or imperfect, lesser versions of humans eager for tutelage. Ancient Tales falls firmly in the latter camp, which does much to explain its enduring hold on the popular imagination. Marobar Sul's Dwemer are so much more comfortable, so much friendlier, so much more familiar, than the real Dwemer, whose truly mysterious nature we are only beginning to understand. The public prefers the light, trivial version of this vanished race. And from what I have learned in my years of studying the Dwemer, I have some sympathy for that preference. As the following essays will show, the Dwemer were, to our modern eyes, a remarkably unlikeable people in many ways.
Greetings, novitiate, and know first a reassurance: Mankar Camoran was once like you, asleep, unwise, protonymic. We mortals leave the dreaming-sleeve of birth the same, unmantled save for the symbiosis with our mothers, thus to practice and thus to rapprochement, until finally we might through new eyes leave our hearths without need or fear that she remains behind. In this moment we destroy her forever and enter the demesne of Lord Dagon.

Reader, this book is your door to that demesne, and though you be a destroyer you must still submit to locks. Lord Dagon would only have those clever enough to pause; all else the Aurbis claims in their fool running. Walk first. Heed. The impatience you feel is your first slave to behead.

Enter as Lord Dagon has written: come slow and bring four keys. Know that then you are royalty, a new breed of destroyer, whose garden shall flood with flowers known and unknown, as it was in the mythic dawn. Thus shall you return to your first primal wail and yet come out different. It shall this time be neonymbiosis, master akin to Master, whose Mother is miasma.

Every quarter has known us, and none bore our passing except with trembling. Perhaps you came to us through war, or study, or shadow, or the alignment of certain snakes. Though each path matters in its kind, the prize is always thus: welcome, novitiate, that you are here at all means that you have the worthiness of kings. Seek thy pocket now, and look! There is the first key, glinting with the light of a new dawn.

Night follows day, and so know that this primary insight shall fall alike unto the turbulent evening sea where all faiths are tested. Again, a reassurance: even the Usurper went under the Iliac before he rose up to claim his fleet. Fear only for a second. Shaken belief is like water for a purpose: in the garden of the Dawn we shall breathe whole realities.

Enter as Lord Dagon has written: come slow and bring four keys. Our Order is based on the principles of his mighty razor: Novitiate, Questing Knight, Chaplain, and Master. Let the evil ones burn in its light as if by the excess of our vision. Then shalt our Knowledge go aright. However, recall that your sight is yet narrow, and while you have the invitation, you have not the address.
My own summons came through a book Lord Dagon wrote himself in the deserts of rust and wounds. Its name is the 'Mysterium Xarxes', Aldmeretada aggregate, forefather to the wife of all enigma. Each word is razor-fed and secret, thinner than cataclysms, tarnished like red-drink. That I mention it at all is testament to your new rank, my child. Your name is now cut into its weight.

Palace, hut, or cave, you have left all the fog worlds of conception behind. Nu-mantia! Liberty! Rejoice in the promise of paradise!

Endlessly it shall form and reform around you, deeds as entities, all-systems only an hour before they bloom to zero sums, flowering like vestments, divine raiment worn to dance at Lord Dagon's golden feet. In his first arm, a storm, his second the rush of plagued rain, the third all the tinder of Anu, and the fourth the very eyes of Padhome. Feel uplifted in thine heart that you have this first key, for it shall strike high and low into the wormrot of false heavens.

Roaring I wandered until I grew hoarse with the gospel. I had read the mysteries of Lord Dagon and feeling anew went mad with the overflow. My words found no purchase until I became hidden. These were not words for the common of Tamriel, whose clergy long ago feigned the very existence of the Dawn. Learn from my mistake; know that humility was Mankar Camoran's original wisdom. Come slow, and bring four keys.

Offering myself to that daybreak allowed the girdle of grace to contain me. When my voice returned, it spoke with another tongue. After three nights I could speak fire.

Red-drink, razor-fed, I had glimpsed the path unto the garden, and knew that to inform others of its harbor I had to first drown myself in search's sea. Know ye that I have found my fleet, and that you are the flagship of my hope. Greetings, novitiate, Mankar Camoran was once you, asleep, unwise, protonymic, but Am No More. Now I sit and wait to feast with thee on all the worlds of this cosmos. Nu-mantia! Liberty!
Whosoever findeth this document, I call him brother.

Answers are liberations, where the slaves of Malbioge that came to know Numantia cast down their jailer king, Maztiak, which the Xarxes Mysterium calls the Arkayn. Maztiak, whose carcass was dragged through the streets by his own bone-walkers and whose flesh was opened on rocks thereon and those angels who loved him no longer did drink from his honeyed ichors screaming "Let all know free will and do as they will!"

Your coming was foretold, my brother, by the Lord Dagon in his book of razors. You are to come as Idols drop away from you one by one. You are exalted in eyes that have not yet set on you; you, swain to well-travelled to shatterer of mantles. You, brother, are to sit with me in Paradise and be released of all unknowns. Indeed, I shall show you His book and its foul-and-many-feathered rubric so that you can put into symbols what you already know: the sphere of destruction is but the milk of the unenslaved. I fault not your stumbling, for they are expected and given grace by the Oils. I crave not your downfalls, though without them you might surpass me even in the coming Earth of all infinities. Lord Dagon wishes you no ills but the momentous. And as He wants, you must want, and so learn from the pages of God this: the Ritual of Want:

Whisper to earth and earth, where the meddlers take no stones except to blood, as blood IS blood, and to the cracking of bone, as bone IS bone, and so to crack and answer and fall before the one and one, I call you Dragon as brother and king.

Hides of dreugh: 7 and 7, draught of Oil, 1 and 1, circles drawn by wet Dibellites: three concentric and let their lower blood fall where it may, a birth watched by blackbirds: Hearthfire 1st. Incant the following when your hearing becomes blurred:

Enraptured, he who finally goes unrecorded.

Recorded, the slaves that without knowing turn the Wheel.

Enslaved, all the children of the Aurbis As It Is."
The Tower touches all the mantles of Heaven, brother-noviates, and by its apex one can be as he will. More: be as he was and yet changed for all else on that path for those that walk after. This is the third key of Nu-mantia and the secret of how mortals become makers, and makers back to mortals. The Bones of the Wheel need their flesh, and that is mankind's heirloom.

Oath-breakers beware, for their traitors run through the nymic-paths, runner dogs of prolix gods. The Dragon's Blood have hidden ascension in six-thousands years of aetherial labyrinth, which is Arena, which they yet deny is Oathbound. By the Book, take this key and pierce the divine shell that encloses the mantle-takers! The skin of gold! SCARAB AE AURBEX!

Woe to the Oath-breakers! Of the skin of gold, the Xarxes Mysterium says "Be fooled not by the forlorn that ride astray the roadway, for they lost faith and this losing was caused by the Aedra who would know no other planets." Whereby the words of Lord Dagon instructs us to destroy these faithless. "Eat or bleed dry the gone-forlorn and gain that small will that led them to walk the path of Godhead at the first. Spit out or burn to the side that which made them delay. Know them as the Mnemoli."

Every new limb is paid for by the under-known. See, brother, and give not more to the hydra.

Reader, you will sense a shadow-choir soon. The room you are in right now will grow eyes and voices. The candle or spell-light you read this by will become gateways for the traitors I have mentioned. Scorn them and fear not. Call them names, call out their base natures. I, the Mankar of stars, am with you, and I come to take you to my Paradise where the Tower-traitors shall hang on glass wracks until they smile with the new revolution.

That is your ward against the Mnemoli. They run blue, through noise, and shine only when the earth trembles with the eruption of the newly-mantled. Tell them "Go! GHARTOK AL MNEM! God is come! NUMI MORA! NUM DALAE MNEM!"

Once you walk in the Mythic it surrenders its power to you. Myth is nothing more than first wants. Unutterable truth. Ponder this while searching for the fourth key.

Understood laws of the arcanature will fall away like heat. "First Tower Dictate: render the mutant bound where he may do no more harm. As God of the Mundus, alike shall be his progeny, split from their divine sparks. We are Eight time eight Exarchs. Let the home of Padomay see us as sole exit."
CHIM. Those who know it can reshape the land. Witness the home of the Red King Once Jungled.

He that enters Paradise enters his own Mother. AE ALMA RUMA! The Aurbis endeth in all ways.

Endeth we seek through our Dawn, all endeth. Falter now and become one with the wayside orphans that feed me. Follow and I shall adore you from inside. My first daughter ran from the Dagonite road. Her name was Ruma and I ate her with no bread, and made another, which learned, and I loved that one and blackbirds formed her twin behind all time.

Starlight is your mantle, brother. Wear it to see by and add its light to Paradise.
COMMENTARIES ON THE MYSTERIUM XARXES

BOOK FOUR

by Mankar Camoran

May the holder of the fourth key know the heart thereby: the Mundex Terrene was once ruled over solely by the tyrant dreugh-kings, each to their own dominion, and borderwars fought between their slave oceans. They were akin to the time-totems of old, yet evil, and full of mockery and profane powers. No one that lived did so outside of the sufferance of the dreughs.

I give my soul to the Magna Ge, sayeth the joyous in Paradise, for they created Mehrunes the Razor in secret, in the very bowels of Lyg, the domain of the Upstart who vanishes. Though they came from diverse waters, each Get shared sole purpose: to artifice a prince of good, spinning his likeness in random swath, and imbuing him with Oblivion's most precious and scarce asset: hope.

Deathlessly I intone from Paradise: Mehrunes the Thieftaker, Mehrunes Godsbody, Mehrunes the Red Arms That Went Up! Nu-Mantia! Liberty!

Deny not that these days shall come again, my novitiates! For as Mehrunes threw down Lyg and cracked his face, declaring each of the nineteen and nine and nine oceans Free, so shall he crack the serpent crown of the Cyrodiils and make federation!

All will change in these days as it was changed in those, for with by the magic word Nu-Mantia a great rebellion rose up and pulled down the towers of CHIM-EL GHARJYG, and the templars of the Upstart were slaughtered, and blood fell like dew from the upper wards down to the lowest pits, where the slaves with maniacal faces took chains and teeth to their jailers and all hope was brush-fire.

Your Dawn listens, my Lord! Let all the Aurbis know itself to be Free! Mehrunes is come! There is no dominion save free will!

Suns were riven as your red legions moved from Lyg to the hinterlands of chill, a legion for each Get, and Kuri was thrown down and Djaf was thrown down and Horma-Gile was crushed with coldsalt and forevermore called Hor and so shall it be again under the time of Gates.

Under the mires, Malbioge was thrown down, that old City of Chains, slaked in newbone-warmth and set Free. Galg and Mor-Galg were thrown down together in a single night of day and shall it be again under the time of Gates.
Nothing but woe for NRN which has become The Pit and seven curses on its Dreugh, the Vermae NI-MOHK! But for it the Crusades would be as my lord's Creation, Get by the Ge and do as thou wilt, of no fetters but your own conscience! Know that your Hell is Broken, people of the Aurbis, and praise the Nu-Mantia which is Liberty!
[35] A Dance in Fire*

See vol. I.
[36] Darkest Darkness*

See vol. I.
[37] The Death Blow of Abernanit

See vol. I.
Death Decree

Sheogorath, Prince of Madness, Lord of the Never-There, Sovereign of the Shivering Isles, does, on this day, hence-forth make this decree:

Robert Wisnewski

Citizen of the Shivering Isles, Resident of Bliss, and Honored Madman

has broken the laws and covenants of the Shivering Isles and offended the austere personage of Our Lord, through the following actions:

Attempting the Growth of a Beard, an Action Deemed Unseemly in the Eyes of Our Lord

It is further decreed that the actions of this citizen merit the strictest of punishments to be meted out at the earliest possible hour, in a manner to be chosen according to the Whims and Fancies of Our Lord Sheogorath
This document hereby states that the bearer is the sole owner and possessor of the domicile currently known as Benirus Manor. Said domicile is located in the township known as Anvil in the territory known as Cyrodiil.

The bearer has full ownership rights to all of the structures, flora and land within the property borders as defined in the Anvil Construction Charter. The bearer is responsible for all matters pertaining to or occurring on said property.

This document also empowers the bearer transfer rights to reassign the property as he sees fit. The bearer may amend this document to rename the manor by submitting the proper forms and payments to the Anvil Construction Charter and by filing duplicate forms with the Documents Division of the Imperial City Archives.
[39.2] Deed to Frostcrag Spire

This document is to inform the bearer that the last known owner of the property known as Frostcrag Spire has been declared deceased, and the bearer has been listed as the sole heir and successor to the deceased's ownership of said property.

The bearer has full ownership rights to all of the structures, flora and land within the property borders as defined in the Cyrodiil Construction Charter. The bearer is responsible for all matters pertaining to or occurring on said property.

This document also empowers the bearer transfer rights to reassign the property as he sees fit. The bearer may amend this document to rename the manor by submitting the proper forms and payments to the Cyrodiil Construction Charter and by filing duplicate forms with the Documents Division of the Imperial City Archives.
The Doors of Oblivion
By Seif-ij Hidja

‘When thou enterest into Oblivion, Oblivion entereth into thee.’
-- Nai Tyrol-Llar

The greatest mage who ever lived was my master Morian Zenas. You have heard of him as the author of the book 'On Oblivion,' the standard text for all on matters Daedric. Despite many entreaties over the years, he refused to update his classic book with his new discoveries and theories because he found that the more one delves into these realms, the less certain one is. He did not want conjecture, he wanted facts.

For decades before and after the publication of 'On Oblivion,' Zenas compiled a vast personal library on the subject of Oblivion, the home of the Daedra. He divided his time between this research and personal magickal growth, on the assumption that should he succeed in finding a way into the dangerous world beyond and behind ours, he would need much power to wander its dark paths.

Twelve years before Zenas began the journey he had prepared his life to make, he hired me as his assistant. I possessed the three attributes he required for the position: I was young and eager to help without question; I could read any book once and memorize its contents; and, despite my youth, I was already a Master of Conjuration.

Zenas too was a Master of Conjuration - indeed, a Master at all the known and unknown Schools - but he did not want to rely on his ability alone in the most perilous of his research. In an underground vault, he summoned Daedra to interview them on their native land, and for that he needed another Conjurer to make certain they came, were bound, and were sent away again without incident.

I will never forget that vault, not for its look which was plain and unadorned, but for what you couldn't see. There were scents that lingered long after the summoned creatures had left, flowers and sulfur, sex and decay, power and madness. They haunt me still to this very day.

Conjuration, for the layman unacquainted with its workings, connects the caster's mind with that of the summoned. It is a tenuous link, meant only to lure, hold, and dismiss, but in the hands of a Master, it can be much stronger. The Psijics and Dwemer can (in the Dwemer's case, perhaps I should say, could) connect with the minds of others, and converse miles apart - a skill that is sometimes called telepathy.

Over the course of my employment, Zenas and I developed such a link between one another. It was accidental, a result of two powerful Conjurers working closely together, but we decided that it would be invaluable should he succeed in traveling to Oblivion. Since the denizens of that land could be touched even by the skills of an amateur Conjurer, it was possible we could continue to communicate while he was there, so I could record his discoveries.
The 'Doors to Oblivion,' to use Morian Zenas's phrase, are not easily found, and we exhausted many possibilities before we found one where we held the key.

The Psijics of Artaeum have a place they call The Dreaming Cave, where it is said one can enter into the Daedric realms and return. Iachesis, Sotha Sil, Nematigh, and many others have been recorded as using this means, but despite many entreaties to the Order, we were denied its use. Celarus, the leader of the Order, has told us it has been sealed off for the safety of all.

We had hopes of using the ruins of the Battlespire to access Oblivion. The Weir Gate still stands, though the old proving grounds of the Imperial Battlemages itself was shattered some years ago in Jagar Tharn's time. Sadly, after an exhaustive search through the detritus, we had to conclude that when it was destroyed, all access to the realms beyond, the Soul Cairn, the Shade Perilous, and the Havoc Wellhead, had been broken. It was probably for the good, but it frustrated our goal.

The reader may have heard of other Doors, and he may be assured we attempted to find them all.

Some are pure legend, or at any rate, not traceable based on the information left behind. There are references in lore to Marukh's Abyss, the Corryngton Mirror, the Mantellan Crux, the Crossroads, the Mouth, a riddle of an alchemical formula called Jacinth and Rising Sun, and many other places and objects that are said to be Doors, but we could not find.

Some exist, but cannot be entered safely. The whirlpool in the Abecean called the Maelstrom of Bal can make ships disappear, and may be a portal into Oblivion, but the trauma of riding its waters would surely slay any who tried. Likewise, we did not consider it worth the risk to leap from the Pillar of Thras, a thousand foot tall spiral of coral, though we witnessed the sacrifices the sloads made there. Some victims were killed by the fall, but some, indeed, seemed to vanish before being dashed on the rocks. Since the sload did not seem certain why some were taken and some died, we did not favor the odds of the plunge.

The simplest and most maddeningly complex way to go to Oblivion was simply to cease to be here, and begin to be there. Throughout history, there are examples of mages who seemed to travel to the realms beyond ours seemingly at will. Many of these voyagers are long dead, if they ever existed, but we were able to find one still living. In a tower off Zafirbel Bay on the island of Vvardenfell in the province of Morrowind there exists a very old, very reclusive wizard named Divayth Fyr.

He was not easy to reach, and he was reluctant to share with Morian Zenas the secret Door to Oblivion. Fortunately, my master's knowledge of lore impressed Fyr, and he taught him the way. I would be breaking my promise to Zenas and Fyr to explain the procedure here, and I would not divulge it even if I could. If there is dangerous knowledge to be had, that is it. But I do not reveal too much to say that Fyr's scheme relied on exploiting a series of portals to various realms created by a Telvanni wizard long missing and presumed dead. Against the disadvantage of this limited number of access points, we weighed the relative reliability and security of passage, and considered ourselves fortunate in our informant.

Morian Zenas then left this world to begin his exploration. I stayed at the library to transcribe his information and help him with any research he needed.
'Dust,' he whispered to me on the first day of his voyage. Despite the inherent dreariness of the word, I could hear his excitement in his voice, echoing in my mind. 'I can see from one end of the world to the other in a million shades of gray. There is no sky or ground or air, only particles, floating, falling, whirling about me. I must levitate and breathe by magickal means ...'

Zenas explored the nebulous land for some time, encountering vaporous creatures and palaces of smoke. Though he never met the Prince, we concluded that he was in Ashpit, said to be the home of Malacath, where anguish, betrayal, and broken promises like ash filled the bitter air.

'The sky is on fire,' I heard him say as he moved on to the next realm. 'The ground is sludge, but traversable. I see blackened ruins all around me, like a war was fought here in the distant past. The air is freezing. I cast blooms of warmth all around me, but it still feels like daggers of ice stabbing me in all directions.'

This was Coldharbour, where Molag Bal was Prince. It appeared to Zenas as if it were a future Nirn, under the King of Rape, desolate and barren, filled with suffering. I could hear Morian Zenas weep at the images he saw, and shiver at the sight of the Imperial Palace, spattered with blood and excrement.

'Too much beauty,' Zenas gasped when he went to the next realm. 'I am half blind. I see flowers and waterfalls, majestic trees, a city of silver, but it is all a blur. The colors run like water. It's raining now, and the wind smells like perfume. This surely is Moonshadow, where Azura dwells.'

Zenas was right, and astonishingly, he even had audience with the Queen of Dusk and Dawn in her rose palace. She listened to his tale with a smile, and told him of the coming of the Nevevarine. My master found Moonshadow so lovely, he wished to stay there, half-blind, forever, but he knew he must move on and complete his journey of discovery.

'I am in a storm,' he told me as he entered the next realm. He described the landscape of dark twisted trees, howling spirits, and billowing mist, and I thought he might have entered the Deadlands of Mehrunes Dagon. But then he said quickly, 'No, I am no longer in a forest. There was a flash of lightning, and now I am on a ship. The mast is tattered. The crew is slaughtered. Something is coming through the waves ... oh, gods ... Wait, now, I am in a dank dungeon, in a cell ...'

He was not in the Deadlands, but Quagmire, the nightmare realm of Vaernima. Every few minutes, there was a flash of lightning and reality shifted, always to something more horrible and horrifying. A dark castle one moment, a den of ravening beasts the next, a moonlit swamp, a coffin where he was buried alive. Fear got the better of my master, and he quickly passed to the next realm.

I heard him laugh, 'I feel like I'm home now.'

Morian Zenas described to me an endless library, shelves stretching on in every direction, stacks on top of stacks. Pages floated on a mystical wind that he could not feel. Every book had a black cover with no title. He could see no one, but felt the presence of ghosts moving through the stacks, rifling through books, ever searching.
It was Apocrypha. The home of Hermaeus-Mora, where all forbidden knowledge can be found. I felt a shudder in my mind, but I could not tell if it was my master's or mine.

Morian Zenas never traveled to another realm that I know of.

Throughout his visits to the first four realms, my master spoke to me constantly. Upon entering the Apocrypha, he became quieter, as he was lured into the world of research and study, the passions that had controlled his heart while on Nirn. I would frantically try to call to him, but he closed his mind to me.

Then he would whisper, 'This cannot be ...'

'No one would ever guess the truth ...'

'I must learn more ...'

'I see the world, a last illusion's shimmer, it is crumbling all around us ...'

I would cry back to him, begging him to tell me what was happening, what he was seeing, what he was learning. I even tried using Conjuration to summon him as if he were a Daedra himself, but he refused to leave. Morian Zenas was lost.

I last received a whisper from him six months ago. Before then, it had been five years, and three before that. His thoughts are no longer intelligible in any language. Perhaps he is still in Apocrypha, lost but happy, in a trap he refuses to escape.

Perhaps he slipped between the stacks and passed into the Madhouse of Sheogorath, losing his sanity forever.

I would save him if I could.

I would silence his whispers if I could.
[41] The Dowry*

See vol. I.
[42] The Dragon Break Reexamined*

See vol. I.
[43] The Eastern Provinces Impartially Considered*

See vol. I.
[44] Elder Scroll
It is a strange life that I have chosen, here amongst the beasts of these Shivering Isles. These Elytra -- a most gentle creature if ever there were a gentle creature - they have welcomed me among their brood as one of their own. I have made my life and home in their tunnels as if they were my own humble cabin, and indeed, I have been invited into their warm family unit.

Many who encounter the Elytra are initially set to unrest by their appearance. Their size alone is sufficient to unsettle most of the humanoid races. The enlarged thorax can grow to be as large as a human male and nearly a full span in girth. When I first encountered my insectoid friends, I believed the enlarged thorax to be a method to manufacture the ichor that is vital to the lives of the Elytra. In truth, the thorax is the precious womb where their noble lives begin.

However, one cannot discount the significance of the ichor that gathers at the spike near the base of the thorax. This precious substance emits a smell that most will describe as acidic and sour (although I find it to be a delight). The ichor serves the most brilliant purpose of the Elytra. It is used to paralyze living tissue of other creatures, rendering them unable to resist the advances of the Elytra. Here is where the true brilliance takes place.

When choosing a suitable host, the Elytra will impose itself on the creature. Any creature that draws breath seems to be biologically suitable for this purpose. I myself have witnessed Elytra Matrons choose creatures that range from simple wolves to a brilliant Khajiit alchemist. Each time, the host is chosen carefully. Oh, I know that the superstitious farmers of the Isles will say that the Elytra will attack any creature, but after what I've seen, I know that they approach each host with the utmost care.

The host is injected and their body becomes enriched with the flowing sweetness of the ichor. They relax and quickly expire as the magical nature of the Elytra's sting takes ahold of the host in its gentle grasp. After the host moves on, the Elytra nests its eggs in the still warm shell of the host. There, the eggs warm and grow over a period of mere days, feeding on the giving flesh of the host. Soon after, the hatchlings emerge and stumble forward into the world.
Vralla was a little girl, beautiful and sweet-natured, beautiful and smart, beautiful and energetic. Everything that her parents had dreamed she would be. As perfect as she was, they could not help but have dreams for her. Her father, a bit of a social climber named Munthen, thought she would marry well, perhaps become a Princess of the Empire. Her mother, an insecure woman named Cinneta, thought she would reach greatness on her own, as a knight or a sorceress. As much as they wanted the very best for their daughter, they argued about what her fate would be, but both were wrong. Instead of growing up, she grew very ill.

The Temples told them to give up hope, and The Mages Guild told them that what afflicted Vralla was so rare, so deadly, that there was no cure. She was doomed to die, and soon.

When the great institutions of the Empire failed them, Munthen and Cinneta sought out the witches, the sorcerer hermits, and the other hidden, secret powers that lurk in the shadows of civilization.

'I can think of only one place you can go,' said an old herbalist they found in the most remote peaks of the Wrothgarian Mountains. 'The Mages Guild at Olenveld.'

'But we have already been to the Mages Guild,' protested Munthen. 'They couldn't help us.'

'Go to Olenveld,' the herbalist insisted. 'And tell no one that you're going there.'

It was not easy to find Olenveld, as it did not appear on any modern map. In a bookseller's in Skyrim, however, they found it in a historic book of cartography from the 2nd Era. In the yellowed pages, there was Olenveld, a city on an island in the northern coast, a day's sail in summertide from Winterhold.

Bundling their pale daughter against the chill of the ocean wind, the couple set sail, using the old map as their only guide. For nearly two days, they were at sea, circling the same position, wondering if they were the victim of a cruel trick. And then they saw it.

In the mist of crashing waves were twin crumbled statues framing the harbor, long forgotten Gods or heroes. The ships within were half-sunk, rotten shells along the docks. Munthen brought his ship in, and the three walked into the deserted island city.

Taverns with broken windows, a plaza with a dried-up well, shattered palaces and fire-blackened tenements, barren shops and abandoned stables, all desolate, all still, but for the high keening ocean wind that whistled through the empty places. And gravestones. Every road and alley was lined, and crossed, and crossed again with memorials to the dead.

Munthen and Cinneta looked at one another. The chill they felt had little to do with the wind. Then they looked at Vralla, and continued on to their goal - the Mages Guild of Olenveld.
Candlelight glistened through the windows of the great dark building, but it brought them little relief to know that someone was alive in the island of death. They knocked on the door, and steeled themselves against whatever horror they might face within.

The door was opened by a rather plump middle-aged Nord woman with frizzy blond hair. Standing behind her, a meek-looking bald Nord about her age, a shy teenage Breton couple, still very pimply and awkward, and a very old, apple-cheeked Breton man who grinned with delight at the visitors.

'Oh, my goodness,' said the Nord woman, all afluster. 'I thought my ears must be fooling me when I heard that door a-knockin'. Come in, come in, it's so cold!'

The three were ushered in the door, and they were relieved to find that the Guild did not look abandoned in the least. It was well swept, well lit, and cheerfully decorated. The group fell into introductions. The inhabitants of the Guildhouse in Olenveld were two families, the Nords Jalmar and Nette, and the Bretons Lywel, Rosalyn, and old Wynster. They were friendly and accommodating, immediately bringing some mulled wine and bread while Munthen and Cinneta explained to them what they were doing there, and what the healers and herbalists had said about Vralla.

'So, you see,' said Cinneta, tearfully. 'We didn't think we'd find the Mages Guild in Olenveld, but now that we have, please, you're our last hope.'

The five strangers also had tears in their eyes. Nette wept particularly noisily.

'Oh, you've been through too, too much,' the Nord woman bawled. 'Of course, we'll help. Your little girl will be right as rain.'

'It is fair to tell you,' said Jalmar, more stoically, though he clearly was also touched by the tale. 'This is a Guildhouse, but we are not Mages. We took this building because it was abandoned and it serves our purposes since the Exodus. We are Necromancers.'

'Necromancers?' Cinneta quivered. How could these nice people be anything so horrible?

'Yes, dear,' Nette smiled, patting her hand. 'I know. We have a bad reputation, I'm afraid. Never was very good, and now that well-meaning but foolish Archmagister Hannibal Traven -'

'May the Worm King eat his soul!' cried the old man quite suddenly and very viciously.

'Now, now, Wynster,' said the teenage girl Rosalyn, blushing and smiling at Cinneta apologetically. 'I'm sorry about him. He's usually very sweet-natured.'

'Well, of course, he's right, Mannimarco will have the last say in the matter,' Jalmar said. 'But right now, it's all very, well, awkward. When Traven officially banned the art, we had to go into hiding. The only other option was to abandon it altogether, and that's just foolish, though there are many who have done it.'
'Not many people know about Olenveld anymore since Tiber Septim used it as his own personal graveyard,' said Lywel. 'Took us a week to find it again. But it's perfect for us. Lots of dead bodies, you know ...'

'Lywel!' Rosalyn admonished him. 'You're going to scare them!

'Sorry,' Lywel grinned sheepishly.

'I don't care what you do here,' said Munthen sternly. 'I just want to know what you can do for my daughter.'

'Well,' said Jalmar with a shrug. 'I guess we can make it so she doesn't die and is never sick again.'

Cinneta gasped, 'Please! We'll give you everything we have!'

'Nonsense,' said Nette, picking up Vralla in her big, beefy arms. 'Oh, what a beautiful girl. Would you like to feel better, little sweetheart?'

Vralla nodded, wearily.

'You stay here,' Jalmar said. 'Rosalyn, I'm sure we have something better than bread to offer these nice folks.'

Nette started to carry Vralla away, but Cinneta ran after her. 'Wait, I'm coming too.'

'Oh, I'm sure you would, but it'd ruin the spell, dear,' Nette said. 'Don't worry about a thing. We've done this dozens of times.'

Munthen puts his arms around his wife, and she relented. Rosalyn hurried off to the kitchen and brought some roast fowl and more mulled wine for them. They sat in silence and ate.

Wynster shuddered suddenly. 'The little girl has died.'

'Oh!' Cinneta gasped.

'What in Oblivion do you mean?!' Munthen cried.

'Wynster, was that really necessary?' Lywel scowled at the old man, before turning to Munthen and Cinneta. 'She had to die. Necromancy is not about curing a disease, it's about resurrection, total regeneration, transforming the whole body, not just the parts that aren't working now.'

Munthen stood up, angrily. 'If those maniacs killed her -'

'They didn't,' Rosalyn snapped, her shy eyes now showing fire. 'Your daughter was on her last breath when she came in here, anyone could see that. I know that this is hard, horrible even, but I won't have you call that sweet couple who are only trying to help you, 'maniacs."

Cinneta burst into tears, 'But she's going to live now? Isn't she?'
'Oh yes,' Lywel said, smiling broadly.

'Oh, thank you, thank you,' Cinneta burst into tears. 'I don't know what we would have done -'

'I know how you feel,' said Rosalyn, patting Wynster's hand fondly. 'When I thought we were going to lose him, I was willing to do anything, just like you.'

Cinneta smiled. 'How old is your father?'

'My son,' Rosalyn corrected her. 'He's six.'

From the other room came the sound of tiny footsteps.

'Vralla, go give your parents a big hug,' said Jalmar.

Munthen and Cinneta turned, and the screaming began.
See vol. I.
Introduction:

Writing the biography of anyone is a challenge. Usually the problem lies in assessing one's sources, comparing the prejudices of one chronicle versus another versus another. Waughin Jarth, I have been told, in writing his well-regarded series on the Wolf Queen of Solitude used over a hundred contemporary narratives. I cannot complain about my task having a similar issue.

There is but one record of the man called Topal the Pilot, the earliest known Aldmer explorer of Tamriel. Only four short verse fragments of the epic "Father of the Niben" have survived to present day, but they offer an interesting if controversial look at the Middle Merethic Era when Topal the Pilot may have sailed the seas around Tamriel.

Though "Father of the Niben" is the only written record of Topal the Pilot's voyages, it is not the only proof of his existence. Among the treasures of the great Crystal Tower of Summerset Isle are his crude but fascinating maps, his legacy to all Tamriel.

The translation of the Aldmeri Udhendra Nibenu, "Father of the Niben," is my own, and I accept that other scholars may disagree with some of my choice of words. I cannot promise my translation lives up to the beauty of the original: I have only strived for simple coherence.

Fragment One:

Second ship, the Pasquiniel, manned by pilot Ilío, was to follow the southern pointing Waystone; and the third, the Niben, manned by pilot Topal, was to follow the north-east pointing waystone; the orders from the Crystal Tower, they were to sail forth for Eighty moons and then return to tell. Only Niben returned to Firsthold, laden high with Gold and spice and fur and strange creatures, Dead and live. Though, alas, Old Ehlnofey Topal never found, he Told the tales of the lands he had visited to the Wonderment of all. For sixty-six days and nights, he sailed, over crashing Waves of dire intent, past whirlpools, through Mist that burned like fire, until he reached the Mouth of a great bay and he landed on a Sun-kissed meadow of gentle dells.
As he and his men rested, there came a fearsome howl,
And hideous orcs streamed forth from the murky
Glen, cannibal teeth clotted with gore

For centuries, strange crystalline balls were unearthed at the sites of ancient Aldmer
shipwrecks and docks, peculiar artifacts of the Merethic and Dawn Eras that puzzled
archeologists until it was demonstrated that each had a tendency to rotate on its axis in a
specific direction. There were three varieties, one that pointed southward, one that pointed
northeast, and one that point northwest.

It is not understood how they work, but they seemed attuned to particular lines of power.
These are the "waystones" of the fragment, which each of the pilots used to point their craft in
the direction they were assigned to go. A ship with a name not mentioned in the fragment
took his vessel north-west, towards Thras and Yokuda. The Pasquiniel took the southern
waystone, and must have sailed down toward Pyandonea. Topal and his north-east waystone
found the mainland of Tamriel.

It is clear from this fragment what the three ships were assigned to do - find a passage back to
Old Ehlnofey so that the Aldmer now living in Summerset could learn what became of their
old homeland. As this book is intended to be a study of Topal the Pilot, there is scarcely room
to dedicate to different theories of the Aldmeri exodus from Old Ehlnofey.

If I were using this poem as my only source, I would have to agree with the scholars who
believe in the tradition that several ships left Old Ehlnofey and were caught in a storm. Those
who survived found their way to Summerset Isle, but without their waystones, they did not
know what direction their homeland was. After all, what other explanation is there for three
ships heading in three opposite directions to find a place?

Naturally, only one of the ships returned, and we do not know if either or both of the other
two found Old Ehlnofey, or perished at sea or at the hands of the ancient Pyandoneans, Sload,
or Yokudans. We must assume, unless we think the Aldmer particularly idiotic, that at least
one of them must have been pointing in the right direction. It may well have even been Topal,
and he simply did not go north-east far enough.

So, Topal setting sail from Firsthold heads north-east, which coincidentally is the longest one
can travel along the Abecean Sea without striking land of any kind. Had he traveled straight
east, he would have struck the mainland somewhere in what is now the Colovian West of
Cyrodiil in a few weeks. Had he traveled south-east, he might have reached the hump of
Valenwood in a few days. But our pilot, judging by his own and our modern maps, sailed in a
straight line north-east, through the Abecean sea, and into the Iliac Bay, before touching
ground somewhere near present day Anticlere in two months time.

The rolling verdant hills of southern High Rock are unmistakable in this verse, recognizable
to anyone who has been there. The question, of course, is what is to be made of this apparent
reference to orcs occupying the region? Tradition has it that the orcs were not born until after
the Aldmer had settled the mainland, that they sprung up as a distinct race following the
famous battle between Trinimac and Boethiah at the time of Resdayn.
It is possible that the tradition is wrong. Perhaps the orcs were an aboriginal tribe predating the Aldmeri colonization. Perhaps these were a cursed folk -- "Orsimer" in the Aldmeris, the same word for "Orc" - of a different kind, whose name was to be given the orcs in a different era. It is regrettable that the fragment ends here, for more clues to the truth are undoubtedly lost.

What's missing between the first fragment and the second is appreciable. It must be more than eighty months that have passed, because Topal is on the opposite side of mainland Tamriel now, attempting to sail south-west to return to Firsthold, after his failure at finding Old Ehlnofey.

Fragment Two:

No passage westward could be found in the steely cliffs
That jutted up like giant's jaw, so the Niben
Sailed south.
As it passed an sandy, forested island that promised
Sanctuary and peace, the crew cheered in joy.
Then exultation turned to terror as a great shadow rose
From the trees on leathered wings like a unfurling Cape.
The great bat lizard was large as the ship, but good pilot
Topal merely raised his bow, and struck it in its Head.
As it fell, he asked his Bo'sun, "Do you think it's dead?"
And before it struck the white-bearded waves, he
Shot once more its heart to be certain.
And so for another forty days and six, the Niben sailed south.

We can see that in addition to Topal's prowess as a navigator, cartographer, survivalist, and raconteur, he is a master of archery. It may be poetic license, of course, but we do have archeological proof that the Merethic Aldmer were sophisticated archers. Their bows of layers of wood and horn drawn by silver silk thread are beautiful, and still, I have heard experts say, millennia later, very deadly.

It is tempting to imagine it a dragon, but the creature that Topal faces at the beginning of this fragment sounds like an ancestor of the cliffracer of present day Morrowind. The treacherous cliff coastline sounds like the region around Necrom, and the island of Gorne may be where the nest of the "bat lizard" is. No creatures like that exist in eastern Morrowind to my knowledge at the present day.

Fragment Three:

The fetid, evil swamp lands and their human lizards
Retreated to the east, and Topal and his men's
Hearts were greatly gladdened by the sight of
Diamond blue, pure, sweet ocean.
For three days, they sailed in great cheer north-west
Where Firsthold beckoned them, but hope died
In horror, as land, like a blocking shield rose.
Before them.
Topal the Pilot was sore wroth, and consulted he
The maps he had faithfully drawn, to see
Whether best to go south where the
Continent must end, or take the river that
Snaked through a passage north.
"North!" cried he to his sad men. "North we go
Now! Fear not, north!"

Tracing Topal's movements, we see that he has skirted the edge of Morrowind and delved into southern Blackmarsh, seemingly determined to follow his waystone as best as he can. The swamp he is leaving is probably near present day Gideon. Knowing what we now know about Topal's personality, we can understand his frustration in the bay between Black Marsh and Elsweyr.

Here is a man who follows his orders explicitly, and knows that he should have been going south-east through river ways to reach Firsthold. Looking at his maps, we can see that he attempted to find passages through, as he has mapped out the Inner Sea of Morrowind, and several of the swampy tributaries of Black Marsh, no doubt being turned away by the disease and fierce Argonian tribes that dissuaded many other explorers after him.

With a modern map of Tamriel in hand, we can see that he makes the wrong choice in electing to go north-east instead of pushing southward. He could not have known then that what he perceived to be the endless mainland was only a jutting peninsula. He only knew that he had traveled too far southward already, and so he made a smart but incorrect decision to go up the river.

It is ironic that this great miscalculation would today bear his mark of history. The bay he thought was an endless ocean is now known as Topal Bay, and the river that took him astray shares the name of his boat, the Niben River.

Fragment Four:

The cat demons of four legs and two ran the river's
Length, always keeping the boat in their
Green-eyed sight, hissing, and spitting, and
Roaring with rage.
But the sailors never had to brave the shores, for
Fruit trees welcomed them, dropping their
Arms down to the river's edge as if to
Embrace the mer, and the men took the
Fruit quickly before the cats could pounce.
For eleven days, they traveled north, until they came
To a crystalline lake, and eight islands of
Surpassing beauty and peace.
Brilliant flightful creatures of glorious colors
Greeted them in Aldmeri language,
Making the mer wonder, until they
Understood they were only calling back
The word they were speaking without
Understanding it, and then the sailors
Laughed.
Topal the Pilot was enchanted with the islands
And the feathered men who lived there.
There the Niben stayed for a moon, and the bird
Men learned how to speak their own words,
And with taloned feet, to write.
In joy for their new knowledge, they made Topal
Their lord, giving him their islands for the
Gift.
Topal said he would return someday, but first he
Must find the passage east to Firsthold, so
Far away.

This last fragment is bittersweet for a number of reasons.

We know that this strange, friendly feathered people the Pilot encounters will be lost - in fact, this poem is the only one where mention is made of the bird creatures of Cyrodiil. The literacy that Topal gives them is evidently not enough to save them from their eventual fate, likely at the hands of the "cat demons," who we may assume are ancient Khajiiti.

We know that Topal and his crew never find a route from the eight islands which are the modern day Imperial City through to the Iliac Bay. His maps tell the tale where this lost poem cannot.

We see his hand as he traces his route up the Niben to Lake Rumare; and, after attempting a few tributaries which do not lead him where he wants to go, we can imagine Topal's frustration -- and that of his long-suffering crew -- as they return back down the Niben to Topal Bay.

There, they evidently discovered their earlier mistake, for we see that they pass the peninsula of Elsweyr. Eventually they traveled along its coastline, past the shores of Valenwood, and eventually home. Usually epic tales end with a happy ending, but this one begins with one, and the means to which it was accomplished is lost.

Besides the extraordinary bird creatures of present day Cyrodiil, we have caught glimpses of ancient orcs (perhaps), ancient cliff-racers, ancient Argonians, and in this fragment, ancient Khajiit. Quite a history in a few lines of simple verse, all because a man failed to find his home, and took all the wrong turns to retrace his steps back.
[49] Feyfolken*

See vol. I.
Brother, I still call you brother for we share our bonds of blood, tested but unbroken by hatred. Even if I am murdered, which seems inevitable now, know that, brother. You and I are not innocents, so our benedictions of mutual enmity is not tragedy, but horror. This state of silent, shadowed war, of secret poisons and sleeping men strangled in their beds, of the sudden arrow and the artful dagger, has no end that I can see. No possibility for peace. I see the shadows in the room move though the flame of my candle is steady. I know the signs that I ..."

This note was found where it had fallen beneath the floorboards of an abandoned house in the Nordic village of Jallenheim in the 358th year of the second era. It was said that a quiet cobbler lived in the house, whispered by some to be a member of the dread Morag Tong, the assassin's guild outlawed throughout Tamriel thirty-four years previously. The house itself was perfectly in order, as if the cobbler had simply vanished. There was a single drop of blood on the note.

The Dark Brotherhood had paid a call.

This note and others like it are rare. Both the Morag Tong and its hated child, the Dark Brotherhood, are scrupulous about leaving no evidence behind - their members know that to divulge secrets of their orders is a lethal infraction. This obviously makes the job of the historian seeking to trace their histories very difficult.

The Morag Tong, according to most scholars, had been a facet of the culture of Morrowind almost since its beginning. After all, the history of Resdayn, the ancient name of Morrowind, is rife with assassination, blood sacrifice, and religious zealotry, hallmarks of the order. It is commonly said that the Morag Tong then as now murdered for the glory of the Daedra Prince Mephala, but common assumptions are rarely completely accurate. It is my contention that the earliest form of the Tong additionally worshipped an even older and more malevolent deity than Mephala. As terrifying as that Prince of Oblivion is, they had and have reverence for a far greater evil.

Writs of assassination from the first era offer rare glimpses into the Morag Tong's earliest philosophy. They are as matter of fact as current day writs, but many contain snatches of poetry which have perplexed our scholars for hundreds of years. "Lisping sibilant hisses,' 'Ether's sweet sway,' 'Rancid kiss of passing sin,' and other strange, almost insane insertions into the writs were codes for the name of the person to be assassinated, his or her location, and the time at which death was to come. They were also direct references to the divine spirit called Sithis.

Evidence of the Morag Tong's expertise in assassination seems scarcely necessary. The few instances of someone escaping a murder attempt by them are always remarkable and rare, proving that they were and are patient, capable murderers who use their tools well. A
fragment of a letter found among the effects of a well-known armorer has been sealed in our vaults for some time. It was likely penned by an unknown Tong assassin ordering weapons for his order, and offers some illumination into what they looked for in their blades, as well the mention of Vounoura, the island where the Tong sent its agents in retirement --

'I congratulate you on your artistry, and the balance and heft of your daggers. The knife blade is whisper thin, elegantly wrought, but impractical. It must have a bolder edge, for arteries, when cut, have a tendencies to self seal, preventing adequate blood loss. I will be leaving Vounoura in two weeks time to inspect your new tools, hoping they will be more satisfactory.'

The Morag Tong spread quietly throughout Tamriel in the early years of the second era, worshipping Mephala and Sithis with blood, as they had always done.

When the Morag Tong assassinated the Emperor Reman in the year 2920 of the first era, and his successor, Potentate Versidae-Shae in the 324th year of the second era, the assassins so long in the shadows were suddenly thrust into the light. They had become brazen, drunk with murder, literally painting the words 'MORAG TONG' on the wall in the Potentate's blood.

The Morag Tong was instantly and unanimously outlawed in all corners of Tamriel, with the exception of its home province of Morrowind. There they continued to operate with the blessings of the Houses, apparently cutting off all contact with their satellite brothers to the west. There they continue their quasi-legal existence, accepting black writs and murdering with impunity.

Most scholars believe that the birth of the Dark Brotherhood, the secular, murder-for-profit order of assassins, was as a result of a religious schism in the Morag Tong. Given the secrecy of both cults, it is difficult to divine the exact nature of it, but certain logical assumptions can be made.

In order to exist, the Morag Tong must have appealed to the highest power in Morrowind, which at that time, the Second Era, could only have been the Tribunal of Almalexia, Sotha Sil, and Vivec. Mephala, whom the Tong worshipped with Sithis, was said to have been the Anticipation of Vivec. Is it not logical to assume that in exchange for toleration of their continued existence, the Tong would have ceased their worship of Mephala in exchange for the worship of Vivec?

The Morag Tong continues, as we know, to worship Sithis. The Dark Brotherhood is not considered a religious order by most, merely a secular organization, offering murder for gold. I have seen, however, proof positive in the form of writs to the Brotherhood that Sithis is still revered above all.

So where, the reader, asks, is the cause for the schism? How could a silent war have begun, when both groups are so close? Both assassin's guilds, after all, worship Sithis. And yet, a figure emerges from history who should give those with this assumption pause.

The Night Mother.

Who the Night Mother is, where she came from, what her functions are, no one knows. Carlovac Townway in his generally well-researched historical fiction 2920: The Last Year of
the First Era tries to make her the leader of the Morag Tong. But she is never historically associated with the Tong, only the Dark Brotherhood.

The Night Mother, my dear friend, is Mephala. The Dark Brotherhood of the west, unfettered by the orders of the Tribunal, continue to worship Mephala. They may not call her by her name, but the daedra of murder, sex, and secrets is their leader still. And they did not, and still do not, to this day, forgive their brethren for casting her aside.

The cobbler who met his end in the second era, who saw no end in the war between the Brotherhood and the Tong, was correct. In the shadows of the Empire, the Brothers of Death remain locked in combat, and they will likely remain that way forever.
See vol. I.
[52] The Firsthold Revolt*

See vol. I.
[53] The Five Songs of King Wulfharth*

See vol. I.
[54] The Five Tenets

The Five Tenets

Tenet 1: Never dishonor the Night Mother. To do so is to invoke the Wrath of Sithis.

Tenet 2: Never betray the Dark Brotherhood or its secrets. To do so is to invoke the Wrath of Sithis.

Tenet 3: Never disobey or refuse to carry out an order from a Dark Brotherhood superior. To do so is to invoke the Wrath of Sithis.

Tenet 4: Never steal the possessions of a Dark Brother or Dark Sister. To do so is to invoke the Wrath of Sithis.

Tenet 5: Never kill a Dark Brother or Dark Sister. To do so is to invoke the Wrath of Sithis.
Followers of the Gray Fox

We are the Fingers of the Fox, the Children of the Shadows. More commonly we are known as the Thieves Guild.

There are but three rules for followers of the Gray Fox:

First, never steal from another member of the guild.

Second, never kill anyone on the job. This is not the Dark Brotherhood. Animals and monsters can be slain if necessary.

Third, don't steal from the poor. The peasants and beggars are under the personal protection of the Gray Fox, particularly in the Imperial City Waterfront.

Breaking any of the three rules means expulsion from the Thieves Guild. If you commit murder, you must pay the blood price to rejoin the guild. Blood price is for each person slain. You can pay any of the guild Doyen.

The Doyen are the hands and eyes of the guildmaster. You take your orders from them. You get your favors from them. They can pay off the Imperial judges to remove your crimes -- for a small fee, of course.

Our guildmaster is the Gray Fox. We don't talk about him in public. However, we make sure that most folks think he is just a myth.

We're thieves, not masons or scribes. Each member steals at his own discretion. The guild neither helps nor hinders with a burglary. However, you will find that you can only sell stolen property to one of our guild fences. Other merchants won't take hot merchandise.

You won't be considered for promotion in the Thieves Guild unless you have sold enough stolen property to the fences. The higher in the guild you rise, the more stolen property you need to have fenced.

If you should be called to help the Gray Fox in some special way, remember that the best source of information is the beggars. Their eyes and ears seem to be everywhere. However, be prepared to spend a little coin. They won't tell you anything for free. At least not anything true.

The guild takes care of its own. The Doyen can remove the bounty from any guild member. However, it takes money to bribe the guards. The guild member must pay the Doyen half of his total fines to get rid of them.
The life cycle of the Grummite is rather unique. They appear to be a deviant version of frogs and may even be distantly related to Argonians, although I have no direct evidence of that. Like the humble frog, the Grummite is born from eggs found in or near water. The eggs hatch into tiny pollywogs, no bigger than my hand.

The pollywog grows quickly, and inside of a few weeks grows limbs and changes into an amphibious Baliwog. The Baliwog will live for up to two years, growing to be larger than a man in both length and weight.

Eventually, the adult Baliwog will feel the urge to seek out deep water and bury itself in the mud. It hibernates there for many months, gestating into a Grummite. I have been unable to determine the exact time of gestation. The Grummite emerges from the mud fully grown.

New Grummites never leave the water and are consumed with the urge to mate. Females leave the water to hang their eggs. They are hung over the water to keep them out of reach of aquatic predators, while still allowing the pollywogs to fall into the water when they hatch.

Once a female has laid her eggs, she turns her back on them. She will live her life more on land than in the water, although never far from it. The male's mating urges subside after six months to a year. He too takes to the land and like the female does nothing to protect his eggs.

Adult Grummites have a sort of primitive culture. Kraften Highbrow maintains that they are cunning craftsmen that make jewelry and weapons, even mining ore. This is plainly ridiculous. Although I have not determined the source of their tools and adornments, I am certain that they trade with other civilized races for such things.

As for tales of magic casting Grummites, that is even more ludicrous. While their primitive brains are surprisingly large, they clearly do not have the intelligence to learn the arcane crafts. I do not know how Kraften managed to train his pet Grummite to cast spells, but I assure all my readers that it is a trick of some sort.
[57] Frontier, Conquest, and Accommodation*

See vol. I.
Often overlooked by aspiring mages, Alchemy is a time-honored, rewarding discipline that can change the lives of those who master it. It is difficult, and often dangerous, to advance one's knowledge of the materials used in alchemical formulas, but continued study and hard work will, in the end, reward the alchemist greatly.

Before success can be achieved, or even attempted, the beginning alchemist must understand the basic principles behind his craft. Many items in our world, mostly organic in nature, can be broken down into more fundamental essences with magickal properties. The more skilled the Alchemist, the more properties of an ingredient that can be harnessed. Combining the essences of two or more ingredients can result in the creation of a potion, which anyone may then drink. (Legend has it that a truly great Alchemist can brew potions from a single ingredient, a feat well beyond the capabilities of most.)

The Alchemist's potion can have several effects, depending on the ingredients used, and not all effects are beneficial. In many cases, recipes result in a potion with a mix of positive and negative effects; it is up to the Alchemist to determine which recipes yield the best results. (It is worth noting that potions can be created to have only negative effects and be used as poisons. This practice is not recommended by the author, and this text shall not discuss such potions further.)

Wortcraft

Wortcraft is, in fact, amateur Alchemy. Eating an ingredient requires grinding it against the teeth, which occasionally releases its simplest essence and results in a fleeting effect on the eater. Wortcraft never has as strong a result as a potion created using the proper tools.

An Alchemist's Tools

The mortar and pestle is the Alchemist's most important and essential tool. Without it, no ingredient can be correctly prepared for use in a potion. The budding alchemist is advised to keep a mortar and pestle on hand at all times, and become comfortable with its use early on. The simple grinding of an ingredient is the most fundamental step in brewing potions. When properly ground, the petals of the Redwort flower yield a powder that can, when mixed correctly with another ingredient such as ginseng, create a potion to cure poisons. (This is one formula that many alchemists are quick to learn and retain, as mistakes in potion mixing often require its use.)

The advanced Alchemist has other tools at his disposal to improve the quality of his potions. A Retort can be employed to purify the mixture, improving the positive effects of a potion. Washing the mixture through an Alembic helps to distill the potion, reducing any negative effects, and a Calcinator can be used to burn away impurities in the mixture, increasing the
potency of all the potion's effects. While these apparatus are not necessary to create potions, it is advised that they be used whenever possible.

Ingredient Combination

A potion is only as good as its ingredients. Only those with identical effects may be combined to make a potion; up to four ingredients may be successfully used in a single potion.

As the Alchemist gains skill in preparing ingredients, new properties may be discovered and can be used in creating potions. While this can be an exciting time, expanding the Alchemist's repertoire, he should take care to check carefully which effects his potions will contain when he is done brewing. Many established recipes may have new results, not all of which are beneficial.
[59] Galerion The Mystic*

See vol. I.
[60] A Game at Dinner*

See vol. I.
[61] Glories and Laments Among the Ayleid Ruins

Glories and Laments
Among the Ayleid Ruins
By Alexandre Hetrand

Having arrived at Gottlesfont Priory, halfway on the Gold Road between Skingrad and the Imperial City, I resolved to make a side trip to view the magnificent ruins of Ceyatatar, or "Shadow of the Fatherwoods" in the ancient Ayleid tongue. After many hours of difficult travel through tangled hawthorn hells and limberlosts, I was suddenly struck dumb by the aspect of five pure white columns rising from a jade-green mound of vines to perfect V-shaped arches and graceful capitals towering above the verdant forest growth. This spectacle caused me to meditate on the lost glories of the past, and the melancholy fate of high civilizations now poking like splinter shards of bone from the green-grown tumulus of time-swept obscurity.

Within the forest tangle I discovered an entrance leading down into the central dome of a great underground edifice once dedicated to Magnus, the God of Sight, Light, and Insight. Dimly lit by the faded power of its magical pools, the shattered white walls of the enclosure shimmered with a cold blue light.

The marble benches of the central plaza faced out across the surrounding waters to tall columns and sharp arches supporting the high dome. From the central island, stately bridges spanned the still pools to narrow walkways behind the columns, with broad vaulted avenues and limpid canals leading away through ever-deepening gloom into darkness. Reflected in the pools were the tumbled columns, collapsed walls, and riotous root and vine growth thriving the dark half-light of the magical fountains.

The ancient Ayleids recognized not the four elements of modern natural philosophy -- earth, water, air, and fire -- but the four elements of High Elf religion -- earth, water, air, and light. The Ayleids considered fire to be but a weak and corrupt form of light, which Ayleid philosophers identified with primary magical principles. Thus their ancient subterranean temples and sanctuaries were lit by lamps, globes, pools, and fountains of purest magic.

It was by these ancient, faded, but still active magics that I knelt and contemplated the departed glories of the long-dead Ayleid architects. Gazing through the glass-smooth reflections of the surrounding pools, I could see, deep below, the slow pulse, the waxing and waning of the Welkynd stones.

The chiefest perils of these ruins to the explorer are the cunning and deadly mechanisms devised by the Ayleids to torment and confound those would invade their underground sanctuaries. What irony that after these many years, these devices should still stand vigilant against those who would admire the works of the Ayleids. For it is clear... these devices were crafted in vain. They did not secure the Ayleids against their true enemies, which were not the slaves who revolted and overthrew their cruel masters, nor the were they the savage beast peoples who learned the crafts owar and magic from their Ayleid masters. No, it was the
arrogant pride of their achievements, their smug self-assurance that their empire would last forever, that doomed them to fail and fade into obscurity.
[62] The Gold Ribbon of Merit*

See vol. I.
[63] Guides

[63.1] Guide to Anvil

ALESSIA OTTUS'
GUIDE TO ANVIL

Sweet Dibella, Lady of Love! Bless us and our Children!
My name is Alessia Ottus, and I'd like to tell you all about Anvil.

The seat of Anvil County is by the sea, and at first glance, is very pretty, but when you examine it closely, turns out to be quite unpleasant. The water views are charming, but on the docks and in the harbor district outside of town you will find many sailors and tramps and dirty persons of little worth. Castle Anvil is clean and well-ordered, and within the town walls, some houses are bright and cheerful, but others are derelict and abandoned, or shabby and neglected, with plaster fallen in patches from the stonework, and lunatics and drunkards may be encountered everywhere.

* Castle Anvil *

The ruler of Anvil is Countess Millona Umbranox. Her husband, Corvus Umbranox, disappeared many years ago, and most persons would agree that Her Ladyship is better off without him, for he was a light and frivolous person, and given to loose and riotous behavior likely to promote scandal. The Countess herself is a righteous and godly woman, and an excellent ruler, well-loved by the people. If only she could compel her Town Guard to drive the seamen, low-lifes, loafers, and thieves from Anvil's streets, Anvil might be a more tolerable place to live.

* Districts of Anvil *

Consider the five districts of Anvil. Castle Anvil lies outside the town walls, south of town, overlooking the harbor, and is reached by gate from Chapelgate. Within the town walls are three districts: Chapelgate in the east, Westgate in the west, and Guildgate between Chapelgate and Westgate. Harborside lies outside the town walls, south of town, and is reached by gate from Westgate district.

* Chapelgate *

A more beautiful chapel may not be seen in all Cyrodiil. A quiet garden for meditation with a fine statue of Dibella lies between the chapel and the town wall, and across from the chapel is a lovely garden and covered arcade where worshippers are protected from the elements. Regretably, the people of Anvil seem little inclined to appreciate these advantages, and are seldom seen worshipping in the chapel. Whether this is the fault of the primate, who is a vain
and shallow woman, or the Countess, who does little to encourage regular chapel worship by her example, I am unable to judge.

* Guildgate *

The most prosperous part of Anvil is entered by Guildgate, or Main Gate, or North Gate. Here side by side may be seen the handsomest and ugliest of Anvil buildings. The guilds are kept clean and in good repair, and both Mages Guild and Fighters Guild are unusually ambitious and industrious by Cyrodiil's common standard. The head of the Mages Guild, Carahil, is a scholar of good reputation and an outspoken enemy of necromancy, summoning, and the dark arts. The Fighters Guild here is well-staffed and active, and shows no sign of the fecklessness and poor morale of chapters elsewhere in Cyrodiil. However, next to the Mages Guild is a ruin, long boarded-up and abandoned, and an prominent eyesore.

* Westgate *

This is the residential district of Anvil. The houses here are shabby and ill-kept. The people are untidy and dull, with the exception of Anvil's famous citizen, the Argonian authoress, Quillweave, who produces wretched books celebrating the misadventures and schemes of the lower and criminal classes. This person does her race no favor by confirming the prejudices of many who consider Argonians to be ungodly, dishonest, and worthless, and little better than beasts.

* Harborside *

The docks are rotten and in ill-repair, and all manner of smells issue forth from the holds of ships and ramshackled warehouses. Shiftless persons gather here to bask in the sun, gossip, chatter, and plot how to beg or steal gold for wine and ale. Here a good woman named Mirabelle Monet runs a house for homeless sailors, but, I'm sorry to say, her mistaken tender-heartedness and charity only encourages malingering and drunkenness. Instead, she should urge these wicked and idle men to improve themselves through industry and the teachings of the Nine. There is, however, a very appealing lighthouse south of the harbor, from which one may contemplate a distant and less-disagreeable view of Anvil's castle, town and its harbor setting.

May the Nine guard and guide you!
Mara, Mother Mild! Make us hale and hearty! My name is Alessia Ottus, and I'd like to tell you all about Bravil.

Bravil is the dark grate of the sewer drain where foul and unappetising debris collects. It is the poorest and dirtiest of Cyrodiil's towns, the oldest and shabbiest, the most plagued by criminals, drunkards, and skooma-eaters, and most popular with beastfolk and other foreigners. All Bravil lacks is a coven of Daedra worshippers to make it the perfect pit of villainy... and many rumors suggest that even more evil and depraved worships are practiced in secret by Bravil's wicked heathens.

This town is gray, grim, and depressing. The climate is damp and the atmosphere foul because of the fetid channels of the Larsius River that serve as Bravil's sewers, and because of the rank swamps of the lowland margins of the Niben Bay, where insects and diseases breed in abundance.

The architecture of the town is remarkable for its unequalled ugliness and disorder. The houses, shops, and guilds are built from cracked and splintered timbers soft from rot and green with mold and mildew. It is a pity that they do not fall down, for they might be rebuilt in a more pleasing manner, but rather they continue to grow on top of one another like mounded middens, reaching lofty heights of three and four stories. Beggars and thieves lounge indolently on balconies overhanging the streets and dump their refuse directly upon the unfortunate passers-by. Whole families live in teetering shacks on the tops of the buildings in unimaginable squalor.

Bravil's people are dirty and dishonest. They live little better than goblins in caves, squatting in filthy, tumbledown shacks. The town citizens are divided into two classes: the smugglers, skooma-eaters, bandits, thieves, and murderers, and the wretched beggars and fools that these criminals prey upon.

Bravil is ruled by crimelords, and the town guard lives in the pockets of the skooma kingpins. You will not be surprised to find there are many Argonians and Khajiit in this miserable place, since Elsweyr and Black Marsh are close by, but you may be surprised to find many Orcs here. However, beastfolk are comfortable in the company of other beastfolk, as are thieves and brutes naturally drawn to the company of one another.

Bravil is not organized into orderly districts. However, some landmarks may serve to orient the unfortunate visitor. The castle is approached by rickety bridges over the river to the east. The chapel is to the west. The shops and guilds are arranged in a line with their backs to the east wall and the channels of the river. Between the chapel and the shops and guilds are Bravil's ramshackle slums and tenements.
The castle is the only sturdy, stone-built dwelling in Bravil. It is nowhere as dirty and ill-furnished as the timber shacks of the people, but it is still little better than the houses of the poorest paupers in Anvil or the Imperial City. Count Regulus Terentius, from a respectable family, once a noted tournament champion, is now widely recognized by his people as a drunken wastrel and ne'er-do-well. And his son, Gellius Terentius, is a strutting peacock who cultivates the society of crimelords and skooma-eaters.

The chapel stonework is in poor repair and covered with mold and mildew. The graveyard is surrounded by a ramshackle, unpainted wooden fence, and the graves are untidy and neglected. The primate is a good servant of Mara, but she is unequal to the task of driving sin and wickedness from this Nine-forsaken town. The priestess is wise and well-liked by those few who visit the chapel, but most people never pass once through the chapel's doors, except to beg and steal.

The inns are a disgrace. It is common to step over prostrate drunks and through pools of sick upon entering, and idlers, gamblers, and pickpockets swarm in the darkness and prey upon unwary travelers. A visitor foolish enough to sleep in these places should expect to be murdered in his bed.

The guilds, by contrast, are relatively clean, dry, and quiet, and one forced by necessity to spend a night in Bravil might be justified in joining the Fighters Guild or the Mages Guild, despite their savage and godless ways, simply to be assured of a safe place to sleep.

The shops are no worse than any other feature of Bravil, and you may be more safe in them from assault or murder on account of the prodigious provisions merchants must take to protect themselves from thieves.

If you are forced by circumstances to visit Bravil, you will very soon wish to leave, and you will wish to watch your back as you leave, to be sure you are not followed by parades of bandits and assassins.

Honor the Nine in prayer!
Father Talos, protect us all! My name is Alessia Ottus, and I'd like to tell you all about Bruma.

Bruma is understood to be a Nibenese county, but in truth it is more Nord than Nibenese, on account of its close proximity to the Skyrim border, and on account of the terrible cold and discomfort of its location high in the Jerall Mountains. Bruma is always cold and covered with snow, with braziers kept burning in every quarter to prevent the citizens from freezing to death. Everything is built in wood, since trees are so plentiful in the forests of the Jeralls, and even rich men live here in dark, dirty wooden huts. It is little wonder that Nords are such drunken heathen savages, for life is impossible in such a climate, and one might be tempted to drink into insensibility or sell one's soul to just to find sanctuary from the bitter cold and relentless wind.

Castle Bruma is cold and drafty, carelessly decorated, and dark with soot from the perpetually burning braziers. The smell of smoke and cinders is overpowering. The high ceilings are grand, but impossible to heat, and one is never able to get warm. The ancient layers of soot and filth encrusting the stonework makes it difficult to appreciate the exceptional stonecarving. Except in its stonework and grand scale, the castle is like the log huts of the people -- cold, dark, drafty, and dirty.

Countess Narina Carvain is a Nibenean Heartlander, a dutiful chapelgoer, and a respected ruler, though she is a cunning and ruthless negotiator, and has a reputation for sharp-dealing and treachery. Administration of the county is efficient and well-ordered, and a well-trained and aggressive town watch under command of a hard-nosed Nord captain insures that thieves and beggars are not very troublesome, though Nords are famous for drunkenness and rioting.

Access to the castle is through a gate west from the town into a courtyard. The shops, inns, guilds are located in the north, either on the western terrace near the castle gate, or below the terrace, north of the chapel. The chapel is the central feature of southern Bruma, with houses ranged along the inside of the walls along the east and south. The streets are cramped and barren, since few trees and plants can survive the cold, but the town is compact and quickly explored.

Bruma's Nibenean citizens faithfully observe chapel Sundas rituals, but the lower classes are unregenerate followers of the heathen Nord gods, and they keep to their own secret superstitions and uncivilized practices.

You will not be surprised to find you can purchase good quality weapons and armor here, for Nord smiths are famous for the quality of their wares. But you should not expect to be able to purchase books here, for Nords are ignorant and not fond of reading. The Fighters and Mages Guilds are poor and short-staffed, for no one wants to be posted to such a gray and cold land,
but at least the Mages Guild is kept good and warm (though I shrink from imagining what infernal engines are employed to produce and preserve that heat).

May the Nine bless and save you!
Arkay, bless my body and soul! My name is Alessia Ottus, and I'd like to tell you all about Cheydinhal.

The first impression of the visitor to Cheydinhal is of broad green parklands, graceful willows along the banks of the Corbolo, neatly groomed gardens and flowering shrubs. Cheydinhal looks prosperous, with clean, well-trimmed houses and neat stonework, ornamented with striking designs in glass, metal, and wood.

But what lurks beneath this pleasing appearance? Crime! Scandal! Corruption!

Cheydinhal is divided into three districts. To the north, on a hill, is the courtyard and inner keep of Castle Cheydinhal. A road runs east-west below the castle from East Gate to West Gate. The Corbolo River runs roughly north-south from this road, dividing southern Cheydinhal into two districts, Chapel in the east, and Market in the west. In Market District lie all the shops, inns, and guildhalls. In Chapel District are the Chapel itself and Cheydinhal's residences. Bridges span the Corbolo in the north and south, with the south bridges connecting upon a pretty little island park in the middle of the river.

Though Cheydinhal lies in the Nibenean East, its culture is shaped by the Dark Elf immigrants who emigrated here in the past half century from Morrowind. Many of these immigrants were fleeing Morrowind's rigid society and heathen Temple theocracy. In Cyrodiil they hoped to find the stimulating commercial atmosphere inspired by Zenithar's patronage.

One of these immigrants is now Count Cheydinhal. Andel Indarys was of House Hlaalu in Morrowind, but he came to Cheydinhal searching for greater opportunity. His sudden rise into the highest ranks of Cyrodilic nobility is hard to explain, and most old families of Cyrodiil rightly regard him as a presumptuous upstart. However, the discovery of the Count's wife, Lady Llathasa Indarys, badly battered and dead at the foot of the County Hall stairs immediately attracted scandal, and rumors of the Count's dissipation, rages and infidelities suggest a darker mystery behind her death.

The Chapel of Arkay in Cheydinhal is poorly attended. The Count sets a poor example; he never sets foot inside the chapel. But perhaps it is from fear of divine judgement that he avoids placing himself under the eyes of the Nine! Cheydinhal's primate, priest, and healer are godly people, and staunch professors of the faith, but the most honored and respected of the chapel's clerics is Errandil, the Living Saint of Arkay, a tireless crusader against the wicked practice of necromantic sorcery in the Mages Guild and the Imperial Battle College.

Both of Cheydinhal's inns appear respectable from the outside, but the Newlands Inn is owned by a wicked, profane Dark Elf ruffian, and the Cheydinhal Bridge Inn is owned by a dignified, devout Imperial matron, so I am sure you know which place will serve you good, reasonable food, and which will provide you with a safe, clean bed where you are unlikely to
be murdered for your purse. The owner-proprietor of Cheydinhal's bookstore is Mach-Na, an Argonian, and a ruder, more disagreeable creature I have never met. Nonetheless, his selection of books is excellent, and his prices reasonable.

The poorest of Cheydinhal's residences are bright and clean, with well-groomed grounds, and the citizens think it no inconvenience when you step in to admire their furniture and appointments (provided you do this at a decent hour!). However, be warned! Many of these residents seem respectable to all appearances, but no sooner do they open their mouths than they reveal themselves to be evil brutes, shocking and rude, and more likely to murder you and bury you in their basements as to speak a civil word to you. That many of these rough, unpleasant people are Orcs should be no surprise to you.

However, you will not wish to miss the house of Cheydinhal's most notable citizen, the celebrated painter, Rythe Lythandas. He is often hard at work in his studio, and not to be disturbed, but his wife is gracious and hospitable, and may be persuaded to show you those of his paintings which hang on his own walls.

Follow the Nine to Glory!
Praise Stendarr, the Nine, and all the Saints! My name is Alessia Ottus, and I'd like to tell you all about the town of Chorrol.

* Castle Chorrol *

Chorrol is the county seat of County Chorrol, and is ruled by Countess Arriana Valga, a very proper woman, and mother of the beautiful and virtuous Alessia Caro, Countess of Leyawiin.

Countess Arriana is a devout and righteous follower of Akatosh, and sets a fine example for her people by her devotions in the Chapel of Stendarr. Her husband, Count Charus Valga, was a staunch Defender of the Faith and follower of Stendarr, and his death in battle against the heathen Nord clansmen of Skyrim was greatly lamented by his people. Alessia Caro has been a good husband to Count Marius of Leyawiin, and a dutiful daughter, and she is often seen visiting Chorrol and her saintly mother.

I am also pleased to report that the castle mage is a righteous and goodly servant of the Nine (unlike so many wizards who neglect the Chapel and the Faith). Chanel offers magical training for those eager to smite the ungodly, and it would be much better to go to her than to some wicked Mages Guild hedgewizard.

The Countess holds court every day in the fine Great Hall (except on Sundas, of course). She has a very fine herald and steward, and the castle is neat and well-ordered. It also has a strong dungeon jail for evildoers, though I'm sorry to say that the guards are often lax in their duties, and fail to arrest and lock up the various beggars and thieves and gamblers and cheats who idle in the streets.

* Districts of Chorrol *

There are five main districts of Chorrol. When you enter the gate, you find yourself in Fountain Gate, before the fine pool and statue of the Saint of Sancre Tor, in memory of all who died in that great battle. Around the fountain are the two inns, the general store and the smith. One street leads east to the Castle, one north to Great Oak Place, one west to Chapel Street and West Chorrol. Chapel Street leads west to the Chapel, past the book store, and thence to the crude shacks gathered around the well of West Chorrol. Around Great Oak Place are the Mages Guild and Fighters Guild, and many fine houses.
* The Chapel of Stendarr *

The Chapel of Stendarr is beautiful, and perfect for a traveler's meditations and prayer. Every Sundas morning you will find the best citizens gathered with their good countess for worship. You may be surprised to learn that not all people of Chorrol follow the model of their countess, for many are very idle and careless in their devotions. This is certainly the responsibility of the Fighters Guild and the Mages Guild, whose members fail to set a good example for Chorrol's citizens. The elderly priestess of the Chapel, Orag gra-Bagrol, is a kindly, righteous soul, and it would be far better to purchase your spells from her than from the godless heathens of the Mages Guild.

* Chorrol's Guilds *

The Fighters Guild's members, though led by the excellent and honorable Vilena Donton, are dirty and uncouth in their speech, and often to be found lazing about in their chapter house, or wandering the town and engaging in loose talk. How much better it would be if they improved their characters by regular attendance at the Chapel of Stendarr. Their excellent smith is an exception, being often seen at her devotions at the chapel.

The members of the Chorrol Mages Guild are for the most part shiftless scholars and students who spend their time reading, quarreling, and brewing foul concoctions. They are well-spoken and well-educated, but what good is such learning if they fail to improve their souls by penitence and prayer? You may purchase spells and potions from these persons, but it will only encourage them in their irreverent amusements and wicked idleness.

* Goods and Services *

The proprietor of Northern Goods and Trade, Seed-Neeus, is an Argonian, but unlike so many of her countrymen, she is clever, honest, and well-spoken. Isn't that remarkable? She is so accomplished that she offers training in the mercantile arts, but you will not purchase goods from her cheaply.

I am told by those who know that the smith of Fire and Steel, Rasheda the Redguard, is a very fine craftsman, who offers training in her craft, and she is always to be found at Sundas chapel worship, but she is fresh and disrespectful, and her manners and dress leave something to be desired.

Renoit's Books is fairly clean, and has a wide selection of books, but would you believe that I found not a single copy of 'Ten Commands of the Nine Divines', nor have I ever seen the proprietress in the Chapel of Stendarr?

There are only two places where you may purchase food and lodging. One is proper and clean, frequented by decent citizens. The other is rude and dirty, and a meeting place for drunkards, thieves, and Orcs. The one is run by a well-dressed, dignified, and proper matron. The other is run by a careless young woman. The one is called the 'Oak and Crosier'. The other is called 'The Grey Mare'. I'm sure you know which one to visit if you want a clean and safe bed.
* Notable Citizens of Chorrol *

Casta Scribonia, the author, lives in Chorrol. She is a well-educated and well-traveled woman, but she writes books which I cannot recommend, for they are full of romance and gossip and other offensive and wasteful indulgences, and their heroes do not present to our children the proper models of virtue, duty, honor, and reverence that all followers of the Nine Divines must love and hold in our hearts.

* Shameful Features of Chorrol *

You will often see townsfolk gathered in mischief and loose talk around the Great Oak near the Fighters and Mages Guilds. One man, very sly, named Honditar, knows all about the surrounding lands, and he offers to teach skills for a fee, but one never sees him in the chapel, and one suspects that he is given to profanity, strong drink, and brawling.

There are many thieves and murderers in Chorrol. They even secretly teach their crafts for fees in their homes, and where is the Chorrol Guard? Nowhere to be seen, I'm sorry to say.

The beggars in Chorrol are dirty, but they are free of disease, cheerful, and polite. You may give a coin to one to ease your soul, but it does little to improve a beggar, for it will soon be squandered on gambling, strong spirits, and other mischief.

Nine gods and nine blessings!
[63.6] Guide to Leyawiin

ALESSIA OTTUS'  
GUIDE TO LEYAWIIN

Zenithar, bless all our labors! My name is Alessia Ottus, and I'd like to tell you all about Leyawiin.

Pinned between the savage and uncivilized provinces of Elsweyr and Black Marsh, and guarding the vital passage up the River Niven from Topal Bay to the Imperial City, Leyawiin is a mighty fortress, with tall stone walls and strong garrisons.

Leyawiin is a bright and cheerful, prosperous town in the midst of Blackwood's swampy wildernesses, with wide, bright streets, large, comfortable houses, half-timbered or painted stucco, many of which are colorful and not too dirty or weather-worn. There are trees and flowering shrubs everywhere, and peaceful plazas and ponds for quiet contemplation. Indeed, if it weren't for the raffish rabble of Argonian and Khajiit descent, Leyawiin would be a pleasant and safe place to visit.

Marius Caro is Count Leyawiin, and his recent bride, the lovely and cultivated Alessia Caro, is the daughter of the righteous and reliable Countess Arriana Valga of Chorrol. The Count and Countess are energetic supporters of Imperialization, and they work tirelessly to bring the traditional values of hard-working, chapel-going, and law-abiding Nibenese Heartland Imperial culture to this frontier outpost.

The town itself lies with tall curtain walls on the west bank of the Niben. To the east through two gates lies the inner keep and Castle Leyawiin, straddling the deep channels of the river. The Chapel of Zenithar lies in the northwest, near the West Gate. All the shops, inns, and guildhalls lie south of the chapel, in the western half of town, except for a fine bookstore and general trader north of the road traversing the town east-west from West Gate. The residential part of town runs along a single wide north-south boulevard, backed on the east by deep ponds created by impounding one of the meandering channels of the Niben.

The Chapel of Stendarr and the Count and Countess are partners in attempting to extend the benefits of heartland Nibenese culture to the benighted frontier populations of Blackwood and the Lower Niben. Trade and industry are strong in Leyawiin, thanks to the patronage of Zenithar, and notwithstanding the bandits troubling caravans and travellers along the Green Road through the recently annexed Trans-Niben.

Leyawiin boasts the finest collection of shops and tradesmen in Cyrodiil (outside of the Imperial City, of course). Even the craftsmen and trainers of the Fighters Guild and Mages Guild are of a higher order of quality. Worth special mention is Southern Books -- a bookstore owned by an Orc (!!!), always stocking multiple copies of 'A Children's Annuad', a religious book appropriate for those ignorant of the mysteries of the faith, and adapted to the meanest understanding.
Recently, a new competitor for the Fighters Guild, a mercenary hiring hall called 'The Blackwood Company', has commenced operations here in a striking new building. Despite being staffed almost exclusively by Khajiit and Argonians, the officers are polite, well-spoken, and deferential, and I'm told they aggressively compete with the Fighters Guild for price and service. (This is the Imperial way and pleasing to Zenithar -- to extend prosperity and security through enterprising commercial ventures.)

I'm sorry to say that not all Khajit and Argonians in Leyawiin are as presentable and industrious as the members of the Black Company. Lizardmen and catfolk are to be seen in the streets at all hours, lounging and gossiping. If only these creatures would spend a little more time keeping themselves and their homes clean.

Praise the Nine and turn away from sin!
In Julianos, all justice and wisdom! My name is Alessia Ottus, and I'd like to tell you all about Skingrad.

Skingrad County is famous for its wines, tomatoes, and cheeses, and the town of Skingrad is one of the cleanest, safest, and most prosperous towns in Cyrodiil. Located in the heart of the West Weald highlands, Skingrad is the gem of Old Colovia, and a model of the Colovian virtues of independence, hardwork, and tough-mindedness.

Skingrad has three districts: the Castle, Hightown, and Chapel. A low road runs east-west under the walls and bridges of the upper town. The guilds and West Weald Inn are in the west of HighTown, while many shops and upper class residence are arranged along a street in the north. The southern half of the town includes the chapel at its east end, with Skingrad's other lodgings, the Two Sisters Inn, on a street in the center, with other residences, modest and mean, scattered through the rest of the district. Gates and bridges cross the low road to connect Hightown and Chapel in several places. Castle Skingrad is completely separate from the town, standing on a high prominence to the southeast. A road from the town's east gate leads from town to the castle.

Janus Hassildor, Count Skingrad, has ruled Skingrad for many years, and is known by reputation to be a powerful wizard. He is a very private man, and declined all requests for an interview, and he shamefully neglects his chapel devotions to the Nine. How are the people to learn public virtue if not from the model of their ruler? Nonetheless, he is widely honored and respected by his people, and Skingrad is a model of a well-run, orderly county. Crime, gambling, and public drunkenness are almost unknown, and its wines and cheeses command high prices all over Tamriel.

There are two inns in Skingrad. One, the Two Sisters Inn, is owned by two Orcs. I'm pleased to tell you that this inn is clean and well-ordered, and is troubled neither by riot nor public drunkenness. The other inn is run by a pleasant Imperial woman. Neither of these proprietors are to be seen in the Chapel of Julianos, so I am at a loss to tell you which one you should choose when seeking food or lodgings.

However, I am certain where you should go to purchase your sweet rolls -- to Salmo the Baker in Chapel District! They are delicious. As for where to sample the other tasty treats of Skingrad -- its cheeses and tomatoes -- I must leave that to your discretion. I am sure you are not interested in Skingrad's wines, for drinking leads to disorderliness, and disorderliness leads to sin.

The Mages Guild here is no better than it is in other places, but the Fighters Guild makes a specialty of goblin hunting, which is a great service to travelers in the West Weald. And I was shocked to discover that the town smith openly refers to himself as 'Agnete the Pickled'. Can you imagine being proud of such shameful behavior?
Keep the Nine in your heart!
Praise Akatosh! Bless the Empire and All Its People!
My name is Alessia Ottus, and I'd like to tell you all about the Imperial City.

* The Imperial City *

Who do you think lives in the Imperial City? Uriel Septim, Emperor of Tamriel, Defender of the Faith, and Descendant of the Sainted Tiber Septim, Lord Talos, the Holy God of State and Law in our Blessed Nine Divines. All know the emperor to be a good and holy man, for he may often be seen in the Temple of the One, making his devotions to the Nine Divines and the Communion of Saints.

And where does he live? In the Imperial Palace, in the center of the Imperial City, in the White Gold Tower which was built many ages ago by the godless, Daedra-loving Ayleids. How fine it is that the stones raised high by this ancient evil empire are now reconsecrated as a monument to Imperial justice and piety.

People who visit the Imperial Palace like to walk among the graves of saints and counts, battlemages and emperors, and gaze with wonder upon White Gold Tower, which can be seen from any place within the City.

The Elder Council Chamber here cannot be entered, and though you may marvel at their curious ancient armors, you will soon want be away from the rude and discourteous Imperial Guards.

* Imperial City Districts *

The Imperial City is divided into ten districts. At the center is the Imperial Palace. The other districts are grouped around the Palace. To the northwest is Elven Gardens, a pleasant residential district.

Continuing widdershins, the Talos District, an exclusive residential area, lies to the west. To the southwest is the Temple District, and beyond it, outside the walls, the filthy and bad-smelling Waterfront District. To the southeast lies the Arboretum, and beyond that, outside the walls, the infamous Arcane University of the Mages Guild. To the east is the notorious Arena District. And last, to the northeast of the Palace lies the Market District, where anything may be bought, and beyond the Market District, outside the city walls, the Imperial Prison.
* The Temple District *

I live in the Temple District of the Imperial City, and it is a very pretty place. You are welcome to visit me, my husband, and daughter when you come to worship at the Temple of the One. This district is very pretty, and only pleasant and well-bred persons live here, though, as in all parts of the city, beggars are a constant problem.

* The Arboretum *

In this beautiful garden you will find the famous Statues of the Nine Divines. In the center you will find the statue of Lord Talos, Emperor Tiber Septim. But is it right, that Talos should have this place of honor rather than Akatosh, king of gods? It is the scheming pride of the Elder Council, who sought favor with the sons of Talos, that is responsible for this shameful error.

* The Market District *

You will find crowds of people waiting outside the doors of the Office of Imperial Commerce to make their complaints about being cheated by some merchant. It is a very dirty place. Piles of crates lie around in untidy heaps, unwholesome toadstools and fungus grow in clumps, and the cobbles are slimy and encrusted with filth. If you may send your servant rather than visit yourself, it would be far better.

* Arcane University *

This place is unspeakably dirty and unkempt, no better than a slum. You will never find the students or wizards outside in the air, for they are squatting in their dark dungeons poring over profane texts and making crabbed scribbles on scrolls.

Within the Arch-Mage's Tower is hidden the Imperial Orrery, which the mages use to study the sky. Such fools! Why do they not look on the glory of Creation itself, and give praise to the Nine as they ought, rather than squat and peer at such a ridiculous and expensive machine?

The Mages are said to have a great library of precious books, but they jealously hoard them for themselves. This is no loss for the righteous, for these books are surely full of wicked nonsense.

* Imperial Waterfront *

This is a terrible place. It is not uncommon to stumble over the bodies of women and children who have been murdered here. There are no more wicked and godless men in Tamriel than merchants and sailors, and they gather here to plot and cheat citizens of their hard-earned gold. Gambling and slaving and skooma-sucking and even more depraved activities take place in warehouses and ships here. And where are the City Watch? Nowhere to be seen.
* Imperial Prison *

The prisons are very cruel and horrible, damp and dirty, with chains and pincers and manacles and instruments of torture on every hand. But did I find any prisoners in these cells? No! For the Watch is so lazy and careless that the cells are all empty!

There are guards everywhere in the Imperial City. They travel in groups, for even they are afraid of the cruel bandits and thieves that lurk everywhere in the City. I do not know why they do not throw the impertinent beggars into prison. Criminals are so bold as to introduce themselves to you on the street. One outlaw was so brazen as to boast that he had stolen his weapons and armor from the Imperial Prison. How careless and idle these Watchmen must be to allow this! They know no shame, for the wicked officers of the Watch are corrupt, and accept gold from the hands of the very people they are supposed to place behind bars.

* The Arena *

I will not tell you about this place, for you have no need to visit it. Only idle or foolish persons come here to throw their money away on games of chance, or to spill their own blood when they would better devote themselves to exterminating the armies of robbers and beggars that swarm in the streets.

May the Nine bless you and keep you!
New Sheoth is generally recognized as the jewel of the Shivering Isles, the culinary and cultural epicenter of the entire realm. Founded at the whim of Our Lord Sheogorath, the city is a model of the Madgod’s own perfect vision.

First-time visitors to New Sheoth are often impressed by the warmth, generosity, and general good humor of its residents. Visitors are welcomed with open arms, and generally made to feel as if they are a part of the large New Sheoth family. The sheer scope of the sights and sounds in the city can be daunting to the new visitor, and this Guide aims to make the transition as easy as possible for newcomers.

Visitors will find the city is divided into three main sections: Bliss, Crucible, and the Palace. Bliss and Crucible house the majority of residential and commercial buildings in the city, while the Palace area houses the magnificent Palace of Sheogorath, as well as the residences of the reigning Dukes of Mania and Dementia.

Though located in the same city, visitors will find that the Bliss and Crucible areas of New Sheoth offer distinct experiences. The shining parapets and golden roads of Bliss stand in stark contrast to the rustic buildings and unpaved streets of Crucible. Travelers interested in a bustling nightlife and fine cuisine might prefer time spent in Bliss, renowned for its extravagant galas and spirited affairs. Visitors who seek a quieter experience would do well to spend their time exploring Crucible, where Dark Seducer patrols encourage a more serene way of life.

No matter your tastes, New Sheoth promises an experience like no other. This Guide will give advice on how to best navigate the oft-confusing, though ultimately rewarding channels of this magnificent city.

Arriving in New Sheoth

Travelers to New Sheoth will arrive at its gates from either the highlands of Mania or the swampy lowlands of Dementia. Many make the mistake of hurrying directly to the gates of the city without exploring the beautiful and majestic countryside outside the city walls. This is certainly a mistake, as the forests and glades of the Shivering Isles are unlike those found anywhere else in all the realms. Some discussion of these areas is warranted, as exploring them is vital to experiencing all that the region has to offer.

Mania, Vibrant Land of Towering Flora

Walking amongst the giant mushroom trees of Mania is an experience any new visitor to the Shivering Isles is not soon to forget. Hours spent wandering in the forests of spore trees, breathing deeply of the spore-laden air—these are the times destined to remain a part of you
forever. Feelings of peace and contentment wash over the body and calm the soul. It can seem as if you haven't a care in the world.

Take the time to examine the beautiful plant life found in the region. Treat yourself to Alocacia Fruit, which is known to have restorative properties, or pluck an Aster Bloom Core, which some locals believe has the ability to ward off the attacks of evil spirits.

If you plan on spending some time in the Mania countryside, consider visiting the small community of Hale. The residents are mostly local artists, and are very welcoming to weary travelers. Be sure to explore the lovely areas surrounding Hale, and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere.

A cautious traveler is a safe traveler, though, even in the idyllic lands of Mania. While the paths that wind through the scenic countryside are generally safe, the surrounding regions pose some danger for the careless traveler. Mania is home to a number of indigenous animal species, some of which could be threatening to a less-seasoned adventurer. We recommend sticking to the clearly marked paths when traveling anywhere within the Shivering Isles.

The Slow Grace of Dementia

It is often said, "Time spent in Dementia is time not spent elsewhere." Truer words were never spoken.

Many have spent days roaming the small islets of Dementia, enjoying the scenic views over the majestic lowlands. Travel over the quaint bridges that span the small islands of southern Dementia, and enjoy a beautiful sunset among the moss-covered trees.

If you're looking for a place to relax while exploring the lands of Dementia, we suggest a visit to Deepwallow. The small community is a working farm, where the residents use a unique method of raising crops of some of the extraordinary local plant life. The residents of Deepwallow are private people, so care should be taken in approaching them. Once you've learned their customs, we've found them to be a most interesting group with whom to spend some time.

Tip: For an exciting day trip, visit the Hill of Suicides, a site unlike any other in all the Shivering Isles. Located in central Dementia, travelers should not pass up the opportunity to take in the sights at this unique and fascinating location. There is no fee to visit the Hill, though some travelers have found it almost impossible to leave.

Getting to the Shivering Isles

Arrival to the Shivering Isles is solely at the discretion of Our Lord Sheogorath, Prince of Madness.

Getting Around

The best way to explore the Shivering Isles is by foot. Take the time to meander along the paths that stretch across the beautiful landscape. A weary traveler can often find a place to rest at one of the many campsites found dotted across the world.
Accommodations

Expensive

The Choosy Beggar, Bliss. Raven-Biter and his wife, Sheer-Meedish run a fine restaurant and inn in the Bliss district of New Sheoth. The rooms are nicely appointed, and the food is above-average for the area. We highly recommend trying the wine-it's some of the best in the city. Many travelers find lunch to be an especially good time to visit the Choosy Beggar. Though the prices are no lower, the earlier hour often finds Sheer-Meedish in a more accommodating mood.

Moderate

Sickly Bernice's Taphouse, Crucible. Don't let the name fool you: Sickly Bernice's Taphouse is exactly what you'd expect from an inn located in downtown Crucible. The lodgings, while not as opulent as those found at the nearby Choosy Beggar, are satisfactory. Sickly Bernice is an affable hostess, when she is well enough to work. The food is palatable, as are the beverages. After a visit, make sure to see Earil at Earil's Mysteries. He sells a wide assortment of magicks, including some wonderful, low-cost Cure Disease spells.

Shopping

Common Treasures, Bliss.

If you're looking for... well... anything, Common Treasures in Bliss is a good place to start. Trader Tilse Arelith has a wide assortment of wares available to the discerning customer. She's also more than willing to negotiate a good price for those unwanted items you may find in your travels.

Cutter's Weapons, Bliss.

There's not a finer weapon shop to be found in all of New Sheoth. Cutter runs a fine establishment, and usually keeps a good variety of weapons in stock and ready for use. She'll do repairs for you on the spot, and she seems to take extra-special care with your bladed weapons. This shop is not to be missed.

Books of Bliss, Bliss.

If you're looking for reading material on your journey, this is the place to get it. Sontaire is a very, very friendly bookseller with a keen eye for more than just books. You won't be disappointed if you spend some of your hard-earned gold in this establishment.

The Missing Pauldron, Crucible.

If it's armor you're in the mood to buy, look no further than The Missing Pauldron in Crucible. Recently re-opened under new manager Dumag gro-Bonk, the shop seems to be doing quite well. Dumag will be happy to sell you some new armor, repair you old favorites, or just sit a while and tell you the rather long and interesting story of his life.
Earil's Mysteries, Crucible.

Many adventurers don't like to travel without a full spell book, and Earil's is the place to go in New Sheoth to stock up on the latest in spellmaking. It sometimes seems time stands still as you browse through the excellent selection of spells. Highly recommended.

Things Found, Crucible.

It's an odd assortment of items, to be sure, but it's never a dull day when you visit Things Found in Crucible. Owner Abhuki has scoured the realm in search of the most intriguing and varied assortment of magical items to be found almost anywhere. Take some time and browse around—you never know what you might find!
Gyub, Lord of the Pit

Praise of Gyub

[Kneel, face forward and raise hands above head]

Praise be to Gyub, Lord of the Pit.
Hear us, Warbling Redeemer.
Hail the Rebirth approaching.
Praise be to Gyub, Lord of the Pit.

[Lower hands and close eyes]

Please accept our offering, merciful one.
Extend your tentacles and accept this gift.
Bless us, Embryonic Prince.
May this offering satisfy your infinite maw.

[Stand, open eyes and wait for volunteer to be escorted to the precipice]

Please accept our offering oh merciful one.
Feed and grow now, our Prince.
Arise and devour Oblivion hence.
May this offering sate your growing bulk.

[Open floor and grasp volunteer by wrists and ankles. Gently swing with sideways motion]

Praise be to Gyub, Lord of the Pit.
Magg-a-rathala!
Magg-a-Nutaggon!
Praise be to Gyub, Lord of the Pit.

[Begin to rhythmically stomp feet all the while swinging volunteer faster and faster]

Praise be to Gyub, praise be to Gyub, praise be to Gyub.
Praise be to Gyub, praise be to Gyub, praise be to Gyub.
Praise be to Gyub, praise be to Gyub, praise be to Gyub.

[When volunteer has reached maximum height, release wrists and ankles. Wait for screaming to stop. Face forward and raise hands above head]

Praise be to Gyub,
Call to us, Prince!
Sing your fell tune!
Praise be to Gyub.

[Wait for Gyub to respond. Get down on knees with hands still raised above head]

All hail Gyub, Lord of the Pit.
All hail rebirth, day of our death.
All hail Gyub, All hail Gyub.
[65] Hallgerd's Tale*

See vol. I.
[66] Handbills

[66.1] Alchemist Service Handbills

[66.1.1] All Things Alchemical

Need fresh Bloodgrass? Out of Harrada? We keep them in stock. Husband snores at night? We have silence potions as well. All Things Alchemical. The only shop for potions and rare herbs.

[66.1.2] The Gilded Carafe

The Gilded Carafe is an Alchemy shop of distinction. We are distinctly CHEAPER than those other guys! Don't pay more! Shop at the Gilded Carafe!

[66.1.3] The Main Ingredient

At The Main Ingredient, we only stock the finest alchemical ingredients and potions. We may not be the cheapest, but we are the best.
[66.2] Armor and Weapons Handbills

[66.2.1] The Archer's Paradox

The Archer's Paradox has everything a hunter might need. If it's sharp and pointy, the odds are we have it, and at a better price than anywhere else.

[66.2.2] The Best Defense

When you need protecting, wear armor made at The Best Defense. We'll keep you safe from the sharpest blades.

[66.2.3] The Dividing Line

Is that dent in your greaves making it hard to sit down? We'll pound it out for you at The Dividing Line. If we can't fix it, we'll sell you a new set.

[66.2.4] A Fighting Chance

If you need quality arms and armor, you have to shop at A Fighting Chance. We specialize in custom-fitted armor.

[66.2.5] Fire and Steel

Nothing says 'Howdy, villain' like a sharp axe from Fire and Steel. And once you've dented your blade on his skull, we can sharpen it for you, too!

[66.2.6] Hammer and Axe

The streets of Bruma can be a dangerous place. We can sell you protection at reasonable prices. Every citizen should have a warhammer from the Hammer and Axe. Don't leave home without it.

[66.2.7] Hammer and Tongs

Hammer and Tongs has been in business for 87 years. Seven generations of smiths have passed down their secrets to Agnete. If he can't forge it, you need to talk to the Last Dwarf.
[66.2.8] Morvayn's Peacemakers

Having trouble keeping the peace at home? Come to Morvayn's Peacemakers. One look at our maces and your neighbors will ask before taking your goat.

[66.2.9] Slash 'N Smash

Slash 'N Smash makes weapons. Really good weapons. You should buy some.

[66.2.10] Stonewall Shields

Stonewall Shields specializes in armor of all sorts, and shields in particular. We use the best steel for quality armor. Viator Accius trained with Orc smiths for 9 years to learn their secrets.
[66.3] Bookstore Handbills

[66.3.1] First Edition

First Edition is a supplier of books for the Imperial Library. If the Emperor trusts us, so can you. We have a widest selection of tomes and histories in all of Cyrodiil.

[66.3.2] Renoit's Books

You can always find what you are looking for at Renoit's Books. Whether you need Barenziah's latest adventures or a guide to the city, we've got it.

[66.3.3] Southern Books

Exotic adventures from the Southern kingdoms. Histories of ancient heros. We have it all at Southern Books. We buy used books, too.
TRAVELERS! FIND PEACE AND JOY WITH DIBELLA!

The Chapel of Dibella welcomes visitors to Anvil. Come and share the quiet grace and joy of the Goddess of Love.

"My spirit rises up, sweet Dibella. My spirit praises you in the happiness of my heart."

TRACE THE STATIONS OF THE NINE AT THE CHAPEL OF STENDARR!

Come! Contemplate the Nine and their Glories! Begin at the Altar of the Nine, where the world's wounds are washed away, and the corruptions of the spirit and body are made clean. Then step along the Stations of the Nine -- Stendarr, Arkay, Mara, Zenithar, Talos, Kynareth, Dibella, Julianos, and Akatosh -- and see what bright inspiration springs from Devotion to the Great Lords of All!

"My heart and spirit are full! Where e'er my eye turns, there shines thy Glories!"

"YOU, MY CHILDREN, ARE BLEST OF ARKAY!"

Citizens of Cheydinhal! Children, saints, and travelers! Come to the Chapel, and drink deep of the waters of the Spirit. The Altar of the Nine shall make you hale and whole! The Nine Altars shall refresh your spirit, and fill you with the Gods' glories! Arkay's servants shall train you in the mysteries of Restoration and Alteration!

"Not a stone, stem, or spirit below but sings of Your Wonders!"

CLASSES IN HEALING AT THE CHAPEL OF JULIANOS

Training in the Restoration Arts is now available from Sister Marie Palielle at the Skingrad Chapel. Arrangements should be made with Sister Marie herself. Scheduling is flexible.
And while you're at the chapel, don't forget...

"Seek forgiveness for your sins, O ye faithful! Offend not against the laws of Man or God. For none but must tremble, when ye contemplate that Julianos is Just!"

### [66.4.5] Great Chapel of Mara

**COME! EXPLORE FAITH AND WISDOM AT THE CHAPEL OF MARA!**

The earnest believer may improve both spirit and mind with the dedicated clerics of Mara. Visit our altars for health and inspiration. Meditate upon the Mysteries of Nirn and the Nine in quiet contemplation. Seek instruction in Restoration and Speechcraft from our wise and patient trainers.

"Praise us in our ministry, O Mara, that we may serve you and your people."

### [66.4.6] The Great Chapel of Zenithar

**THE CHAPEL OF ZENITHAR WELCOMES YOU!**

Take a break from your labors! Work is sacred, but rest and restoration are sacred, too! Sit in quiet contemplation, or seek counsel from Zenithar's servants. Gather together with your friends and neighbors, and send up hymns of praise to the Nine.

"Take strength from my altars, and comfort, and wisdom. These gifts I have prepared for you, when you rest from your labors."
[66.5] Clothing Handbills

[66.5.1] Divine Elegance

When you dress, do you wear Divine Elegance? You should. A first impression is priceless. That's why you won't see prices marked on our clothing. If you need to ask, you shouldn't be shopping at Divine Elegance.

[66.5.2] Nord Winds

Do you believe that the clothes make the man, but you don't look it? Come to Nord Winds for a complete make-over. We'll put you at the height of fashion.
[66.6] General Store Handbills

[66.6.1] Best Goods and Guarantees

If it can be made or found, you can buy it or sell it at Best Goods and Guarantees. We'll match any competitor's offer.

[66.6.2] Colovian Traders

Colovian Traders. We have goods from beyond Black Marsh. We buy and sell almost anything. Browsers are always welcome.

[66.6.3] The Copious Coinpurse

The Copious Coinpurse has goods from beyond the shores of Anvil. All manner of exotic items are available on our shelves. We have the widest inventory in the city.

[66.6.4] The Fair Deal

Looking for a fair deal? Come to the Fair Deal! We won't cheat you, we promise. We buy and sell everything.

[66.6.5] Jensine's "Good as New" Merchandise

Jensine's "Good as New" Merchandise will beat any price at the Copious Coinpurse. We also buy and sell used goods.

[66.6.6] Lelles' Quality Merchandise

Lelle's Quality Merchandise has the best prices and the largest inventory in Anvil. Don't bother with those other shops. We'll beat their prices everytime.

[66.6.7] Northern Goods and Trade

Need a fur coat? Need new candles? Look no further than Northern Goods and Trade. We have the best from Skyrim and beyond.

[66.6.8] Novaroma

Buying? Selling? Who cares? We'll do either at Novaroma. We'll do whatever it takes to make the sale.
Three Brothers Trade Goods has a sterling reputation for honesty. We will always pay what your trade goods are worth, and always charge you a fair price for what you buy.
[66.7] Inn Handbills

[66.7.1] The Count's Arms

The beds at the Count's Arms are the softest in Anvil. We wash them after every third customer, no matter how soiled. Our pillows are twice as soft as those at the Flowing Bowl.

[66.7.2] The Feed Bag

When you're hungry, stop by the Feed Bag. Please.

[66.7.3] Five Claws Lodge

Rooms and food at the Five Claws Lodge. Let someone else watch the hatchlings tonight. We'll serve you fresh fish. We'll even cook it for a extra fee.

[66.7.4] The Flowing Bowl

The Flowing Bowl is a great place to eat. For this week only, we are putting twice as many leeks into our soup as normal. Why not stop in for a bowl? Bring a friend!

[66.7.5] The Fo'c's'le

A night at the Fo'c's'le is a night you'll never forget. Our tea and crumpets taste better and last longer than any in Anvil. And there is always a wench to keep you company.

[66.7.6] The Fo'c's'le

The Fo'c's'le features warm beds and great company. Our tea and crumpets taste better and last longer than any in Anvil. The serving wenches are always available for conversation.

[66.7.7] The Grey Mare

Eat at the Grey Mare tonight. Why cook your own meals when Emfrid can do it for you? We specialize in Orcish cuisine.
[66.7.8] Jerall View Inn

Tired of the noisome din of the common tap room? Stay at Jerall View. Peaceful, tasteful, and only for the most discerning of customers. Everyone knows, quality comes at a price.

[66.7.9] The Lonely Suitor Lodge

The Lonely Suitor Lodge is ideal for all Bachelors and Bachelorettes. Our rooms are private and soundproof. Our staff asks no questions and tells no tales. Reasonable rates for food and lodging.

[66.7.10] The Oak and Crosier

The Oak and Crosier. If you need to ask why, then you've obviously never dined there. We cater to the best.

[66.7.11] Olav's Tap and Tack

Olav's Tap and Tack is changing business! Instead of providing for all your horse needs, we will provide for all of yours! Great food! Soft beds! Rousing company! We have it all!

[66.7.12] Silverhome on the Water

When your mother-in-law comes to visit, put her up at Silverhome-on-the-Water. We offer moderately priced, clean rooms. Chamberpots are available for a small fee.

[66.7.13] Three Sisters' Inn

Let the Three Sisters hunt for you. After your meal, try one of our soft beds for the night. Locks and keys are available for small fee.

[66.7.14] Two Sisters Lodge

A free bath with every night's stay! Only at the Two Sisters Lodge. Meals and drinks are extra.
[66.7.15] West Weald Inn

Fine dining is a rare experience, unless you eat at the West Weald Inn. We use only the freshest truffles, and our goat's milk yogurt is considered the best in Cyrodiil.
Red Diamond Jewelry is the only jewelry store in the nine cities. We have the best gems and silver in Cyrodiil. We also have the best guards, so don't even think about it.
[66.9] Mage Service Handbills

[66.9.1] Edgar's Discount Spells

Edgar's Discount Spells will beat any Mages Guild price for spells. Why pay more for the same spell?

[66.9.2] Mystic Emporium

Mystic Emporium is the only enchanter's shop in all of Cyrodiil. We import the rarest items from Black Marsh, Skyrim, and Morrowind. Come see what we have in stock today.

[66.9.3] Rindir's Staffs

Staffs are not for everyone. Only the most talented of wizards can use a staff. If you have what it takes, come see us at Rindir's Staffs. We can sell you the right staff for the right occasion.

[66.9.4] A Warlock's Luck

Wizard's beware! If you are using supplies from some place other than A Warlock's Luck, you may be taking your life in your hands. Don't compromise your spellcraft. We won't.
[66.10] Stables Handbills

[66.10.1] Bay Roan Stables

Bay Roan Stables has what you need. Horses, horse, horses. Don't be content to walk. Ride with style on a Bay horse from Bay Roan Stables.

[66.10.2] Grateful Pass Stables

Horses! Horses! Horses! You know you want one. Come to the Grateful Pass Stables and pick one out today. All horses are for riding only. Grateful Pass Stables does not condone selling horses for food under any circumstances.

[66.10.3] North Country Stables

The North Country Stables is the areas finest purveyor of Chestnut horses. Why ride a paint horse or bay horse when you can ride a Chestnut from North Country Stables?

[66.10.4] Wildeye Stables

Don't settle for a weak horse. The Wildeye Stable's Paint horses are tougher and meaner than any in Cyrodiil. What good does a faster horse do you if it can't carry the load? We also have the best prices around.
Hanging Gardens of Wasten Coridale*

See vol. I.
[68] Heavy Armor Repair

Heavy Armor Repair

Heavy armor must be designed to take a lot of punishment. It will receive direct blows from all sorts of weapons while protecting the wearer. Such armor tends to be made from a few large pieces rather than lots of small pieces like light armor.

Iron and steel are easy to work. Just heat them up and pound them back into shape. You can even use a camp fire for field repairs. Avoid filing off any of the metal. Always try to conserve the metal and work it back into shape.

If a piece needs a lot of hammering, it may become brittle. Reheating the armor every now and then can reduce the brittleness after severe repairs. Once the hammering is done, be sure to oil it well. The freshly hammered surfaces will rust more quickly and need to be protected.

Dwarven and Orcish armor require small and large hammers. Heat should be used sparingly, particularly with Orcish. Both types respond better to many small hammer strokes rather than fewer heavy strokes.

Ebony can only be hammered when heated. It will develop small cracks that eventually shatter the material if hammered cold. Daedric should always be worked on at night... ideally under a new or full moon, and never during and eclipse. A red harvest moon is best.
Zealotry is an abomination that must be wiped from the Shivering Isles. We cannot suffer their beliefs to spread to even one more soul. They name us Heretics for our lack of belief. We gladly accept the name, and will make a honorable one.

It is not heresy to speak truth. It is not heresy to speak out against an unjust lord. It is not heresy to take arms and action in defense of true belief. We are the so-called Heretics of the Shivering Isles, but we do not speak heresy. We speak the truth.

Our Lord, Sheogorath, is but a man. He is only flesh and blood, not a god, and certainly not a Daedric Prince. There are no princes in the realms of the Daedra, only vile servitors such as the Hungers that we summon to do our bidding.

Sheogorath the False is a mad despot. Years of dabbling in foul magic and consorting with Daedra have driven him mad. He is not a fit ruler, let alone divine. He perverts the teachings of Arden-Sul, He Who Gave His Heart's Blood.

When the truth of our cause is common knowledge among the people, we will drive him from New Sheoth and put that cesspool to the sword. His four limbs will be scattered to the four winds. His head will rest upon the Hill of Suicides and his heart shall be burnt in the flames of freedom. His entrails shall be fed to the dogs.

We will make all the people of the Shivering Isles wear the robes of the Heretics. By these robes we know each other to be true non-believers. The people shall return to the wilderness and live among the wild things, as we do. They will see the wisdom and purity of the life we lead and they will hail us as saviors.
There are few professions that require the practitioner to be more self-reliant than that of thief. A thief is by nature a loner. He trusts no one and is trusted by few. He cannot go to a master and become an apprentice. He has no guild to collect and codify how to ply his craft. He does his crimes alone, and in the dark of night. He must hide by day to avoid capture by the authorities.

The only known deity recognized by thieves is Nocturnal. Not truly a goddess, this Daedric lord is none-the-less a potent figure. She is the Mistress of Shadows, holding sway over secrets and stealth. She does not ask for worshippers, nor does she necessarily give blessings to those that do recognize her. In fact there are no known temples to her in Cyrodiil, although there are rumors of a forgotten shrine. In other words, she is perfectly suited to the criminal mind of the thief.

By and large, thieves are a godless lot. They believe only in their own skills and cunning. However, since the existence and influence of the gods and Daedric lords is undeniable, they have an uneasy relationship with Nocturnal. Though some thieves truly worship her, most choose to offer their respect and reverence without fealty.

These criminals recognize that should they offend the Mistress of Shadows, it might go poorly for them. However, true worship and fealty does not have any known benefit. The classic blessing between thieves is "shadow hide you." This is an oblique reference to Nocturnal. However it can also be interpreted to be a non-theistic statement of actual shadows hiding the thief.

Thieves tend to dress in black clothes or dark clothing. While this is a practical thing for their criminal endeavors, it is unnecessary during the daylight hours. Yet many thieves still don these shadowy colors in silent recognition of Nocturnal.

The most shocking link between the nebulous culture of thieves and Nocturnal, is the tale of the Gray Fox. He is the mythical king of thieves. The legend states that he stole the hood off of Nocturnal's cloak. Obviously this is just a story invented centuries ago to bolster their feelings of self-worth. However, it is indicative of the continued link between the Daedric lord and the criminals of the Empire.
History of Lock Picking

The modern lock has a fascinating history in Cyrodiil. The need to restrict access to one's home has been a problem since homes were first built. The very first security system was a simple bar across the door. This has the obvious shortcoming of only being functional when the owner is at home.

The first recorded instance of a lock is the ingenious armbreaker of Castle Anvil. The count of the day put five slide bars on the side of the door. A hole in the door just above them allowed him to reach in and manipulate any of these bars. Only one of the bars truly locked or unlocked the door. The other four released the clasp on a hammer that fell down on the person's arm. Only by knowing which sliding bar was the true lock could one safely open the door.

For over a hundred years, the state of the art in locks was defined by sliding bars and punished traps. Then the famous dwarf Mzunchend invented the pin lock. The first example had three pins. The key was turned in the lock four times, each turn depending on a different pin being in position. Obviously a pin could be used more than once.

It was 65 years before anyone devised a method to open a pin-based lock without the key and without damaging the lock. It wasn't that the problem was so difficult. It was that nobody other than royalty could afford Mzunchend's locks. An enterprising blacksmith named Orenthal decided to mass-produce a common form of the lock at a reasonable price. Suddenly every shop had a lock. Now there was a reason to subvert the locks. It wasn't long before lockpicks and lockpicking appeared. Orenthal became quite wealthy inventing more and more sophisticated locks.

Today's locks are sophisticated mechanisms with spring-loaded pins. Each metal pin must be pushed up by the key precisely to open the lock. Any imprecision in the key, any poorly made copy, or any clumsy attempt at lockpicking releases the spring tension, causing the pin to clamp down upon or even break the key or lockpick.

Locks are made more secure by using multiple pins in the lock. Multiple-pin locks are more delicate and difficult to make, and more expensive, but provide a greater reliability against tampering. Multiple-pin locks have the further virtue of resetting all pins when any single pin is tampered with. A single mistake with the fifth pin of a five-pin lock requires a thief to reset all five pins again. Most affordable locks are one-pin or two-pin locks. The five-pin lock is the highest achievement of the lockmaker's craft, and the greatest challenge to a would-be intruder.

Picking the modern lock is an art form. A lockpick is a thin metal bar with a small tooth on the end. The tooth is used to press the pin up into the lock mechanism. The thief uses skill and experience to manipulate each pin in turn to determine the exact tension necessary to set the spring-loaded pin at its catchpoint. With a subtle pressing and lofting of the pin, the master thief determines the exact motion required to set it.
A novice thief breaks many picks while learning his trade. Only with time and practice will he get better at guessing the tension and timing necessary to set a pin. As a result, novice thieves tend to carry a great many lockpicks, while the masters only need to carry a few.
In the 283rd year of the 2nd Era, Potentate Versidue-Shaie was faced with a disintegrating empire. The vassal kingdoms throughout Tamriel had reached a new height of rebellion, openly challenging his rule. They refused his taxes and led sorties against the Imperial garrisons throughout the land. At the destruction of his fortress in Dawnstar, he gathered the Imperial Council in what would be called the Council of Bardmont, after the town south of Dawnstar where they met. There the Potentate declared catholic and universal martial law. The princes of Tamriel would dissolve their armies or face his wrath.

The next thirty-seven years were perhaps the bloodiest in the violent history of Tamriel.

In order to crush the last of the royal armies, Versidae-Shaie had to sacrifice many of his best legions, as well as spend nearly every last piece of gold in the Imperial treasury. But he accomplished the unthinkable. For the first time in history, there was but one army in the land, and it was his own.

The problems that immediately surfaced were almost as staggering as the triumph itself. The Potentate had impoverished the land by his war, for the vanquished kingdoms had also spent the last of their gold in defense. Farmers and merchants alike had their livelihood ruined. Before the princes of Tamriel would not pay his taxes - now, they could not.

The only persons who benefited from the war were criminals, who preyed upon the ruins of the lawless land, without fear of arrest now that all the local guards and militia were gone. It was a crisis the Akavir had seen coming long before he destroyed the last of his subjects' armies, but for which he had no solution. He could not allow his vassals their own armies again, but the land was deeper into the stew of anarchy that it had ever been before. His army sought to fight the rise of crime, but a central authority was no threat against the local underworld.

In the dawn of the year 320, a kinsman of Versidae-Shaie, Dinieras-Ves "the Iron", presented himself with a host of companions before the Potentate. It was he who suggested an order of mercantile warriors-for-hire, who could be hired by nobility in lieu of a standing army. The employment would be temporary, and a percentage of the fee would go to the Potentate's government, thus putting salve on two of Versidae-Shaie's greatest pains.

Though it was then called The Syffim, after the Tsaesci word for 'soldiers,' the organization that was to be known as the Fighters Guild had been born.

Dinieras-Ves "the Iron" initially believed that the entirety of the order should be composed of Akaviri. This belief of his is not disputed by any historian, though his motivation is often debated. The traditional, simple explanation is that he knew his countrymen well, trusted them, and felt that their tradition of fighting for profit would be of use. Others believe, with reason, that he and the Potentate sought to use the order to effectively complete the conquest
of Tamriel begun over five hundred years earlier. When Akavir attacked Tamriel in the 2703rd year of the 1st era, they had been beaten back by the Reman Dynasty. Now they had a Potentate on the throne, and with Dinieras-Ves's machinations, the local armies would also be Akaviri. What they had failed to do by combat, they would have successfully accomplished by patience. A traditional strategem, many scholars suggest, of the immortal snake men, the Tsaesci of Akavir, who always had time on their side.

The point, however, is largely academic. Though the Syffim did establish themselves in some kingdoms neighboring Cyrodiil, it became quickly apparent that local warriors were needed. Part of the problem was simply that there were not enough Akaviri for the work that needed to be done. Another part was that the snake men did not understand the geography and politics of the regions they were assigned.

It was evident that some non-Akaviri were needed in the Syffim, and by the mid point of the year, three Nords, a warrior-sorceress, a rogue, and a knight were admitted into the order.

The knight, whose name has been lost in the sands of time, was also a great armorer, and probably did more to strengthen the organization than anyone but Dinieras-Ves himself. As has often been stated, the Akaviri, particularly the Tsaesci, understood weaponry better than armor. Even if they could not wear it themselves, the knight was able to explain to the other Syffim what the weaknesses were in their opponent's armor, explaining to them how many joints there were in a pauldun and a grieve, and the differences between Aketons and Armkachens, Gorgets and Gliedshrmis, Palettes and Pasguards, Tabards and Tassettes.

With this knowledge, they made long strides in defeating the brigands, doing far better than their meager numbers would suggest. It is a joke among historians that if Akavir had a Nord armorer in their employ in the first era, they would have won the invasion.

The success of these first three outsiders to the Syffim opened the door for more local members. Before the year was through, Dinieras-Ves had spread his business throughout the Empire. Young men and women, for a variety of reasons - because of desperate poverty, for love of action and adventure, in order to aid their crime-stricken neighbors - joined his new order en masse. They received training, and were immediately put to work helping the aristocracy's problems, assuming the roles of guards and soldiers within their locality.

The early success of the Syffim in combating crime and defeating local monsters so inspired Potentate Versidae-Shaie that he entertained representatives from other organizations interested in Imperial sanction. Though formed much earlier, the Mages Guild had always been viewed with suspicion by the government. In the 321st year of the 2nd Era, the Potentate gave his approval to the Guilds Act, officially sanctioning the Mages, together with the Guilds of Tinkers, Cobblers, Prostitutes, Scribes, Architects, Brewers, Vintners, Weavers, Ratcatchers, Furriers, Cooks, Astrologers, Healers, Tailors, Minstrals, Barristers, and the Syffim. In the charter, they were no longer called the Syffim, however: bowing to the name it had become known as by the people, they were to be called the Fighters Guild. All the Guilds, and those that followed by later sanctions throughout the second and third eras, would be protected and encouraged by the Empire of Cyrodiil, recognizing their value to the people of Tamriel. All would be required to pay to expand their influence throughout the land. The Empire was strengthened by their presence, and the Imperial coffers were filled once again.
Shortly after Versidae-Shaie's death, only three years after the Guild Act, his heir Savirien-Chovak, allowed the reforming of local armies. The Fighters Guild was no longer the principal arm of the local aristocracy, but their worth had already been established. Though there were certainly strong individuals who sought their own fortunes in the past, many historians have suggested that Dinieras-Ves was the ancestor in spirit of the modern phenomenon of the Adventurer, those men and women who dedicate their lives to questing for fame and fortune.

Thus, all owe a debt of gratitude to the Fighters Guild -- not only its members, and the people who have been helped by its neutral policy of offering strong arms for a fee within the boundaries of the law. Without them, there would be no guilds of any kind, and it may be argued, no model for even the independent Adventurer.

NOTES

1 No break in *Fighters Guild History, 1st Ed.*
2 *Fighters Guild History, 1st Ed.* Not in *History of the Fighters Guild.*
[73] The Horror of Castle Xyr*

See vol. I.
I'm a set of plans. Go to the Chestnut Handy stables.
[75] House Receipts

[75.1] Battlehorn Castle

[75.1.1] Bedroom

The furnishings for your private quarters will be delivered promptly to Battlehorn Castle. I hope you find them comfortable!

Thank you for your patronage,

Nilphas Omellian
The Merchants Inn, Market District
Imperial City

[75.1.2] Captain

As per our recent conversation, I've hired a new guard captain to take command of the garrison of Battlehorn Castle. I've tried to answer his questions without going into too many specifics about the fate of his unfortunate predecessor. I trust that I have done well.

As always, I remain,

Nilphas Omellian
The Merchants Inn, Market District
Imperial City

[75.1.3] Dining Area

The furnishings you selected for the dining hall will be delivered promptly to Battlehorn Castle. I'm sure you will find that they make your meals more pleasant.

Thank you for your patronage,

Nilphas Omellian
The Merchants Inn, Market District
Imperial City
[75.1.4] Dwemer Forge

I know you will be pleased with the antique forge that I am having shipped to Battlehorn Castle. I think you will find it is well worth the cost. Not many can boast of owning a working Dwemer forge!

I appreciate your patronage,

Nilphas Omellian
The Merchants Inn, Market District
Imperial City

[75.1.5] Kitchen Area

The furnishings you selected for the kitchens will be delivered promptly to Battlehorn Castle. I hope you get many years of enjoyment out of them!

Thank you for your patronage,

Nilphas Omellian
The Merchants Inn, Market District
Imperial City

[75.1.6] Library Area

The appointments you selected for your library will be delivered promptly to Battlehorn Castle. I'm sure you will find them conducive to scholarship and reflection.

I appreciate your patronage,

Nilphas Omellian
The Merchants Inn, Market District
Imperial City

[75.1.7] Training Room

The famous Arena champion, Shagrol gro-Uzug, is on his way to Battlehorn Castle to take up his new position as your sparring partner. I've taken the liberty of sending along the equipment he will need to set up your training room, using the funds you provided. I trust that this meets with your approval.

Thank you for your patronage,
Nilphas Omellian  
The Merchants Inn, Market District  
Imperial City

[75.1.8] Trophy Hall

The appointments you selected for your trophy hall will be delivered promptly to Battlehorn Castle. As you requested, I've also hired a taxidermist to join your castle staff. Melisi Daren comes highly recommended by her former employer, a wealthy gentleman from Bruma named Baenlin. I'm sure she will meet with your satisfaction.

Thank you for your patronage,

Nilphas Omellian  
The Merchants Inn, Market District  
Imperial City

[75.1.9] Wine Cellar

As you requested, I have hired Talan, one of the finest vintners in Cyrodiil to maintain your wine cellar at Battlehorn Castle. He is the brother of the well-known Tamika of Skingrad, so he has learned his trade from the very best. I took the liberty of providing Talan with the funds to equip your wine cellar as he sees fit, as we discussed.

Thank you for your patronage,

Nilphas Omellian  
The Merchants Inn, Market District  
Imperial City
[75.2] Bravil

[75.2.1] Dining Area

This entitles the bearer to one dining area that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bravil. Said area contains:

2 Chairs
1 Rug
Assorted Pottery

Thanks for shopping with us!

Nilawen
The Fair Deal, Bravil

[75.2.2] Kitchen Area

This entitles the bearer to one fireplace area that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bravil. Said area contains:

1 Food Cupboard
1 Small Table
1 Chair
Assorted Pottery

Thanks for shopping with us!

Nilawen
The Fair Deal, Bravil

[75.2.3] Racks Assortment

This entitles the bearer to various racks that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bravil. This set includes:

2 Wine Racks
2 Wall Mount Weapon Racks
1 Free-Standing Weapon Rack

Thanks for shopping with us!

Nilawen
The Fair Deal, Bravil
[75.2.4] Reading Area

This entitles the bearer to one reading area that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bravil. Said area contains:

2 Bookshelves
1 Rug
1 Chair
1 Candelabra

Thanks for shopping with us!

Nilawen
The Fair Deal, Bravil

[75.2.5] Storage Area

This entitles the bearer to one storage area that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bravil. Said area contains:

2 Dressers
1 Chair
1 Chest
1 Rug
1 Candelabra

Thanks for shopping with us!

Nilawen
The Fair Deal, Bravil

[75.2.6] Wall Hangings

This entitles the bearer to various wall hangings that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bravil. This set includes:

4 Assorted Paintings
1 Tapestry

Thanks for shopping with us!

Nilawen
The Fair Deal, Bravil
[75.3] Bruma

[75.3.1] Bedroom Area

This entitles the bearer to one bedroom area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bruma. Said area contains:

2 Wall-Mounted Candle Sconces
1 Clothing Cupboard
1 Dresser
1 Chest
1 Rug
1 Candle Holder
Assorted Pottery and Potted Flowers

Shop Novaroma where if we don't have it, it's not worth having!

Suurootan
Novaroma of Bruma

[75.3.2] Dining Area

This entitles the bearer to one dining area on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bruma. Said area contains:

3 Chairs
1 Rug
1 Set of Shelves
Assorted Pottery and Utensils
Potted Flowers

Shop Novaroma where if we don't have it, it's not worth having!

Suurootan
Novaroma of Bruma

[75.3.3] Kitchen Area

This entitles the bearer to one kitchen area on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bruma. Said area contains:

1 Cupboard
1 Wine Rack
1 Chest
1 Fireplace Rack
1 Candle Holder
1 Rug
Assorted Bottles and Pottery

Shop Novaroma where if we don't have it, it's not worth having!

Suurootan
Novaroma of Bruma

[75.3.4] Lower Storage Area

This entitles the bearer to one storage area and sitting area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bruma. Said area contains:

3 Barrels
1 Chest
1 Set of Shelves
1 Small Table
1 Bench
1 Chair
1 Rug
Assorted Pottery

Shop Novaroma where if we don't have it, it's not worth having!

Suurootan
Novaroma of Bruma

[75.3.5] Lower Wall Hangings

This entitles the bearer to various wall hangings on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bruma. This includes:

3 Paintings
3 Tapestries
4 Wall-Mounted Candle Sconces

Shop Novaroma where if we don't have it, it's not worth having!

Suurootan
Novaroma of Bruma
[75.3.8] Study Area

This entitles the bearer to one study area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bruma. Said area contains:

2 Bookshelves
1 Desk
1 Chair
1 Candelabra
Assorted Candles

Shop Novaroma where if we don't have it, it's not worth having!

Suurootan
Novaroma of Bruma

[75.3.9] Upper Sitting Area

This entitles the bearer to one sitting area on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bruma. Said area contains:

2 Tables
1 Bench
1 Chair
1 Rug
1 Candle Holder
Potted Flowers

Shop Novaroma where if we don't have it, it's not worth having!

Suurootan
Novaroma of Bruma

[75.3.10] Upper Storage Area

This entitles the bearer to one storage area on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bruma. Said area contains:

2 Chests
1 Set of Shelves
1 Small Table
1 Candelabra
Assorted Pottery
Shop Novaroma where if we don't have it, it's not worth having!

Suurootan
Novaroma of Bruma

[75.3.11] Upper Wall Hangings

This entitles the bearer to various wall hangings on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Bruma. This includes:

5 Paintings
1 Tapestry
2 Candle Holders

Shop Novaroma where if we don't have it, it's not worth having!

Suurootan
Novaroma of Bruma
[75.4] Cheydinhal

[75.4.1] Bedroom Area

This entitles the bearer to one bedroom area on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Cheydinhal. Said area contains:

1 Bed Upgrade
1 Dresser
1 Chest
1 Table
1 Rug
Assorted Candles and Pottery

Borba's motto: "Nobody outsells me... nobody!"

Borba gra-Uzgash
Borba's Goods and Stores

[75.4.2] Dining Area

This entitles the bearer to one dining area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Cheydinhal. Said area contains:

2 Chairs
1 Set of Shelves
1 Rug
1 Thatched Basket
Assorted Pottery and Utensils

Borba's motto: "Nobody outsells me... nobody!"

Borba gra-Uzgash
Borba's Goods and Stores

[75.4.3] Dressing Area

This entitles the bearer to one dressing area on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Cheydinhal. Said area contains:

1 Clothing Cupboard
1 Dresser
1 Set of Shelves
1 Chair
1 Rug
Assorted Candles and Pottery

Borba's motto: "Nobody outsells me... nobody!"

Borba gra-Uzgash
Borba's Goods and Stores

[75.4.4] Kitchen Area

This entitles the bearer to one kitchen area on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Cheydinhal. Said area contains:

2 Cupboards (1 Food, 1 Drink)
1 Table
1 Rug
Assorted Pottery and Utensils

Borba's motto: "Nobody outsells me... nobody!"

Borba gra-Uzgash
Borba's Goods and Stores

[75.4.5] Lower Wall Hangings

This entitles the bearer to various wall hangings on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Cheydinhal. This includes:

5 Paintings
2 Tapestries

Borba's motto: "Nobody outsells me... nobody!"

Borba gra-Uzgash
Borba's Goods and Stores

[75.4.6] Sitting Area

This entitles the bearer to one sitting area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Cheydinhal. Said area contains:

2 Chairs
2 Small Tables
1 Bench
1 Rug
1 Barrel
Assorted Pottery

Borba's motto: "Nobody outsells me... nobody!"

Borba gra-Uzgash
Borba's Goods and Stores

[75.4.7] Storage Area

This entitles the bearer to one storage area on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Cheydinhal. Said area contains:

3 Barrels
2 Wood Crates
2 Chests
Assorted Candles

Borba's motto: "Nobody outsells me... nobody!"

Borba gra-Uzgash
Borba's Goods and Stores

[75.4.8] Study Area

This entitles the bearer to one study area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Cheydinhal. Said area contains:

1 Desk
1 Stool
1 Bookshelf
1 Rug
1 Thatched Basket
Assorted Desk Accessories

Borba's motto: "Nobody outsells me... nobody!"

Borba gra-Uzgash
Borba's Goods and Stores
[75.4.9] Upper Hall Area

This entitles the bearer to one upper hall area that will be promptly delivered to your home in Cheydinhal. Said area contains:

2 Wall-Mounted Candle Sconces
2 Sets of Shelves
2 Candle Holders
1 Bench
Assorted Pottery

Borba's motto: "Nobody outsells me... nobody!"

Borba gra-Uzgash
Borba's Goods and Stores

[75.4.10] Upper Wall Hangings

This entitles the bearer to various wall hangings on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Cheydinhal. This includes:

3 Tapestries
3 Paintings

Borba's motto: "Nobody outsells me... nobody!"

Borba gra-Uzgash
Borba's Goods and Stores
[75.5] Chorrol

[75.5.1] Bedroom Area

This entitles the bearer to one bedroom area on the middle level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Chorrol. Said area contains:

3 Chairs
1 Bed Upgrade
1 Set of Shelves
1 Dresser
1 Clothing Cupboard
1 Chest
1 Chandelier
1 Desk
1 Rug

Northern Goods and Trade
"A Stone's Throw from the Great Oak!"

Seed-Neeus, Proprietor

[75.5.2] Dining Area

This entitles the bearer to one dining area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Chorrol. Said area contains:

4 Chairs
1 Rug
1 Chandelier
1 Wine Rack
Silver Place Settings and Utensils

Northern Goods and Trade
"A Stone's Throw from the Great Oak!"

Seed-Neeus, Proprietor

[75.5.3] Dining Upgrade

This entitles the bearer to addons for the dining area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Chorrol. This includes:
3 Tables
2 Sets of Shelves
Assorted Pottery

Northern Goods and Trade
"A Stone's Throw from the Great Oak!"

Seed-Neeus, Proprietor

[75.5.4] Kitchen Area

This entitles the bearer to one kitchen area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Chorrol. Said area contains:

1 Cupboard
1 Barrel
1 Table
1 Stool
1 Candle Holder
Assorted Pottery

Northern Goods and Trade
"A Stone's Throw from the Great Oak!"

Seed-Neeus, Proprietor

[75.5.5] House Lower Wall Hangings

This entitles the bearer to various wall hangings on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Chorrol. This includes:

7 Paintings
5 Tapestries
2 Wall-Mounted Lanterns

Northern Goods and Trade
"A Stone's Throw from the Great Oak!"

Seed-Neeus, Proprietor
[75.5.6] Middle Wall Hangings

This entitles the bearer to various wall hangings on the middle level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Chorrol. This includes:

3 Paintings
3 Tapestries
1 Wall-Mounted Lantern

Northern Goods and Trade
"A Stone's Throw from the Great Oak!"

Seed-Neeus, Proprietor

[75.5.7] Servants Quarters

This entitles the bearer to one servants quarters on the middle level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Chorrol. Said area contains:

1 Bed
1 Clothing Cupboard
1 Table
1 Rug
1 Chandelier
Assorted Pottery

Northern Goods and Trade
"A Stone's Throw from the Great Oak!"

Seed-Neeus, Proprietor

[75.5.8] Sitting Area

This entitles the bearer to one sitting area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Chorrol. Said area contains:

3 Tables
2 Benches
2 Chairs
1 Small Table
1 Cupboard
1 Large Rug
Assorted Pottery
Northern Goods and Trade
"A Stone's Throw from the Great Oak!"

Seed-Neeus, Proprietor

[75.5.9] Study Area

This entitles the bearer to one study area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Chorrol. Said area contains:

2 Bookcases
2 Small Bookcases
1 Chair
1 Desk
1 Rug
Assorted Desk Accessories
Assorted Candles

Northern Goods and Trade
"A Stone's Throw from the Great Oak!"

Seed-Neeus, Proprietor

[75.5.10] Suite Area

This entitles the bearer to one master bedroom suite on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Chorrol. Said area contains:

4 Chairs
2 Tables
1 Large Bed
1 Large Rug
1 Rug
1 Dresser
1 Clothing Cupboard
1 Chandelier
Assorted Pottery

Northern Goods and Trade
"A Stone's Throw from the Great Oak!"

Seed-Neeus, Proprietor
[75.5.11] Upper Wall Hangings

This entitles the bearer to various wall hangings on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Chorrol. This includes:

4 Tapestries
3 Paintings

Northern Goods and Trade
"A Stone's Throw from the Great Oak!"

Seed-Neeus, Proprietor
[75.6] Deepscorn Hollow

[75.6.1] Bedroom Area

Your sleeping area will be delivered to Deepscorn Hollow as requested.

Sithis bind us.

Rowley Eardwulf

[75.6.2] Cattle Cell

Your cell will be delivered to Deepscorn Hollow as requested. Through my sources I have located suitable cattle that should meet your "needs".

Sithis bind us.

Rowley Eardwulf

[75.6.3] Dining Area

Your dining area will be delivered to Deepscorn Hollow as requested.

Sithis bind us.

Rowley Eardwulf

[75.6.4] Garden Receipt

Your Garden of Venomgrowth will be planted as you've requested.

Sithis bind us.

Rowley Eardwulf

[75.6.5] Storage Area

Your storage area will be delivered to Deepscorn Hollow as requested.

Sithis bind us.
Rowley Eardwulf

[75.6.6] Deepscorn Study Area

Your study area will be delivered to Deepscorn Hollow as requested.

Sithis bind us.

Rowley Eardwulf
[75.7] Frostcrag Spire

[75.7.1] Alchemy Lab

As requested, the Alchemy Lab will be delivered promptly to Frostcrag Spire and installed. I'm glad to see Frostcrag Spire once again has a worthy owner.

Warmest Regards!

Aurelinwae
Mystic Emporium, Market District
Imperial City

[75.7.2] Bedroom Area

As requested, the Bedroom Area will be delivered promptly to Frostcrag Spire and installed. I'm glad to see Frostcrag Spire once again has a worthy owner.

Warmest Regards!

Aurelinwae
Mystic Emporium, Market District
Imperial City

[75.7.3] Library Area

As requested, the Library Area will be delivered promptly to Frostcrag Spire and installed. I'm glad to see Frostcrag Spire once again has a worthy owner.

Warmest Regards!

Aurelinwae
Mystic Emporium, Market District
Imperial City

[75.7.4] Vault Area

As requested, the Vault Area will be delivered promptly to Frostcrag Spire and installed. I'm glad to see Frostcrag Spire once again has a worthy owner.

Warmest Regards!
Aurelinwae
Mystic Emporium, Market District
Imperial City
[75.8] Imperial City

[75.8.1] Dining Area

This entitles the bearer to one dining area that will be promptly delivered to your home in the Imperial City. Said area contains:

1 Set of Shelves
1 Rug
Assorted Pottery and Utensils
Assorted Candles

We hope you'll enjoy your home's new look!

Sergius Verus
Three Brothers Trade Goods, Imperial City

[75.8.2] Kitchen Area

This entitles the bearer to one kitchen area that will be promptly delivered to your home in the Imperial City. Said area contains:

1 Cupboard
1 Rug
1 Thatched Basket
Assorted Pottery

We hope you'll enjoy your home's new look!

Sergius Verus
Three Brothers Trade Goods, Imperial City

[75.8.3] Sitting Area

This entitles the bearer to one fireplace area that will be promptly delivered to your home in the Imperial City. Said area contains:

2 Chairs
1 Small Table

We hope you'll enjoy your home's new look!

Sergius Verus
Three Brothers Trade Goods, Imperial City
[75.8.4] Storage Area

This entitles the bearer to one storage area that will be promptly delivered to your home in the Imperial City. Said area contains:

2 Dressers
1 Chest
Assorted Candles

We hope you'll enjoy your home's new look!

Sergius Verus
Three Brothers Trade Goods, Imperial City

[75.8.5] Wall Hangings

This entitles the bearer to various wall hangings that will be promptly delivered to your home in the Imperial City. This set includes:

3 Tapestries
1 Painting

We hope you'll enjoy your home's new look!

Sergius Verus
Three Brothers Trade Goods, Imperial City
[75.9] Leyawiin

[75.9.1] Bedroom Area

This entitles the bearer to one bedroom area that will be promptly delivered to your home in Leyawiin. Said area contains:

1 Dresser
1 Privacy Screen
1 Rug
1 Set of Shelves
Assorted Candles

Come back and see us and again for the best goods and guarantees!

Gundalas
Best Goods and Guarantees

[75.9.2] Dining Area

This entitles the bearer to one dining area that will be promptly delivered to your home in Leyawiin. Said area contains:

3 Chairs
1 Rug
1 Candle
Assorted Pottery

Come back and see us and again for the best goods and guarantees!

Gundalas
Best Goods and Guarantees

[75.9.3] Kitchen Area

This entitles the bearer to one kitchen area that will be promptly delivered to your home in Leyawiin. Said area contains:

1 Cupboard
1 Large Table
Assorted Baskets

Come back and see us and again for the best goods and guarantees!
Gundalas
Best Goods and Guarantees

[75.9.4] Reading Area

This entitles the bearer to one reading area that will be promptly delivered to your home in Leyawiin. Said area contains:

3 Bookshelves
2 Candles on Holders
1 Chair
1 Small Table
1 Rug
1 Large Privacy Screen

Come back and see us and again for the best goods and guarantees!

Gundalas
Best Goods and Guarantees

[75.9.5] Storage Area

This entitles the bearer to one storage area that will be promptly delivered to your home in Leyawiin. Said area contains:

3 Barrels
1 Chest
1 Basket
1 Rug
1 Broom

Come back and see us and again for the best goods and guarantees!

Gundalas
Best Goods and Guarantees

[75.9.6] Study Area

This entitles the bearer to one study area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Leyawiin. Said area contains:

1 Desk
1 Chair
1 Bookshelf
1 Candelabra

Come back and see us and again for the best goods and guarantees!

Gundalas
Best Goods and Guarantees

[75.9.7] Wall Hangings

This entitles the bearer various wall hangings that will be promptly delivered to your home in Leyawiin. This includes:

5 Paintings
2 Tapestries

Come back and see us and again for the best goods and guarantees!

Gundalas
Best Goods and Guarantees
[75.10] Skingrad

[75.10.1] Balcony Area

This entitles the bearer to one balcony area overlooking the lower level that will be promptly
delivered to your home in Skingrad. Said area contains:

- 2 Stools
- 2 Rugs
- 1 Chair
- 1 Chest
- 1 Small Table
- Assorted Candles

We use only the finest wood and craftsmanship in all our products.
Please, come back soon!

Gunder
Colovian Traders

[75.10.2] Balcony Upgrade

This entitles the bearer to one upgrade to the balcony area overlooking the lower level that
will be promptly delivered to your home in Skingrad. This includes:

- 2 Large Shelves
- Assorted Candles
- Assorted Pottery

We use only the finest wood and craftsmanship in all our products.
Please, come back soon!

Gunder
Colovian Traders

[75.10.3] Bedroom Area

This entitles the bearer to one bedroom area on the upper level that will be promptly delivered
to your home in Skingrad. Said area contains:

- 2 Clothing Cupboards
- 1 Bed Upgrade
- 1 Set of Shelves
- 1 Chest
1 Dresser
1 Rug
1 Stool

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Please, come back soon!

Gunder
Colovian Traders

[75.10.4] Den Area

This entitles the bearer to one den area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Skingrad. Said area contains:

2 Dressers
1 Desk
1 Chair
1 Rug
Assorted Wall-Mounted Candle Sconces
Assorted Pottery

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Please, come back soon!

Gunter
Colovian Traders

[75.10.5] Dining Area

This entitles the bearer to one dining area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Skingrad. Said area contains:

3 Chairs
1 Set of Shelves
1 Chandelier
1 Large Rug
1 Candle Holder
Silver Place Settings and Utensils
Assorted Pottery

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Please, come back soon!

Gunter
Colovian Traders
[75.10.6] Display Case Upgrade

This entitles the bearer to several glass display cases in various parts of the house that will be promptly delivered to your home in Skingrad. This includes:

3 Large Display Cases
4 Small Display Cases
Assorted Candles

We use only the finest wood and craftsmanship in all our products.
Please, come back soon!

Gunder
Colovian Traders

[75.10.7] Kitchen Area

This entitles the bearer to one kitchen area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Skingrad. Said area contains:

2 Cupboards (1 Food, 1 Drink)
1 Table
1 Barrel
1 Set of Scales
Assorted Pottery

We use only the finest wood and craftsmanship in all our products.
Please, come back soon!

Gunder
Colovian Traders

[75.10.8] Lower Wall Hangings

This entitles the bearer to various wall hangings that will be promptly delivered to your home in Skingrad. This includes:

10 Paintings
5 Tapestries

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Please, come back soon!

Gunder
Colovian Traders

[75.10.9] Servants Quarters

This entitles the bearer to servants quarters on the basement level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Skingrad. Said area contains:

2 Stools
1 Privacy Screen
1 Bed
1 Clothing Cupboard
1 Table
1 Chest
Assorted Candles
Assorted Pottery

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Please, come back soon!

Gunder
Colovian Traders

[75.10.10] Sitting Area

This entitles the bearer to one sitting area on the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Skingrad. Said area contains:

2 Stools
2 Rugs
1 Bench
1 Set of Shelves
1 Table
Assorted Pottery

We use only the finest wood and craftsmanship in all our products.
Please, come back soon!

Gunder
Colovian Traders

[75.10.11] Storage Area

This entitles the bearer to one storage area on the basement level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Skingrad. Said area contains:
4 Crates
4 Barrels
3 Chests
2 Wine Racks
1 Set of Shelves
Assorted Candle Holders

We use only the finest wood and craftsmanship in all our products.
Please, come back soon!

Gunder
Colovian Traders

[75.10.12] Study Area

This entitles the bearer to one study area on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Skingrad. Said area contains:

2 Bookshelves
1 Executive Desk
1 Chair
1 Chest
Decorative Mini-Tapestries

We use only the finest wood and craftsmanship in all our products.
Please, come back soon!

Gunder
Colovian Traders

[75.10.13] Upper Hall Area

This entitles the bearer to one upper hall area overlooking the lower level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Skingrad. Said area contains:

2 Chests
2 Chairs
1 Set of Shelves
1 Small Table
1 Rug
Assorted Candles
Assorted Pottery

We use only the finest wood and craftsmanship in all our products.
Please, come back soon!
Gunder
Colovian Traders

[75.10.14] Upper Sitting Area

This entitles the bearer to one sitting area on the upper level that will be promptly delivered to your home in Skingrad. Said area contains:

2 Stools
2 Chairs
1 Table
1 Chandelier
Assorted Pottery

We use only the finest wood and craftsmanship in all our products.
Please, come back soon!

Gunder
Colovian Traders

[75.10.15] Upper Wall Hangings

This entitles the bearer to various wall hangings that will be promptly delivered to your home in Skingrad. This includes:

6 Tapestries
5 Paintings

We use only the finest wood and craftsmanship in all our products.
Please, come back soon!

Gunder
Colovian Traders
[76] How Orsinium Passed to the Orcs*

See vol. I.
[77] A Hypothetical Treachery*

See vol. I.
[78] Ice and Chitin*

See vol. I.
[79] Imbel Genealogy

The Imbel family traces lineage strictly through the male line of heirs, as any right-thinking nobility would. Therefore this family genealogy does not record the inconsequential female offspring.

Artan Imbel 1000 - 1057, Son of Rosten Imbel  
Married Gustie Karna 1031  
Buried in Vardenfell near Suran

Faris Zeetl 1030 -1101, Son of Artan Imbel  
Unmarried  
Whereabouts unknown

Faren Imbel 1037 - 1056, Son of Artan Imbel  
Married Janiy Ulura 1053  
Buried in Vardenfell near Suran

Corben Imbel 1053 - 1152, Out of wedlock son of Faren Imbel  
Unmarried  
Buried in Bravil

Artan Imbel II 1079 - 1152, Bastard son of Corben Imbel  
Married Eadith Gerimania 1100  
Buried in Bravil

Faren Imbel II 1084 - 1085, Bastard son of Corben Imbel  
Buried in Skingrad

Corben Imbel II 1086 - 1167, Bastard son of Corben Imbel  
Married Faith Horr 1110  
Buried in Bruma
The moons and stars were hidden from sight, making that particular quiet night especially dark. The town guard had to carry torches to make their rounds; but the man who came to call at my chapel carried no light with him. I came to learn that Movarth Piquine could see in the dark almost as well as the light - an excellent talent, considering his interests were exclusively nocturnal.

One of my acolytes brought him to me, and from the look of him, I at first thought he was in need of healing. He was pale to the point of opalescence with a face that looked like it had once been very handsome before some unspeakable suffering. The dark circles under his eyes bespoke exhaustion, but the eyes themselves were alert, intense, almost insane.

He quickly dismissed my notion that he himself was ill, though he did want to discuss a specific disease.

"Vampirism," he said, and then paused at my quizzical look. "I was told that you were someone I should seek out for help understanding it."

"Who told you that?" I asked with a smile.

"Tissina Gray."

I immediately remembered her. A brave, beautiful knight who had needed my assistance separating fact from fiction on the subject of the vampire. It had been two years, and I had never heard whether my advice had proved effective.

"You've spoken to her? How is her ladyship?" I asked.

"Dead," Movarth replied coldly, and then, responding to my shock, he added to perhaps soften the blow. "She said your advice was invaluable, at least for the one vampire. When last I talked to her, she was tracking another. It killed her."

"Then the advice I gave her was not enough," I sighed. "Why do you think it would be enough for you?"

"I was a teacher once myself, years ago," he said. "Not in a university. A trainer in the Fighters Guild. But I know that if a student doesn't ask the right questions, the teacher cannot be responsible for his failure. I intend to ask you the right questions."

And that he did. For hours, he asked questions and I answered what I could, but he never volunteered any information about himself. He never smiled. He only studied me with those intense eyes of his, committing every word I said to memory.
Finally, I turned the questioning around. "You said you were a trainer at the Fighters Guild. Are you on an assignment for them?"

"No," he said curtly, and finally I could detect some weariness in those feverish eyes of his. "I would like to continue this tomorrow night, if I could. I need to get some sleep and absorb this."

"You sleep during the day," I smiled.

To my surprise, he returned the smile, though it was more of a grimace. "When tracking your prey, you adapt their habits."

The next day, he did return with more questions, these ones very specific. He wanted to know about the vampires of eastern Skyrim. I told him about the most powerful tribe, the Volkihar, paranoid and cruel, whose very breath could freeze their victims' blood in the veins. I explained to him how they lived beneath the ice of remote and haunted lakes, never venturing into the world of men except to feed.

Movarth Piquine listened carefully, and asked more questions into the night, until at last he was ready to leave.

"I will not see you for a few days," he said. "But I will return, and tell you how helpful your information has been."

True to his word, the man returned to my chapel shortly after midnight four days later. There was a fresh scar on his cheek, but he was smiling that grim but satisfied smile of his.

"Your advice helped me very much," he said. "But you should know that the Volkihar have an additional ability you didn't mention. They can reach through the ice of their lakes without breaking it. It was quite a nasty surprise, being grabbed from below without any warning."


"I don't believe in luck. I believe in knowledge and training. Your information helped me, and my skill at melee combat sealed the bloodsucker's fate. I've never believed in weaponry of any kind. Too many unknowns. Even the best swordsman has created a flawed blade, but you know what your body is capable of. I know I can land a thousand blows without losing my balance, provided I get the first strike."

"The first strike?" I murmured. "So you must never be surprised."

"That is why I came to you," said Movarth. "You know more than anyone alive about these monsters, in all their cursed varieties across the land. Now you must tell me about the vampires of northern Valenwood."

I did as he asked, and once again, his questions taxed my knowledge. There were many tribes to cover. The Bonsamu who were indistinguishable from Bosmer except when seen by candlelight. The Keerilth who could disintegrate into mist. The Yekef who swallowed men whole. The dread Telboth who preyed on children, eventually taking their place in the family, waiting patiently for years before murdering them all in their unnatural hunger.
Once again, he bade me farewell, promising to return in a few weeks, and once again, he returned as he said, just after midnight. This time, Movarth had no fresh scars, but he again had new information.

"You were wrong about the Keerilth being unable to vaporize when pushed underwater," he said, patting my shoulder fondly. "Fortunately, they cannot travel far in their mist form, and I was able to track it down."

"It must have surprised it fearfully. Your field knowledge is becoming impressive," I said. "I should have had an acolyte like you decades ago."

"Now, tell me," he said. "Of the vampires of Cyrodiil."

I told him what I could. There was but one tribe in Cyrodiil, a powerful clan who had ousted all other competitors, much like the Imperials themselves had done. Their true name was unknown, lost in history, but they were experts at concealment. If they kept themselves well-fed, they were indistinguishable from living persons. They were cultured, more civilized than the vampires of the provinces, preferring to feed on victims while they were asleep, unaware.

"They will be difficult to surprise," Movarth frowned. "But I will seek one out, and tell you what I learn. And then you will tell me of the vampires of High Rock, and Hammerfell, and Elsweyr, and Black Marsh, and Morrowind, and the Sumurset Isles, yes?"

I nodded, knowing then that this was a man on an eternal quest. He wouldn't be satisfied with but the barest hint of how things were. He needed to know it all.

He did not return for a month, and on the night that he did, I could see his frustration and despair, though there were no lights burning in my chapel.

"I failed," he said, as I lit a candle. "You were right. I could not find a single one."

I brought the light up to my face and smiled. He was surprised, even stunned by the pallor of my flesh, the dark hunger in my ageless eyes, and the teeth. Oh, yes, I think the teeth definitely surprised the man who could not afford to be surprised.

"I haven't fed in seventy-two hours," I explained, as I fell on him. He did not land the first blow or the last.
[81] Imperial Charter of the Guild of Mages*

See vol. I.
See vol. I.
[83] Incident in Necrom

See vol. I.
Entry 1:
When I took on the role of Chieftain of Thirsk, when I accepted the beautiful Svenja Snow-Song as my advisor, and then my bride, I never imagined how quickly my life would change.

I went to the isle of Solstheim for some much needed rest, and found it in the mead-soaked halls of Thirsk. But when I met Svenja, my sweet Svenja, I became entangled in an epic story the likes of which I had only read about in fables and children's tales.

Svenja told me of the fateful night when a hideous creature known as the Uderfrykte attacked the mead hall, killing rampantly, leaving her the only survivor. The creature was slain by a champion, and Thirsk had its new chieftain, but it wasn't long before they moved on to some new challenge, some new adventure.

And that's where I entered the tale. Svenja Snow-Song, with her ice-blue eyes and flaxon hair, gained my love. Soon after, I became her husband...and the mead hall's new chieftain. In truth, I had never been happier. But Svenja, my dear wife, existed in quiet misery, constantly haunted by the memory of the Uderfrykte, and the damage it had wrought on the mead hall, and the people she had loved. Night after night, my dear woke up screaming, her face etched in horror and a single word issuing from her lips -- "Uderfrykte!"

I feared for my wife's sanity and happiness, but it was she who found a solution to her problem. As a warrior, she told me, she must confront her fear. She must defeat it. The Uderfrykte was dead, yes, but where did it come from? Was it unique? Would more of the creatures come, and wreak havoc once again? Would I, her loving husband, be killed? And so she corresponded with explorers and researchers all across Tamriel, until she found the answer she had been looking for. The Uderfrykte was in fact NOT unique, but the offspring of an ancient Uderfrykte Matron. In order to end the nightmares, in order to prevent any more destruction, we would need to hunt down and kill the Uderfrykte Matron, no matter where or how.

Entry 2:
By Ysmir, we've been searching. And searching. And searching some more. But finally it came -- the lucky break we had been hoping for. The creature has been spotted by a shepherd in the remote highlands of Skyrim!

Entry 3:
We found its trail and tracked it for days, crossing the border into the Imperial Province. Here in the frigid mountains, we met with a local hunter who tried to warn us away from the area, citing an old legend about a deadly creature known as the Horror of Dive Rock -- a monster credited with the slaying of over a dozen people, and just as much cattle. Could this creature be the very Uderfrykte Matron we seek? Perhaps, unlike its child on Solstheim, the Matron moves from location to location, and its this mobility that has thus far prevented its killing or capture?
Entry 4:
we have made camp at Dive Rock, reportedly the highest natural observation point in all of Cyrodiil. From here we can see for miles! So we'll keep watch, night and day. We're close, so very close. Svenja and I can feel it in our very bones. Indeed, Svenja has always been particularly in tune with such things, and is convinced the Uderfykte Matron is close.

Entry 5:
Svenja has grown tired of my constant writing, but this journal will serve as a record of our travels and defeat against the Uderfykte. She's staring at me angrily, impatiently, right now as I write, but this entry is too important -- finally, on this third day of watching, we've spotted it -- the Uderfykte Matron! It is unlike anything we have ever lain eyes on, a giant, troll-like beast that seems to waver and shimmer in the cold -- like the feral form of winter itself! We're off now to trudge down the mountain, weapons in hand, and give the Horror of Dive Rock its due!

Entry 6:
Failure and horror! We engaged the monster with all the force we could muster, but it was a travesty beyond comprehension. Svenja... My beautiful Svenja! My dear wife was killed instantly, consumed by the beast nearly whole! And though it shames me now to write these words, I could think of nothing more at the time than escape. I took flight, returning here to our camp on Dive Rock, to collect my thoughts and nerve.

I haven't much time. After this quick entry I will march out and meet the Uderfykte Matron once more -- it is sure to track me back to this campsite anyway, so our confrontation is inevitable. Can I even hope to defeat this monstrosity? One thing is certain -- Svenja and I came hastily, unprepared. My steel axe? Useless. My dear wife's Frostwyrm Bow? Completely ineffective (and swallowed whole, still in Svenja's hand...).

The beast appears to be a creature of the cold, and is likely nearly completely resistant to it. I would attack with fire if I had any on hand. But there is no time. No time to travel to a mages guild and procure an enchanted blade, or hire the services of a sorcerer. My steel axe will have to do. And so I return to battle now, and hope beyond hope that I may slay the wretched monster that has brought so much grief to so many people. And if not, I take comfort in knowing I will soon rejoin my beautiful bride in the gilded halls of Sovngarde.

If someone is reading this hastily written journal, I am likely dead, and pray to Ysmir that you have had more luck against the creature than I.

Agnar the Unwavering,
Chieftain of Thirsk
[84.2] Akaviri Diary Translation

Day Three

It is with a heavy heart and a trembling hand that I pen this latest entry. It has been several days since I have seen anyone else on the road from our garrison at Grey Ridge. The road is lonely and treacherous. I am rationing my supplies to prepare for a tough path ahead. As long as Reman Cyrodiil's army hasn't located our headquarters at Pale Pass, the journey should be fairly uneventful. I admit, I am nervous. It is an honor to be selected to carry these orders to our fort, but sending me alone is a calculated risk. While it is not my own life I am worried about, it is the importance of the contents of the orders that aggrieves me. If they are somehow lost, the fort will not know that their supplies are going to be delayed by a month. Without that knowledge, the fort may choose to press the attacks on the front line as their supplies dwindle. They are counting on those supplies to be there sooner. I must not fail getting this message there. The slate rock that the orders have been carved upon for safety weighs me down; it is a constant reminder of the more than physical burden that I carry.

Day Seven

It has been two days, and I have finally arrived at Dragonclaw Rock. The huge formation is a welcome and invigorating sight. The giant stone appears to reach down from the north and strike at the heart of Remus' forces like our armies have been doing for the better part of a year now. I have still encountered no one else on this trail. I hope that as I head due west along the narrow path, I will find someone who can give me some news as to how our men are faring in the war.

Day Eight

After winding my way westward, I have come within sight of The Sentinel: a huge statue placed there by some unknown artist many years ago. It stands watch pointing north, as if daring anyone to cross the borders into the Imperial nation. Remus would be quite angry if he knew we used this very statue as a waypoint into his domain. Last night, I encountered another one of our messengers who had been beset by a pack of mountain wolves. His leg was hurt badly, but I managed to help heal it with an ampoule of medicine I carried with me. He said his name was Sylaj, and he was on his way from Pale Pass to request more supplies. I discussed with him the irony of our meeting, and he decided to travel with me back to the fort since his mission would be needless. We plan to leave at nightfall.

Day Nine

I am using much of my remaining strength writing this. As we had made our way north from The Sentinel, we were attacked by perhaps the same pack of wolves that had attacked Sylaj. He had chased them off earlier after being bitten, but now that they had tasted blood, they had returned in greater number. Fighting back to back, Sylaj and I slew at least 8 of the beasts, but not before one of them clawed my gut and left a terrible wound. We were able to drive them off, but now I am bleeding badly, and the only medicine I had I gave to Sylaj. We have decided to continue north until we reach the portal to the Serpent's Trail and seek cover inside. I will try to write more soon, but I must sleep. I am so very tired.
Day Eleven

This is the last entry I shall be able to write. We entered the Serpent's Trail nearly a day ago, seeking shelter from the elements and the wolves. What we did not foresee was the creatures that had decided to make the Serpent's Trail their home. I did not see them clearly, but they were huge and strong. Sylaj died instantly as one of them cleaved off his head with a single stroke. There were three of these huge, ugly man-like creatures. I ran as fast as I dared through the dark tunnels trying to escape. But as I fled, one of them hurled a boulder at me and struck me square in the back. I managed to crawl through a smaller opening and escape the lumbering monsters, but I soon realized that crawling is all I would be able to do. I think the boulder shattered my spine. I can no longer feel my legs. My wound from the wolf attack has reopened and I have lost much blood. I fear that this is as far as I shall be able to go. I have failed my mission. I have been unable to get these orders to the fort at Pale Pass. I am so close, yet it may as well be leagues away since I can no longer walk and my strength is draining. If a fellow messenger or soldier picks up this diary, please get the orders to the fort before it is too late. And please tell my wife, Vata, that Xhaferi will always love her.
Second Seed, Tirdas
Traelius surprised me when he brought me to this place. It is quite beautiful here. This will be a much-needed vacation from the city.

I have found the cool water from the stream nearby to be quite refreshing. The spot above the waterfall is a great area to clear my thoughts; I shall bathe there frequently.

7th Mid Year, Turdas
His continual reference of this place as our 'home' is beginning to annoy me. How do I tell him that it is not my wish to spend the rest of my days here?

11th Mid Year, Morndas
Traelius informed me that he plans on making this dwelling our permanent home. I will try and convince him otherwise; I do not see us living here for the rest of our lives!

15th Mid Year, Fredas
This place is beginning to feel like a cage. I need to get out. I am in much need of fresh air, of sunlight, of life. I am going to try and find some way out of here so I might be able to grab a bit of freedom from time to time.

20th Mid Year, Middas
I have been spending more time at my daily baths scouting the area below, trying to find safe passage. I do not think he suspects anything, so I will continue my search.

22nd Mid Year, Fredas
I climbed down the cliff face today and into the cavern below to scout out a safe passage. I was careless in my steps and alerted a nearby creature. I quickly retreated up the walls and bruised my arms and legs in the process. I do not think Traelius has noticed the bruises, as he has not mentioned anything about them as of yet. I need to be more careful.

24th Mid Year, Sundas
I think I have found a way around the creatures! Yes, I am certain. Before I try to escape I will attempt to convince him to leave this place once and for all.

27th Mid Year, Middas
My confession of last night to Traelius worked -- he is letting me return to the city! In some ways I am sad. Sad that I will not see him for a while, for I know he loves me and I, he. I just cannot stay here for the rest of my days. I leave as soon as I am finished packing.

Turdas
Traelius!
Why do you not come for me?
I am hurt.
I am scared.
I scream your name, I beg of you to come for me, but I do not see you.
Why do you leave me here, alone and injured?
I am at your mercy.

Loredas
After three days of yelling for help near the waterfall with no response from Traelius, I have given up hope. With my fractured leg, I cannot possibly go on. I can neither go forward nor return. I can only suffer.

Morndas? Tirdas?
I managed to drag myself down the stream a bit, but cannot go on. It is not so bad. I have now what I have been craving for a long time -- freedom, although not as I had planned. Nonetheless, I am free. It is not so bad. The cool water from the stream is quite refreshing after all.
I've planted the seeds of the Drinkers. Soon I shall know if my theories hold true.

The first shoots have appeared. I must make sure to continue the precise schedule of nutrient solutions.

Small Drinker fronds are clearly visible. This is a critical time in their development. I'm almost out of rat blood. I'll have to catch some more of the filthy beggars.

The young plants are juveniles now. I can see them waving as if in a breeze, although the air in my cellar is still as death.

I'm having a hard time catching any more cats. I may have to start using dogs. The damn Drinker plants have a voracious appetite.

One of them cut me today. I'll have to be more careful.

My creations are refusing to feed. As an experiment I offered a drop of my own blood, which one of them drank greedily. The others Drinkers are beginning to wither.

I collected a bucket of human blood from the healers. I had to pay her an exhorbitant amount to keep her tongue still. The Drinkers are doing much better. Am I doing the right thing? The benefit of these plants to all of Cyrodiil is beyond doubt, but the price may be too high.

It is one of the most difficult decisions of my life. I have destroyed my notes for how to hybridize Drinkers. I set the trays on the roof where the sun could strike them. An hour after sunrise they were all dead. My attempt to create a hybrid of vampire and plant has failed. They were just too dangerous.

Two parts grave dust, one part ash salts. Mix with human blood. Expose to two hours of moonlight each night.
12th of Rains Hand: Today I begin my great project on the spontaneous generation of life. I expect that there will be difficult days ahead, but if I succeed, my place among the great mages of history will be assured.

23rd Rains Hand: Still not able to even reproduce Empedocles's results with maggots. I'm beginning to think his reputation is overblown.

3rd Second Seed, Tirdas: Empedocles was right! The mistranslation of "sunlit" to "scorching heat" explains my earlier problems. From now on I will work only in the original daedric, despite the risks.

Fredas (mid Second Seed?): Local peasants came by to complain about the noise. I promised them that all that was behind me. A pleasant if dull-witted crew.

Morndas (I think): The experiment today went better than expected. Although the number of rats produced was surprising, they were all remarkably docile, just as Malham predicted (although only I have ever proven it empirically!).

Middas: Villagers again. More complaints. You would think they'd never seen a rat before! They are starting to become a real nuisance.

I've run into a terrible snag. Galerion's Ninth Law appears immutable! If the total life generated cannot exceed the cube of the source, this line of research may prove a dead end. I must reread Empedocles for any hint that he was able to circumvent this barrier.

Next day: The locals are becoming insufferable! While I was walking in the woods, some of them broke into my laboratory and spilled the solution I was preparing -- nearly a full quart of purified imp gall wasted! They did not seem to grasp the absurdity of a crowd of unwashed peasants with dung on their boots complaining about the smell. It is well past time I did something about this problem.

Two days later: I dug up the notes from my permanent invisibility thesis. No time like the present to put theory into practice!

Today: The spell worked! Not perfect invisibility, of course (Vanto's Third Law), but it was more powerful than I expected. And there were none of the side effects that Professor Traven had predicted. Ha ha, even in my youth I was already outstripping my elders. Now I can get back to my real work in peace.
Arbiter's Log

Neophyte overheard questioning mandates of our Lord Sheogorath, ten days in the pit.
Proselytizer admitted guilt of thieving bread from pantry. No punishment given.
Two Missionaries conspired to incriminate a suspected heretic -- commendation issued
A neophyte accidentally fell into the pit sweeping our chambers the other day. Besides nearly snapping her leg, she had to wait the better part of the morning for the patrolman to discover and release her. Speak with courier about having duplicate key forged by smithy in Crucible.
Neophyte mistakenly summoned an atronach during evening meal. Two days in the pit.
[84.7] A Bloody Journal

[Many of the pages of this journal have been shredded or are too covered in blood to be legible.]

Sundas

It has been two weeks since Vitellus' death, and I fear that Mother will never truly accept the fact that he is gone. She visits his grave nightly, though I do not believe she knows I have seen her go. She speaks to him there, apologizing for sending him on his last mission. I know in my heart that he would have sought no other end. Better to die fighting for the honor of the Guild than to waste away in a life of relative safety.

....

Middas

Another day, another day of barracks duty. It's been a full month since I've been given a contract, any contract. My time is spent polishing weapons and training with the new boots. Eduard and I have spoken at length about this. His reasoning, as always, is sound. Mother fears for my safety, and for the safety of the Guild. This is a terrible weight for her to bear. Perhaps when our numbers have risen, she will once again feel comfortable allowing me to perform my duties.

...

Morndas

Thank the gods for Eduard. I fear without him I would go mad. His constant companionship keeps me hopeful that I will one day be returned to active duty. Until then, we have each other. He has willingly forgone lucrative contracts in order to help me pass the days. A truer companion I could not imagine.

...

Loredas

Some days I question whether or not I am fit to be a Guild member. Perhaps Mother's fears for my safety not because of Viranus, but because of my own abilities. Am I a failure in her eyes? Does she believe me to be less a man than Viranus?

...

Turdas

Freedom! Finally, a contract! I was sent with one of our newer members to investigate a disappearance in Nonwyll Cavern. It was nothing glamorous, but I am glad for the
opportunity to see some action. I doubt, however, that Mother even knew about the contract, as the order came directly from Oreyn. It is good to see that he still has faith in my skills, and my ability to keep that new boot alive.

... Loredas

Again, nothing. It seems my only hope is that Oreyn will find another contract for me, though contracts are harder and harder to come by with the increasing presence of the Blackwood Company in Cyrodiil. Eduard and I spoke of them over breakfast this morning. He believes them to be nothing more than a rogue mercenary band. I fear he is as naïve as he is beautiful. The Blackwood Company bears watching.

... [date obscured]

I've been given another contract, clearing out some trolls that have been troubling miners. And Eduard is to accompany me! I can't think of better news. This is exactly what I need.

... [date obscured]

Eduard is dead, along with the rest. I fear I will follow shortly. The fighting grew heavy with the trolls, but was under control. Then came the Blackwood Company. They were like madmen. Trolls, men, mer fell to their blades. It was inhuman

[text unreadable]

... [text unreadable]

Blackwood Company gone quick as they came

Eduard fought bravely. All did. Rest now

... I hear trolls

I'm sorry Mother
I decided that I had better start a new journal today. I haven't seen Ardwe in four months since he began restoring Ebrocca, and he's finally asked me to come spend time with him while he finishes the work. I know the death of his mother was traumatizing. I'm just glad that he'll finally allow me to be near enough to try and console him.

Cousin Garwedh should have returned from Ebrocca in time for my own departure today, but he must have been delayed. I was hoping to ask him about the conditions of the crypt in case I ought to bring any special supplies with me. No matter, I'm sure I can run such errands after my arrival.

I'm amazed at the scope of Ardwe's accomplishments here. The crypt is massive beyond anything I had expected. I realized that the death of his mother would appoint him Clanfather, but I didn't anticipate him to take the role so seriously. He feels a sense of duty in establishing this as a place to honor the family. I'm worried he may be distracting himself from mourning his mother, but I'm still proud of all he's done.

I'm glad Ardwe called me out here. He must have been so lonely by himself before now. He regularly complains of how empty this place feels. It must be difficult to pour so much effort into a thing that only sees use in a time of grief.

Today the supply wagon brought with it a bed for Ardwe and myself. I suppose he was trying to surprise me -- or at least quiet my complaints of using bedrolls to sleep on the stone floors, but I don't like the precedent this establishes. I was hoping we would move back to New Sheoth before his birthday celebration next month.

Why haven't we gone home yet? I've been here months, and I'm sick of the arid climate between these rock walls. I haven't seen or heard from the architect in weeks, and the sounds of construction have all but stopped. What possible reason is there to stay here?

I'm sure that Ardwe's sending out correspondence, but he doesn't admit it when I confront him. Just two nights ago, I was sure I heard a voice calling out from somewhere below, and not the usual rasp of our Argonian courier. If he won't tell me, then I'll just have to look through his drawers before he wakes tomorrow.
3E 286… or thereabouts

I’m findin’ it unlikely that anyone will be findin’ this journal, but if they do, know that here be written the last words of the great Captain Torradan ap Dugal, Scourge of the Abecean Sea, Terror of the Gold Coast, Cutthroat of Hunding Bay, and Lord Captain of the Red Sabre - the finest band o’ buccaneers and pirates e’er to sail Tamriel.

I ain’t a man with much use for words -- I ain’t never been to no academys, and I ain’t never wrote no books. Words ain’t never earned me no gold, so theys worthless to me - that's why ye have quartermasters and first mates. But I'm gonna be settin' my last thoughts down here on paper, cause I ain't got much time left here and it’s ev’ry old man’s right to have his words heard.

Now, me business was fightin’, sailin’, and lootin’. I became a leader of sailin’ men, the most feared in hist’ry, or so they tells me. Now, b’fore ye be gettin’ ahead o’ yerself, let me be warnin ye that me tale does not end well as I’m sure ya can see from wherever ye found me rotten bones in this gods cursed cavern.

I was born in a little town on the north coast o’ Skyrim called Dunbarrow. Me mother was a wench and me father was a right bastard. The only thing that either of ‘em e’er did fer me was doin’ me the favor of sellin’ me off to a sea cap’n when I were nine. That cap’n, he taught me e’ry thing I'd e'er need to know about sailin’, and a few things about the rest too.

Ye see, he were a smuggler, an’ he taught me all about smugglin’ and avoidin’ the Imperial Navy as he run the skooma route from Daggerfall to Vivec. Shame he were caught and hung. He were as close to a daddy as this ol’ pirate e’er knew, closer n’ that bastard what sold me off e’er were, that’s fer sure.
We cut his throat and tossed his worthless carcass to the depths for Herm'us Mora to feast on. The rest of us put keel to this mudhole and broke for the nearest cove to lay low for a while.

Now, the thing that I learned about war is that it's profit'ble for just about everyone except for the poor bastards that actually have to go an' fight it. While the Navy were busy puttin' down the rev'lution, they were too busy to worry about a bunch o' pirates runnin' up and down the Gold Coast. And even better for us, the Navy was needin' a stream of supplies up in High Rock to fight and dinna have the ships to escort 'em.

In case you don't be knowin', cargo vessels without escort is a pirate's best friend.

In just a couple of years, I had ev'ry buccaneer from here to Valenwood flyin' under me flag. We had dozens of ships and crew and more men joined on e'ry day. Soldiers and sailors, castoffs from the war, escaped prisoners -- they were the best cutthroats and sons o' whores that a pirate cap'n could ever wish for. It brings a tear to me eye to think of 'em all.

But even better than the men were the ships: Captured navy cutters. Refitted priv'teer Galleons. Even had a few of them bosmer ships with the funny living sails in my fleet. The finest ship I saved for meself. “The Black Flag”. Ye'll find her rotting hull around here. She don't look like much now, but I can tell ye that in her day, there weren't no vessel she couldn't out run.

All these men and ships, we called ourselves the Red Sabre. The merchant ships called us death on the seas.

We gots to be so feared that most crews jus' abandoned ship when they seen our flag on the horizon. With no Navy to stop us, Captain Torradan ap Dugal and the Red Sabre was known all over the east.

Now, I ain't one to brag, but the empire had a bounty on me of forty thousand coins. Now that’s somthin' to be proud of. A' course, the poor bastards couldn't never collect on it. Anvil being the wretched den that it is - an mos' sailors there worked for me anyhow -- the Legion couldn’t never get no one to give me up.

I wish those days coulda lasted fore'er, but you know how it is, friend. Ain't nothing good can ever last.
the war, that fat pompuss bastard decided to come down here to Anvil and take up port in my town, lookin' to break up the Red Sabre. The Emperor gave him whatev'r he asked for to campaign again' us, despite the coffers bein' empty from the war in High Rock.

When Umbranox couldn't get what he needed from my men in Anvil, he set out lookin' all over the Abecean Sea for the Black Flag. There are hundreds of islands In the Abecean, and he landed a crew on each one. He rooted out my men when he could find them, hung those who weren't willin' to go peacefully and jailed those who laid down arms.

No matter for many ships and men it cost him, he kept comin' with more and more. We couldn't never get ahead of him and we couldn't never mount a counter attack. It took him four years and a hell of a lot of ships, but that sea rat finally tracked me down.

It were me own fault, anyway. If I never made the mistake I made, he'dve died before he found me. But a man has to stand up for his mistakes, no matter if it cost him. Besides, ain't like I’ll be foolin' ye, since yer likely starin' at me bones as yer readin' this.

Umbranox had his main force out of port followin' a lead that I planted. I set sail back to Anvil, hopin' to catch him off guard, capture the boats he left behind, and fight him with his own ships in Anvil Bay. Ha! Can you imagine the look on his pig's face if it'dve worked? I thought I’d finally get the whoreson to show his face in a proper fight. I shoulda known, but he had men waitin' there for me.

We fought like hell, but we were trapped in the bay. The Navy men set the town on fire to keep us from fleeing onto land. I’m sure that the fine citizens of Cyrodiil dinna weep for the torching of a town of thieves.

The main force of Imperial dogs held us until Umbranox showed up in his flagship. Umbranox fought me to the last ship and in the end, the Bay was filled with sunken and burning boats. If I weren’t fightin' for me life, I’dve probably thought it were beautiful. So, the Black Flag and Umbranox’s rickety tub were the only ones that were still floatin' and fightin' when dawn come. So, I did what any pirate with sense would do - I tried to run.

Now understand, I’m a right bastard in me own way. I'm a pirate, a murderer, a thief, and I certainly ain’t never believed in a fair fight. But there's a line and an unspoken code between sailin' men and Umbranox went too far. He had mages on his ship. Mages ain't never been allowed on my boats. They’re no good, bad luck, an' I don’t trust 'em. Turns out, I was right.

I cut across the south side of the bay, along the huge cliff wall that used to be there. I had me helmsman stay as close as he could to the cursed cliff. I could hear those mages from the deck of Umbranox's ship, yellin' some nonsense into the wind. A few rocks fell onto my deck, a few more, and then the whole bloody cliff came crashin’ down on top o' me.

Now, don't you worry, I didn't die just then. The cliff collapsed around the ship, makin' this damned cavern. Better the it just fell on us, but no. It sealed the Black Flag, her crew, and me under tons of rock.

We were buggered.
I seen my own blood more times than I cold ever count, but seein' the ragged mess that just come up out of me lungs just now is the only time I ev'r been afraid of it. I guess I should be gettin' to the last bit o' me story.

Me and me crew were trapped down here, never to see the light again or some rot. We tried diggin' out. We tried blastin' out. We tried callin' to the nines and the daedric princes for help. Nothin' worked. Some o' the men went crazy when we figured out that there were no gettin' out, but most of us just accepted what fate had dealt us. We made the hulk o' the Black Flag into the best home that we could and tried makin' a life of it down here.

We had plenty of stores with us and since most of the crew were killed in the fight, it was more than enough to go around. I will tell you though, that you ain't known suffering until you ate nothin' but hard rations for twenty-some years. All the pain I ever caused anyone has been paid back to me tenfold in havin' to eat the same filth every day for the whole time I been down here.

Then Grim died off.

Grim was the first and one by one, the boys had been droppin' off. They all got the same sickness I ended up with. We buried 'em when we could, threw 'em in the water when we didn't have strength to bury 'em. Finally, we jus' made 'em walk to the far side of the cavern a couple of days before the sickness ran its course.

I'm the last, an' I suppose that makes sense. The great cap'n Dugal, defeated by Fasil Umbranox and buried alive forever. I wonder what became of Anvil. Prob'ly let it burn and swept the ashes into the sea. Umbranox prob'ly went back to the Imperial City to pat himself on the back and be rewarded with lands an' titles.

Like I said way back in the beginnin', I don't expect nobody to ever read this but if by chance someone does find my carcass down here in this pit, do an old seaman a favor. Track down whatever descendents that fat old sack Umbranox may have and tell 'em that Torradan ap Dugal says hello.
[This is apparently the diary of a young Argonian named Dar-Ma. Most of the book deals with personal but mundane details of her life in Chorrol. The only interesting entry is the last one:]

Arrived in Hackdirt after dark, due to Blossom throwing a shoe on the way -- the road was REALLY rough! hardly more than a track -- doesn't anyone else ever come down here?!

The trader's shop was closed, and she wouldn't come to the door even though I could see a light in the upstairs window -- RUDE!!! But at least this inn was open (although the proprietor is kind of creepy -- kept giving me these weird grins when he thought I wasn't looking -- ugh.) And what's wrong with his face??

Seems like I'm the only one staying here tonight. I didn't see much of the town since it was already dark, but I admit to being kind of spooked -- but I'll never admit that to Mother! Or she'd never let me go on another one of these deliveries. She still thinks I'm just a baby (she would probably say "hatchling," and in front of my friends too!) Remember to ask her about the creepy innkeeper when I get home.

Well, the candle is almost burned down (they don't even provide a lantern in this horrible old inn!), so I guess I'd better try to get some sleep. If I CAN even sleep with all the creaking in this old place! I keep thinking I hear footsteps outside the door, I'm so on edge -- GROW UP, Dar! I'm sure in the morning it will all seem quaint and charming. Good night, Diary!
I knew a man who was a great thief. He dared steal from Nocturnal herself! How odd that I cannot seem to recall his name. I think we were friends, but I'm not certain. In three days I will venture into Taren's crypt. Graverobbing alone is dangerous. Maybe I should try to find a partner. Didn't I once know a great thief?

I begin this second entry in the second volume of my diary on a momentous day. Actually it is night, the night when my second life begins. It will be forever night for me. I have become one of the children of the night, a son to mother wolf and brother to the bat. I am nosferatu, a vampyre. Tonight is the first night of the rest of eternity.

I rediscovered this diary today. It has been 13 years since I last wrote in it. With an eternity before, and the blood hunger ever pulsing in my veins, there is little urgency for diaries, or much of anything. Amiela is calling to me. I must go.

Has it really been 89 years since I last wrote? The pages are getting fragile. I have rediscovered purpose, though it took nearly a century. I have finally gained some measure of control over the blood frenzy. I think I will try to establish a life among the living in one of their great cities.

I had forgotten about this diary. I won't bother to calculate how many decades it has been since I last wrote in it. The cattle of this city know me as Jakben, Earl of Imbel. Centuries ago I knew myself as Springheel Jak, the famous thief. I seem to recall having a famous partner, but his name escapes me. No matter. I have grown beyond friends and partners. I rule the night here in the city.
This room appears to have been built around the original site of the Nefarivigum, but there is no sign of Mehrunes' Razor! There is some sort of statue of a man here, and some scattered inscriptions in the stonework. Perhaps they can give me some clues.

At first I thought the runes were useless, but I was able to piece together a phrase; Kynverum Dagon Nefarivigum. Speaking the words aloud in that order caused the Razor to materialize! Alas, the way to it is blocked, and I dare not risk force lest the gate is trapped. I must search for more clues.

I have discovered more inscriptions, etched as to be nearly imperceivable to my eyes. After much labour I discovered some clues as to the man entombed here. It seems he was a champion to Dagon who failed in some great task.

The Kyn, it says (Dremora?) carved his chest open, through flesh, armor, and bone, with the Razor itself. He stands guard now as a test for those worthy to claim the weapon. What sort of test can this be?

The runes mention the ability of the razor to instantly send a struck foe to Oblivion through Dagons' wrath. This corroborates many tales of the weapon, but can it really be so powerful as to kill instantly?

The task seems so simple, now that I've given it thought. He who travels here, draws the heart from the chest of the champion, and devours it must be worthy to wield the Razor. I'm wary to proceed, and wonder if there is another way, but the power of the blade is so near; I must ponder my next move...
[84.13] Drothan's Journal

12 Morning Star
Sadrith Mora

Traitors, all! Helseth and all the lapdogs in the great houses care nothing for the heresy of allowing the Empire to command the lives of our noble Dunmer people. Even my fickle Telvanni kinsmen apathetically consent to this outrage. Once I have raised my army and topple the atrocious Empire of men, then they all shall pay for their complacency.

6 First Seed
Vivec

I could hardly bear the journey here to deal with that filthy bookseller, but it was worth it. The Treatise on Ayleidic Cities I bartered for provided the last bit of evidence I needed. I'm now convinced that I can find the Nefarivigum beneath Sundercliff Watch, just inside Cyrodiil's border.

2 Rains Hand
Kragenmoor

The Drothmeri army grows in might! Our forward detachment is ready to escort me within Cyrodiil's borders, where they shall bolster themselves for the assault whilst I claim my prize under the mountain.

17 Rains Hand
Kragenmoor

It's getting harder to find mercenaries. I may have to consider employing some of the beastfolk. Must remember to discuss this with Adrethi before we depart for Sundercliff.

26 Rains Hand
Sundercliff Keep

The Nefarivigum must be near; I can feel power emanating from this place. Now I've only to find it and overcome the task to earn Mehrunes Razor. Wielding this fearsome relic, I'll lead the Drothmeri Army to victory against the Imperial tyrants.

14 Second Seed
Sundercliff Keep

We finally uncovered the entrance to Varsa Baalim. I'm going to take a detachment of men inside with me to find the Nefarivigum. We already discovered an assassin prowling the camp; I fear that Helseth may have sent him. To be safe, I'm going to seal myself in the city until we can recover the Razor. I've left two bezoars, cut from the belly of an albino guar, in the care of Commander Adrethi and the Forgemaster. If there is some emergency, they have only to place these on the pedestals outside the door to dispel my barrier, and open the way to Varsa Baalim.
As I pen this, I gaze upon the walls of my home and remember the very day its design came to fruition. Although it seems like yesterday, it was actually many years ago. I was an impetuous wizard; I wasn't simply satisfied living at the Arcane University. I spent years coming up with a design for my home, a place where I could practice my magic in peace and keep myself away from the prying eyes of my colleagues. I pored over tomes and dusty scrolls, scoured the bookshops of the land and even delved into ancient ruins looking for inspiration. Finally, as I rested my weary body at a camp outside of Bruma and marveled in awe at the majesty of the Jerall Mountains, I became inspired. Like a madman I began to sketch exactly what I wanted my grand dwelling to look like. It wasn't long before I had completed my masterpiece, put down my quill and took a step back to see what I had wrought. Frostcrag Spire was born.

And now, as age overwhelms me and the glow is dying from my eyes, I wish to give the Spire to you. The thought that my dream could one day crumble to ruin fills me with sadness. I know that you'll take care of your new home, and if need be, restore it to its former glory. Please, heed my instructions carefully. There's much to tell, and the strength drains from my limbs.

Frostcrag Spire contains many wonderful inventions. I've spent my whole life perfecting them, and I hope you'll put them to good use. My pride and joy is the Atronach Altar. By bringing three salts from the very same creatures to this altar, you can summon an Atronach Familiar to do your bidding. It will obey your simple commands, and defend you in times of need. Should you tire of it, simply speak to it and dismiss it. These fine creatures have protected me in my travels, and should be of great use to you.

With permission from the Arcane University, I've had a Spellmaking and an Enchanting Altar placed in the tower as well. You have but to provide the Magetallow Candles to power them, and they will serve you well.

Working closely with my good friend Sinderion, the Master Alchemist of Skingrad, I have developed the Frostcrag Apparatus Table. This table is for the discerning alchemist, and should help even the most difficult brews become easier to create. I've also re-seeded my alchemy conservatory with the best ingredients Cyrodiil has to offer, and some from beyond her borders.

Finally, I have created portals to all of the Mages Guilds in Cyrodiil. This should make it easier to travel to them in times of need.

I've entrusted most of my belongings to Aurelinwae at the Mystic Emporium in the Market District of the Imperial City. There you'll find everything you need to bring Frostcrag Spire back from the dead. She may require compensation for her time and care watching these special items, but I assure you, it's well worth the coin. Please, take care of Frostcrag Spire. She was my home and much of myself is infused with the stone and mortar. May your journeys be safe, and the roads you travel free of danger.
The eighth day has passed, and still there's no sign of the artifact. We've covered most of the remainder of the outer guard tower, and scoured the crumbled gatehouse ruins, but not one clue has arisen as to where it may have been buried.

It's quiet out here, as if the ruins were paying respects to the Ayleid inhabitants that disappeared here long ago. We haven't encountered anything hostile, but if we do, I think we're ready. The Brotherhood's been in worse scrapes before. Bradon paid good money for the information as to our treasure's whereabouts, and I hope it doesn't turn out to be yet another fiasco.

This morning, our camp was set upon by some bandits who were protecting what they claimed was their territory. Considering that we were outnumbered three to one, we did very well. Only Raynil suffered a small wound, but that was easily healed by a potion that Bradon had thoughtfully brought with him on our expedition.

After getting rid of the bandit's corpses, we set out to tackle the largest part of the ruin, the remains of the great keep. Two of the walls of the once-mighty structure were collapsed, scattering the telltale whitish rock so typical of the Ayleid architecture in this part of Tamriel. This made our assault on the ruin difficult, as many of the larger chunks of wall were far too heavy for us to move.

Bradon suggested that we search the center of the building's foundation for any underground entrances, which was typical for this type of keep. His guess paid off, and after several hours of backbreaking work, we managed to clear an opening just large enough for us to squeeze through and enter an ancient stairwell leading down into the ground. We decided to wait until morning's light to begin our descent into the depths of the ruin.

After a restless sleep, all of us were quite excited at the prospect of what might lie ahead. Eagerly, we dipped our torches in a fresh container of pitch, lit them, and entered the inky blackness of the stairwell.

The stale air was choked with dust and fine grit, a sign that no one had entered this portion of the ruins in a very long time. We became excited, as that meant no other tomb robbers had gotten there before us.

The stairwell eventually leveled out into a corridor of sorts that snaked its way to the north. As we carefully walked along, I scanned the floor and walls very carefully for any type of triggers, tripwires or pressure plates; such was my specialty. The Ayleid were well known for their cunning traps protecting their tombs, and I wasn't taking any chances.

Bradon, the scholar of the Brotherhood, was getting more and more excited as we traversed the passage; he was translating the wall carvings and was becoming certain that we had finally found the true location of our prize. After walking for several more minutes, we were overjoyed to see what we were hoping to see: the hallway ended at a metal door with the carving of a spider upon it.
Now came the true test of Bradon's information. The door supposedly had a puzzle lock; by pulling the spider legs in a certain combination, it would unlatch. The wrong combination would spell our deaths, perhaps triggering a collapse of the hallway or some other equally deadly trap. With a shaky hand, I pulled the legs one by one in the order I had memorized: the sixth one, then the first one, the second one, the eighth one, and finally the first one again.

I closed my eyes, as there were a few loud clicks and then the door popped open. We all breathed a sigh of relief. Pushing open the door, I looked in at a huge room with a pedestal at the center. Sitting on the pedestal illuminated by a shaft of sunlight from a tiny hole in the ceiling was our prize.

The floor was covered in a huge mosaic of a stylized spider, all eight of its legs coming to a point and ending up at the door entrance. This was the last of the traps the Ayleid left behind to protect their treasure. Again, if it hadn't been for Bradon's skill at acquiring information, we may never had known how to solve this last line of defense.

I instructed Bradon and Raynil to remain at the entrance and to tie a rope around my waist in case of a sudden pitfall. Carefully, I began to walk on the darkened tiles that formed the third leg of the spider. Sweat beaded on my forehead, as the pathway made by the tiny pieces of ceramic was very narrow at the start, and one slip could again mean instant death.

But death never arrived. The information had been correct, and I was able to make it to the pedestal and secure the artifact! Quickly as possible, we made our way back and out into the daylight. Once again, the Brotherhood was triumphant and it was time to return home.

At the tavern that night, we decided to make a pact. We would stash the artifact in a cave not far from Bruma until we researched it further. An item of its magnitude could be very dangerous if mishandled, and we certainly didn't want to sell it without understanding its true value. Bradon agreed to contract a local cooper to construct a chest with three locks. Each of us would hold a key to one of the locks so none would have access to the artifact without the others being present. For the rest of the evening, we drank merrily and sang many a song of adventures passed, and adventures to come.
[84.16] Grewyn's Journal

Turdas 18 Rain's Hand 3E 421

Sithis speaks to me. He does not use words but I can hear his voice. Echoes of darkness spring from his lips and tell me what I must do. The Dark Brotherhood must be purged of its clean-blooded vermin and a new order must take the reins. The time is nigh for the vampire to claim his rightful place as the true Hands of Sithis. I have secured the help of many of my kin, and soon, we shall spread like a cold fog through the ranks and make the group our own. Soon, Sithis will give the sign, the time will be right, and the Crimson Scars will strike!

Loredas 27 Rain's Hand 3E 421

We are betrayed! That cur, Silarian, has made true our plans to the Fingers, and we have been discovered! The Brotherhood struck as we slept, not even giving the Scars a chance to fight back. Using their silver weapons, they pierced the heart of many of my brothers... The screams I could hear as they turned to dust still echo within my mind. I was able to dispatch two of the purebloods that fell upon me, and before they could send more, I made good my escape. I must find a place to hide... to recover from this blow. I will make my way south to Deepscorn Hollow, my old hideaway from when I was but a novice. There I will make my dark plans and we shall see who Sithis truly favors!

Tirdas 21 Second Seed 3E 421

It's been nearly a month, and yet none of my brethren has returned to the fold. What puzzles me is why I have not heard from my lord. Sithis hasn't spoken to me since that dark night. What have I done to displease him? I have slain many since then, and poured their lifeblood on his altar, but still he remains silent. As I ponder this, I turn my attentions to the lair. Deepscorn Hollow will rise as the new headquarters of the Crimson Scars. But it must be prepared. So much to do...

Loredas 1 Mid-Year 3E 421

The lair has improved much. I was fortunate to find Rowley Eardwulf at the Wawnet Inn outside of the Imperial City, another Scar who had escaped the night of slaughter. He now does his dark work acquiring the tools I need to bring Deepscorn Hollow back to its former glory. I must remember him in the future should I ever need these items again.

Middas 17 Sun's Height 3E 421

All along, I was mistaken. All along, I was the blight upon Sithis and his dark name. Tonight, he spoke to me and again, and I learned of his displeasure. Again, I heard no words, but I knew the meaning. I was meant to take blood, to spill blood... but never to taste blood. My sanguine ways have offended my lord! I must cleanse myself of this filth. I must find a way!
Tirdas 30 Sun's Height 3E 421

I have found it! My lord will be pleased! My answer lies with the Purgeblood Salts. Yes! I will bathe in these tonight and free myself from my old ways! Hail Sithis! Dark ruler, soon I will be your only true disciple!
3 Rain's Hand 3E431

We were finally able to convince that idiot rogue Lewin that it was time to give up that strongbox of money he stole from Lelles' Quality Merchandise in Anvil and ditch it outside the castle. All the heat he brought on the group was starting to chafe. Syndelius pretty much sat him down and made him do it, because I was ready to put my foot in his face. I know he's a rogue, but we're adventurers; we get our loot from raiding old crypts, and ruins, and places that ain't got guards. He can be a real horse's ass sometimes, I'll tell ya.

12 Rain's Hand 3E431

What a bad Fredas we've had. We hit what was left of old Fort Wariel, and after slaughtering a bunch of no good Marauders and grabbing their loot, made our way north. We came to the ruins of Trumbe. Syndelius said they were Ale Lid or Eyelid or some kind of old civilization, but all I cared about was how loaded with gold they were. He said usually they were, so in we went. What a mistake! The place was crawling with skeletons and ghosts. Those things give me the creeps. How can I fight something that ain't even alive? Lewin took a few good hits and had to pop all his potions, Syndelius broke his arm when a trap almost crushed him to death and I got a nice nasty scar across my forehead. Close call. Best of all, when we got to the treasure horde, Lewin was out of lockpicks! Why do we even keep him with us? We had to drag the damn container out of Trumbe and all the way back to Camp Atrene. Now I'm sitting here staring at a stupid metal box wishing I could use Lewin's head to bash it open. What a dolt.

13 Rain's Hand 3E431

After a night of deciding whether or not to snap off Lewin's legs and use them as firewood, I sent Syndelius and Lewin to Anvil to buy more lockpicks while I guarded the box. They came back in a few hours and Lewin picked the lock in the first try. Good thing too, I was still pretty mad at the guy. I don't like sitting around all day. Anyway, Syndelius got all excited when he saw something wrapped up in some sort of fancy cloth. Inside the cloth was a bunch of stuff, but the best was the sword. What a beauty! Blade looks like a mouth with teeth, handle like golden snakeskin and the gem in the middle of it... a perfect fiery orange and red, like the sky at dawn. Syndelius was going crazy and I asked him what was all the noise for. He told me it was Akaveery or something like that and made by the Snake People or the Sayessie or whatever. Syndelius says Sayessie starts with a T just now when he saw me writing this, but that doesn't make any sense. T-s-a-e-s-c-i. Fine, there, I wrote it. By the Nine, Syndelius is nosy sometimes. Well, anyway, the best was yet to come. Right as the sun was setting the sword vanished for a moment and was suddenly replaced by another weapon that looked almost the same, but the gem on it was deep blue and purple. Syndelius said he was certain that at dawn, it would change back to the orange and red gem! Well, this was good enough for me. That alone made the sword the best thing I had ever seen. Lewin muttered
something about Akaveery magic, but I told him to shut up. I decided to call the sword Dawnfang when it was orange and red and Duskfang when it was blue and purple.

14-16 Rain's Hand 3E341

Things are getting better and better with my new sword in these last few days. I found out Dawnfang is a fire blade and Duskfang is a frost blade... handy for extra killing power! But the best was what I found out when a Minotaur decided to jump us and I landed the killing blow. I heard a voice in my head. Or maybe a thought? I dunno. It was weird. But it felt like the sword knew it had just killed the Minotaur, like it was counting or something. At first I thought maybe I was just tired, but after tearing through a camp of Bandits, it kept counting. After the twelfth kill, it told me its thirst was satisfied. At least, I think it told me. Then it stopped. Syndelius said it's possible the sword was a blood drinker... my kind of sword... but he didn't know what would happen. It didn't take that long to find out. When dusk came around, and the blade changed... I almost fell off the campfire log. The new blade was still Duskfang... but it somehow seemed stronger. I could just tell. I couldn't wait to try it out! I ran right out and looked for something to kill. Didn't take long to come across a few of those stupid imps. Sure enough, not only did it do more frost damage than normal, but also I could feel the energy from the creature transfer to me every time I hit it! What a weapon this was! Yeah! Duskfang Superior! That's what I'll call it. Sometimes I amaze even myself. Syndelius said he was sure Duskfang would blood drink too and I could power up Dawnfang with it. I spent all night looking for twelve things to kill, and when the sun came up, he was right! Dawnfang Superior is to be this one's name. It's like having four blades in one!

17-19 Rain's Hand 3E341

It's been the most fun I have ever had in my life cutting a bloody swath across the ruins of Cyrodiil with my new double sword. Syndelius and Lewin are even more confident now that we have such a powerful weapon among us. We've gathered tons of loot in the last three days, but nothing compares to this. We're going to head north and explore the area around Niben Bay today. I hope that something else like this turns up on our adventures. Then I'm going to retire!
Entry 1: I've made up my mind. I don't care what it takes, I'll have my revenge! I've heard the stories about the Dark Brotherhood, about how they'll come to you if you perform some kind of ritual to their Night Mother. I don't know who or what the Night Mother is, and I don't give a damn! If I can do it, I will. I'll give the Dark Brotherhood anything they want, so long as they do what I can't...

Entry 2: I've learned how to perform the ritual and have procured the necessary items. The bones and skull were easy enough to get, but the heart and skill were a bit more difficult. I'll make the preparations in the cellar.

Entry 3: It worked! Last night I was visited by someone, a representative from the Dark Brotherhood! The Night Mother heard my prayers! The money was exchanged, and the man promised me I would have satisfaction. I don't know where he's hiding, and neither does the Dark Brotherhood, but as soon as he's located, Rufio will die!
Entry 1. Beauty! Pure and sublime. That is the only way to accurately describe my love, the maiden gro-Malog. True, the Orcs of Tamriel are often vilified by the other citizens of the Empire, and rarely would they be considered a pleasure to look upon. So, is my maiden Luktuv a rare breed of Orc, unlike the rest of her kin in physical appearance? Nay. In fact, she is the perfect representative of her race, green skin, muscular frame and all. But beautiful she is, all the same. For who am I to judge? Who am I to criticize when so many would condemn my very existence? I can only hope my love is as understanding when she learns of my unique condition, for I have yet to reveal that most precious of secrets.

Entry 2: Damn the politics of my station! Taxation and trade negotiations and meetings with disingenuous aristocrats -- it's sometimes enough to make me regret my birthright altogether. I've spent the latter half of my life hiding my identity, guarding my secret. But now I am faced with an even greater challenge, for if word were to get out that I have fallen in love with a servant -- and an Orc, no less -- I would be all but ruined! Such is the life of the Cyrodilic nobleman.

Entry 3: Curse me for a coward, but I have not yet found the strength to tell my beloved Luktuv the truth. Perhaps it's for the best, for what benefit is there in her knowing? She would share all of my fears but none of my abilities. Her life would become one of doubt and uncertainty. Still, if she is to spend her remaining mortal days with me, she has the right to know the truth.

Entry 4: Joy and exaltation! She is with child! My beloved Luktuv is carrying my child! The midwives predict a boy, and we have already settled on the name Agronak. In truth, I never realized such miracles were even possible, but the Divines have granted us their blessing, and so shall it be. I must wonder, of course, if my dear child will share in my Dark Gift. Only time will tell.

Entry 5: Tonight the truth will be revealed. I will tell my beloved Luktuv everything. She will know who and what I am, and we will decide how best to raise the precious child that grows in her womb.

Entry 6: Betrayal! Foul and loathsome harlot! How dare Luktuv question my motives, question the love I have for my own unborn child! When she learned the truth, that I, the Lord Lovidicus, am no longer human, that I have walked Tamriel as a vampire for the past two hundred years, how quickly she judged me! So, I am a monster, am I? Perhaps I should have proven her right. Perhaps I should have drained her dry when I had the chance! But I loved her, as deeply as a man has ever loved a woman, and I wanted nothing more than to bring our baby into this world and embrace my new role as father. Perhaps when Luktuv has come to her senses -- for she refuses to come out of her room -- we can have rational discourse about our future. I do not, however, retain much hope.

Entry 7: Imprisoned! Imprisoned in my own home! While I slept, Luktuv locked me in my own private chambers. She called to me through the doors, told me of her plan to escape with our unborn child. She means to keep my baby from me! When I get free, I will find the traitorous whore and rip the child from her very womb!
Entry 8: Two weeks. Two weeks have passed since Luktuv locked me in my quarters. Try as I might, I cannot free myself. I cannot breach the doors! If I don't feed soon, I feel I will go mad.

Entry 9: Food blood blood blood blood I need it I need blood need blood

Entry 10: ...
...after taking aboard a few more crates in Leyawiin, Captain Laughton pointed the May north towards the Imperial City. We pleaded with him to wait until the next morn, but he insisted on continuing despite the look of the sky. Let it be known that this decision was his.

Tuesday 14 Last Seed 3E421

Wasn't long before the May hit the storm. It was just as we suspected, far too dangerous to sail through. With the last bit of daylight disappearing, Navigator Quillan spotted an inlet off the starboard bow. The Captain ordered the wheelman to steer towards the inlet in the hopes of getting the May out of Niben Bay. It was at that moment Gable gave me the signal and we struck. He'd always had an eye for the Captain's position, and with the chaos going on, this was a better time than any. Only that idiot, Blakeley was still loyal to the Captain, but the rest of us wanted the May. The fight lasted maybe a minute or two. Blakeley and Laughton knew that fighting was futile. We tossed them down below and now Captain Gable has set the May on course for the inlet. Hopefully we can get her secured for a while and then...
I hope I have done well. I don't know. Perhaps I should tell the others. But what hope would they have then? I will have to tell Kelvyn, one day, when it is time for him to assume the lordship of the Castle. He, at least, may forgive me, as I am his father.

I must collect my thoughts. Lord Kain returned last night, while the others were gone to the city. Thank Onsi it was only myself and Garridan -- faithful friend! I have sworn him to secrecy. He was only too happy to let me take responsibility for what we did.

Later: I am more resolved than ever that the others must never find out. They must never know what Lord Kain has become, our liege lord -- we sacrificed everything for him!

I will set it all down here, clearly, so that others may judge whether I have done right or wrong.

When Garridan woke me to tell me that Lord Kain had arrived, I was overjoyed at first. Garridan's grim face soon warned me that all was not well, but he would not tell me what was wrong. Only that Lord Kain was accompanied by Arielle Jurard, a name to freeze the blood -- a Breton battlemage of sinister reputation in Lainlyn.

Lord Kain was waiting in the great hall with Arielle Jurard. He was heavily cloaked, unsurprisingly as it was a foul night, but I wondered why he had not removed it upon entering the castle.

I greeted Lord Kain warmly, ignoring his companion for the moment, but when he spoke, it was only haltingly, and with a grating edge that I had never heard before. "Where are the others?" was all he said. Arielle Jurard quickly intervened, explaining that Lord Kain was unwell and needed a place to rest.

By the time Kain was abed, I was fully alarmed. He moved like an old man, and barely spoke in my presence. He left a foul odor in his wake, and remained cloaked until I left him in my chambers. I then demanded that Arielle explain herself, which she was only too willing to do. Her story was appalling. Apparently Kain had perished in battle shortly after we left, but by her arts she had returned him to life, and now planned to gather an army of Knights to resume the war against Baron Shrike. Her eyes glittered with pride as she told me all this -- she is so far gone in madness and evil that she actually believed that I would go along with her plan to install a necromatic puppet on the throne of Lainlyn! For all Baron Shrike's cruelties, he at least is mortal and will one day pass on the rule to an heir.

Somehow I was able to hide my shock from Arielle Jurard, and pretended to agree to her plan. "The other knights will need to have Lord Kain's... condition... explained to them before they see him," I told her. "Otherwise the surprise of seeing him may lead some to regrettable actions." Thinking quickly, I suggested that she tend to Lord Kain in the grotto until I had prepared the others. She agreed without suspicion -- I wonder if her mind has become disordered by her evil practices -- my performance could not have been all that convincing.
Once they were inside, I shut them in, with Garridan's help. May Tu'whacca have mercy on Lord Kain's soul... As for Arielle Jurard, I wish nothing but endless night on her foul spirit.

I've had workmen cover up the doorway. Only a few of the others were ever aware of that passage behind the training room -- luckily Kelvyn was not among them. I'll have to come up with some story to satisfy those who ask about the grotto -- or tell them the truth and face the consequences.
[84.22] Messenger's Diary
Entry 1: My initial findings may have been inconclusive, but they set me on the path I will pursue until I achieve my goal or lie rotting in this cave. Either outcome will be a welcome respite from the days and nights I've spent toiling without food, water, or any kind of companionship. A lesser mage would have fallen prey to madness by now, I'm sure of it. But I am not a lesser mage! Though they try in earnest, though their hearts and minds are true to the teachings of our great Sovereign, my fellow Necromancers lack the complete dedication required to achieve that ultimate of goals -- the state of lichdom. Not even Falcar himself can match my sheer tenacity, my unwillingness to accept failure on any level. That is why I, Celedaen, will soon join the ranks of the Worm Eremites, those servants favored by our sovereign above all others. I will sit with honor and obedience at his right hand while those fools in the Mages Guild grovel at my maggot-ridden feet!

Entry 2: Even the most pedestrian peasant fairy tale has long held that a lich must somehow remain bound to his soul, and that connection most commonly manifests itself as a transference of the spirit into an actual physical object. An urn, a sarcophagus, a crystal phial.... One Khajiit fairy tale even tells of a lich who preserved his spirit in the severed head of a Wood Elf infant! And these same peasants long comforted themselves with the belief that if they ever had the grave misfortune of facing a lich, they would need only find the vessel containing his spirit form and then destroy it, thus destroying the lich himself. Fools and their folklore! True liches possess no such weakness! Can one of the Sovereign's Worm Eremites be bested by shattering a glass vase? The very notion is so absurd as to be comical. Yes, a Necromancer must transfer his soul into a physical vessel, but once that transference is complete, once the Necromancer has fully metamorphosed into his lich form, the vessel is inconsequential. But it's the process of this transference itself that has eluded me for so long. My soul remains bound to my earthly body, and nothing I have attempted has allowed me to free myself of this mortal coil and transcend to the state of lichdom I so dearly desire.

Entry 3: Every tome I've acquired, the volumes upon volumes of Necromantic discourse, all useless! I have grown disgusted by the years of wasted life that have been poured into these so-called "essential" writings. Who in their right mind would ever wish to animate a month-dead Cyrodilic butterfly, or bring life to the rotting husk of a rare albino mud crab? How many months have I wasted away in this cave? And for what reason? Ah, yes, I know! I will resurrect an army of deformed goblin younglings and march on the White-Gold Tower itself! That at least is in my reach! My mind has become a cesspool of Necromantic waste, where reject spells and rituals compete for the honor of finally driving me completely insane. And still I am no closer to achieving my goal than I was when I first began this process. Am I losing faith in myself, in my discipline? Perhaps I have been studying too hard. Many a night I have sacrificed my prayers to our Sovereign for one more experiment, one more incantation. What I need now is rest. Rest, and a state of tranquility, so that I may commune with our Sovereign and re-pledge my loyalty and devotion. For what answer will I find in some crumbling codex that could not be supplied by our great Sovereign himself?

Entry 4: The secret is mine! So long I searched, so hard I toiled, but I was a fool! I was right to forgo my studies for a more ardent devotion to prayer. Last night, as I sit in the throes of meditation, our great Sovereign did come to me! He passed to me the knowledge I have sought for so long! The secrets of transcendence were even more complex and arcane than
even I could have imagined, and I will never transcribe them into any written work. Indeed, they have never been recorded! All my months of solitude were for naught, as the secret I so desperately sought could only be obtained through direct communication with our great Sovereign himself. Soon I will walk the earth as a Worm Eremite, serving the Sovereign in a state of endless undeath!

Entry 5: Through the sacrifice of many innocents, the resurrection of many servants to aid me in my tasks, and the tireless performance of a nearly week-long ritual, I have completed construction of the Sands Of Resolve. The transcendence to full lichdom will not be immediate, however. The vessel has been crafted, but my energy force, my soul, must be fully transferred into it. Not even our Sovereign was quite certain how long this process would take, as it varies from one Necromancer to the next, based on many factors both physical and spiritual. One thing, however, is certain. This hourglass must never leave my possession until the transference is complete! I grow more powerful every day, but in truth am more vulnerable than I've ever been. If something were to happen to the Sands of Resolve, if the hourglass should somehow leave my person, the connection between soul and vessel would be severed. To think that my work, my life, could be eradicated so easily after I've come so close to success is almost more than I can bear.
Experiment Log - Day 12

Project Limb Removal
Day 12 Observations and Summary Conclusions

Day 12
Removing an arm from the young wood elf female made her fight all the harder for her life, despite being clearly outmatched. In previous battles, she fought much less bravely and to lesser effect. She lasted a full minute against my most angry of hounds before her throat was ripped out and I had to revive her.

However, removing just the feet of the middle-aged Nord male made him despondent and without any will to defend himself, even against a lesser foe. So pitiful was the look on the face of his corpse, that I decide to leave him be, rather than resurrect him. After so many years of scientific study, I still cannot abide apathy. I'm sure that my aversion to pity has colored my findings, as I only make use of strong-willed test subjects. Though I suppose, flawed as my research may be, it is still more revealing and faithful than any other has done before me.

Summary Conclusions
After studying the various combats between the test subjects in this project, I have concluded that, much as the pain threshold is inconsistent within a given species, so too is the effect of dismemberment. Whether beast or man, the removal of a limb, be it functional as a hand, or peripheral as a tail, has varying effects on the subject, having to do more with individual temperament than any biological or cultural endowment. Whatever the particular effect, it is substantial. Whether it enhances a subject's tendency toward aggressiveness or passivity, or swings them to the other extreme, removing a limb has a profound effect on behavior.

After reviewing my notes, I will attempt to catalogue all the similarities and differences between the subjects and their responses. I may be able to offer Lord Sheogorath a guidebook detailing how to craft a better kingdom by removing various appendages from the bodies of its people.

Unproductive Musings

Today I intended to continue my research into the effect of pain on the host of the unborn (in this case the middle-aged pregnant Breton female), and yet, no matter how many times she
was ripped apart and resurrected, I simply could not bring myself to the requisite attentiveness serious study demands.

Rather than the usual precision of observation, my faculties seemed possessed of a peculiar poetic sensibility. So that, rather than dutifully logging each scream and twitch of agony, I seem transported by her cries to some other place.

I became sheltered within a tapestry of tranquility, woven from the screams of the Breton's anguish warped against the grunts and clacking of the beasts and shambles that toyed with her.

It was there, in that spot, my soul naked and clean, that I came to a sense of clarity. And like all - dare I say - religious experiences, returning to my mundane senses, I am left with little more than a faded memory of supernal knowledge, like a burned parchment on which once were written words of wisdom and understanding, of which now only torn and blurred fragments remain.

The harder I try to remember that innate knowledge, the more it seems to recede from me. The essence that remains is this:

Pain is a force that purifies, ennobles, and uplifts. It is the Fire that burns away impurities, that melts away imperfections.

Death is not the sign of weakness, nor bodily constitution the sign of strength. It is what happens to soul when brought into the Fire that determines the mettle of men.

Those with inner strength are forged into weapons of devastating keenness by Pain's Fire. Those who are undeserving and weak turn to dark and lifeless ash in Its heat.

And there it stands in all its inscrutability - so much for an unproductive day. Perhaps tomorrow will lead to more fruitful experiments.

[84.24.3] Project Hound's Blood - Day 7

Project Hound's Blood

Day 7 observations

My theory stated before trial is thus: "Blending the most recent concoction of hound blood with that from a headless zombie will result in a beast with greater fury and resistance to pain."
Test 1

Subject 1 has the current concoction, and Subject 2 has the new mixture.

Battle 1:
Subject 1 lasted approximately one minute before expiring, having done average amount of injury to Subject 2. Subject 2 seemed not to notice most of the injuries it received.

Battle 2:
After a drawn out combat, Subject 1 killed Subject 2, but suffered near fatal wounds. Subject 2 fought to the bitter end with the same energy it started with.

Battle 3:
Subject 1 went out very quickly.

Battle 4:
Subject 1 lasted less that a minute. Subject 2 took little injury.

Test 2

Subject A and B both have the standard blood. Subject C and D both have the new blood.

Battle 1 (A vs. B):
Lasted just over a minute, both hounds suffering grievous injury, and somewhat bothered by their wounds.

Battle 2 (A vs. B):
Nearly identical results.

Battle 3 (C vs. D):
Lasted over two minutes, both hounds suffering grievous injury. Neither seemed very winded or bothered by their wounds.

Battle 4 (C vs. D):
Lasted under 1 minute, both suffering grievous injury. Neither seemed very bothered by their wounds.

It seems my original theory was correct. In future trials I will try watering down the headless zombie blood before adding it to the mixture, to gain some insight into the actual potency of the blood itself and determine how much of the additional effect is coming from its combination with the existing ingredients.
[84.24.4] Reptilian Appetite Conditioning

Reptilian Appetite Conditioning

Experiment Setup and Hypothesis
Reptilian Appetite Conditioning

I have raised these Baliwogs and Scalon together, from hatchling to adult. I inflicted great pain on them when they were aggressive towards each other, and rewarded them when they showed aggression towards others. They have since acquired an almost familial bond, normally expressed in warm-blooded creatures. See previous experiment logs for details.

For the last month, I have been starving them in separate cages, allowing them occasionally to eat, but only tiny amounts of reptilian flesh.

I have procured a fatty Breton of previously luxurious lifestyle. There is not an ounce of muscle on him. He should be a most tempting snack, indeed. But we shall see!

I shall return soon to run the experiment. There is still some time left to starve the reptiles until they are most desperate.

[84.24.5] Week-old blood

Week-old blood

Experiment Setup and Hypothesis
Week-old blood

I have paired up a hound and shambles of equal fighting capacity. However, I have recently drained the hound of its zombie blood, and replaced it with blood extracted from a Breton corpse, which had lain for a week, rotting in the hot sun. When I return, having let it acclimate to its new supply of vital fluid, I expect the hound will perform with much less efficiency than normal.

[84.24.6] Hunger vs. Shambles

Hunger vs. Shambles

Experiment Setup and Hypothesis
Hunger vs. Shambles, with elven catalyst
While generally an even match, these two Shambles versus a single Hunger, previous experiments have indicated that the presence of a warm body causes the Hunger to increase its ferocity. This territorial hunting imperative is completely lacking in the shambles. They seek to destroy life, not to devour it.

In this case I have confined a Hunger to his cage, while leaving an unspoiled high elf female in viewing distance. Hungers seem to have a particular thirst for elf maiden blood. And this one, on the verge of flowering, should be a particularly irresistible morsel.

I hypothesize that the hunger will fight with greater force and precision in the up coming battle, after I let the creature and elf maiden stew awhile in each other's proximity.

I shall return in a few days to run the experiment.
Their screams and battle cries are incessant by now, and the din of steel and training bags is overwhelming. They've been bringing more and more of us in here over the few weeks of my captivity, and the lust for each other's blood is reaching a fearful pitch.

What am I going to do? I've never raised a sword or axe in my life.

Just after I was captured, a well-mannered abductor came and asked if there was anything I wanted. I asked for some food and was brought fine pickled baliwog and wine. How was I to know that I should have asked for a weapon? Since then, they've only brought wine, cheese, and silken clothes too tight for my body.

They'll kill me - not first, though. No, they'll want to eliminate the more immediate threats, and then come to me. Tear me apart, screaming.

What's worse is that I think we might have this whole thing wrong. Our captors no longer speak to us; indeed they seem afraid of us. We're fed well, and they seem more easily able to provide us ink, paper, and delicacies than the iron-shod armor the others have put in such high demand.

I hope they don't pit us one against one. Surely I'd be tortured before the mercy of a killing blow. Craven heathens. Save me, Sheogorath.
[84.26] Scrap from Lorgren's Diary

2 Sun's Dawn 3E335
The people of Anvil are worms! How dare they criticize what they don't understand! I shall have my vengeance in a form they cannot possibly imagine. I shall use the souls of the departed to prolong my own life. The Tome is very specific. I must have more bodies... yes... more bodies.

11 Sun's Dawn 3E335
I must protect myself from those meddlers. They shall not interfere in my designs. I have constructed a room in the basement of this manor. It is there I will inter my corporeal self and I will transcend this plane of existence. Only a true-blooded Benirus may open the portal, so if I fail, however unlikely that may be, a descendant may attempt to follow in my footsteps to carry on the true way. To make sure our secret is safe, I have harnessed the spirits of those whose bodies I have defiled to forever guard that place.

15 Sun's Dawn 3E335
The fools think I don't hear them speaking? I can hear their rumor and innuendo. They intend to meddle in powers they can barely comprehend. They call me an old fool and shun me. The young dare each other to step one foot in my yard. I have become the stuff of old wives tales and campfire stories. They dismiss me as an oddity. But soon they will see. When all of Anvil lies in waste around me, when their corpses litter the streets and their blood dampens the earth... only then will my true power be known and feared.
This journal is a record of failure. My failure.

In the immediate sense, this is no doubt obvious. If you are reading this, you are probably standing over my body, slain in the depths of the Shrine of the Crusader. Perhaps the gods granted me the gift of at least glimpsing the holy Helm before I died, undeserving though I am. I must believe that you are indeed a holy knight, following in my footsteps in quest of the Crusader's Relics. It is to you, Sir Knight of my hopes, that I direct these words. May the account of my failures help you avoid my fate.

Know that my failures encompass far more than my own death (which is of little account, at the end of a long life). The high ideals of the Knights of the Nine, of service to the gods rather than men, of dedication to a higher purpose -- these are my failures, as I shall record here.

As I write this, the scratching of my pen the only sound in the empty Priory, I am preparing to embark on my last quest for the Helm of the Crusader. I know that my chance of success is small. I am too old for such a task. This quest should have been taken up by the next generation of Knights of the Nine, while Sir Caius and Sir Berich and the rest of us stayed behind and spun tales of our days of glory. Alas, there is no next generation. Sir Berich is my embittered enemy, the rest of my old companions are all dead. There is only me, the last stubborn Knight of a failed Order.

For many years I blamed Sir Berich for the dissolution of the Order, but in my old age I have finally come to recognize my own part in those tragic events. I now believe that the seeds of our destruction were sown early, although the fruit did not ripen until late. Even in the first heady days, questing for the Cuirass with Sir Caius and Sir Torolf, I set the pattern of personal glory. The Cuirass was mine, and although it resided in the Priory, I wore it into battle and accepted the acclaim of my fellows and the people for its recovery. And so it went. The Sword and Greaves, recovered by Sir Berich, became his personal arms, and the Gauntlets to Sir Casimir. Why not? Should the holy weapons lie idle while there was evil to be vanquished? And who more fitting to carry them than the knight who had proved himself worthy by their recovery? So we told ourselves -- so I told myself -- but all that followed flowed from this.

When Sir Berich wanted to take his Relics with him to the war, who was I to forbid him? I, who had jealously considered the Cuirass my own and none other's? Sir Berich was wrong, but I was wrong first, and the blame for the dispute over the Relics falls first on me, the leader and founder of the Knights, who should have set a higher example, but was instead first to claim a Relic for my own.

Sir Berich's later actions I will leave for others to judge. But let it be known that I do not blame him for the dissolution of the Knights. If he would speak to me, I would tell him so myself. He and I are now all that are left of the original Knights. The others are all dead, and I have dedicated myself to recovering their bodies and interring them in the Priory Undercroft, as is fitting for such holy warriors. Alas that they did not have the leader that they deserved.
Now it is time for me to depart on my quest for the Helm. If you would follow in my footsteps, Sir Knight, know that the Priory basement, at least, will remain inviolate. I have sealed the stairs and only my ring will now open it. My brother knights will sleep in peace, in company with the Cuirass, the only Relic that remains in the Order's keeping. I say that, although the Order is officially dissolved, hoping and believing that the Knights of the Nine will one day be reborn. Perhaps you are the one to restore the Order. If so, go to the Priory in the West Weald. Use my ring to enter the vaults beneath the Priory House. There you will find the Cuirass, and claim it for your own if you are a true knight.

May the Nine guard and guide you. Farewell.

Sir Amiel
Priory of the Nine
The West Weald
County Skingrad
Year 153 of the Septim Era
[84.28] Slythe's Journal

[84.28.1] Slythe's Journal I

As midnight approaches, I still watch the fires burn. The great city of man, Kvatch, lay in ruins. They didn't heed my words. They didn't listen to my voice. Now, they are all paying the cost of ignorance. The Sunken One strikes swift and hard. He swats those who oppose Him as if they did not exist at all. The excuses of man fall upon deaf ears. The Sunken One has no pity; He has no mercy, He only sits below and passes sentence. And now, with a mighty stroke, He's toppled one of man's pitiful blights on His land. And yet, He still hungers. His appetite is voracious. Kvatch will not be the last city to fall by His hand. The world of man grows more and more corrupt, and it angers Him. Man's lies and deceit will be his undoing as The Sunken One grows impatient and no longer waits for or accepts the proper offering.

The burden is mine to shoulder. I am the last who knows of He Who Shakes The Ground. If I do not bring him the Offering, who knows what city may fall prey to his whim? Anvil? Chorrol? Or perhaps He will turn his eyes on the greatest boil of all, the great Imperial City itself. No, I must not let that happen. I must get the Offering to him like my father did before me. Man may be fallen in His eyes, but they must have time to learn The Sunken One's teachings. Destroying man now would be a waste, when I am certain that given the chance, they will come to see His ways. Yes, I will do this thing. I will brave the depths of Sandstone Cavern to see Him. My weapons will be my will and my word. The Sunken One will watch over me and guide me. I must depart soon, before it is too late. If anyone finds this page, let them know that I, Slythe Seringi, do this for the good of all man.

[84.28.2] Slythe's Journal II

As I descend into the depths of Sandstone Cavern, I wonder to myself... why? Why would The Sunken One test me so? Have I not been loyal? Have I not spread His word? Have I not obeyed His laws? This journey has been cruel and unfair. I've nearly met my end more than once. I don't know if I can make it to His home. But no, I cannot think this way! I must get there! I must see Him. If I do not, then the world of man is doomed. I dare not tarry longer, as I do not wish to suffer His wrath. I must get the Offering to Him.

[84.28.3] Slythe's Journal III

I am fallen.

I have failed. I will not reach Him in time. And because of me, man is doomed. The creature jumped me without warning and before I could dispatch it with my magic, it dealt me a mortal blow. Now, all of Tamriel will face wanton destruction and death. His wrath will be unspeakable, his anger immense. Kvatch was but a small amount of his true potential. All hope is lost. The Sunken One wakens and soon, man will feel His hunger.
[84.29] Small Diary

Dear Diary
Today I go to see my cousin! Mother said it was a blest day, which I think means she's going to miss me. I'll miss her, too, but I'm real excited to see cousin Drothan again! I promise write again real soon.

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Dear Diary
I met a rider on the road today he called himself a curyer. He gave me a letter from cousin drothan! it says I'll have a special job when I get to Cyrodiil. I will be a steward. cousin says stewards keep track of who comes and goes, but somebody will do most of that for me, and I just need to only let people in who know the secret word. That's a very big responsibility! It says I have to tear up his note - cousin is very smart. I better write down the password so I don't forget it! Its "Chimer"

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Dear Diary
Today I saw a wood elf!

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Dear Diary
Another Curryer found me today, with another letter from cousin! This letter said that he may not be around when I get there. cousin said his journal will tell me everything I need to know about finding him if he's not around, and I should find it in his cabin. Uh oh - I'm no good at reading, only writing.

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Dear Diary
I'm finally here! Before I use the special word to get in, I have something I need to tell you, diary. It's not personal, but diaries are kid stuff, and I have to be grownup here, so I'm leaving you behind right here. But thank you, diary, especially for keeping the special word safe. good luck!
Alyssa has been very nervous these past few days, even thinking about packing up and moving out of here. I will hear nothing of it. She does not understand the importance of this place to me. The city is too busy and too noisy for me to think clearly. Only here can I practice my studies in peace and not have to deal with the Inferiors back in the city. Nothing soothes the soul like the gentle sound of rushing water. She will grow to love this place.

Alyssa is beginning to spend more and more time at her daily baths. I have not pressed the matter, for I know she is true to me. Maybe I will follow her tomorrow. No. I cannot. I cannot afford to lose her trust. I have worked too hard to get her here.

Spent two hours waiting for my Alyssa to return from her daily bath near the waterfall. She apparently fell asleep. I did not inquire any further, but I did notice scratches and bruises on her forearms and legs. She probably tripped and fell, but was too embarrassed to tell me about it.

The past few days Alyssa has brought up the subject of leaving this place. Has she already forgotten why we came here in the first place? Has she already forgotten the daily mental torture of conversing with the Inferiors in the city? This constant bickering between us is starting to wear on me and I fear I will not be able to take much more of it.

Alyssa spent nearly four hours today at the waterfall. She said she fell asleep again. I will not be made a fool. I demanded she tell me where she had been. She burst into tears and confessed she no longer wished to stay here with me. That night I did not sleep and the day's events played over and over in my head. In the morning, I made the decision to let Alyssa leave. Let her be free. Let her live life the way she wants. She thanked me, parted with one final kiss, and then took off toward the waterfall. That was the last I saw of my dear Alyssa.

I have done what I know is right, but my heart will not accept it. Only time will heal my heartache, and now it seems I have all the time in the world... alone. I have done the right thing. I had no right to keep her here against her will. The only thing that keeps me sane is knowing she is happy once again and free to do what she wants. I swear I still hear her voice...
now and then coming from the waterfall, but I know they are only echoes of memory. I must stay strong. I will stay here until my dying days and maybe, just maybe, she will return to me.
JOURNALS: TRAITOR'S DIARY

It's all right, mother. It's almost over. I'm close. So very close. How long have we struggled? How long have we waited? Too long, I know. But it's almost over. I promise.

Mommy, mommy as you lie the dark man comes and makes you die my daddy's hands are red with guilt because he killed the life we built

I hate it! All this lying, all this pretending! Sithis and the Five Tenets be damned! How long do I have to live by their rules? How long before I get my chance? I saw Lucien Lachance yesterday. He was in the Sanctuary talking with Ocheeva. He was right there! So close I could have severed his spine in less than a heartbeat! Oh Mother, never before have I had to exercise such self-control. What's sickeningly ironic is that it was the Dark Brotherhood's discipline that allowed me to restrain myself. I've been a part of their "family" for so long it's a part of me, whether I like it or not. And in all that time I've fooled them all. They see me as a fellow member of the Brother, a trusted family member. Some day soon I will learn the truth about the Night Mother, and when I do, I will use that trust to get close to her. Close enough so that I may rend the head from her body, just as Lucien Lachance did to you so long ago!

Damn it, mother! Why did it have to be this way? Maria was so beautiful. She was perfect in so many ways. Why couldn't she handle the truth? Why couldn't she realize her "family" didn't really love her? She was a murderer like the rest of us. Paid to kill in the name of Sithis. I really thought we could be together. Make a real family, with real love. But she told me she could never accept your place in my life. So now she's gone. She didn't deserve to live after the horrible things she said about you. I never should have told her, I know. I'm so sorry. It will never happen again, and the others will never find her, don't worry. There's nothing left of her to find.

I like to lie in the grass and watch the ants and wish I were one of them in their underground mazes safe from the darkness of people horrible people I will kill them all kill the ants kill the people kill everything

I did it, mother! I killed them all! I killed them and I cursed them to wander their ship in undeath for all eternity! They came to talk to the old man in the lighthouse. When they saw me, they could have kept walking. But no. They laughed! They laughed at me, mother! They called me names! They said I was strange, that I was a human rat, living here in the cellar of the lighthouse. They did not know who they were dealing with! So I snuck on board, later that night, and I slit their throats. Every last one of them. So there the Serpent's Wake sits. The ghost ship of Anvil they'll call it now! Ha ha ha ha ha!

Some wonderful news, mother! Advancement at last! Lucien Lachance paid a visit to the Sanctuary today, to talk with me! He told me the Black Hand needed my services. One of the
other Speakers is looking to replace his assistant, who was killed fulfilling a contract. So Lucien Lachance suggested me! I met with the Speaker, and will serve as his new "Silencer." Ha! Lachance might as well have given me a contract to kill the Night Mother herself! I am now one step closer to realizing our dream. I will learn the Night Mother's identity and tear the heart from her chest. Oh yes, and I have something special planned for Lachance himself...

mommy I so afrade. i mis yu mommy. i just wantyu to kis me agenn

father prayed and guess who came the hooded man in Sithis' name who left but then he came once more to pass through window wall and door I lie in fear my mouth agape as wicked blade did cleave your nape for I was watching 'neath the bed to see the falling of your head and when your face lie on the floor our loving eyes did meet once more and so I pledged to you that day the Brotherhood would dearly pay and just as they took me from you I'd find and kill their mother too but there's someplace I need to start and that's with father's beating heart and when that's done I'll sing and dance to celebrate a dead LaChance

greenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangegreenblueREDyelloworangEGREEENBLUEREDYELLOWORANGEGREENBLUEREDYELLOWORANGEGREENBLUEREDYELLOWORANGEGREENBLUEREDYELLOWORANGEGREENBLUEREDYELLOWORANGEBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACK!!!!!!!

I've been careless! Too careless. The bodies, the burnings. Killing that fool Blanchard was the worst mistake I've made so far. I was seen! I was cloaked and hooded, and escaped into shadow, so no one learned my true identity. But now the Black Hand is suspicious. They suspect treachery, suspect a traitor! I must be more cautious than ever.

when in the snow I like to lie and fold my arms and wait to die

I've been switching them! Switching the dead drops! It was so easy! I tracked Lachance from his lair at Fort Farragut to the first dead drop location. After Lachance placed the orders, when I was sure he was gone, I switched them! It was so easy. Now Lachance's fool Silencer is working for us, mother! Oh, the fun we'll have. One of the Black Hand told me they haven't seen such an ambitious family member since I first joined the Dark Brotherhood. I will use that very ambition to my own advantage. The fool will never question the dead drops, and as I write this is en route to the first target -- one of the very members of the Black Hand! And so it begins. Lachance's silencer will kill one high ranking Brother member, then another, then another, and so on, until the entire family implodes. Eventually, as is the custom, the survivors will consult the Night Mother and seek her guidance. When that day comes, I will be there, ready to plunge a blade into that dark whore's fetid heart!

!eid lliw ecnahcaL neicuL
Weathered Journal

Long have I sought to purge the evils haunting Erandur. Even when his necromantic studies resulted in our mutual expulsion from the Guild of Mages, I persisted in guiding him towards good with a gentle hand. Alas, in our exile, my old friend has mired himself in the foul practice, and in shocking discovery I learned he had become a miserly disciple of the Worm King, a cunning wraith. A Lich.

Frail memory strengthened by dogmatic resolve, the Archmages turned me away when I came to them with my discovery. My pleas for a detachment of battlemages ignored, only my long-past expulsion remembered. And thus, the grave duty falls only to me. I must bear the burden of purging the Lich that was once a friend.

I wander now into the foreboding maw of these catacombs known as the Lost Boy Caverns, far from the climes of common elves and men. With pure spirit and rites of cleansing, I hope to strike down the fearsome Lich and set free the soul of Erandur, but I leave this testament behind, lest I may never return from these depths; as a warning to those who may follow my path.

Faithful, even in Exile,
Vangaril
Gentle reader, you will not understand a word of what follows unless you have read and committed to memory the first three volumes in this series, 'Beggar,' 'Thief,' and 'Warrior,' which leads up to this, the conclusion. I encourage you to seek them out at your favorite bookseller.

We last left Eslaf Erol fleeing for his life, which was a common enough occurrence for him. He had stolen a lot of gold, and one particularly large gem, from a rich man in Jallenheim named Suoibud. The thief fled north, spending the gold wildly, as thieves generally do, for all sorts of illicit pleasures, which would no doubt disturb the gentleman or lady reading this, so I will not go into detail.

The one thing he held onto was the gem.

He didn't keep it because of any particular attachment, but because he did not know anyone rich enough to buy it from him. And so he found himself in the ironic situation of being penniless and having in his possession a gem worth millions.

'Will you give me a room, some bread, and a flagon of beer in exchange for this?' he asked a tavernkeep in the little village of Kravenswold, which was so far north, it was half situated on the Sea of Ghosts.

The tavernkeep looked at it suspiciously.

'It's just crystal,' Eslaf said quickly. 'But isn't it pretty?'

'Let me see that,' said a young armor-clad woman at the end of the bar. Without waiting permission, she picked up the gem, studied it, and smiled not very sweetly at Eslaf. 'Would you join me at my table?'

'I'm actually in a bit of a hurry,' replied Eslaf, holding out his hand for the stone. 'Another time?'

'Out of respect for my friend, the tavernkeep here, my men and I leave our weapons behind when we come in here,' the woman said casually, not handing the gem back, but picking up a broom that was sitting against the bar. 'I can assure you, however, that I can use this quite effectively as a blunt instrument. Not a weapon, of course, but an instrument to stun, medicinally crush a bone or two, and then - once it is on the inside ...'

'Which table?' asked Eslaf quickly.
The young woman led him to a large table in the back of the tavern where ten of the biggest Nord brutes Eslaf had ever seen were sitting. They looked at him with polite disinterest, as if he were a strange insect, worth briefly studying before crushing.

'My name is Laicifitra,' she said, and Eslaf blinked. That was the name Suoibud had uttered before Eslaf had made his escape. 'And these are my lieutenants. I am the commander of a very large independent army of noble knights. The very best in Skyrim. Most recently we were given a job to attack a vineyard in The Aalto to force its owner, a man named Laernu, to sell to our employer, a man named Suoibud. Our payment was to be a gem of surpassing size and quality, quite famous and unmistakable.

'We did as we were asked, and when we went to Suoibud to collect our fee, he told us he was unable to pay, due to a recent burglary. In the end, though, he saw things our way, and paid us an amount of gold almost equal to the worth of the prize jewel ... It did not empty out his treasury entirely, but it meant he was unable to buy the land in the Aalto after all. So we were not paid enough, Suoibud has taken a heavy financial blow, and Laernu's prize crop of Jazbay has been temporarily destroyed for naught,' Laicifitra took a long, slow drink of her mead before continuing. 'Now, I wonder, could you tell me, how came you in the possession of the gem we were promised?'

Eslaf did not answer at once.

Instead, he took a piece of bread from the plate of the savage bearded barbarian on his left and ate it.

'I'm sorry,' he said, his mouth full. 'May I? Of course, I couldn't stop you from taking the gem even if I wanted to, and as a matter of fact, I don't mind at all. It's also useless to deny how it came into my possession. I stole it from your employer. I certainly didn't mean you or your noble knights any harm by it, but I can understand why the word of a thief is not suitable for one such as yourself.'

'No,' replied Laicifitra, frowning, but her eyes showing amusement. 'Not suitable at all.'

'But before you kill me,' Eslaf said, grabbing another piece of bread. 'Tell me, how suitable is it for noble knights such as yourself to be paid twice for one job? I have no honor myself, but I would have thought that since Suoibud took a profit loss to pay you, and now you have the gem, your handsome profit is not entirely honorable.'

Laicifitra picked up the broom and looked at Eslaf. Then she laughed, 'What is your name, thief?'

'Eslaf,' said the thief.

'We will take the gem, as it was promised to us. But you are right. We should not be paid twice for the same job. So,' said the warrior woman, putting down the broomstick. 'You are our new employer. What would you have your own army do for you?'

Many people could find quite a few good uses for their own army, but Eslaf was not among them. He searched his brain, and finally it was decided that it was a debt to be paid later. For
all her brutality, Laicifitra was an simple woman, raised, he learned, by the very army she commanded. Fighting and honor were the only things she knew.

When Eslaf left Kravenswold, he had an army at his beck and call, but not a coin to his name. He knew he would have to steal something soon.

As he wandered the woods, scrounging for food, he was beset with a strange feeling of familiarity. These were the very woods he had been in as a child, also starving, also scrounging. When he came out on the road, he found that he had come back on the kingdom where he had been raised by the dear, stupid, shy maid Drusba.

He was in Erolgard.

It had fallen even deeper into despair since his youth. The shops that had refused him food were boarded up, abandoned. The only people left were hollow, hopeless figures, so ravaged by taxation, despotism, and barbaric raids that they were too weak to flee. Eslaf realized how lucky he was to have gotten out in his youth.

There was, however, a castle and a king. Eslaf immediately made plans to raid the treasury. As usual, he watched the place carefully, taking note of the security and the habits of the guards. This took some time. In the end, he realized there was no security and no guards.

He walked in the front door, and down the empty corridors to the treasury. It was full of precisely nothing, except one man. He was Eslaf's age, but looked much older.

'There's nothing to steal,' he said. 'Would that there was.'

King Ynohp, though prematurely aged, had the same white blond hair and blue eyes like broken glass that Eslaf had. In fact, he resembled Suoibud and Laicifitra as well. And though Eslaf had never met the ruined landlord of the Aalto, Laernu, he looked him too. Not surprisingly, since they were quintuplets.

'So, you have nothing?' asked Eslaf, gently.

'Nothing except my poor kingdom, curse it,' the King grumbled. 'Before I came to the throne, it was powerful and rich, but I inherited none of that, only the title. For my entire life, I've had responsibility thrust on my shoulders, but never had the means to handle it properly. I look over the desolation which is my birthright, and I hate it. If it were possible to steal a kingdom, I would not lift a finger to stop you.'

It was, it turned out, quite possible to steal a kingdom. Eslaf became known as Ynohp, a deception easily done given their physical similarities. The real Ynohp, taking the name of Ylekilmu, happily left his demesne, becoming eventually a simple worker in the vineyards of The Aalto. For the first time free of responsibility, he fell into his new life with gusto, the years melting off him.

The new Ynohp called in his favor with Laicifitra, using her army to restore peace to the kingdom of Erolgard. Now that it was safe, business and commerce began to return to the land, and Eslaf reduced the tyrannical taxes to encourage it to grow. Upon hearing that, Suoibud, ever nervous about losing his money, elected to return to the land of his birth. When
he died years later, out of greed, he had refused to name someone as heir, so the kingdom received its entire fortune.

Eslaf used part of the gold to buy the vineyards of The Aalto, after hearing great things of it from Ynohp.

And so it was that Erolgard was returned to its previous prosperity by the fifth born child of King Ytluaf - Eslaf Erol, beggar, thief, warrior (of sorts), and king.
And so it came to pass, that on the first month before the harvest, nary a decent crop could be found in the drought-ridden fields of Farmantle Glens. Twenty-seven families, their bellies sunken and empty, turned to their lordship who had been so fair to them in hard times before. The man ruled not with an iron gauntlet, but with the soft touch of silken kindness: my lord, Garridan Stalrous, Knight-Errant of Farmantle Glens.

I watched sadly as my lord Garridan looked out at the withered fields before him from his meager stone keep and cursed the luck that tainted the skies and stopped the rain from falling. The families in his charge would not last the winter, which was always bitter and cold in the northern reaches of the Jerals. His own supply of grain was already picked clean; there was barely enough to sustain him for the months ahead. I know if my lord had the food there, he would have shared it gladly, allowing his charges to pay him back in whatever time or manner they could afford... and in some cases, to those in dire need, give it to them without costs. Something had to be done; and it had to be done soon.

Sparing not a drake, Garridan paid for the best sages he could find and used the rest to buy as much surplus grain as he could wrest from the neighboring domains. A month passed, and nothing surfaced. Winter's icy tendrils would soon creep across Farmantle Glens, causing the green to disappear from the landscape. Families would have to huddle close to their hearths, keeping warm and rationing the bits of food Garridan had given them. I could see Garridan's patience, which was immense mind you, wearing thin. He told me he'd considered selling his keep... his belongings... anything to keep his people alive. If only the harvest would yield more, they'd be saved.

Then, as if Mara herself had answered his prayers, a sage entered Garridan's keep with the answer. Legend told of a vessel of sorts from which water would pour endlessly known as the Everflow Ewer. Some said the Divines themselves created it; others thought perhaps a powerful sorcerer enchanted it. Wherever it was from, Garridan knew this could be his chance. Following the directions from the sage, my lord and I set out to recover the Ewer and rid Farmantle Glens of the drought.

It took days to reach the entrance to the place. After we passed through a winding passage, we finally came to an odd door covered in mystical symbols. As the sage instructed, my lord touched some Refined Frost Salts to the door. The ancient stone door opened, and we proceeded into the glade. A cave cut into a hillside led into a small glade of trees. In the center of the glade, flanked by two standing stones, was a stone altar. On the altar, seemingly glowing with inner light was the Ewer. Cut from crystal, the vessel was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen. Water filled it to the very top, and as legends held, would never diminish as the liquid decanted from it. Eager to return to his domain, Garridan grasped the Ewer in hand.
Suddenly, the ground trembled as though the mountains themselves were angered. The sky changed from sunlit blue to dreary grey. Even the ring of trees forming the glade seemed to bend away slightly from the altar, as if fearing what was to come. Then, with no warning, one of the standing stones cracked and exploded! My gaze froze and my heart fell as I looked upon the guardian of the glade. A huge creature seemingly cut from the very same crystal as the Ewer stepped forth and growled menacingly at my master. The air around it became very cold, as if it was born from the glaciers of the northern mountains. This was a being of ice... living breathing ice!

Garridan shouted at me to run as he drew his blade. Still clutching the Ewer in one hand, he gave a mighty swing at the ice creature. When the forged steel struck home, it gave a resounding ring and merely chipped the beast as a spike would when driven against the hardest of rocks. Never showing fear, my lord swung again and again, each blow being harmlessly deflected away. Then, a single and mighty blow from the ice creature knocked my lord down. His blade slid away, and he lay on the forest floor looking up into the crystalline eyes of his death. The ice creature raised its arm again for the fatal blow, and brought it down hard at Garridan's prone form.

I don't know why he did it. Perhaps it was instinct, perhaps a moment's lapse in judgment. But my lord lifted the Everflow Ewer defensively as he got up to a kneeling position. The blow from the creature connected with the vessel, creating an ear-splitting crash. There was the sound of water splashing and a horrible cracking noise as the sundered pitcher sent waves of freezing water in all directions. Even as I watched, the liquid covered the ice creature and my poor master. They seemed suspended in place as if frozen solid. At the time, I didn't know how true my thoughts had become. As I watched in horror, they were encased in a tomb of pure ice. I could see Garridan's face as the ice overtook him, and I could swear he was crying. A few of his tears froze and fell to the ground at his feet like beautiful blue crystals. He knew he'd failed his mission. His people would starve, and he was responsible. Frost and ice covered everything in the glade now... the trees, the rocks, the soil... everything.

It was then I became aware that the very air around me began to freeze. It was like a cold winter's night at first, and then it rapidly became worse. The cold was so bad, it turned into a sort of frozen heat... it began to burn. My throat became tight and breathing became difficult. I began to lose feeling in my arms and legs, and my vision was beginning to blur. I had to escape this icy glade and tell Garridan's story. It was the least I could do for such a noble man. With every bit of strength I could muster, I ran from the frostfire and back through the cave. I barely escaped with my life.

My journey back to the domain of Garridan was a sad one. My heart was heavy, my mind clouded with misery. He was a good man, the greatest I'd ever known. To die like that was no way for such an honorable knight to end his life. When I finally reached the outskirts of Farmantle Glen, the farmers were waiting for me. I was ready to tell them the sad news, but they raised a cheer of great joy! They told me that only a week ago, a strange, bluish glowing rain fell on their fields and that the next day the crops began to grow as if there had never been a drought. A week ago was exactly when my master was frozen in that horrible glade... and his tears froze like bluish raindrops frozen in time! I looked up at the heavens and the twinkling lights suddenly gave me great comfort. I thanked Mara, and headed home.
Few people now remember the Knights of the Nine, but in their time, they were famous throughout Cyrodiil -- indeed, throughout the Empire. For a brief period in the early days of the Septim Empire, their adventures were the talk of the land. But their renown, as with so much else, was swallowed up by the War of the Red Diamond, and today even the location of their priory house has been lost to history.

The Knights were founded by Sir Amiel Lannus in 3E 111, following his heroic turn in the War of the Isle, with the high purpose of recovering the legendary Crusader's Relics, the weapons and armor of Pelinal Whitestrake which have been lost for thousands of years. They were born out of the sense of optimism and ambition that characterised the first century of the Third Era. Tamriel was united and at peace for the first time in many centuries. Nothing was impossible.

The fame of the knights was established early on when Sir Amiel led them against the Wyrm of Elynglenn to recover the Cuirass of the Crusader, which had not been seen since the First Era. Soon, the greatest knights of the day were lining up to join the new order, and the Priory of the Nine in the West Weald of Cyrodiil became a magnet for the great and the good. The Knights were the toast of the Empire. When Berich Vlindrel joined the order, the scion of one of the great noble families of Colovia, it was clear that the Knights of the Nine had become the Empire's most prestigious knightly order. In relatively short order, the Knights reclaimed three more Relics, and their fame soared to new heights with each one. No one doubted that they would eventually succeed in their quest to recover all eight Relics.

Sadly, this early promise of the Knights did not survive the ravages of the War of the Red Diamond, which tore apart the Empire beginning in 3E 121. At first, it seems that Sir Amiel was able to keep his knights out of the war. But the very success of the Knights undermined this, as many of the Knights came from important families from across the Empire which were lining up on either side of the bloody civil war. Sir Berich was apparently the first to leave the Order to join the war on the side of Cephorus, carrying the Sword and Greaves of the Crusader into battle with him. Many other knights seem to have left the Order shortly after this, some joining the war on one side or the other.

The end of the order was as ignominious as its beginning was glorious. Following the victory of Cephorus in 3E 127, Berich Vlindrel became an important figure on the winning side. It seems likely that he was behind the Imperial decree which officially dissolved the Knights of the Nine in 3E 131, although in truth this was little more than a formality -- despite Sir Amiel's best efforts, the order had never recovered from the bitterness of the civil war.

What happened to the various Relics originally recovered by the Knights of the Nine? The Sword and the Greaves went with Sir Berich, but where he bestowed them is unknown. The Gauntlets famously lie immovable on the floor of the Chapel of Stendarr in Chorrol, where Sir Casimir left them after his disgraceful murder of a beggar in 3E 139. The location of the
Cuirass is a mystery, lost to history along with the eventual fate of Sir Amiel, who was last reported still living alone in the empty Priory of the Nine by a passing traveller in 3E 150. And so the Knights of the Nine faded away into history.
[88] Lady Benoch's Words and Philosophy*

See vol. I.
The Ayleids, or Heartland High Elves, ruled Cyrodiil in the long ages of Myth before the beginning of recorded history. One of the earliest recorded dates, in fact, is the Fall of White Gold Tower in 1E 243, which is commonly assumed to mark the end of the Ayleids.

Although Ayleid rule over all of Cyrodiil was indeed broken in 1E 243, this was only one of the most obvious stages near the end of a long decline. The first two centuries of the First Era saw increasing strife between the great Ayleid lords of Cyrodiil. Alessia appears to have taken advantage of a period of civil war to launch her uprising. Imperial historians have traditionally attributed her victory to intervention from Skyrim, but it appears that she had at least as much help from rebel Ayleid lords during the siege of White Gold Tower.

The popular image of the Ayleids as brutal slavemasters is based in fact, of course, but it is less well-known that a number of Ayleid princes continued to rule parts of Cyrodiil after 263, as vassals of the new Empress of Cyrodiil. This suggests either that Ayleid rule was not universally detested, or that Alessia and her successors were more pragmatic than is traditionally believed, or perhaps some of both.

In any event, excavations at a number of Ayleid sites show continued occupation and even expansion during the so-called Late Ayleid Period (1E 243 - c. 498). At first, many Ayleid lords continued to rule as vassals of the new human regime. In some cases, Ayleid supporters of Alessia were even rewarded with new lands taken from slain enemies. It is not clear to what extent human slavery continued under the Cyrodilic Empire. Humans continued to dwell in the Ayleid-ruled areas of Cyrodiil, but there is nothing definitive to show under what terms.

This was an uneasy relationship from the beginning, and was not destined to last long. Resentment at the continued presence of Ayleid nobles within the Empire was a contributing factor to the rise of the so-called Alessian Order founded by Maruhk. The first victims of the Alessians were the Ayleids of Cyrodiil. In the early 300s, the surviving Ayleid communities in human-ruled areas were obliterated one by one, the refugees temporarily sweling the power of the remaining Ayleid lordships.

Then in 361, the Alessians gained control of the Empire and enforced the Alessian Doctrines throughout its domain. The Ayleid lordships were abolished. Enforcement of this decree does not appear to have required much direct violence -- it seems that by this point the balance of power was so overwhelmingly against them, and their fate so long foreshadowed, that most of the remaining Ayleids simply left Cyrodiil, eventually being absorbed into the Elven populations of Valenwood and High Rock. Indeed, the rise of the Direnni Hegemony may be linked to this exodus of Ayleids from Cyrodiil (a connection so far little studied by historians).

Still, a remnant Ayleid population seems to have survived the rule of the Alessians, because we hear of "the last king of the Ayleids" joining the battle of Glenumbria Moors where the
Dirennis decisively defeated the Alessians in 482. How this king's people survived the preceding century is unknown. We do not even know who they were, although recent research points to Nenalata as the possible resting place of this "last king." Unfortunately, in the current state of the Empire, funds are no longer available for proper scientific investigation of such extensive ruins, so the answer to these questions will have to be left to future generations.
[90] The Last Scabbard of Akrash*

See vol. I.
THE LEGEND OF KRATELY HOUSE

[91] The Legend of Krately House

The Legend of the Krately House
By Baloth-Kul

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THEOPHON - Imperial man, 24, thief
NIRIM - Bosmer man, 20, thief
SILANUS KRATELY - Imperial man, 51, merchant
DOMINITIA KRATELY - His wife, 40
AELVA KRATELY - Their daughter, 16
MINISTES KRATELY - Their son, 11

Setting: The famous haunted Krately House in Cheydinhal, first and second floors, requiring a stage with a second story where most of the action takes place.

The stage is dark.

There is a CREAKING noise, footsteps on the stairs, the sound of a man breathing, but still we see nothing.

Then, a voice calls from above.

AELVA (off stage)
Hello? Is someone down there?

MINISTES (off stage)
Should I wake up Papa?

AELVA (off stage)
No... Maybe I was imagining it...

A light from a lantern can be seen coming from the upstairs, and the slim form of a beautiful young girl, AELVA, descends the staircase at stage right, nervously.

From the light of the lantern, we can see that we are looking at the second floor of a dusty old house, with a set of stairs going up and another one going down on stage right. An unlit stone fireplace sits at stage left. A table, a locked chest, and a wardrobe complete the furnishings.

MINISTES (off stage)
Aelva, what are you doing?

AELVA
I'm just making certain... Go back to bed, Minestes.
As the girl passes the table, we see a Bosmer NIRIM slide gracefully up from behind and around her field of sight, carefully avoiding the pool of light. She doesn't appear to see him as he creeps closer to her, his footsteps silent on the hard wooden floor.

When he is almost on her, there is a sudden CRASH from down below. This causes the Bosmer to leap away, hiding again behind the table.

The girl does not seem to notice the sound, and Nirim, peeking out from behind the table, watches her.

MINESTES (off stage)
Caught anything?

AELVA
No. Probably just my imagination, but I'm just going to check downstairs.

MINESTES (off stage)
Is there a fire? I'm cold...

Aelva looks towards the long dead fireplace, and so does Nirim.

AELVA
Of course there is. Can't you hear it crackling?

MINESTES (off stage)
I guess so...

Aelva suddenly jumps as if she heard something which we do not. She turns her attention down the stairs to the first floor.

AELVA
Hello?

Aelva, lantern ahead of her, begins the descent. She does not seem to notice as an Imperial, THEOPHON, carrying a big bag of loot and a lantern of his own, calmly walks up right past her.

THEOPHON
Excuse me, young lady. Just robbing you.

Aelva continues her slow, nervous walk downstairs, which we can now see thanks to her light. She looks around the low-ceilinged, thoroughly looted room as the action continues upstairs.

Theophon's lantern provides the dim light for the second floor.

THEOPHON
Why are you hiding, Nirim? I told you. They can't see you, and they can't hear you.

Nirim sheepishly steps out from behind the table.
NIRIM
I can't believe they're all ghosts. They seem so alive.

THEOPHON
That's what spooks them superstitians. But they ain't going to hurt us. Just reliving the past, the way ghosts do.

NIRIM
The night they was murdered.

THEOPHON
Stop thinking about that or you'll get yourself all willy spooked. I got all kinds of stuff on the first floor - silver candlesticks, silk, even some gold... What'd you get?

Nirim holds up his empty bag.

NIRIM
Sorry, Theophon, I was just about to start...

THEOPHON
Get to work on that chest then. That's what you're here for.

NIRIM
Oh yeah. I got the talent, you got the ideas... and the equipment. You refilled that lantern before we came here, right? I can't work in the dark...

THEOPHON
Don't worry, Nirim. I promise. No surprises.

Nirim jumps when a young boy, MINESTES, appears on the stairs. The lad creeps down quietly and goes to the fire. He acts as if he's stoking a fire, feeding it wood, poking at the embers, though there is no wood, no poker, no fire.

THEOPHON
We got all the time in the world, friend. No one comes near this house. If they sees our lantern light, they'll just assume it's the ghosts.

Nirim begins picking the lock on a chest of drawers, while Theophon opens a wardrobe and begins going through the contents, which are mostly rotten cloth.

Nirim is distracted, looking at the young boy.

NIRIM
Hey, Theophon, how long ago did they die?

THEOPHON
About five years ago. Why you asking?

NIRIM
Just making conversation.
As they talk, Aelva, downstairs, finally having searched the small room, acts as if she's locking the front door.

THEOPHON
Didn't I already tell you the story?

NIRIM
No, you just said, hey, I know a place we can burgle where no one's at home, except for the ghosts. I thought you was joking.

THEOPHON
No joking, partner. Five years ago, the Kratelys lived here. Nice people. You seen the daughter Aelva and the boy Minestes. The parents were Silenus and Dominitia, if I remembers rightly.

Nirim successfully unlocks the chest and begins rummaging through it. While he does so, Ministes gets up from the ‘fire,’ apparently warmed up, and stands at the top of the stairs down.

MINISTES
Hey!

The boy's voice causes Nirim, Theophon, and Aelva to all jump.

AELVA
Why aren't you in bed? I'm just going to check the cellar.

MINISTES
I'll wait for you.

NIRIM
So, what happened?

THEOPHON
Oh, they was rip to piece. Halfway eaten. No one ever knew who or what did it neither. Though there was rumors...

Aelva opens the door to the cellar, and goes in. The light disappears from the first floor. Ministes patiently waits at the top of the stairs, humming a little song to himself.

NIRIM
What kind of rumors?

Theophon, having exhausted the possibilities in the wardrobe, helps Nirim sort through the gold in the chest.

THEOPHON
Pretty good haul, eh? Oh, the rumors. Well, they says old lady Dominitia was a witch before she married Silenus. Gave it all up for him, to be a good wife and mother. But the witches
didn't take too kindly to it. They found her and sent some kind of creature here, late at night. Something horrible, right out of a nightmare.

MINISTES
Aelva? Aelva, what's taking you so long?

NIRIM
Ye Gods, are we going to watch them get killed, right in front of us?

MINISTES
Aelva!

SILENUS (off stage)
What's happening down there? Stop playing around, boy, and go to sleep.

MINISTES
Papa!

Ministes, frightened, runs to the stairs up. Along the way, he bumps into Nirim, who falls down. The boy does not seem to notice but continues on up to the dark third floor sleeping porch, off-stage.

THEOPHON
Are you all right?

Nirim jumps to his feet, white-faced.

NIRIM
Never mind that! He touched me?! How can a ghost touch me?!

THEOPHON
Well... Of course they can. Some anyhow. You heard of ancestor spirits guarding tombs, and that ghost of the king they had in Daggerfall. If they don't touch you, what good are they? Why you so surprised? You thought he'd move right through you, I figger.

NIRIM
Yes!

SILENUS, the man of the house, comes down the stairs, cautiously.

DOMINITIA (off stage)
Don't leave us alone, Silenus! We're coming with you!

SILENUS
Wait, it's dark. Let me get some light.

Silenus goes to the cold fireplace, sticks his hand forward, and suddenly in his arm, there's a lit, burning torch. Nirim scrambles back, horrified.
NIRIM
I felt that! I felt the heat of the fire!

SILENUS
Come on down. It's all right.

Ministes leads his mother DOMINITIA down the stairs where they join Silenus.

THEOPHON
I don't know why you so scared, Nirim. I must say I'm disappointed. I didn't figger you for a supersitionalist.

Theophon goes for the stairs up.

NIRIM
Where are you going?

THEOPHON
One more floor to search.

NIRIM
Can't we just go?

Nirim watches as the family of three, following Silenus and his torch, walk down towards the first floor.

SILENUS
Aelva? Say something, Aelva.

THEOPHON
There, you see? If you don't like ghosts, third floor's the place to be. All four of 'em are downstairs now.

Theophon goes upstairs, off-stage, but Nirim stands at the top of the stairs, looking down at the family. The three look around the first floor as Aelva did, finally turning towards the cellar door.

NIRIM
All... four?

Silenus opens the cellar door.

SILENUS
Aelva? What are you doing down in the cellar, girl?

DOMINITIA
You see her?

NIRIM
All four, Theophon?
SILENUS
I think so... I see someone... Hello?

NIRIM
What if there's five ghosts, Theophon?!

Silenus thrusts his torch in through the cellar door, and it is suddenly extinguished. The first floor falls into darkness.

Ministes, Dominitia, and Silenus SCREAM, but we cannot see what is happening to them.

Nirim is nearly hysterical, screaming along with them. Theophon runs downstairs from the third floor.

THEOPHON
What is it?!

NIRIM
What if there is five ghosts?! The man, the wife, the girl, the boy... and what killed them?!

THEOPHON
And what killed them?

NIRIM
And what if it's a ghost that can touch us too?! Just like the others!

From the darkened first floor, there is a CREAK of a door opening, though we cannot see it. And then, there is a heavy, clawed footfall. One step at a time, coming towards the stairs.

THEOPHON
Don't get so upset. If it can touch us, what'd make you think it'd wants to? All the others didn't even notice we was here.

Theophon's lantern dims slightly. He adjusts it carefully.

NIRIM
You said you refilled the lamp!

The light goes out entirely, and the stage is filled with darkness.

NIRIM
You promised me you refilled the lamp!
More footsteps and a horrible, horrible HOWL. The men SCREAM.

The curtain falls.
The Legendary City of Sancre Tor

The Legendary City
of Sancre Tor
by Matera Chapel

During the Skyrim Conquests [1E 240 - 415], ambitious Highland earls, envious of the
conquests and wealth of their northern cousins in High Rock and Morrowind, looked south
over the ramparts of the Jerall Mountains for their opportunities. The Jerall Mountains proved
to be too great a barrier, and northern Cyrodiil too poor a prize, to reward full scale Nord
invasions. However, Alessia hired many ambitious Nord and Breton warbands as mercenaries
with the promises of rich lands and trade concessions. Once settled among the victorious
Alessian Cyrodiils, the Nord and Breton warriors and battlemages were quickly assimilated
into the comfortable and prosperous Nibenean culture.

Alessia received the divine inspiration for her Slave Rebellion at Sancre Tor, and here she
founded her holy city. Sancre Tor's mines provided some wealth, but the poor soils and harsh
climate of the remote mountain site meant it must be supplied with food and goods from the
Heartlands. Further, located on one of the few passes through the Jeralls, its fortunes were
subject to the instability of relations with Skyrim. When relations were good with Skyrim, it
prospered through trade and alliance. When relations were bad with Skyrim, it was vulnerable
to siege and occupation by the Nords.

With the decline of the Alessian Order [circa 1E2321], the seat of religious rule of Cyrodiil
moved south to the Imperial City, but Sancre Tor remained a mountain fortress and major
religious center until the rise of the Septim Dynasty. In 2E852, the city was suffering under
one of the periodic occupations by Skyrim and High Rock invaders. King Cuhlecain sent his
new general, Talos, to recapture the city and expel the northern invaders. During his siege,
Sancre Tor was destroyed and abandoned. Realizing the strategic weakness of the site,
General Talos -- later Tiber Septim -- resolved to abandon Sancre Tor, and during his reign,
no effort was made to rebuild the city or citadel.

Alessian historians asserted that Sancre Tor was magically concealed and defended by the
gods. Records of Sancre Tor's repeated defeats and occupations by northern invaders gives the
lie to this assertion. The entrance to the citadel was indeed concealed by sorcery, and the
citadel and its labyrinthine subterranean complex were defended by magical traps and
illusions, but their secrets were betrayed to besieging Nords by the Breton enchanters who
crafted them.

One enduring feature of the legend of Sancre Tor is the ancient tombs of the Reman
emperors. Following the defeat of the Akaviri invaders, Sancre Tor enjoyed a brief resurgence
of wealth and culture under Reman Cyrodiil and his descendants, Reman II and Reman III.
Tracing his ancestry to St. Alessia, and following the tradition that St. Alessia was buried in
the catacombs beneath Sancre Tor [1], Reman built splendid funerary precincts in the depths
of the ancient citadel underpassages. Here the last Reman emperor, Reman III, was buried in
his tomb with the Amulet of Kings.
During the Sack of Sancre Tor, General Talos is said to have recovered the Amulet of Kings from the tomb of Reman III. Theologians ascribe the long centuries of political and economic turmoil following the collapse of the Reman dynasty to the loss of the Amulet of Kings, and associate the renaissance of the Cyrodilic empire in the Third Era with Tiber Septim's recovery of the Amulet from Reman III's tomb.

Sancre Tor has lain in ruins since the beginning of the Third Age, and the surrounding region is virtually uninhabited. Now all communications with the north are through the passes at Chorrol and Bruma, and Sancre Tor's citadel and underpassages have become the refuge of various savage goblin tribes.

[1] The competing tradition that St. Alessia is buried on the site of the Temple of the One in the Imperial City. The actual resting place of St. Alessia is unknown.
[93] The Legendary Scourge

See vol. I.
[94] A Less Rude Song*

See vol. I.
Dearest Father,

I know it's always been your dream to travel to Cyrodiil, to climb the lofty mountains and reach the peak known as Dive Rock, and gaze down at the full beauty of the Imperial Province.

but I beseech you -- be careful! We've both heard the tales of the creature known as the Horror of Dive Rock. But in truth, what concerns me most is your lack of...grace. Oh father, you know it pains me to say it, but you're clumsy! You always have been! You can't walk up a flight of stairs without crashing down to the bottom at least once -- how can you possibly hope to scale a mountain range?

Please, father, I beg of you, call off your expedition! I fear the worst.

Your loving daughter,
Fiona
[95.2] Invitation from Umbacano

As my servant no doubt has already explained, I am an avid collector of Ayleid antiquities. As such, your recent sale of a rare Ayleid statue piqued my interest. I am most eager to acquire more of these statues for my collection, and will be happy to remunerate you handsomely for your efforts.

I would be pleased to welcome you to my home in the Imperial City, in order to discuss this matter in more detail, at your earliest convenience.

I remain, most sincerely,

Umbacano

Umbacano Manor
Talos Plaza District
Imperial City
Vilnas -

Keep searching for the writ that assassin carries. The patrolmen have searched the tunnels in hopes that he dumped it when he was found out, but he may carry it on his person yet. If that's the case, I shudder to think where it's hidden. Try sneaking in there while he's sleeping to search the cell.

And by Nerevar, get to work building that second cell! I don't want to execute that assassin until we find out who he came for, and Sardova needs someplace to lock up the workers when they get out of line.

- Commander Adrethi
You don't know me, but I see you every day. Every day my heart skips a beat as you walk past. I am writing to you in hopes that you will let me court you. When you next venture into town, I will be the one holding a primrose.
Your offer was ludicrous. My merchandise is worth twice that at least. Because we have done business before, and because you are known to be trustworthy, I am willing to give you a 15% discount, but no more.
Your last payment was 10% short. I've allowed your debts to accumulate too long. Pay the full debt by next Friday, or I'll be forced to sell my wares elsewhere.
Your proposal is acceptable. I will have the shipment waiting a week after next. I shall expect payment by the end of the month.
[95.8] Letter

You don't know me, but I see you every day. Every day my heart skips a beat as you walk past. I am writing to you in hopes that you will let me court you. When you next venture into town, I will be the one holding a daffodil. If you walk by without stopping, I'll know you don't want me, and I shall never bother you again.
I was heart-broken when you rejected me. Tell me what I can do to win your heart. I will slay Trolls, walk through thorns, fast for a week. Please don't shut me out of your life. I love you more than a flower needs sunshine.

Your penitent lover
My dearest lover,
Yesterday was wonderful. We should plan to see the gardens every week. Your gift was very touching. I will wear it when we next meet. Until then, you have my eternal love.

You know who
I can't wait to see you tonight. My every day is spent thinking about when we will next be together. Soon we will be married and we can be together forever.

Your True Love
Letter Draft

I don't care if you think it's wise -- just build the device. I've lined your coffers with enough gold to feed half the Isles, and you never batted an eyelash before now. You've put in mechanisms that crush bones and sear flesh, why should this one be any different?

The concept is as simple as it was when we first discussed it. Use a few of the standard statuary we've installed but modify the enchantment. A low-grade shock and some strong restoration should do the trick. There may be a few days between charges on an enchantment like that, but do you honestly think any more will be needed?

I'd like to think that we've grown to be friends through the restoration of this place. If nothing else, build this last construct as a favor to me. Ebrocca will be around for ages to come, and it needs a caretaker. Who else will fill that role, if not me?
Letter from Branwen

Owyn,

I know you don't believe me. I know you think I'm just some stupid kid who doesn't know what she's talking about. But the truth is the truth -- you ARE my father.

One night with a scullery maid is all it takes. Or maybe your father deserted you, too, and never taught you the basic lessons of life? Anyway, the past is long forgotten. What matters now is that you come to terms with the truth. I am your daughter, and I will join the Arena as a combatant.

Maybe someday, when I'm Grand Champion, you'll see that we have the same blood, the same tenacity. Until then day comes, I'll train every moment of every day. All I want, all I ever wanted, was to make you proud.

Your loving daughter,

Branwen
I miss you more with each passing night. My only comfort is knowing that the wages I'm earning now will ensure our comfort when I return. I couldn't believe the pay this lunatic was offering, and I doubt we would have followed him all the way to Cyrodiil otherwise. The fool thinks he'll overthrow the Empire, Vaermina take him! I figure we'll end up deserting soon, just as soon as we've gotten as much pay as we can without actually following this addled madman into battle.

We've hardly crossed the border, but already I can tell you: Cyrodiil is an awful place. We have nothing but iron to work with. There's no art to iron armor. I tried using the bones of beasts killed in the local forest, but they are brittle and won't bear the force of the hammer.

Even with decent materials, this would be a dull post. We must be a mile underground and a league from civilization. I don't envy the courier who carries this letter! I pass the time in conversation with the other apprentice. We always seem to have a good laugh at the expense of the Forgemaster; in private, of course.

I can't wait to see your family home in Suran. I've never actually been to Vvardenfell; I've heard much of it's charm. I'm pleased and surprised to hear that you've begun saving for our own home already. You say you're working for somebody named Desele? The pay must be very good, but when I return you won't need to keep it up. You never mentioned, by the way, what sort of work you're doing.

I'm still not sure how this crazy wizard is paying wages for us and his army of mercenaries and laborers. We don't use half the ore mined here for smithing, so I figure he must sell the surplus iron, but I see no evidence of it, nor do I think it would produce such a fortune. I think he's Telvanni, perhaps folk in the area near you have heard if he's from wealthy stock?

I fear I must conclude, my love; the forgemaster is demanding another parcel of iron-shod boots. How many more pairs could we possibly need?
Mother,

Please don't worry. The Elder Council knows what it is doing. Uriel was an old man. They knew he wouldn't live forever, and I'm sure they had plans for the succession. Of course, now with the three princes dead, it's not clear who will be the next emperor, but it's happened before -- there are precedents, I'm sure -- and anyway, Ocatr and the Council have been running the Empire for the past 15 years anyway. So there's nothing to worry about. Everything will be fine.

I don't know what you've read or heard, but here at the Priory everyone seems to think it must have been madmen or witches or crazy cultists. It doesn't look at all political. It's horrible and depressing, but the Empire will survive. There will not be rioting or civil war or another Warp in the West. So please. If you like, go stay with Uncle Korr and Aunt Harrah on the farm for a while. But I'm certain you'll be perfectly safe in the City. I'll try to get down to visit as soon as possible. And I hope to hear from you soon.

your loving son,
Piner
My beloved Sheogorath,

Forgive me, it's been so long I can't remember the last time I've written.

I can only hope these letters reach you. I know your duties keep you busy, but any message from you would be welcome, even if it is given through that fool, Haskell. If it is not possible, fear not, my love is constant. I can remember the day you brought me to your realm as if it were yesterday. But I miss you terribly.

You should see the supplicants mucking about in the Fringe these days. A few I think will be ready soon -- the rest, who can say? If it weren't blasphemous, I might venture to say that the world has been slowly going sane. I can almost feel in my bones a chilling presence approaching, like a devouring emptiness. That does not bode well, but I trust in my Lord's power to keep our spirits well nourished from his bounteous showers of inspiration.

Our child continues to destroy those pesky adventurers who come seeking treasure and glory.

I have been sojourning here in Passwall, tutoring Nanette Don as an apprentice. She is one of the hopefuls that I believe will bloom soon. In the meanwhile, I can visit our child -- I go see him every night around midnight, when the world is quiet, when it belongs to memory and imagination. He is strong and powerful like his father. Would that you visited us some time. It's almost cruel, the way you keep aloof from me. Sometimes I can't even bear to look at him, because I can remember when we created him, your glistening body in the pool, lovingly blending the components of flesh that would become our child -- and afterward you tortured me in your sweet embrace. But now when I visit him, I can't help but weep like a little girl. I know how unlike me it seems... I just can't help it.

To make matters worse, it seems my tears burn my poor creature. It agitates that Daedric soul bound in his body, threatening to sever the warding magic weaved into him. I didn't realize how badly that soul would seek release from the shell I grew in my gardens. But the flesh is pure. Perfect! Perhaps it is my own tears that hold the imperfection...

But I shouldn't be bothering you with these petty concerns. Our child, your Gatekeeper, stands guard over the Gates of Madness, mighty and powerful. No harm shall come to him.

Yours truly and forever,

Relymna
[95.17] Letter to the Guild of Mages

An open letter to the Guild of Mages

Respected Archmages, if this letter makes it to your hands, it is either through my miraculous escape from Lost Boy Cavern, or the noble hands of an intrepid explorer, who did not share my gruesome fate. The dire task I undertook alone, when your hands denied me aid, ended in peril. Despite my studies, I failed the casting to banish the Lich befouling the spirit of my dear friend Erandur, and an evil took root within me. Surely your noble countenance will not be furrowed to hear -
[95.18] Letter to the Guild of Mages

A letter for the Once Great Mage's council

The words you read now are those of a man sentenced to the icy grip of undeath, so doomed by your hand. Though thy folly was perhaps only to follow protocol, may my fate haunt your dreams. I vigorously trained myself as a spellsword to purge the lich that had dominated the soul of my once-noble friend Erandur, but my pointless expulsion from your misguided coven barred me from the appropriate training; the blame falls upon your brow for my errors in banishing the lich, the blame falls to you for its infestation of my mind... May the Worm King himself usurp you, piteous hounds of -
[95.19] Letter to the Guild of Mages

An open threat to the Guild of Mages

Your days are at an end, your blind bureaucracy finished! Your maggot-filled hearts will rot in the eaves of my inner sanctum, your flesh nothing more than tattered mort meat, your paltry souls forfeit. I will consume you, each one. The fell might of Lich Erandur Vangaril will be your end! Daedraeka! Mannimarlo Daedroth Kvatch Mannimarlo एरान्दर वन्गारिल Oblivion Tska Tska Takaesh!

Transliteration:

Erandur Vangaril
Smile, Raybeam!

I know that you're not terribly excited about the summons you've received from your grandfather, so I decided to write this letter for you, since I won't be able to see you off in the morning. You had better not lose it! Whenever you're gloomy, just read this letter and think of me!

Better yet, think of what color dress you'd like me to wear at our commitment ceremony. I'm going to speak with Dervenin about having the ceremony when you return. He worries too much about the torch not being lit -- all that matters is that we're in love, does it not? Arden-Sul himself would condone it, I'm sure.

When you return, you'll have to let me know why your grandfather summoned you. You mentioned something about the family mausoleum, but I don't understand what possible need he would have of you there. He really shouldn't coop himself up in those old ruins all by himself. Highcross is near enough that he could still visit as often as he'd like, and be much more comfortable as well. You should mention it to him while you're there.

And that's all I shall write, my love. You'll be back soon enough; we can talk more when you return. Sheogorath guard you.
My dearest Roland,

I cannot wait for you to return from Bravil. My heart swells with joy as I know we will once again soon be together. I yearn for you every night that I look beside me in my bed, and you are not there. How I wish I could have taken the journey with you, but I understand that these are dangerous times, and I would only slow you down. When you return, perhaps we should get away from the chaos of the Imperial City. Let's go back to that cabin in the woods. The one where you said we would always be safe from the world. The one where you took me in your arms and sang songs of moonlight and happiness. The one where you said "I love you."

Hurry, my love,

Relfina
Finally, somebody sees me for what I am. I'll admit I was taken aback by their approach - a paralysis spell hardly seems like a proper token of respect, but I've given it some thought and they probably didn't think I would willingly associate myself with them. In fact, they were probably right to do so.

If I hadn't been paralyzed while they carried me away, they probably knew I'd have called my army of flying scamps to chew their eyes out.

But here I am, and I have to be honest; I was beginning to worry that the world didn't appreciate me until now. These guys get it. They've brought me all the cured meats I can eat, and I can scarcely empty a cask of wine before another is rolled into my room. Oh, they don't get too close. They know. A wayward glance from me could break their spines.

They needn't worry, of course. I know why I'm here. I saw all the other combatants. They heard of me, Beldring - the Grand Champion of the Felgourad Arena and favored bodyguard to Emperor Kinpo and his thousand-feathered cap. Of course they'd want to see me become the Champion of the Shivering Isles as well. So I train, and they bring me all the equipment I need to do it.

I don't think it will be much longer, now. No, I'll peel the skin off my enemies for the glory of Palgania, and the entertainment of these servants who have been so dutiful in their desire to witness my grandeur.
Dearest Brother -

I just don't understand it. We always dreamed of a place to host the Elaborate Spectacle, and I finally found it. These ruins feature a grand, tiered room suited to a great display, and I promptly persuaded our brothers and sisters to migrate here. Yet, the Elaborate Spectacle has never gone as planned. Perhaps you can tell me where I've gone wrong. Permit me to walk you through the process step by step.

First, we acquire our lucky participants. Truly, I would give anything to be in their place, but I can understand their frenzied protests and struggles in the excitement of the moment. We have to stray to the swamps to find them, though some are more easily obtained from the nearby roads.

Once we've returned to Cann with our participants, they're each given private quarters in which to be prepared for the event. Each room is lined with the finest wines and cheeses, and comfortable bedding in the peasant-chic roll style. My personal steward visits each of them soon after arrival and asks what they would like tailored for the Spectacle, but they invariably ask for suits of armor. Our stores are stocked to the ceiling with the finest velvets, silks, and furs - how am I supposed to provide them with chain mail?

Each participant is provided with ink and pen to practice their prose, but again their behavior escapes me. You should see some of the horrid things they've written! Lengthy letters to loved ones, saying goodbye as though they were dying of a plague, or horribly bloodthirsty curses against their fellow participants. Oh, and I will not offend you with descriptions of the ones who think themselves artists! I suppose that their writings could have clued me into what would happen next, brother -- for that is when things get truly bizarre.

Each time, on the day of the Elaborate Spectacle, after we've all gorged on suckling meats and pungent cheeses, the participants are escorted from their quarters into the viewing chamber where we all eagerly await what we're sure will be a thrilling show, but that never happens. After the first time, we removed the decorative weapons from the walls, but they just bludgeoned and gored each other with whatever they could get their hands on -- loose stones, wine bottles, and in one case a bone the participant must have filed to a point in his quarters. Why would men given a week alone to write and feed on wine instantly set murderously upon each other, rather than share a loving embrace?

I simply don't understand it, brother -- we always believed that the Elaborate Spectacle would be the greatest public display of shared pleasure and it has each time ended a blood-soaked mess. Perhaps the time has finally come to move back to Bliss and abandon our dream.
My Dearest Cousin,

Thank you for last month's shipment -- He was very pleased. I have found that when two are thrown in at the same time, the louder His response and the longer it lasts. How exciting!

Now, I understand how difficult it is for you to gather more volunteers, but I am in need of your services more than ever, cousin. You and I both know it will not be long until the day of Rebirth is upon us, so the more we can offer, the better. When He arrives, I will make sure you are duly rewarded for your services. Be sure to let our volunteers know how happy we all are with their commitment to the cause and what an enormous impact they are having on the coming of Rebirth.
Lord --
I regret to inform you that my return may not be as swift as originally hoped. As you know, I have been summoned away on family business, the full nature of which was not known to me when the courier's message arrived. Now that I am here, it is clear that I will need to spend at least a few days longer before leaving.

I know that you'll insist on knowing the specifics of my absence, so I'll spare us both the headache and disclose them now. The family member is an older cousin -- technically the patriarch of my family -- who has been working tirelessly on restoring our family crypt following the death of his mother. Knowing my interest in stonework, he was keen to enlist my help with certain deterrents he has been installing, and having seen the work to be done, I know it will be enough to fill the better part of a week.

On a personal note, the ruins themselves are fascinating. I hope to get the time to take down some sketches -- you recall the drawings from my journeys last year, of course. Oddly, I can't remember anything about my trip after meeting my escort, but I'm told that this site is very near the border, although this structure is unlike any of the Nord ruins I'm familiar with, and the air is stifling hot for a Skyrim structure. Perhaps you and I can research this further when I return.

I hear my name being called -- I'd better go see what is needed and have this letter handed to a courier before any more time passes. I hope it finds you well.
- G. Malifant
Suspicous Letter

Dearest Isabel and Jenetta,

I should be able to send you another package of money and goods within the month. This posting is proving more lucrative than I'd first suspected. Who knew that Indarys would be so easy to dupe? He doesn't even care. He's so busy wrapped up in his own affairs, and I mean that literally, that he has no time to pay attention to the daily operations of Cheydinhal. I've decided to raise the fines again next month. Then we can begin constructing that summer keep we'd always wanted, my cousins. More to come soon. My love to both of you.

Ulrich
Aluc, my friend -
I apologize that I have not written before now, and pray that you worry not. How could you have known that your patrol would stumble across my outing at the cemetery? There was no denying my deed; a sack full of limbs and grave-soil still fresh on my boots. With your men standing by, what choice was there but pursuit, lest they suspect your own true nature? Truly, I am glad it was you to expose me, and not another whose spellfire may not have missed my escape so widely!
My new haven provides safety and bodies to work on, whether those long-dead or hapless bandits; I will be content here for some time, though I dare not yet to say where. Care for Caessue, and know that when the time comes, I shall return to live again in our beloved Daggerfall. Until then, Captain Cardius, remain vigilant and always hidden.

- Jalbert
[95.28] Undelivered Letter

Until a buyer can be found, the items should be hidden.

Scatter them, so the Legion pigs can't ferret them out easily. Use our safespots at the following camps:

Dagny's Camp
Brotch Camp
Bodean Camp
Varus Camp

Word will be sent when it's time to get rid of these things.
Filide -

It's so dark in this place. We were beset by the monsters after discovering this accursed city under the mountain. I was separated from most of the others in the madness, watched men ten times my superior fall in combat against them. I'll never forget their screams echoing in the vastness, nor the blood splashing against the pale stones, staining the faces of our attackers in their cannibalistic frenzy.

Drothan's a madman. I should have listened to you, brother. I was so eager to prove myself, to be a part of something. I was so proud to send a part of my wages home to mother. Please, tell her I died honorably. I volunteered for Drothan's escort into this forsaken city, watched as he sealed the door behind us. When the slaughter began, I saw him flee in the shadows, Dagon take the s'wit.

I left Mournhold to prove myself, and only proven to be a fool. This place is cold, muthsera, and the screams are diminishing. I fear they may start hunting for the rest of us soon. I cannot find my way out, and their eyes are so keen in the murky dark.

I know this letter will never reach you, brother, but Vivec willing, when the winds blow east over the Peaks of Valus and Velothi, may they carry my final thoughts to you. I love you, brother. I'm so sorry.

Farewell.
Clanfather Malifant -

Are you absolutely certain that such extreme precautions are necessary? I understand your interest in safeguarding the remains of grandmother -- and indeed, all of our eventual resting places -- against unscrupulous grave robbers, but I doubt that even the most stalwart crusader would survive the gauntlets you have built in the mausoleums of Ebrocca, much less a petty thief.

I've seen some of the sketches your architect has drafted, and it seems that some of these traps are without safety mechanisms of any kind; what chance have our future generations of visiting our graves, if they should honor us with such a pilgrimage?

Again, Clanfather -- I do not doubt your motives. In truth, I am glad you have taken such responsibility for this monument to our clan-family; I merely want to be sure that you are keeping your usual level of rationality about you when making decisions as to the construction and expansion of Ebrocca. I hope this letter finds you well.
Coroner Thederen -

Thank you for contacting me. I know it must be an unpleasant task to alert anyone to the death of a loved one, but your frank and professional manner did nothing to further aggravate the distress caused by Mother's passing. That is all one can ask from such a thing, I believe.

I understand the difficulty in storing cadavers, and will be arriving soon after this message reaches you with a carriage to bear her away in. There is one other matter I'd like your counsel on, if it isn't too much trouble.

Mother's wish was always to be buried in a family vault, and so it falls to me to restore a site to this purpose. I feel it's a macabre thing to ask, but considering your occupation, could provide me a recommendation of any architect experienced in such a task? I would greatly appreciate any help you have to offer.

Thank you again, Sir. I expect to arrive before dusk.
-Ardwe Malifant, Clanfather
There are two classes of light armor, metallic and non-metallic. Chainmail, Elven, Mithril and Glass are all examples of metallic light armor. You may be surprised to think that Glass can be thought of as metallic, but appearances are deceiving. What we call Glass is nothing like the windows panes you see in houses. The greenish material is far stronger and has a much higher melting point.

Non-metallic armors are Fur and Leather. For these armor types, the hammer is less useful than the sewing kit. A sharp awl is necessary to restitch the thick material. Holes frequently have to be patched with spare material. The rule of thumb is once you have to patch a patch, it's time to throw out the armor and get a new set.

Metallic armor will occasionally need a patch. Usually it can be repaired by hammering the torn pieces back together. Elven and Mithril will repair better when heated. Chainmail is usually malleable enough to work on cold.

The trickiest of all is Glass. Hammer blows struck across the grain run the risk of shattering the armor. Whenever possible, allign the hammer blows with the grain. In extreme cases, place the armor in tub of oil. Place the anvil so that the affected piece is on the anvil, but just under the oil. Vibrations from the hammer blows are absorbed by the oil and less likely to shatter the Glass.
Transliminal passage of quickened objects or entities without the persistent agency of hyperagonal media is not possible, and even if possible, would result in instantaneous retromission of the transported referents. Only a transpontine circumpenetration of the limen will result in transits of greater than infinitessimal duration.

Though other hyperagonal media may exist in theory, the only known transliminal artifact capable of sustained transpontine circumpenetration is the sigil stone. A sigil stone is a specimen of pre-Mythic quasi-crystalline morpholith that has been transformed into an extra-dimensional artifact through the arcane inscription of a daedric sigil. Though some common morpholiths like soul gems may be found in nature, the exotic morpoliths used to make sigil stones occur only in pocket voids of Oblivion, and cannot be prospected or harvested without daedric assistance.

Therefore, since both the morpholiths and the daedric sigils required for hyperagonal media cannot be obtained without traffic and commerce with Daedra Lords, it is necessary that a transliminal mechanic cultivate a working knowledge of conjuration -- though purpose-built enchantments may be substituted if the mechanic has sufficient invocatory skill. Traffic and commerce with Daedra Lords is an esoteric but well-established practice, and lies outside the compass of this treatise. [1]

Presuming a sigil stone has been acquired, the transliminal mechanic must first prepare the morpholith to receive the daedric sigil.

Let the mechanic prepare a chamber, sealed against all daylight and disturbances of the outer air, roofed and walled with white stone and floored with black tiles. All surfaces of this chamber must be ritually purified with a solution of void salts in ether solvent.

A foursquare table shall be placed in the center of the room, with a dish to receive the morpholith. Four censers shall be prepared with incense compounded from gorvix and harrada. On the equinox, the mechanic shall then place the morpholith in the dish and intone the rites of the Book of Law, beginning at dawn and continuing without cease until the sunset of the same day.

The mechanic may then present the purified morpholith to the Daedra Lord for his inscription. Once inscribed with the Daedra Lord's sigil, the morpholith becomes a true sigil stone, a powerful artifact that collects and stores arcane power -- similar in many respects to a charged soul gem, but of a much greater magnitude. And it is this sigil stone that is required to provide the tremendous arcane power necessary to sustain the enchantment that supports the transpontine circumpenetration of the limen.
To open a gate to Oblivion, the mechanic must communicate directly, by spell or enchantment, with the Daedra Lord who inscribed the sigil stone in question. The Daedra Lord and the mechanic jointly invoke the conjurational charter [2], and the mechanic activates the charged sigil stone, which is immediately transported through the liminal barrier to the spot where its sigil was inscribed, thus opening a temporary portal between Mundus and Oblivion. This portal may only remain open for a brief period of time, depending on the strength of the liminal barrier at the chosen spots, several minutes being the longest ever reported, so the usefulness of such a gate is quite limited.

[1] Interested students are invited to consult the works of Albrecht Theophannes Bombidius and Galerion The Mystic for the fundaments of this discipline.
[2] Recommended examples of the conjurational charter may be found in Therion's Book of Most Arcane Covenants or Ralliballah's Eleven Ritual Forms.
[98] Lists

[98.1] Amber Materials List†

Amber Materials List

Amber Armor
I, Dumag gro-Bonk, Master Smith of New Sheoth, am honor and duty bound by oath to my beloved mentor, to forge weapons and armor for any hero who brings me Amber. I will create magical versions of these weapons and armor if the hero can, along with the Amber, return to me the appropriate matrix, which my mentor has scattered throughout the land, to soak in the magical essence of the Shivering Isles.

The amount of Amber required to make items is listed below:

1 piece ---- Arrows (per 25)
2 pieces ---- Bow
4 pieces ---- Hammer
2 pieces ---- Mace
3 pieces ---- Sword
2 pieces ---- Boots
5 pieces ---- Cuirass
2 pieces ---- Gauntlets
3 pieces ---- Greaves
2 pieces ---- Helmet
2 pieces ---- Shield
[98.2] Battlehorn Castle Upgrades List

I will be happy to provide the following improvements to Battlehorn Castle upon receipt of payment for goods and services rendered.

Kitchen Area: The kitchen will be completely refurbished with everything needed to support you and your household. I will also provide the services of a most excellent cook, Plautis Rusonius, whose culinary skills I can personally recommend as he was in charge of the kitchens at the Tiber Septim Hotel for many years.

Bedroom Area: The bedroom in the castle's private quarters will be fitted out with the most luxurious furnishings and appointments, and the services of a maid accustomed to working in a noble household will be retained.

Library Area: The library in the castle's private quarters will be restocked with books appropriate to a noble's library, and furnished to provide a comfortable reading and working area.

Dining Area: You will be able to entertain in high style once we have cleaned and refurbished the dining room in the castle's East Wing.

Barracks: I will retain the services of an experienced mercenary captain, as well as two men-at-arms, in order to bring the castle garrison up to its full complement.

Training Room: I will provide an experienced battle trainer, who can spar with you and your men on a variety of weaponry. I have an excellent candidate in mind, but do not want to name him until I am certain I can retain his services for you.

Trophy Hall: The trophy room in the castle's Great Hall will be reappointed. I will also hire an expert taxidermist to create beautiful and lifelike trophies out of the most dangerous creatures of the land.

Wine Cellar: No castle should be without the services of a well-trained vintner, and one of the best is now available. Talan learned his trade from his famous sister Tamika of Skingrad. He was also once a member of the prestigious Imperial Alchemy Symposium, but was removed from its ranks for using the skill of alchemy to perpetuate the mixing of magical and alcoholic beverages. The alchemists' loss is your gain: using ingredients found in the wild and his keen sense of taste, Talan creates unusual mixtures the likes of which have never been seen.

I trust that you will find much here of interest to you in your new position as lord of Battlehorn Castle. Please allow me to be of service.

I remain,

Nilphas Omellian
The Merchants Inn, Market District
Imperial City
[98.3] Candidate Lists

[98.3.1] Forged List of Candidates

Hieronymus Lex, eminently qualified - my personal recommendation
Carmalo Truiand, smart but inexperienced - a good second choice
Itius Hayn, loyal but not too bright - unqualified
Audens Avidius, questionable morals - not recommended

[98.3.2] List of Candidates

Itius Hayn, loyal but not too bright - my personal recommendation
Carmalo Truiand, smart but inexperienced - a good second choice
Hieronymus Lex, overly fanatical - not recommended
Audens Avidius, questionable morals - not recommended

[98.3.3] Sealed Forged Candidate List

Hieronymus Lex, eminently qualified - my personal recommendation
Carmalo Truiand, smart but inexperienced - a good second choice
Itius Hayn, loyal but not too bright - unqualified
Audens Avidius, questionable morals - not recommended
Dear courier,

I would like to thank you again for agreeing to assist me. I was so delighted when a friend recommended you, and will certainly employ your services again in the future if everything goes well with this round of purchases. You can imagine how difficult it is for an old woman such as myself to get around. My children, darlings that they are, deserve the best, and I'm afraid I haven't been able to properly show my love and appreciation for them in quite a few years. But all that is behind me now! Here is the list of gifts I think my family would most enjoy, as well each child's current place of residence, which should be used to for delivery.

Matthias -- Talos Plaza District, Imperial City (he has a home there): Matthias always was a rough and tumble lad. The last I'd heard, he'd fallen in with some pretty tough characters there in the Imperial City. I'd feel so much better if I knew he was well protected, so I'd like for you to find him a nice cuirass. Nothing too light -- iron or steel should be fine. And, if possible, I'd like it engraved with "To my Dear Matty, I'll always be here to protect you, love Mum."

Andreas -- The Drunken Dragon Inn (he owns the place and lives there as well): Andy has been brewing his own beer and spirits since he was six years old. The opening of that inn was the happiest day of his life. I'd like for you to get him some new tavern glasses. I'm sure there are craftsmen in the Imperial City who could make a fancy set from frosted ebony or Altmeri crystal.

Sibylla -- Muck Valley Cavern. Yes, my daughter lives in a cave, and no, I'm not very happy about it. Sibby has always loved animals (almost as much as Andy loves beer) and a couple of years ago she apparently thought it a good idea to abandon the Empire and live as a savage with the rest of the animals. In that time, I'm afraid Sibby has kind of... cracked. She's basically as wild as the beasts she lives with. What can I do? I'm Sibby's mother and I'll always love her. She obviously doesn't want or need anything from civilized society, so what I'd like you to do is find a tanner and secure the largest fur blankets you can possibly find. The last time I saw Sibby she was nearly naked, and I can't imagine there's much in that cave to keep her warm. When you do bring them to Muck Valley Cavern, be careful! The wild animals are bad enough, but Sibby herself will probably attack anyone on sight.

Caelia -- Castle Leyawiin (you'll find her in the barracks): My beautiful Cae! My dearest daughter broke so many hearts when she was younger. But now that she's an officer in the Imperial Legion I'm afraid she's let herself go a bit. Not gotten fat! By Mephala, not that! But she's settled into a more... practical kind of look. Even a bit boyish, I guess you could say. So what I'd like you to do is get my Cae as much pretty "girl" stuff as you can. Flowers, perfume, Nord chocolate, that sort of thing.

You've already received half your fee in advance, and will receive the remainder after the gifts have been purchased and delivered, as we originally agreed. Thank you again for providing such a valuable service.

Sincerely,
Perennia Draconis
[98.5] Lists of Death

[98.5.1] List of Death

Toutius Sextius MUST be killed! There is no choice, he is definitely conspiring against me.

Come back and see me (make sure you are NOT followed) once it is done and I will give you your reward.

Glarthir

[98.5.2] List of Death

Davide Surilie MUST be killed! There is no choice, he is definitely conspiring against me.

Come back and see me (make sure you are NOT followed) once it is done and I will give you your reward.

Glarthir

[98.5.3] List of Death

Bernadette Peneles MUST be killed! There is no choice, she is definitely conspiring against me.

Come back and see me (make sure you are NOT followed) once it is done and I will give you your reward.

Glarthir

[98.5.4] List of Death

These people MUST be killed! There is no choice, they are definitely conspiring against me.

Toutius Sextius
Davide Surilie (THE RINGLEADER -- kill him first!)

Come back and see me (make sure you are NOT followed) once it is done and I will give you your reward.

Glarthir
[98.5.5] List of Death

These people MUST be killed! There is no choice, they are definitely conspiring against me.

Bernadette Peneles
Davide Surilie (THE RINGLEADER -- kill him first!)

Come back and see me (make sure you are NOT followed) once it is done and I will give you your reward.

Glarthir

[98.5.6] List of Death

These people MUST be killed! There is no choice, they are definitely conspiring against me.

Bernadette Peneles
Toutius Sextius

Come back and see me (make sure you are NOT followed) once it is done and I will give you your reward.

Glarthir

[98.5.7] List of Death

These people MUST be killed! There is no choice, they are definitely conspiring against me.

Bernadette Peneles
Toutius Sextius
Davide Surilie (THE RINGLEADER -- kill him first!)

Come back and see me (make sure you are NOT followed) once it is done and I will give you your reward.

Glarthir
[98.6] Macabre Manifest

Recently Deceased

Ferdelus Wagariun - Imperial City
Quilted Doublet
Green Silk Pants
Gold Trimmed Shoes
Gold Ring

K'sirr - Cheydinhal
Green and Blue Outfit
Green Velvet Shoes
Silver Amulet with Blue Stone
Silver Ring

Nodur Cloud-Seeker - Bruma
Fine Silk Robe
Silk Shoes
Fine Ashen Cane with Inlaid Copper
Gold Ring

Nodaria Wythel - Bravil
Blue Dress
Blue Suede Shoes
Fine Silver Necklace
Gold Ring with Polished Stones
Gold Ring with Red Stone

Kaylah Swinchell - Bravil
White Dress with Floral Pattern
Gold Trimmed Cow Hide Shoes
Gemmed Necklace
Gold Ring with Onyx Stones

Dondlar - Leyawiin
Green Brocade Doublet
Green Silk Pants
Green Velvet Shoes with Gold Thread Trimming
Polished Wood Box with Silver Fittings
Small Polished Staute of Azure Stone (in box)

Holithanius - Cheydinhal
Decorative Leather Armor with Gold Buckles
Silver Longsword (Personalized)
Soft Leather Boots
Glass Ring
Oforo Gabings - Anvil
Travel Cloak with Silver and Green Leaf Fastener
Enchanted Shortsword with Inlaid Writing
Gold Ring with Inscription (Cursed?)
Leather Bound Travel Journal

Sellina Rotona - Imperial City
Red Velvet Dress
Red and Gold Velvet Shoes
Silver Necklace with Locket
Silver Ring with Blue Stones
I, Cutter, Master Smith of New Sheoth, by tradition and sacred pledge to my deceased mentor, must forge weapons and armor for any hero who brings me Madness Ore. I will create magical versions of these weapons and armor if the hero provides the needed Ore and the appropriate matrix, which my mentor has hidden throughout the land, drinking in the mystical essences, the blood of the Shivering Isles.

The amount of Madness Ore required to make items is listed below:

1 piece ---- Arrows (per 25)
2 pieces ---- Bow
4 pieces ---- Claymore
2 pieces ---- War Axe
3 pieces ---- Sword
2 pieces ---- Boots
5 pieces ---- Cuirass
2 pieces ---- Gauntlets
3 pieces ---- Greaves
2 pieces ---- Helmet
2 pieces ---- Shield
Mirili's List
{by Mirili Ulven}

I, Mirili Ulven of Highcross, will pay for samples of the following items, the sum of 10 coins each. As I only need one sample of each, I shall not pay for duplicates.

Alocasia Fruit
Aster Bloom Core
Black Tar
Blister Pod Cap
Congealed Putrescence
Digestive Slime
Elytra Ichor
Flame Stalk
Fungus Stalk
Gas Bladder
Gnarl Bark
Grummite Eggs
Hound Tooth
Hunger Tongue
Hydnum Azure Giant Spore
Pod Pit
Rot Scale
Scalon Fin
Screaming Maw
Shambles Marrow
Swamp Tentacle
Thorn Hook
Void Essence
Watcher's Eye
Withering Moon
Worm's Head Cap
[98.9] Shopping Lists

[98.9.1] Shopping List

A potion of Restore Willpower is made by heating Minotaur Horn and Primrose Leaves. Grind the results together with a mortar and pestle. Add water to create a drinkable fluid.

[98.9.2] Shopping List

For a minor Restore Health potion, crumble some Cairn Bolete cap over roasted Boar Meat. Chop finely and mix together with a mortar and pestle. Add water to create a solution that can be drunk.

[98.9.3] Shopping List

Bloodgrass
Harrada
Tinder Polypore Cap
Ironwood nuts
Stinkhorn cap

[98.9.4] Shopping List

Yams
Potatoes
Carrots
Fruit (any kind)
Half loaf of bread

[98.9.5] Shopping List

Wheat flour
Sugar
Milk
Tarragon
Pepper
Salt
[98.9.6] Shopping List

- Side of beef
- Onions
- Corn
- Mead
- 3 loaves of bread

[98.9.7] Shopping List

- Paper, quality vellum
- Ink, red and black
- Binding glue
- Two new quills

[98.9.8] Shopping List

- Apples
- Onions
- Lard
- Cheese
- Milk

[98.9.9] Shopping List

- New shirt
- Boots
- Broom
- Two forks

[98.9.10] Shopping List

- Beer, lots of beer
- New mugs
- Enough fruit for 12 guests
- 8 loaves of bread
- Roast boar
[98.10] Steward's Registry

Drothmeri Army; Forward Detachment
Registry of Departures and Arrivals
Second Seed through _________

6, Second Seed
New Recruits, grade I salary paid
10 infantry
4 archers

18, Second Seed
Cavalry Detachment, granted shelter
Assigned to Tenmar outpost

12, Mid Year
Infantry, Drothmeri
Departure to Narsis; Courier detail
1 cavalry

15, Mid Year
Veterans, Grade III salary paid
6 mage-trained

19, Mid Year
Infantry, Drothmeri
Returned from Courier detail
1 cavalry

21, Mid Year
Platoon, Grade II salary paid
12 Soldier infantry
Dranmis Drethari
Discharged for family emergency
[98.11] Taxidermy Needs List

I specialize in the finest reconstructions of creatures from across the face of Cyrodiil. I am ready to create my marvels of taxidermy, but require a small portion of each appropriate creature in order to make the likeness complete.

Stuffed Bear:
Bear Pelt

Stuffed Wolf:
Wolf Pelt

Stuffed Minotaur:
Minotaur Horn

Stuffed Mountain Lion:
Lion Hide

Stuffed Ogre:
Ogre Teeth

Stuffed Clannfear:
Clannfear Claws

Stuffed Deadroth:
Deadroth Teeth

Stuffed Troll:
Troll Fat

Melisi Daren, Taxidermist
[98.12] Waterfront Tax Records

Adanrel, 3 coins
Amusei, 1 coin
Armand Christophe, 4 coins
Astay Haymon, 2 coins
Bronsila Kvinchal, 3 coins
Carwen, 2 coins
Damian Magius, 3 coins
Dranas Llethro, 1 coin
Graman gro-Marad, 2 coins
Hillod, empty handed - thrashed
Isleif, 2 coins
Jair, 3 coins
Kastay Kvinchal, 3 coins
Methredhel, 2 coins
Ormil, 7 coins
Raven Camoran, 2 coins
Skarla Wirich, 2 coins
Myvryna Arano, exempted
Uzul gro-Grulam, 3 coins
Velan Andus, 3 coins
Vlanarus Kvinchal, 4 coins
I can make the following wines for you in about 24 hours, provided I have the necessary ingredients.

**Frostdew Blanc:**
Aloe Vera Leaves x2, Green Stain Cup x2
 Restore Health, Restore Fatigue

**Colovian Battlecry:**
Bog Beacon Asco, Cinnabar Polypore Red, Cinnabar Polypore Yellow Shield, Fortify Endurance

**Julianos Firebelly:**
Sacred Lotus Seed, Lady's Smock Leaves x2
 Resist Frost, Fortify Health

**Numskin Mead:**
Dragon’s Tongue, Lady’s Smock Leaves x2
 Resist Fire, Fortify Health

**Stumblefoot's Reserve:**
Arrowroot, Flax Seeds x2
 Feather, Fortify Strength

**Argonian Bloodwine:**
Bergamot Seeds x2, Foxglove Nectar x2, White Seed Pod (from Goldenrod)
 Resist Poison, Resist Disease, Water Breathing

**Sparkling Honeydew:**
Lavender Sprig x2, Summer Bolete x2
 Fortify Personality, Fortify Speechcraft
Dearest reader, the tome that you hold in your hand is a chronicle of pain, of torment, and of discovery. In these memoirs, I shall impart to you an autobiography of a foolish and failed attempt to achieve a great power. Walk with me as I break the bonds of propriety, throw off the restraints of the ancient laws of the arcane, and cast aside the bonds of magical ethics. For contained herein, you shall find the dying words of Vexis Velruan.

Let it be known to you, loyal reader, that I remain until my dying moment, a student of Magicka. But no typical apprentice, am I. I am one who has forged a unique path to the deeper understanding of the mechanics of Magicka. Through the infliction of destruction magic upon my own flesh, I have accomplished more than any student before me has.

How is it, you ask, that I came to be what I am? It began innocently enough. I was once a healer, one of the most promising students of the temple. Which one? It doesn't matter. I was eventually expelled. Fools. You see, we had a number of patients interred in our humble sanctuary who had been infected with the Red Fever. My attempts to use the magical arts to turn the disease on itself were less than successful in their early stages. For trying to find a cure, I was cast out.

It was not long after my exile that I discovered the means to eradicate infection using the destructive energies of magicka. In my explorations of the school of Destruction I discovered that by pulling the elemental energies through my own body, I was able to increase the raw output of energy. From the experience of a lighting bolt surging through my own body, I was able to deepen my understanding of the raw forces of magicka.

At first, the pain was bearable. I directed only a minor amount of the energy back in towards myself. I learned to couple the destruction with restorative energies. It helped to abate the damage done to my body, but did nothing to stop the pain itself.

As my tolerance for the pain increased, I began to channel more and more through my own body. My understanding of Destruction outgrew my knowledge of Restoration. While it could still lessen the damage, it could not stop it. My skin became charred and blackened; it dried, flaked off, and cracked. I stunk of cooked meat. But I could not resist the draw of more and more energy.

I became like a skooma fiend of the worst sort. I no longer used magic for any practical purpose. I simply sought out more and more energy -- I relished the pain. Anticipated the
moment when the energy and the pain would wash over me as one, freezing my flesh, burning it beyond recognition. My skin became a network of scars, sores, lesions, and burns. But it was never enough. Never. I needed more. More pain. More power.

I lost my sight. My eyes melted into boiling pools of vitreous humor so hot that they left streaks of blistered skin as they ran down my face like burning tears. My right hand froze solid and shattered into a thousand pieces, when I carelessly bashed it against a doorjamb in terror, once I realized what had happened. The bones of both my legs shattered outward like broken glass, shredding the flesh and muscle surrounding them.

While this may sound like a fate of terrible consequence, my dearest reader, I can assure you that you will never know what it is to be a creature of flesh and bone like I have. You will never have the degree of knowledge of frailty of the flesh that I have grown to know. I achieved a level of understanding of Magicka beyond that of the grand masters of the guild, but that accomplishment pales in comparison to the grander discoveries that this experience has bestowed upon me.

People like you think that pain is to be avoided. Hidden from. Feared. Through my suffering and the numbness that now robs me of the ability to feel it, I can say this to you: Pain is a simple factor of human existence. It affords us the opportunity to feel -- to appreciate the temporary shell that our spirits occupy. Pain is the greatest gift that the gods have ever given mortal man.

And now, as I tell you this story by way of a scribe, I am a stump of a man, wrapped in seeping bandages, never to know pleasure again. Even still, I have but one message to impart to you: Embrace what you are.

Glory to lord Sheogorath, for he has opened my eyes.
[100] Liturgy of the Duelists

Liturgy of the Duelists

We purge ourselves in the duel.
Sheogorath will mend us.
We purge our friends in duel.
Sheogorath will mend them.
We purge our enemies in war.
Sheogorath will abandon them.

Speak not of the Duelists
Speak only of the duel
Speak not of the combatant
Speak only of the combat
The Gnarl is a creature of the forest like no other. Away from the walls of New Sheoth, they are called the Walking Trees. Gnarl are known for their affinity with the elements. If a Gnarl is struck by elemental forces of fire, frost, or shock, it uses that energy to grow stronger and larger. Fortunately, this effect only lasts for a short time.

It is the will of Sheogorath that the Gnarl confuse and bewilder the unwary mage. To that end, it gains resistance to the element it is struck with, but becomes weaker to the other two. The wily mage will quickly switch between elemental spells to take advantage of this. Lesser wizards will suffer if they continue to use the same spell over and over.

In recent years there have been rumors of smiths that are able to use the amber sap extracted from Gnarl to make sturdy armor and weapons. As of yet, this gossip has not been confirmed.

More is not known about the Gnarl than is known. No-one has been able to determine the gender of Gnarl, or if they even have them. Young or immature Gnarl have never been seen. One academic suggested that Gnarl are born full-formed from trees that are struck by lightning. This absurd suggestion has not been confirmed.

Similarly, we have no knowledge of their diet or social habits. Presumably they feed directly from the sun and earth, like trees do. There are no reported cases of them communicating, even among each other. However, they do seem to have a truce of sorts with other woodland creatures such as the Baliwog and Elytra.
[102] The Locked Room*

See vol. I.
[103] Lord Jornibret's Last Dance*

See vol. I.
[104] Lost Histories of Tamriel

In an earlier volume I discussed the vagaries and influences of the Aedric prophesies, more commonly known as the Elder Scrolls. Readers wanting to know the history behind the highly inappropriate appellation 'Aedric' can refer to chapters 23 through 27 of my previous work for a full explanation as well as the incompetencies of my good comrade Therin of Mournhold, who named them thus.

The influences of the archivally historic Elder Scrolls cannot be understated. Once a prophesy contained in an Elder Scroll is enacted in Tamriel, the text of the parchment becomes fixed. All readers ingest the same divine message. It becomes an historical document declaring the unequivocal truth of a past event. Scholars, even those as dim-witted as Therin of Mournhold, cannot argue the bias of the writer, like he has with my earlier works. Not even magic can affect the word written upon those ancient pages.
[105] The Lunar Lorkhan*

See vol. I.
The Lusty Argonian Maid* 

See vol. I.
Mace Etiquette

Warriors sometimes make the mistake of thinking that there are no tactics with a mace. They assume that the sword is all about skill and the mace is only about strength and stamina. As a veteran instructor of mace tactics, I can tell you they are wrong.

Wielding a mace properly is all about timing and momentum. Once the swing of the mace has begun, stopping it or slowing it down is difficult. The fighter is committed to not just the blow, but also the recoil. Begin your strike when the opponent is leaning forward, hopefully off balance. It is completely predictable that he will lean backward, so aim for a point behind his head. By the time the mace gets there, his head will be in its path.

The mace should be held at the ready, shoulder high. The windup should not extend past the shoulders by more than a hand's width. When swinging, lead with the elbow. As the elbow passes the height of your collarbone, extend the forearm like a whip. The extra momentum will drive the mace faster and harder, causing far more damage.

At the moment of impact, let the wrist loosen. The mace will bounce and hurt a stiff wrist. Allow the recoil of the blow to drive the mace back into the ready position, thereby preparing the warrior for a quicker second strike.
[108] The Madness of Pelagius*

See vol. I.
The ancient Ayleids believed that Nirn was composed of four basic elements -- earth, water, air, and light -- and of these four elements, they believed the most sublime form of light was starlight. The stars are our links to the plane of Aetherius, the source of all magical power, and therefore, light from the stars is the most potent and exalted of all magical powers.

From time to time, fragments of Aetherius fall from the heavens. The people know these fragments as 'shooting stars', and from time to time, such Aetherial fragments are found on Nirn. The most common varieties are known as 'meteoric iron'; this metal is prized by armormers and enchanters for its properties in the forging of enchanted weapons and armors. This meteoric iron is also the primary component in 'Ayleid Wells,' ancient enchanted artifacts found throughout Cyrodiil.

Another, rarer form of Aetherial fragment is called 'meteoric glass'. It is from such fragments that other rare Ayleid enchanted artifacts are crafted -- Welkynd Stones and Varla Stones.

Ayleids Wells are scattered across Cyrodiil's landscape. Their siting is a mystery; they are not associated with any known Ayleid cities or settlements. It is presumed that, in some manner, they harvest magical power from starlight. It is also suggested, without evidence or support, that they are located at the meeting points of ancient lines of magical power; however, modern arcane arts have discovered no perceptible evidence of such lines of power.

Those with magical talents can draw magicka from Ayleid wells to restore their own reservoirs of magical power. No ritual or arcane knowledge is necessary, suggesting that these wells were designed to serve persons not skilled in the magical arts. Once drained, the wells replenish again only at magical midnight. Once recharged, they appear to radiate magical power back into the sky, which prompts some to theorize they are also objects with religious or magical ritual significance -- perhaps a means of offering magic back to the heavens.

Welkynd Stones [Aldmeris - "sky stone," "heaven stone"; literally, "sky child"] are pieces of cut and enchanted meteoric glass which apparently act as storage devices for magical power. A magical talent can restore his reservoirs of magicka from such stones. Alas, the means of restoring power to these stones may have been lost with the Ayleids. Currently, these objects simply crumble to dust after they have been used.

Great Welkynd Stones are exceptionally large pieces of enchanted meteoric glass. Scholars believe that at the heart of each ancient Ayleid city, a Great Welkynd Stone was the source of the settlement's magical enchantments. It may be that these great stones were linked to the lesser stones, restoring and maintaining their power. In any case, research on these Great Welkynd Stones is impossible, since all the known Ayleid ruins have been looted of their great stones, and no examples of these great stones are known to survive.
Another rare enchanted item found in Ayleid ruins is called a Varla Stone [Aldmeris - "star stone"]. Varla Stones are remarkably powerful, enabling untrained users to restore magical energy to any number of enchanted items. Because of their great value and utility, these items are also extremely rare, but since they are small and easily concealed, diligent explorers may still occasionally come across them in any Ayelid ruin.

Ayleid Wells. Welkynd Stones. Varla Stones. Consider, then, these marvels of magical enchantment. Are we then to conclude that the Ayleids were a superior race and culture? Did they so exceed us in art and craft that they mock the feeble powers of Third Era Wizards?

Never! The Ayleids were powerful, yes, and cunning, but they were neither good nor wise, and so they were struck down. Their works have passed from Nirn, save these rare and sparkling treasures. Their ancient cities are dark and empty, save for the grim revenants and restless spirits condemned forever to walk the halls, keeping their melancholy vigils over bones and dust.
[110] Manifesto Cyrodiil Vampyrum

To you whom We have seen
    Stalking at night by eyes keen
Transcendant of savages
    Sating thirst sans avarice
Your coffers stay stuffed
    By social graces robust
None know your nature;
    save Us
None share your fate;
    save Us
None welcome you as kin;
    save Us

On Our Order:
Know first that we are no simple tribe of savages, tearing throats with the orgiastic abandon of our scattered, tribal brethren. Ours is a civil fraternity, to which we are bound - every one - by our dual hunger for flesh and influence. By the virtue of Imperial structure and bureaucracy, Cyrodiil has become our stronghold in the third era, and we suffer no savage rivals within our boundaries, reveal ourselves to none, and manipulate the hand of society to mete out our agendas.

On Our Dual Patrons:
To Kin-father Molag Bal, who brought forth the Bloodmatron Lamae to spite Arkay, we owe our existence, as do all vampires, though not all honor Him. For him we revel in the feast, and acknowledge the gift adrift in our veins.

To patron Clavicus Vile, beacon o’er our affairs, we owe our successes and social stature. Our bond with Vile makes us unique among our kind, for his guidance steels our savage craving with reason and savvy. For him we live amidst mankind, and twist them to our will from offices of power.

On Our Rivals:
Most barbaric tribes think themselves powerful by the gift of Bal’s blood alone, and squander the gift. There are those, however, who show signs of enlightenments, and earn our attention - those such as the Glenmoril Wyrd, who live within the walls of Breton cities, or the Whet-Fang sodality of Black Marsh, who use magicka to keep captives catatonic and harvest from them the red nectar. These foes may one day threaten to impugn our sovereignty within the boundaries of Cyrodiil, thus compelling our vigilance. Should any encroach upon our dominion, our wrath must be swift and total.

On Our Conduct:
To preserve our ideals and way of life, two primary edicts shall be observed. Above all, reveal thyself and our Order to no other, for discretion is the greatest of our virtues. Do not feed where you may be found out, or on those who may suspect your passing. Avoid daylight by
lifestyle; dispel common belief in our kind, and maintain supple appearance through satisfaction of the thirst. Second, devote your pursuits to the procurement of influence, political and otherwise. Our strength is not in physical numbers, but in skillful manipulation of society. Always be mindful of our Patrons, and preserve the Order. Devote yourself to these ideals always, and the Order shall count you amongst our own.
[111] Mannimarro, King of Worms

Mannimarro, King of Worms
By Horicles

O sacred isle Artaeum, where rosy light infuses air,
O'er towers and through flowers, gentle breezes flow,
Softly sloping green-kissed cliffs to crashing foam below,
Always springtide afternoon housed within its border,
This mystic, mist-protected home of the Psijic Order:
Those counselors of kings, cautious, wise, and fair.

Ten score years and thirty since the mighty Remans fell,
Two brilliant students studied within the Psijics' fold.
One's heart was light and warm, the other dark and cold.
The madder latter, Mannimarco, whirled in a deathly dance,
His soul in bones and worms, the way of the necromance.
Entrapping and enslaving souls, he cast a wicked spell.

The former, Galerion had magic bold and bright as day.
He confronted Mannimarco beneath gray Ceporah Tower,
Saying, 'Your wicked mysticism is no way to wield your power,
Bringing horror to the spirit world, your studies must cease.'
Mannimarco scoffed, hating well the ways of life and peace,
And returned to his dark artistry; his paints, death and decay.

O sacred isle Artaeum, how slow to perceive the threat,
When the ghastly truth revealed, how weak the punishment.
The ghoulish Mannimarco from the isle of the wise was sent
To the mainland Dawn's Beauty, more death and souls to reap.
'You have found a wolf, and sent the beast to flocks of sheep,'
Galerion told his Masters, 'A terror on Tamriel has set.'

'Speak no more of him,' the sage Cloaks of Gray did say.
'Twas not the first time Galerion thought his Masters callous,
Unconcerned for men and mer, aloof in their island palace.
'Twas not the first time Galerion thought 'twas time to build
A new Order to bring true magic to all, a mighty Mages Guild.
But 'twas the time he left, at last, fair Artaeum's azure bay.

O, but sung we have of Vanus Galerion many times before,
How cast he off the Psijics' chains, bringing magic to the land.
Throughout the years, he saw the touch of Mannimarco's hand,
Through Tamriel's deserts, forests, towns, mountains, and seas.
The dark grip stretching out, growing like some dread disease
By his dark Necromancers, collecting cursed artifacts of yore.
They brought to him these tools, mad wizards and witches,
And brought blood-tainted herbs and oils to his cave of sin,
Sweet Akaviri poison, dust from saints, sheafs of human skin,
Toadstools, roots, and much more cluttered his alchemical shelf,
Like a spider in his web, he sucked all their power into himself,
Mannimarco, Worm King, world's first of the undying liches.

Corruption on corruption, 'til the rot sunk to his very core,
Though he kept the name Mannimarco, his body and his mind
Were but a living, moving corpse as he left humanity behind.
The blood in his veins became instead a poison acid stew.
His power and his life increased as his fell collection grew.
Mightiest were these artifacts, long cursed since days of yore.

They say Galerion left the Guild, calling it 'a morass,'
But untruth is a powerful stream, polluting the river of time.
Galerion beheld Mannimarco's rise through powers sublime,
To his mages and Lamp Knights, 'Before my last breath,
Face I must the tyranny of worms, and kill at last, undeath.'
He led them north to cursed lands, to a mountain pass.

O those who survived the battle say its like was never seen.
Armored with magicka, armed with ensorcelled sword and axe,
Galerion cried, echoing, 'Worm King, surrender your artifacts,
And their power to me, and you shall live as befits the dead.'
A hollow laugh answered, 'You die first,' Mannimarco said.
The mage army then clashed with the unholy force obscene.

Imagine waves of fire and frost, and the mountain shivers,
Picture lightning arching forth, crackling in a dragon's sigh.
Like leaves, the battlemages fly to rain down from the sky,
At the Necromancers' call, corpses burst from earth to fight,
To be shattered into nothingness with a flood of holy light.
A maelstrom of energy unleashed, blood cascades in rivers.

Like a thunderburst in blue skies or a lion's sudden roar,
Like sharp razors tearing over delicate embroidered lace,
So at a touch did Galerion shake the mountain to its base.
The deathly horde fell fatally, but heeding their dying cries
From the depths, the thing they called Worm King did rise.
Nirn itself did scream in the Mages' and Necromancers' war

His eyes burning dark fire, he opened his toothless maw,
Vomiting darkness with each exhalation of his breath,
All sucking in the fetid air felt the icy touch of death.
In the skies above the mountain, darkness overcame pale,
Then Mannimarco Worm King felt his dismal powers fail:
The artifacts of death pulled from his putrid skeletal claw.

A thousand good and evil perished then, history confirms.
Among, alas, Vanus Galerion, he who showed the way,
It seemed once that Mannimarco had truly died that day.
Scattered seemed the Necromancers, wicked, ghastly fools,
Back to the Mages Guild, victors kept the accursed tools,
Of him, living still in undeath, Mannimarco, King of Worms.

Children, listen as the shadows cross your sleeping hutch,
And the village sleeps away, streets emptied of the crowds,
And the moons do balefully glare through the nightly clouds,
And the graveyard's people rest, we hope, in eternal sleep,
Listen and you'll hear the whispered tap of the footsteps creep,
Then pray you'll never feel the Worm King's awful touch.
This manual is commissioned by General Warhaft to serve as a guide and manual to armor for all officers in the Imperial service.

On the battlefield, a soldier's armor should reflect his principal duties. Scouts, light cavalry, archers, and raiding skirmishers should wear light armor. Mobility and speed is of paramount importance to these troops. It is recommended that a cuirass and greaves be worn at all times. Helmets, gauntlets and boots are of value to cavalry and skirmishers, but not scouts or archers.

Light armor is made from fur, leather, chainmail, mithril, elven or glass. This is also the order of their quality and expense, fur being the least protective and cheapest, and glass the best and most expensive. Fur, leather armor, and chainmail are readily available throughout the empire. Mithril, elven and glass are exceedingly rare and are only found in ancient ruins and remote tombs.

Heavy armor should be reserved for the frontline infantry, pikemen, heavy cavalry or foot knights. All officers should be issued heavy armor. Helmets, cuirass and greaves should be standard issue at all times. Boots and gauntlets are only necessary for the cavalry and foot knights.

Blacksmiths can forge heavy armor from iron, steel, dwarven, orichish, ebony or daedric. This is also the order of their quality and expense, iron being the least useful and cheapest, with daedric the most effective and expensive. Iron and steel plate mail can be found in most any blacksmith's shop. The other materials are rare and armor made from them is only found in ancient treasure hoards hidden deep underground.

Advanced practitioners in the Mages Guild know the secrets of placing enchantments upon pieces of armor. The greatest enchantments are typically placed on armor made from rarer, more durable materials, such as ebony and daedric, but even iron can be made to take an enchantment.

The self-styled Bard of Battle, Amorous Janus, once penned a comedic ballad about a Colovian general who was constant removing and re-equippping his armor every few minutes to conserve the magicka powering it. By way of response to the implied criticism, the general had him mounted on the front of a battering ram during the siege of Castle Fallow.
This manual is commissioned by General Warhaft to serve as a guide and manual to arms and weapons for all Imperial officers in the field.

Obviously, a soldier's weaponry should reflect his skills. Skill with a blade is recommended for daggers, shortswords, longswords, and claymores. Skill with blunt weapons is desirable to wield the war axe, mace, battle axe and war hammer. To the uninitiated, axes and hammers may seem to be very different weapons, but the rhythm, drill, and physical strength used by both weapon types are virtually identical. Only those with marksman skill should be outfitted with the bow.

Most of these weapons are commonly used in combination with a shield. The claymore, battle axe and war hammer, however, require both hands to use. These two-handed weapons are best suited to heavily-armored knights, berserkers and those soldiers that hold the flanks of the line.

Arms have been made from many materials over the ages, and each material varies in weight, durability, and cost. These materials are here ranked in order of desirability and cost, with cheapest and least desirable listed first: iron, steel, silver, dwarven, elven, glass, ebony, and finally daedric. Some armors correctly observe that silver weapons are slightly less durable than steel; nonetheless, its unique ability to affect ghosts, wraiths and certain types of Daedric creatures is undisputed.

Bows can be made with laminated cores of the same materials. This provides a higher tensile strength and therefore greater power on the draw. The materials used in the arrow, particularly in the arrowhead, can affect its mass and penetration. Thus, the quality of the bow and of the arrow are taken together to determine the weapon's overall armor penetration.

Enchanted weapons are mentioned in virtually every fable and song. The magic on such items lies dormant until they strike an opponent. At that moment the enchantment is activated, causing distress and injury to the target. Enchantments on bows are transferred to the arrow at the moment of release. Should the arrow have an enchantment of its own, however, the missile now carries both enchantments and delivers them to the target.

An enchanted weapon has a limited reservoir of magicka. Each blow drains some of its reserves, until finally it is drained dry. The enchantment can be recharged by arcane processes involving soul gems. The more powerful the soul in the gem, the more magicka is restored to the item.
[112.3] Manual of Spellcraft

MANUAL OF SPELLCRAFT
An Introductory Text

{[The book contains an inordinate number of scrawlings along the margins; the few that are immediately readable suggest they are notes for someone who needs frequent reminders on the basics of spell casting.]}\(^\text{1}\)

The Beginning Spellcaster

The most powerful mages in Tamriel were once beginners. They all had similar early experiences: exposure to magic kindled an interest and/or unlocked some latent ability, followed by years of hard work. These intrepid souls honed their skills, learned new spells, and vigorously trained their minds and bodies to become the formidable figures they were known as during their later lives.

The Mages Guild of Tamriel has long been the first stop on a long road to knowledge and power for many individuals. Providing magical services to the general public, the Guild offers a wide variety of spells for purchase, and is recommended as a first stop for any aspiring spellcaster. Independent dealers may be found, though their selection of spells is often not as comprehensive as that of the Mages Guild.

Many spells are beyond the capabilities of beginning mages; the ability to render one's self invisible, for example, is an advanced power and is beyond the novice spellcaster. Through practice, a mage may become more skilled in a given school of Magic and find himself proficient enough to begin exploring its more powerful aspects. The fledging mage should not be daunted by his inability to wield certain powers, but should instead use this as a point of focus and a drive for bettering himself. Rather than becoming discouraged, the student should look forward to higher levels of skill, such as the advanced techniques of absorbing spells, summoning lesser (and eventually greater) Daedra and undead -- for research purposes only -- and protection against specific types of spells, such as Fire, Frost, and Shock spells.

Mages wishing to specialize in a particular school of magic are encouraged to learn as many spells of possible within that school, and to practice them frequently. All mages, whether specializing or nurturing a general interest, are encouraged to apply for membership within the Mages Guild. Beyond services available to the general public, the accomplished Guild member has access to many exclusive services such as Advanced Spellcraft and Enchanting. These services have been deemed potentially dangerous to the public at large, and have been restricted to higher-ranked Guild members in good standing by the Council of Mages.

Citizens interested in the further use of magic should consult their local Mages Guild ArchMagister.

\(^{1}\) From Jeanne Frasoric's copy (MG06ManualSpellcraft).
Manual of Xedilian

On the subject of Xedilian's construction, Lord Sheogorath, let me begin by extending the warmest regards to you and your noble being. The construction was completed on time and well under budget as you demanded ("under pain of fun," I believe you are quoted as saying) and with only the most infinitesimal loss of life. I am proud to say that by harnessing the energy of that most unusual crystalline formation, Xedilian should maintain itself for years to come (with proper maintenance of course). At your request, I have included the full operation instructions for each section of the site. If you have any other questions, please feel free to bother me anytime (like when you originally thought of this idea in the middle of the night).

The heart of Xedilian is its power source, the Resonator of Judgment. By tuning this huge chunk of crystal with the Attenuator of Judgment (a "tuning fork" of sorts), we have released a wave of siren-like sound that will draw anyone from outside the Isles. Three Focus Crystals have been placed throughout the site to assist in keeping this wave of sound even and stable. This site will not function without all three Focus Crystals running in unison, so it's important to keep them clean and safe on their "cradles" (which I have called their Judgment Nexus). The Focus Crystals are irreplaceable at this time, so take proper precautions guarding the site when not in use.

Xedilian is split into three encounter areas all linked with the latest in arcane transport technology. As the hapless "Xedilianites" (it was fun to experiment on them, thank you for that) make their way through each room, they are subjected to a test based either on the Manic philosophy or that of the Demented... whichever suits your whim at the time. All you need do is push a single button, then sit back with your favorite wine (we've provided luxurious observation platforms from which to enjoy the show) and watch the results.

Each encounter area has a unique theme that matches your requests as close as we could provide. I think you'll be pleased with the results. Below I have detailed each room and the effects you can expect from them (in brief, as I know your lordship is busy):

Chamber of Conversion

A fairly empty room with a large grating on the floor and single, half-sized "harmless" Gnarl wandering in the center.

Manic Result
Our small, harmless Gnarl will be grown in size to nearly thrice that of the average Xedilianite. Most we observe run around in an attempt to escape the lumbering creature. Eventually, it will stop and fade away. The magic of the room is enhanced by the spore gas we pump in through the grating.

Demented Result
Our tiny friend Gnarl is joined by a small swarm of its brethren and they attack our surprised guests! Genius!
Chamber of Avarice

In this room, a huge mound of treasure sits atop a half-ziggurat inside a securely locked cage (to which there is no key).

Manic Result
We drop several hundred keys to the ground that are all exact duplicates. It's amusing to watch Xedilianites scramble through the keys for the correct one. Some spend days. Amazing.

Demented Result
When the Xedilianite reaches the top of the ziggurat; we blast them with a highly concussive flame spell. The blast always sends them flying... good fun for all, discounting those that do not survive.

Chamber of Anathema

As you requested, we saved this one for last. The Xedilianite that has the mettle to make it this far now faces the toughest challenge of all. This room features freshly killed corpses, blood, and plenty of hanging bodies (for your darker moods, my lord).

Manic Result
We kill the Xedilianite, and cause a specter of his former self to rise from the body. Not many Xedilianite minds can handle this one... most go insane this far into the site. I must confess, this room is a favorite of mine.

Demented Result
Nothing better than a good old-fashioned battle! We raise at least double the number of zombies as there are Xedilianites and let them all have at it! Simple, elegant, and deadly.

I hope you are pleased with the results of Xedilian. I know you'll have just as much fun using it as we had fun constructing it. Strangely, we have yet to receive payment for the site, but I am sure it is just a minor oversight and it will be corrected as soon as your lordship has a mome...
[113] Maps

[113.1] Grantham Blakeley's Map
[113.2] Pale Pass Map
If you wish to repent of your sins and rededicate your life to the Gods, pray at the Wayshrines of the Nine.

May the Nine hear your prayers and look upon you with tender loving kindness.
[114] Master Zoaraym's Tale*

See vol. I.
[115] The Mirror*

See vol. I.
See vol. I.
Daedra worship is not prohibited by law in Cyrodiil. Primarily this is a result of the Imperial Charter granted the Mages Guild permitting the summoning of Daedra. Nonetheless, chapel and public opinion is so strongly against Daedra worship that those who practice Daedric rituals do so in secret.

However, opinions about Daedra worship differ widely in other provinces. Even in Cyrodiil, traditional opinions have changed greatly over the years, and some communities survive which worship Daedra. Some more traditional Daedra-worshippers are motivated by piety and personal conviction; many modern Daedra-worshippers are motivated by a lust for arcane power. In particular, questing heroes of all stripes seek after the fabled Daedric artifacts for their potent combat and magical benefits.

I personally have discovered one community worshipping the Daedra Lord Azura, Queen of Dawn and Dusk. A researcher curious about Daedra worship might research in several ways: through a study of the literature, through exploration and discovery of ancient daedric shrines, through questioning local informants, and through questioning worshippers themselves. I used all these means to discover the shrine of Azura.

First I read books. References like this one may provide a helpful general background concerning Daedric shrines. For example, my researches led me to understand that, in Cyrodiil, Daedric shrines are generally represented by statues of Daedra Lords, are generally situated in wilderness locations far from settlements, that each shrine generally has associated with it a community of worshippers, often referred to as a 'coven', that shrines have associated with them a particular time -- often a day of the week -- when a Daedra lord might be solicited, that Daedra Lord often will not deign to respond unless they regard a petitioner of sufficient prowess or strength of character, that they will only respond if given the proper offering [the secret of which offering often only known to the community of worshippers], and that, in return for the completion of some task or service, the Daedra Lords will often undertake to offer an artifact of power to a successful quester.

Then I questioned locals with an intimate knowledge of the wilderness. Two classes of informants I found especially useful -- well-traveled hunters and adventurers [who might come across shrines in their travels], and scholars of the Mages Guild. In the case of the Shrine of Azura, both sources were profitable. I discovered a Cheydinhal hunter who had chanced across a strange epic statue in his travels. The statue was of a woman with outstretched arms; in one hand she held a star; in the other hand, she held a crescent moon. He had shunned the statue out of superstitious fear, but had marked the location in memory --far north of Cheydinhal, northwest of Lake Arrius, high in the Jerall Mountains. Then, proceeding to the local Mages Guild with a description of the statue, I was able to confirm from its description the identity of the Daedra Lord worshipped.
Having discovered the location of the shrine, I visited it, and discovered there the community of worshippers. Because of the strength of opinion against Daedra worship, the worshippers were, at first, reluctant to admit their identity. But once I had won their trust, they were willing to divulge to me the secrets of the times when Azura would hear petitions [from dusk to dawn], and that the offering required by Azura was glow dust, a substance obtained from the will-o-the-wisp.

I am, of course, nothing more than a chapelman and scholar, so it did not lie within my power to find a will-o-the-wisp to obtain glow dust; nor am I certain that Azura would have found me worthy to make such an offering, even had I proffered it. But I was assured that if I had been able to make such an offering, and if it had been accepted, Azura would have given me some sort of quest, which, if completed, might have earned me the reward of Azura's Star, a Daedric artifact of legendary magical powers.

I have since heard rumors of the existence in Cyrodiil of several other Daedric shrines, of the Daedric Lords to which they are dedicated, and the Daedric artifacts that might be won by questing heroes. Hircine the Huntsman, for example, is linked in legend to the Savior's Hide, a powerful enchanted armor. The sword Volendrung is associated with Malacath, Lord of Monsters, and the eponymously named Mace of Molag Bal is also thought to be the object of Daedra worship. Other Daedra Lords, their shrines and worshippers, remain to be discovered in Cyrodiil by earnest and persistent researchers.
[118] Mysterious Akavir*

See vol. I.
[121] The Mystery of Princess Talara*

See vol. I.
[122] Mysticism*

See vol. I.
Many investigators have attempted solve the riddle of the Thieves Guild. Despite repeated proofs that no viable Thieves Guild exists, the rumors persist. Whenever historians search for evidence of this shadowy organization, nothing is found. Witnesses know nothing. Safehouses are empty. Fences turn out to be simple businessmen.

Let me clarify by stating that thieves most certainly do exist. They rot in dungeons all across Tamriel. Certainly bands of thieves work together to commit crimes. On rare occasions there has even been documented cases were persistent bands of thieves have worked together for years at a time committing thefts and other crimes.

However, a guild is different than a band. A guild implies an organization with membership rolls. It would have a financial structure, which would include member dues or some other means of securing funds. It would have rules of conduct or behavior. It would have a hierarchical leadership structure. Within this structure there would be methods of advancement and succession.

The best documented case of a Thieves Guild was found in Morrowind. For a brief time Gentleman Jim Stacey ran a ring of thieves that robbed wealthy merchants and nobles all across that island nation. During the recent Nevarine incident, the Fighters Guild and the shadowy Morag Tong eliminated this band of thugs. The final fate of Jim Stacey himself is not known.

The Morrowind Thieves Guild did have a financial structure and a leadership structure. It satisfied many of the conditions of a true guild. However, it was short lived. Public knowledge of Stacey's group lasted for only a few years at most. Although the Fighters Guild has claimed credit for wiping them out, some historians believe the group merely went deeper undercover.

The problem with determining the non-existence of the Thieves Guild is quite logical. It is not possible to prove a negative. I cannot prove definitively that the Thieves Guild does not exist, only that historians have been unable to document one.

If a Thieves Guild were to be operational in Cyrodiil, one would think that crime would be rampant, which it is not. The very nature of thieves makes it impossible for them to trust one another sufficiently to work together for very long. By nature a thief is a rule breaker. Therefore an organization that has rules would fail if all it's members were thieves. For these reasons, I dispute the existence of a modern day Thieves Guild in Cyrodiil.
Sheogorath Invents Music

In the earliest of days, in a time when the world was still raw, Sheogorath decided to walk amongst the mortals. He donned his guise of Gentleman With a Cane, and moved from place to place without being recognized. After eleven days and eleven nights, Sheogorath decided that life among mortals was even more boring than his otherworldly existence.

"What can I do to make their lives more interesting?" he said to himself. At that same moment, a young woman nearby commented wistfully to herself, "The sounds of the birds are so beautiful."

Sheogorath silently agreed with her. Mortals could not make the beautiful and inspired calls of birds. Their voices were wretched and mundane. He could not change the nature of mortals, for that was the purview of other Daedric Princes. However, he could give them tools to make beautiful sounds.

Sheogorath took hold of the petulant woman and ripped her asunder. From her tendons he made lutes. From her skull and arm bones he made a drum. From her bones he made flutes. He presented these gifts to the mortals, and thus Music was born.

Sheogorath and King Lyandir

King Lyandir was known to be an exceedingly rational man. He lived in a palace that was a small, simple structure, unadorned with art and ugly to look upon. "I do not need more than this," he would say. "Why spend my gold on such luxuries when I can spend it on my armies or on great public works?"

His kingdom prospered under his sensible rule. However, the people did not always share the king's sense of practicality. They would build houses that were beautiful to look upon, although not necessarily very practical. They devoted time and energy to works of art. They would celebrate events with lavish festivals. In general, they were quite happy.

King Lyandir was disappointed that more of them did not follow his example and lead frugal, sensible lives. He brooded on this for many years. Finally, he decided that his subjects simply didn't understand how much more they could accomplish if they didn't waste time on those frivolous activities. Perhaps, he reasoned, they just needed more examples.

The king decreed that all new buildings must be simple, unadorned, and no larger than was necessary for their function. The people were not happy about this, but they liked their king and respected the new law. In a few short years, there were more plain buildings than ornate ones. The citizens used the money saved to make and buy even more lavish art and hold even more excessive celebrations.
Once again, King Lyandir decided to provide them a strict example of how beneficial it would be to use their time and resources for more practical purposes. He banned all works of art in the city. The people were quite put out by this, but they knew that their king was doing what he thought was best for them. However, human nature is not so easily denied. In a few more years the city was filled with plain, simple buildings, and devoid of any sort of art. However, the people now had even more money and time to devote to their parties and festivals.

With a heavy heart, King Lyandir decided that his people were to be treated like children. And like all children, they needed rules and discipline laid down by great figures of authority to make them understand what was truly important in life. He decreed that there should be no revelry in the city. Singing, dancing, and music were all banned. Even food and drink were limited to water and simple foodstuffs.

The people had had enough. Revolt was out of the question, since King Lyandir had a very well trained and equipped army. They visited the shrines and temples in droves, praying to all the gods, and even to some of the Daedric Princes, that King Lyandir would revoke these new, oppressive laws.

Sheogorath heard their pleas and decided to visit King Lyandir. He appeared to the king in his dreams as a field of flowers, each with arms instead of petals and the face of the Madgod in the center. "I am Lord of the Creative and Lord of the Deranged. Since you have no use for my gifts of creativity, I have decided to bless you with an abundance of my other gift."

From that day forward, every child born in the city was born into madness. Since infants do not reveal illnesses of the mind, it was several years before this was realized. The king's own son was among the victims, suffering from seizures and delusions. Yet, King Lyandir refused to change his ways.

When his son, Glint, was 12 years old, he stabbed his father while Lyandir was sleeping. With his dying breath, King Lyandir asked, "Why?" His son replied, "It is the most practical thing I could do."

The new, young king ordered all the palace servants slaughtered. He ordered a grand festival to celebrate his new reign and the repeal of Lyandir's laws. He served the crowds a stew made from the carcasses of the palace servants. He ordered the east facing walls of every building painted red, and the west facing walls painted in stripes. He decreed that all citizens wear ornate masks on the backs of their heads. He then burned down the palace and began construction of a new one.

In the new palace, the young king ordered his personal chambers to not have any doors; for fear that small woodland creatures would attack him. He ordered that it have no windows for fear that the sun and moon were jealous of him and plotting his death.

And thus ended the line of King Lyandir. The people of the city returned to their grand works of art and raucous celebrations. They talked and acted as if they still had a living king, and even kept up the palace, using it to house and care for their mad children. Sheogorath was mightily pleased with this outcome. From that day forward the city was blessed with more than the normal number of gifted artists and deranged citizens.
The Contest of Wills

A mighty wizard named Ravate once walked the Winds of Time to find Lord Sheogorath. His intent was to win a favor from this most capricious of the Daedric Princes. Upon finding Sheogorath, Ravate spoke humbly to him, "Lord Sheogorath, I beg a favor of you. I would gladly drive a thousand men mad in your name if you would but grant me the greater magical powers."

Fortunately for Ravate, Sheogorath was in a playful mood. He proposed a game, "I will grant your wish, if you are still sane in three days. During that time, I will do my utmost to drive you mad. It shall be great fun."

Ravate was not so certain that he liked this new deal. He had been really looking forward to driving a thousand men mad. "Lord Sheogorath, I regret having disturbed you with my shallow, selfish request. I withdraw my unfortunate plea and will humbly leave this place."

Sheogorath just laughed, "Too late, mighty Ravate. The game is afoot, and you must play." Ravate fled, only to find that all exits from the Daedric realm were now sealed. He wandered aimlessly, constantly looking over his shoulder, jumping at every noise. Each moment brought new terror as he waited for Sheogorath to begin.

After three days, Ravate was convinced that every plant and animal was a tool of Sheogorath. He hadn't eaten or drunk for fear that Sheogorath had poisoned the food or drink. He hadn't slept for fear of Sheogorath invading his dreams. (Which was foolish, as dreams are the domain of Vaermina, may She grant us Restful Sleep.)

It was then that Sheogorath appeared to him. Ravate cried out, "You have set the whole world to watching me! Every creature and plant are doing your bidding to drive me mad."

Sheogorath replied, "Actually, I have done nothing. You have driven yourself mad with your fears. Your delusions prove that you are truly deranged, and therefore I win. While you wanted to make a thousand men mad, I only wanted to break one man's mind, yours."

From that day forward Ravate served Sheogorath's every whim. Whenever daring travelers try to approach Sheogorath, Ravate warns them, "Sheogorath is already inside each of us. You have already lost."
[125] Necromancer's Moon

Brothers and Sisters
of the Worm!

Despair not at the trials we now face, for our time comes swiftly.

The God of Worms watches over our Order, and will deliver us from these troubled times on the Day of Reckoning. Until then, perform His works in secret, serve His needs, and look to the skies for His signs.

The Revenant, the Necromancer's Moon, watches over us all. His Form, ascended to Godhood, has taken its rightful place in the sky, and hides the enemy Arkay from us so that we may serve Him. Watch for the signs: when the heavenly light descends from above, hasten to His altars and make your offering, so that He may bless you with but a taste of His true power. Grand Soul Gems offered to Him will be darkened, and can be used to trap the souls of the unwitting; a feat even the great N'Gasta would marvel at.

Stay faithful to the Order of the Black Worm, and in time your loyalty will be rewarded. Soon, He will return to set the world right in due time, and those who would stand in his way will suffer eternally at his hands, just as those who stood opposed before.

Until that day, you must believe and be patient. Hide in your caves, in your ruined forts, in your secret lairs. Raise your minions, summon your servants, cast your spells. Answer the call of the Order when you are needed. Watch and listen.
[126] Nerevar Moon-and-Star*

See vol. I.
[127] N'Gasta! Kvata! Kvakis!*

See vol. I.
[128] Night Falls on Sentinel*

See vol. I.
This brings me to my next subject, the glowing root known as Nirnroot.

Although the oddly tenacious root grows almost anywhere a significant body of water is present, this root is extremely rare, and I believe soon to become extinct. I myself have yet to come across one of the gnarled shoots, as they're rarely in sight of the roads that cross Cyrodiil. According to the records of the noted Imperial Herbalist Chivius Regelliam, the Nirnroot once flourished and could be found all over the country, but he suspected a cataclysmic event severely stunted their growth. Although many scholars reject the proposal that the Sun's Death event of 1E 668 catastrophically affected plant life, Chivius feels that the Nirnroot's lineage was damaged by the lack of sun for a full year. Whereas other plant species tend to "find a way," the Nirnroot's mysterious magical nature made it especially susceptible to this climate shift. While this may or may not be the case, it's certainly true that the recorded sightings of Nirnroot are declining as the years pass.

The most perplexing facet of Chivius's studies is that his notes describe the root as having a yellowish glow. Contrary to this fact, the Nirnroot of today has a soft bluish or blue-white glow. Unfortunately, since not many studies of the Nirnroot were performed from Chivius's day until now, it's unknown when or why this occurred. What I'm proposing today is that the Nirnroot, even though merely a plant, sensed impending extinction and therefore changed its own nature to survive. One of the more obvious facets of today's Nirnroot that supports this theory is the fact that it can now survive underground without any sunlight at all. While it's true that generally only mosses and fungi grow in these environments, I have two signed depositions by persons claiming that they sighted the Nirnroot in deep caves. Not once in Chivius's copious notes is a subterranean Nirnroot mentioned. But how could this be? How could a surface dwelling plant suddenly begin appearing in new locations radically different from its normal habitat?

The answer, my fellow alchemists, is nestled within Chivius's own notes. Although he spends a great deal of time with the Nirnroot in his laboratory, the one thing he neglected to test at a high enough level of detail was the soil. As stated previously, Chivius felt that the Sun's Death, the eruption of Red Mountain, contributed to the demise of the Nirnroot. Agreed. My amendment to that proposal is that the ash that fell from the sky that entire year mixed with the soil, and again, due to the magical nature of the root, contributed to the aforementioned changes. The ash became a catalyst of sorts, forcing a change in the very makeup of the Nirnroot. Although very little ash from that dark time remains, I have done tests on newer ash samples sent to me from Vvardenfell. They show little to no magical properties, certainly none of which could affect a plant to that magnitude. However, the rare occurrence of what's known as Ash Salt in the normal ash does contain very potent magical abilities. In fact, some native Dunmer are said to harness that ability to create a cure for the Blight, which pervaded their realm many years ago. I feel this magic, meshed with the Nirnroot's inherent magic caused the radical change... in essence; the root "healed itself."

To surmise, my two proposals are certainly linked. The plant needed to survive, and therefore used a byproduct of its destructor to do so. No other plant in nature has ever come close to

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1 Written by the Skingrad alchemist Sinderion for an Imperial Alchemy Symposium (in-game information).
this metamorphosis. I feel the Nirnroot has accomplished in a relatively short amount of time what it would take other species millions of years to complete.

Whatever the case may be, one thing is certain; the Nirnroot is on a path to destruction. It contains untapped potential to create potions the likes of which have never been seen in our day. I propose to you today that we divert a small portion of our funds to an expedition to collect some of these roots to study. I have outlined this proposal for your perusal after this section of the Symposium. Please, seriously consider this proposal before it becomes too late, and the Nirnroot becomes nothing but a memory.

Thank you for your time.
[130] Notes

[130.1] Alval Uvani's Schedule

As he travels around Cyrodiil, Alval Uvani can be found at the following locations, on the following days:

Morndas/Tirdas -- Bravil -- The Lonely Suitor Lodge

Middas/Turdas -- Skingrad -- The West Weald Inn

Fredas/Loredas -- Bruma -- Olav's Tap and Tack

Sundas -- Leyawiin -- Alval Uvani's House (rented property)

Keep in mind that there may be some variation based on the time it takes for him to get to the different cities.
Forgemaster -
When next you can take leave, I wish to speak with you. I know you have had reservations about allowing me to assume more duties, but I think you will reconsider when I recount for you some of the atrocious things my counterpart has said in your absence.
I have watched you from afar and feel it is time to make myself known. I am Greywyn, the last of the Crimson Scars. Once a powerful force rivaling the Dark Brotherhood itself, the Scars were the true followers of Sithis and the masters of deception. I will be departing this world soon, as the cold embrace of the Night Lord calls to me. All I have I leave as a legacy to you. My home, Deepsorn Hollow, will be your new haven. Use the map on the reverse of this note to find it. All that lay within is yours to do with as you please. I have but one request in return... further the ways of shadow and honor Sithis with the darkest of deeds. Make the virtuous pay for their blasphemy with their lifeblood staining your blade. May Sithis guide you.

Greywyn
Cindanwe's Notebook

The sun listens to my greenness. But where did the moon frown? The sky is empty of children, and the earth eats strawberries. Yet, why do the worms taste of bitter-plumb?

Everyone is bereft of spores. Or the spores have devoured us all and we are left with nothing. Or everything is inside us, though we find ourselves swimming in rock, where strange things remain, and known things fall outside of their own selves - let alone from each of us!

Why play the paintbrush against her? She always stands close to being far away. And what of the farm then? Shall it twinkle in the breeze of lyricism? How should I know?

What I do know is this: the grass drinks flower dust like a glass bead swallowed tastes nothing like water. And furthermore, wherever one finds the absence of something, that something surely exists someplace else, or else how could it be absent. There is wisdom in this!

Yes, and everything has its place, and every place its thing belonging to it. It is the way of all things. Even those things misplaced know where they belong. They long to be. That is the whole point of belonging, is it not? And yet we are never so lonely as the stars, as when we find ourselves possessed. Of love? Of death? Of what then? Life?

But they call me Enemy, even as they exalt me. Yet even the wind is slave to the clouds... But the rain? It bounces against the sky like apples in a basket, and for what? What shall become of us when the pod pits die?

I would like to think that the bleak summer does not herald the death of the rain. But who is to say one way or the other? If the butterflies make up the walls, how does one see inside a room at night? Perhaps the room is already inside us and we are the ones who need occupants, and our occupants are the ones needing the light.

But I digress.

The spoon that slays monsters is always the last to enter the mouth, and the first to leave. Nor do eyes in the back of one's head mean that one can walk backwards... do the knees bend that way? Do the shoes point heavenward? No, we are stuck falling forward until we smash against the door of eternity. That is the essence of life. To be devoured in our own banality, though we wish to be something more.

I love this life, but I hate the aftertaste. Like waking from a dream with someone's fingers in your mouth. How did they get there? Whose hand do they belong to? Whose hand do any of us belong to, really?
It always comes back to belonging, does it not? It does. As the question knows the answer, the answer belongs to the question. And that is the whole point, I think: to know the question, and thus to belong to the answer.

That is why I must write in this book. Everyday. Sometimes twice. The others are jealous of the windflowers that bloom in these pages. They desire to swallow the ink through their nostrils, tasting the bitterness of all that life has in store for them... but it is my life that belongs to me. Even as my house belongs to the things inside it. And insides belong to outsides, and outsides are never quite as free to do as they think they are.

Always this. One thing after another, but not some things. Some things are better left where they think they are, not where they really are. Not all places are equal, nor all things belonging to the same spot. How could that be? No. Surely not.

When my sun shines through the moon's teeth, then it will be time. But not until. Until then I shall continue to smash my head through windows so that I might see. Where I am. Where here is. Where I belong. And all things being just so, so I be just. And justice is important in this life, is it not? How else can a life be justified, but by this?

The sun is forever moving. I must get back to work. I am grateful I have this place to put my thoughts, lest they become lost and confused as I am (though I'll never let the others see that... they think I have everything in control)...
Acolytes,

The Shield is here. We know this, and yet we have not found it.

The fort has been cleansed, and yet still it eludes us. No doubt it was hidden from eyes such as ours, hidden with the intent to keep it from those who would learn its secrets.

The gate to the lower levels no longer halts our progress. Make note of the candles along the walls if you would pass through.

The fort must be held at all costs if we are to succeed. Let none enter. Leave no foe standing.
[130.6] Conjurer's Note

The prisoner remains uncooperative.

There is little doubt that he was on his own, and none will come to his aid. It has been made clear to him that unless he reveals what he knows, he shall pay most dearly. And yet still he holds out.

We give it one more week. If he does not help us reach the Shield, he is to be disposed of, preferrably in a manner most painful.
My thanks again for commissioning my work on this crematory. May it serve you and your kin for generations to come. Please retain this letter of instruction in its use.

Place the remains of the departed within the crematory retort. There is no need to remove items such as jewelry or clothing, as enchantments on the retort only allow the incineration of bone itself.

Once the retort is sealed, exit the incineration chamber and close the gate. Depress the nearby panel to actuate the incinerator. Wait a few moments for the retort to cool before re-entering the chamber.

Once the retort has been opened, the remains of the departed can be recovered, interred, and prepared for last rites.
I guess you found the message I told you about, old friend. We've traveled together for so long, and you're the only one I trust with the ring and my story.

I knew climbing into the window of that wizard's house was a mistake, but the bounty on the ring was just too enticing to pass up. They said it was worth thousands of drakes... enough to keep me comfortable for a while as I lay low. They also said Ortharzel was out of town at some meeting of wizards or some such.

They were wrong on both counts. You'd think I'd be used to this by now, dealing with the unpredictable in our line of work. But after trying to fence the ring all over Cyrodiil, no one would touch it. Worse still, Ortharzel was pursuing me the entire time. I had to call in many favors to stay one step ahead of him.

I decided to strike north and make for Skyrim. As I was crossing the Jeralls, he finally caught up to me. Two fireballs later, I found myself tumbling down a steep snowy slope into a valley. Don't know where I am, but there are ruins of some old fort here. Luckily, that fetcher didn't follow me down; I assume he gave me up for dead.

I think I'm going to stash the ring in this valley, make for Skyrim, and return later when I feel it's safe. I've used some old chests I found in the ruins to make sure nobody stumbles across the ring by mistake; you know, the old key to a key thing like we used to do. If I don't make it back here, and you're reading this message, then the ring is all yours, my friend. Use it well and remember me.

G.S.
[130.9] Crumpled Pieces of Paper

[130.9.1] Crumpled Piece of Paper

[blank crumpled piece of paper]

[130.9.2] Crumpled Piece of Paper

[blank crumpled piece of paper with lines scratched in a trembling hand]
THE HORROR

THE HORROR

[130.9.3] Crumpled Piece of Paper

[blank crumpled piece of paper with a line written in a trembling hand]
I shall lie here in the dark waiting for death

[130.9.4] Crumpled Piece of Paper

Each day this cave foils me. I could swear I am near the surface when I awake shaking, cold and in this dank inner keep. Here I must keep notes of the way out.

Three steps forth, five steps right, six steps up and seven for woe.

Eight steps make the children cry, Nine steps pop Khajiit's eyes!

Ten steps mark the Worm King's Wrath, Eleven steps through the gates, of scorched Oblivion!

Transliteration:

Worm of Death Take Vangaril
Rot, decay, and O the worms! The pitiful scrabbling of this mortal shell shall soon be quieted. Vangari! Fool! Struggle no more. When you read these words, know that your graying skin, your failing breath, know that they are your own doing, your own foil and folly! Soon, you will be no more, and Lich Erandur will consume you, from within. Resign unto your fate; join Us.

Mother,

What do you expect me to do about it? Come to the City, track down the assassins, and bring them to justice myself?

And are there assassins banging on your door? Do you have some reason to think they're coming for you next?

Please. Don't panic. These assassinations have upset everyone. But you just have to go on with your life.

I don't know what you're worried about. Everything is fine here. Everyone is getting on with business, like the Chancellor says. The Elder Council has everything under control. Certainly you don't expect me to

Mother,

I know you're upset. But please. I have important duties here at the Priory, and I can't come to the Imperial City and babysit you. Just stay calm, like Chancellor Ocato says, and pray for the Emperor and his sons.

Mother,

Goods Gods! Don't go crazy on me! You'd think the streets of the Imperial City were filled with rioters and the Legions were being called out to restore order.
We've had no disturbances at all here in Chorrol, and I've heard of nothing at all in the City or in the other towns. People are doing just as Chancellor Ocato said -- staying calm, and honoring the memory of the emperor and his sons by getting along with their lives. Running around like frightened children isn't going to help anyone. I haven't got time to
Notes: Decrepit Note

Ignorant fool! I could have delivered Lainlyn to him, and more. But time is of no consequence to me any longer! While he is growing old, I will be only growing stronger, to await the day when I will return to claim my rightful place among the powers of this world!

The darkness is not so bad. I come to like it. My companion is not very talkative, but that is just as well. I see now that my procedure was somewhat flawed -- the flesh was not fully imbued with life as I intended. But his spirit remains strongly bound. He will provide me with an excellent test subject, as long as I am careful to do no permanent damage.

Sometimes I awaken, and do not know where I am or what I have been doing. How to tell the passage of time here? Why should it matter to me? I believe the change is coming over me quickly now. My lord Mannimarco would be pleased.

Dirty Scroll

Some of the men were worried about these old ruins being haunted, but Mephala take them -- this spot's going to be perfect for ambushing merchants along the road. And all under the nose of the Imperial Legion!

Finally got some of those big blue stones down today. Berenice got the idea to shoot them down with her bow. Got 'em all here with me. I don't know what they are, but they stink of magicka. Bet they'll fetch a nice price with the Mage's Guild.

Two-Coins and that khajiit from Vvardenfell set up their camps down in the tomb. Fine by me, spares the rest of us the smell.

Two-Coins ran up today, the Khajiit's gone missing. Swore to the Nine that you could hear claws scrabbling at limestone, but nothing's down there. I'm guessing she got tired of the smell and snuck out overnight. Two-Coins' stench could peel shells off mudcrabs - I'm surprised she hung around that long.
Divining the Elder Scrolls

...of night. The Elder Scrolls themselves can pierce the veil. They offer a view of the flux of Time itself. The prophet who reads the scroll sees one version of what might be. Another prophet might have a different vision with equal veracity. The price for insight is the reader's sight. He is struck blind and...
My dear helper:

Most of the text you've given me is well beyond your comprehension, I'm afraid. I found one section, however, that had been appended by the keepers of the Imperial Watch, and their notes will be of use to you.

Return to the ruins of Cloud Top. There you should find a section of pillar that looks remarkably unlike any other stonework present. The carvings on this pillar were made by the Ayleids, and the pillar has been infused with significant power.

The following was scribbled in the margins of the book, presumably by the same men who took the pillar from its original resting place. The notes are smeared in places, so I have included what I could decipher. Do note that this sounds rather dangerous, and take whatever precautions you feel are necessary.

"... only seems to function outdoors, where it reacts strongly to magic... terrible power, capable of striking a man dead on the spot..."

"...transported the stone to a secure location, in order to study it more fully..."

"...guild wizards brought in to focus power of stone. Several severely injured; stone finally 'tuned' to react to shock magic..."

"...Welkynd stone necessary to harness stone's power. Success means powers of shock unattainable through other means."

From these notes, and the original Ayleid inscriptions, it seems that our Imperial friends were attempting to harness some degree of the Ayleid's magical power, and were marginally successful. I suggest you procure a Welkynd stone for yourself (searching Ayleid ruins will likely be the quickest method of acquiring one) and return to Cloud Top to cast a shock spell at the pillar.

What happens then, I think you can comprehend on your own.

-E
I don't think I'll live much longer. My wine supply is thinning, only one bottle left. Bernice's wine is worthless! I would have lasted longer on Gnarl bark. I'd go back home to resupply, but Brithaur, that maggot, has stolen my house. It's not just him, though, it's also the others. I can't leave the safety of the roof. They have a plan for me, I see it in their eyes. Caldana, Earil, Cutter, ALL OF THEM!

They don't know I'm up here, watching. Not much longer, though. At least they won't find me or my stash. I've put all my favorite things in an urn, and sunken it in the sewage near the back of Bernice's dive.

I think I'll drink that last bottle to celebrate.
This day, I have struck down the shade of my former friend and ally. With a heavy heart, as the Lich wailed and perished, I performed the rites to extract Erandur's soul from Undeath, and destroy the lich utterly. No dusty text had prepared me for the bizarre events that occurred, but I am confident that I have freed the soul of Erandur.

I feel compelled to investigate this cavern. Perhaps some dark relics here can be used for research to better combat necromancers in the future. I will explore, and perhaps emerge with trophies enough to prove my worth to the guild.
Mondas: Today I caught Bernadette Peneles watching me. I have very little doubt now that she is one of them. This saddens me. I had thought her one of the few to show me kindness in this nest of treachery. But now it seems that it was all a lie.

Current thoughts on the conspiracy:

Maruhkati Selectives -- Most likely!! Ruthless and secretive. I have undoubtedly earned their enmity by my vigilance numerous times.

The Blades -- Supposedly the guardians of the Empire. Question: Do they know that I know their dark secret? Everything hinges on that!

Mythic Dawn -- Need to learn more about them!!! Obscure hints from various sources suggest they could be the most dangerous of the three. Question: Why do they want me dead?

Observation of Davide Surilie:

Mormdas: Watched him from my upstairs window. He pretends to work, but I can tell that he is really watching my house. Spent several hours whispering to his brother. Could Gaston be involved as well?

Tirdas: Followed him to his vineyard. Don't think he saw me. He went off by himself once -- could have been burying secret evidence? NOTE: Go back tonight and search for this. Could be the break I need to finally learn the truth!

Middas: Too sick to go out today, but noticed him staring at my window.

Turdas: Searched the vineyard tonight. Found nothing, but the ground had clearly been disturbed. He must have learned I was spying on him and removed it! NOTE: Need to find someone from out of town to help me. My movements are too closely watched!

Fredas: Davide watched my house again. He doesn't even try to hide it anymore. They are becoming more brazen now. Think I am as good as caught in their net. I must strike back before it's too late! But are desperate measures called for yet? Do I have enough proof to justify acting?
Loredas: Toutius Sextius may be one of them. Noticed him staring at me today near the Low Gate. I am tempted to stop going out, but that might tip my hand. They must NOT know I am aware of their agents, or they may finally move against me!

Yes. Toutius Sextius lives alone. No one knows what goes on in that big old house of his. Could it be the headquarters of the conspiracy? If only my movements were not so closely watched!

Good news! I may still have a chance. Found someone to help me today. A stranger who can move freely. Hope to have proof against Bernadette Peneles by tonight!

Bernadette Peneles is guilty, as I thought! My new agent has proved trustworthy and efficient. We must move quickly before the conspiracy learns that I am no longer alone. I should have proof against Toutius Sextius by tonight.

Bernadette Peneles is not involved in the conspiracy! At least so my new acquaintance tells me. I hope it is true, but my instincts are rarely wrong. But I have no reason to suspect treachery, yet. The report on Toutius Sextius should help me decide where my new friend's loyalties lie.

Proof against Toutius Sextius, at last! I chose my helper well. Now to gather evidence against Davide Surilie, and the conspiracy will at last be laid bare. If we can preserve the element of surprise, we may still have a chance!

Toutius Sextius is blameless, it seems. I am glad to know that at least one of my fellow-citizens is not involved in the conspiracy. When my new friend delivers proof of Davide Surilie's guilt, I can finally take decisive action with a clear conscience.
I fear the conspiracy spreads further than I thought. The supposed stranger in town appears to be involved. Is it likely that both Bernadette Peneles and Toutius Sextius are blameless? But I must not act without proof. I have always held myself to a higher standard than my enemies. The report on Davide Surilie will tell the tale. I fear that the end is near. But I will not go down without a fight! They will know that Glarthir, at least, did not submit to their yoke quietly!!
To the Anchorites:

Place your Grand Soul Gems in the altar. Pray for His Blessing, and strike the altar with your Soul Trap magic. Your gems will become instruments of His Divine Power.

3 Prowlers sent to Elsweyr. The item should be acquired within the week. Please have patience.

[a note written in a trembling hand]

There is no world so great as the world of the mind.
There is no voyager so well-traveled as the traveler in the land of dreams.
There is no abyss so deep as the well of terror that lies within each of us.
I have plumbed its depths.
I have seen the unthinkable. I am unafraid.
Even death's boundaries do not confine me.
I am the lord of limitless space, and the master of place and time.
Through the doors of sleep, the universe lies waiting for me.
I will no longer wait for my dreams to carry me worlds away, to unknowable deeps, to unspeakable vastness.
I shall dwell in the House of Vaermina forever, the Orb my companion.
There is no compass to my destination, no end to my journey.
My mind is the eternal voyager, fearless and wild with wonder in the Halls of Horror.
Brugo's take -- 300 ducks. Ready for Middas pickup, after midnight.
[130.18] Hastily Scrawled Note

Primary sites:

The Dark Fissure
Fort Istirius
Fort Linchal
Wendelbek

Altars have been raised; Anchorites have been called. Watch the skies; once a week His Grace shines down on us.
I've wanted to die for quite some time. Things just aren't going right. Never have gone right, really. No one seems to care either, nor even notice I exist. Not that I'd have much to say even if someone had wanted to be my friend. I'd make a lousy friend anyway. I'm probably even boring the person reading this. I'm certainly boring myself. Not that anyone will ever find this note. Oh, but if they do!

If they do it means that I've been granted my greatest wish! To be released from this mortal coil. This isn't a suicide note, no. That would mean I've taken my own life, and we all know what that means. Who wants that kind of existence, to be reborn on a hill every day, reset as if nothing ever happened? That's even worse than the life I'm living. Life I've lived! Yes, yes, yes! I'm sure I'm happy now. The dead me. The me writing this note isn't happy at all. Never have been happy, really.

Anyway, the purpose of this note is to say to the man or woman who has killed me: "Thank you!"

All I really have is this queer little ring. A wizard gave it to me once, said I reminded him of his dead son. I guess I resemble his dead son even more now. Anyway, he said it would make me happy. Lift the weight of the world off my shoulders or some such thing. Come to think of it, it's the only time anyone has ever given me anything. Personally, I think the thing is worthless. Just like me.

I tried it for a while, the "Happiness Ring," but eventually I couldn't wear it anymore. It made me feel odd -- not myself. I didn't like feeling that way so I locked it away. It's pretty enough, though. It might fetch a few gold coins at the merchant. Sorry not to leave much more behind. But, my life never really amounted to much anyway, did it?

Yours very truly,

Hirrus Clutumnus, deceased
Dear Reader,

In celebration of the launch of our new barding services, we are offering a free set of horse armor to the bearer of this letter. To retrieve your reward bring your favorite horse, along with this notice, to the Chestnut Handy Stables outside of the Imperial City. Help us spread the word about our new horse armor services.

Chestnut Handy -- Because you can't afford not to protect your horse.

Signed,

Snak gra-Bura
Owner, Chestnut Handy Stables
[130.21] Instructions

I need 15 gross of your finest goods. I'll be by some time on Wednesday to pay for them. Our agreement was half now, half in 30 days.
[130.22] Instructions: the Gray Cowl

The Gray Cowl of Nocturnal shrouds the wearer's face in shadow. No light or magic of detection can penetrate its depths. To look upon Nocturnal's face without the cowl is to view the depths of the void. A man would lose his mind to see it.

Recently it has come to light that the Gray Cowl has gone missing. This must be at the whim of Nocturnal, for she could reclaim it easily. The Lady of Shadows has seen fit to reveal that a curse is laid upon the Gray Cowl. Whosoever wears it shall be lost in the shadows. His true nature shall be unknown to all who meet him. His identity shall be struck from all records and histories. Memory will hide in the shadows, refusing to record the name of the owner to any who meet him. He shall be known by the cowl and only by the cowl.

I am directing a triad of Moth priests to investigate this tale. They shall determine the truth or falseness of the story. They shall determine the present whereabouts of the Gray Cowl, be it in Tamriel, Oblivion, or beyond. All curses can be broken, even those laid by Nocturnal. The triad shall determine how this curse may be lifted so that the Moth priests may safely wield the Gray Cowl.

Office of the Unseeing Eye
As I entered the final chamber of Bramblepoint Cave, my eyes fell upon the goal of my expedition. In the inky blackness, the familiar aquamarine glow of the Welkynd Stone beckoned me in silent reverence. I was the first here in ages; evidenced by the thick layers of dust and debris strewn about. I don't remember how long I stood there, in awe of the beautiful crystals outside their natural environment.

They all said I was crazy; a fool, a buffoon. Crystals growing outside Ayleid ruins? Preposterous! I spent nearly a decade and all the money I had crossing Cyrodiil and exploring the many natural caves dotting her landscape. Then, on that fateful night, a Orc stumbled into the Imperial Bridge Inn where I happened to be drinking. He spouted off a line of nonsense about creatures that came out of the darkness, and I dismissed him as drunk, until he said something that gripped my heart with hope. He spoke of a light in the darkness "as blue as the lady sea." Could it be the Welkynd Stones I was seeking? I had to know more. A few gold and many drinks later, the Orc told me he'd been in Bramblepoint Cave. As I made my way through the night to the cave, my mind was racing. The stories had to be true! The Ayleid culture had mastered the art of creating these crystalline structures and was just beginning to cultivate them outside of their underground communities when they disappeared from history. That meant one thing; with the proper materials, magic and research the Welkynd Stone could adapt to any environment. I had to get to Bramblepoint and study them before anyone else found them. This would be my mark on history, my moment to shine.

And now, after climbing through the cave I've arrived at this chamber. After I finish this entry in my logbook, I'll have so much to do. So much to do indeed. This will be the day that Lithnilian will be remembered as the first to unlock the secrets of the Welkynd Stone.
My love,

I write this with trembling hands. The guards are after me, and I have nowhere else to turn. Soon they will be at the doors to Rosethorn Hall, and nothing will keep them from taking me away back to that horrible prison. I don't know how they found me; perhaps it was that traitor, Delgariun. Whoever told them I was hiding in your home must have known both of us very well. I know Delgariun has eyes for you, I know he's the one that framed me in the first place and had me sent to that dank hole in the Imperial City. He has to be the one. Beware of him, my love. He's treacherous and only wants you to get to the treasure. I didn't give it up to the guards, and I won't give it up to Delgariun. I've hidden the treasure within the walls of Rosethorn Hall. Remember the toy we played with as we ran through this place as children? Remember the riddle we had for it? It was our secret code:

"Two bodies have I, though both joined in one. The more I stand still, the quicker I run."

The key to the treasure lies with the answer. Take care of it, my love. It is your ticket far from Delgariun. Do not fret, I've escaped once, I shall do so again. Soon we will be together, and the sun will shine upon us.

Daravyn the Gray
3E227
...Last Will and Testament

I, Lord Kelvyn, son of Jaren, and a sworn Knight of the True Horn, upon my death do hereby bequeath Battlehorn Castle and all her lands, dependents, and chattels to the bearer of this document.

Such an unusual document requires some explanation. I resort to such measures out of desperation. I pen this while Battlehorn Castle lies besieged by a band of ruthless marauders, with little hope that any of us will survive. "Besieged" I say, although this petty battle would not have even rated a footnote in the great days of the Knights of the True Horn. We have fallen on hard times, indeed.

I will entrust this document to my last faithful retainers, with instructions to destroy it in the last extremity, although I accept that I may have provided the means for my murderers to legally take the lordship of Battlehorn Castle. So be it.

To the new lord of Battlehorn Castle, whoever you are, know that you inherit a stronghold with a proud tradition. Battlehorn Castle was built by a remnant of the Knights of the True Horn who were exiled from our homeland of Lainlyn in Hammerfell. After a failed battle to dethrone Baron Shrike of Lainlyn, our leader, Lord Kain, ordered us to split up into as many small groups as possible until the time should come that he would recall us. My father was part of a group that settled here in Cyrodiil and built Battlehorn Castle as a refuge while they waited for Lord Kain's message... a message that never arrived.

Over the years, all the Knights of our little band either gave up or passed on, all but one: my father Jaren. Since his untimely death, I have continued to hold Battlehorn Castle in the hope that someday we will hear from Lord Kain and our great exile will be at an end.

I am afraid that the fortunes of Battlehorn Castle have fallen on hard times. What resources I had available I devoted to maintaining the castle itself -- its walls still stand strong and its hearths still provide warmth. Sadly, this came at great cost, and many of the items within its walls had to be sold in order to meet the enormous payments such maintenance begets. If you find yourself with the means to restore Battlehorn Castle to its former glory, a friend of my father's named Nilphas Omellian still holds many of the castle accoutrements in storage and on account. All that is required is to repay the Castle's debts to Nilphas, and I'm certain he'll happily return the items.

My final request for the new lord of Battlehorn Castle is to continue to uphold the proud traditions of the Knights of the True Horn, and to honor the memory of our brave service.
Lynch,

Your instructions are to make your way to the bottom deck of the ship and secure all of the rooms there. Make sure you don't disturb Minx. She's to be left alone to do her assignment. Remember, after the ship is scuttled, we'll meet back in Bravil in three days. Make sure you destroy this note after you memorize it.

S
I haven't got much time. She's coming for me.

Nelrene asked me to hold on to this sword. Said I should give it to Anya and have her do the deed, but Anya wouldn't. Now maybe it can find a better use as evidence. Syl will recognize it.

Muurine is in charge. She's the one telling Nelrene what to do. If I'm not around, I hope this is enough evidence to bring her in.

I hope I'm alive to see it.
I can offer you greater rewards and less time in prison. If you are interested, come to the Garden of Dareloth in the Imperial City's Waterfront district at midnight. Present this note and all shall be made clear.

The Gray Fox
The sword leads the way.
Half a mile.
It's just past the big rock on the right.

Do the upstairs rooms first.
Floors and walls are most important.
After the privvy is emptied, spread crushed peppermint to mask the scent.
Only then should you replace the linens.
Don't forget to put flowers on the table.

Sit up against the wall.
Drop your head between your knees.
Breathe deeply while reciting the seven aphorisms to Akatosh.
Swallow the ointment.
In a short while, the hangover will be gone.

Mix the flour and yeast with the elderberry shavings.
Fold in two eggs.
Stir in milk until it thickens.
Add any chopped fruit you want.
I like to mix in some harrada.
Bake it until the crust turns light brown.
Served best with mead.

Remove the top first.
Reach inside and take out all the parts, being careful to note their order.
Put the carving onto the rod.
Reinsert the rod into the cavity.
Replace the parts in the order you removed them. Seal the top with pine tar.

[130.29.6] Note

Head north for an hour or so. You'll see a group of dead trees. Head northeast until you come to the water. Follow the shore upstream. His house is close by. Watch out for bears.

[130.29.7] Note

Go to the end of the street. Turn left. Take the next right. If you see the house with the fallen roof, you've gone too far. Knock twice, pause, knock again. They'll let you in. Be sure to have the money.

[130.29.8] Note

It's three houses past the chapel. Look for the place with the flowers. She'll be waiting outside.

[130.29.9] Note

Go through the fields. Turn east for half a mile. It's just past the big rock on the right.

[130.29.10] Note

Rigmor,
Set up camp out of sight and keep an eye out for strangers. Umbacano thinks to cheat us, as usual, so we'll play it cautiously. Do NOT enter the ruin until I arrive. We may not need to risk our necks this time.

Maric

PS Keep an eye on S'razirr. He's acting even twitchier than usual. Maybe he finally realized he isn't getting a full cut. But I think he's good for one more job, and he's the best I could come up with on short notice.
[130.30] Note from Bothiel

To whom it may concern:

You have been passed this note because you may be able to help the Mages Guild. The Council of Mages has not the resources; the Legion is either unwilling or unable to assist.

A shipment of Dwarven artifacts from Morrowind, destined for the Arcane University, was intercepted by bandits recently. Intending to sell the artifacts for profit, they have stolen items essential to repair the Imperial Orrery in Cyrodiil's capital.

The only known location of these bandits is Camp Ales, north of Kvatch. If you can find these ruffians and recover the items they've stolen, I will be most indebted. The Orrery is my life's work, and I would hate to see it pass into obscurity now.

Items missing:
2 Dwarven Cogs
1 Dwarven Coherer
1 Dwarven Cylinder
1 Dwarven Tube

-Bothiel
[130.31] Note from First Mate Filch

Capn,

Im tellin ya sir! We gots ta be moor carefull! if the Layawind city watch comes snoopin around agin, we may havta pull anchor and git out of this good fer nuthin city! I aint spendin the rest a my days locked up in no jail for illegally transportin cattle! No sir, i will not! all due rspect capn, but the mates an me sined on fer real pirate stuff -- murderin lootin and ravagin! we aint no damn shepeards!

first mate filch (pirate!)
It seems that security in the Arcane University is not what it used to be. In fact, that seems to be a problem all over the Imperial City. I would recommend that you get your guards back on duty unless you want more of your precious artifacts to go missing.

The Gray Fox
[130.33] Note from Nilphas Omellian

I hope you are pleased with your recent purchase. I recently learned of an item you might be interested in -- an ancient Dwemer forge, still in working condition! It is guaranteed to facilitate all armor and weapon repairs. I know that a person of your means and discrimination would never balk at the price of 3000 gold, which barely covers my own expenses (much less the cost of shipping it to Battlehorn Castle).
I look forward to doing business with you soon.
I remain,

Nilphas Omellian
The Merchants Inn, Market District
Imperial City
[130.34] Note from Raminus Polus

Hieronymus Lex,

Your vendetta against the Gray Fox has cost the Arcane University dearly. You commandeered the guards patrolling our property. In their absence, someone stole a valuable artifact from the University. We demand that you return all guards to their posts immediately. If you do not do this, we will be forced to bring the matter to the attention of your superior.

Raminus Polus
The Arcane University
Blessed are those who explore the unbeaten path...
Nothing in life is free... except for this.
[130.37] Note to Gwinas

Gwinas,

Your interest in the writings of the Master has been noted. You are taking the first steps towards true enlightenment. Persevere, and you may yet join the exalted ranks of the Chosen.

If you wish to continue further down the Path of Dawn, you will need the fourth volume of the Master's "Commentaries on the Mysterium Xarxes." It can be obtained only from a member of the Order of the Mythic Dawn. As your designated Sponsor, I will pass on my copy to you if I deem you worthy.

Study the first three volumes of the Master's writings. Look for the hidden meaning in his words, as best as you are able.

When you are ready, come to the Sunken Sewers under the Elven Gardens in the Imperial City. Come alone. Follow the main tunnel until you reach the room with the table and chair. Sit down. I will meet you there and give you what you desire.

The Sponsor
[130.38] Notes: Captain Montrose

So far the investigation has been inconclusive, to say the least. The assassin's body has yielded no clues as to his affiliation, and we haven't even been able to ascertain the motive for the Emperor's slaying. We've even gone so far as to question local merchants about the unique garb, but have run into nothing but dead ends.

The nature of the attack, the multiple assassins, the ceremonial robes, the summoned weapons and armor -- it all speaks of something...ritualistic. I've seen the Dark Brotherhood's handiwork more times than I care to remember, and this just doesn't fit their usual pattern. I guess that's what worries me. We're not dealing with the unknown, and I'll be damned if I know how to handle it.

-- Captain Gepard Montrose

Postscript -- I've instructed the men to dump the rest of the assassins' bodies in the sewers. Let them serve as food for the vermin. It's more than those bastards deserve.
Mee wurst troll evurr

nobuddy pay brijj tole

me nott sceary enuf

mee gett drunc an kil sellf

troll droun
I used to be somebody. I was a captain of the guard in the Imperial City until that fleabitten hero decided to poke his nose in my business. I have a plan to get out of the Imperial prison. Apparently there is a secret escape tunnel used by the royal family. When I get out I'm going to settle the score with that hero. Then I'll take care of those two snitches Ruslan and Luronk. The sweetest of all will be Itius Hayn. I'll make him squeal first.
[130.41] Sealed Note

You sleep rather soundly for a cold-blooded killer. That's good. You'll need a clear conscience for what I'd like to propose. For there is much I can offer you. The taking of a life has its own pleasures, of course, but the taking of a life for the Dark Brotherhood is an act worthy of immeasurable reward. If you're intrigued, and I suspect you are, come visit me at the ruins of Fort Farragut. If you survive the descent down to the bottom level where I reside, I'll know you're capable of all the Dark Brotherhood has to offer. L.L.
[130.42] Steward's Note

Vaske-

Your job is to see that our arrivals and departures are well-documented and that their wages are paid, and keep an eye on my dear cousin. It is not to gossip with every new recruit about our far-reaching plans. We've already captured one assassin prowling the caves, the last thing we need is some spy of Helseth's hearing all our goals from you. Commander Adrethi will debrief the troops as necessary at his own discretion.

On Turdas I'm taking a detachment through the doorway with me. I don't know how long I'll be gone, but in the unlikely case that there is cause to disrupt my excursion, read the most recent entry in my journal. You'll find it in my cabin, on the desk. Don't go in there for any other reason! Discretion above all; we don't want our Imperial enemies to know what our plans are.

Death to the Empire.

Arch-Mage Frathen Drothan
[130.43] Suicide Note

This was my big break! Finally I'm given something important to do, and what happens? I blow it! All I had to do was keep Phillida alive! That's it! But no! I couldn't even accomplish that! Father was right -- I'm an idiot, and I haven't amounted to anything!

I let everyone down, so this is it. Goodbye cruel Empire! I'm ending it all!
Most Honorable Ocheeva,

As per your instructions, I will, from this day forward, leave the solitude of the Sanctuary and maintain the following posts:

Loredas and Sundas -- I will travel to, and remain in, the city of Leyawiin. There I will spy any and all vessels entering into the Imperial Province by sea. Upon my return to the Sanctuary, I will report on which ships have sailed the Niben northward to the Imperial City.

Tirdas -- I am to spend my day here in Cheydinhal, in the establishment known as the Cheydinhal Bridge Inn. There I will spy the citizens of this city, and report back on anyone I deem a threat to Sanctuary security.

Turdas -- I will remain in Cheydinhal, but keep a watchful eye on the Sanctuary entrance. At the first sign of suspicious activity, I am to report back to you immediately.

My thanks again to you, Ocheeva. Your reliance on my gift for subterfuge will serve the Brotherhood well. Of this I promise.

May we walk always in the Shadow of Sithis.

Telaendril
Ocheeva,

Damn that young fool Antoinetta and her experimental recipes! As if the stench of her cooking weren't bad enough, last week she made a particularly offensive dish consisting of mandrake, onions... and garlic! Garlic! I have told her repeatedly of the danger this plant poses to me, but she has obviously not heeded my warnings.

It is strange, this reaction I have to garlic. In all my wanderings, in all my research, I have never encountered another vampire thusly affected. It is true that some popular lore holds that all vampires have an inherent weakness to garlic, but this is simply not the case. My situation, as far as I can tell, is unique. If I were to somehow come into contact with garlic, if it in some way came to be on my person, the results could be catastrophic. I would most certainly suffer from a loss of strength and stamina, and fear my resistance to magic would be nearly completely nullified.

So please, Ocheeva, as mistress of this Sanctuary, I beg you to keep Antoinetta on a tighter leash. I love her as a Sister, of course, but can not be held accountable for my actions should she continue to disregard my own personal safety. The Tenets clearly state that one family member may not kill another; but I don't need to remind you there is no restriction against draining Antoinetta of a few pints of precious life's blood.

Vicente
My name is Ghola gro-Muzgol. My companion's names are Aranalda, Nille Elf-Daughter, Avita Cassiana, and Umar gra-Khar.

The vampire Dratik died by our hands, but the price was dear. Those into whose hands we have fallen, we thank you, and pray your favor.

We served Lady Azura. Bring these, our last words, to the Her Shrine. We praise Her with the full fountain of our devotion.

Our destinies were written in the stars, that our souls and reason be slain, and our world lost forever.

None can escape Her Fate. But let us be remembered at Her shrine, and in the hearts of Her servants.

"It is only by fate that any life ends, and only by chance that it is mine... not yours."
[131] Notes on Racial Phylogeny*

See vol. I.
See vol. I.
[133] The Old Ways*

See vol. I.
[134] On Artaeum*

See vol. I.
[135] On Morrowind*

See vol. I.
See vol. I.
[137] On Wild Elves*

See vol. I.
As brighter grows light, darker becomes shadow. So it passed that the Daedra Molag Bal looked on Arkay and thought the Aedra prideful of his dominion o’er the death of man and mer, and it was sooth.

Bal, whose sphere is the wanton oppression and entrapment of mortal souls, sought to thwart Arkay, who knew that not man, nor mer, nor beastfolk of all Nirn could escape eventual death. The Aedra was doubtless of his sphere, and so Molag Bal set upon Nirn to best death.

Tamriel was still young, and filled with danger and wondrous magick when Bal walked in the aspect of a man and took a virgin, Lamae Beolfag, from the Nedic Peoples. Savage and loveless, Bal profaned her body, and her screams became the Shrieking Winds, which still haunt certain winding fjords of Skyrim. Shedding a lone droplet of blood on her brow, Bal left Nirn, having sown his wrath.

Violated and comatose, Lamae was found by nomads, and cared for. A fortnight hence, the nomad wyrd-woman enshrouded Lamae in pall for she had passed into death. In their way, the nomads built a bonfire to immolate the husk. That night, Lamae rose from her funeral pyre, and set upon the coven, still aflame. She ripped the throats of the women, ate the eyes of the children, and raped their men as cruelly as Bal had ravished her.

And so; Lamae, (who is known to us as blood-matron) imprecated her foul aspect upon the folk of Tamriel, and begat a brood of countless abominations, from which came the vampires, most cunning of the night-horrors. And so was the scourge of undeath wrought upon Tamriel, cruelly mocking Arkay’s rhythm of life and death through all the coming eras of the et’Ada, and for all his sadness, Arkay knew this could not be undone.
Silencer,

You are now reading your first dead drop note, here on Hero Hill, which proves to me you were well-appointed to the tasks that lie ahead.

Journey now to Leafrot Cave. There you will encounter an ancient Necromancer who is attempting to escape death by transforming himself into a lich. This Necromancer, Celedaen, has not yet completed his metamorphosis, but is still immensely powerful, possibly too powerful to destroy if confronted directly. Search Leafrot Cave. Necromancers are wizards after all, and wizards are prolific by nature. Celedaen surely has written records, and these records may contain evidence of some kind of weakness. Perhaps there is some other way to destroy Celedaen besides a direct confrontation. But destroy him you must!

When the Necromancer lies dead, journey to the city of Chorrol for your next dead drop. At the foot of the Great Oak, hidden in the bushes, is an old sack. Inside you will find your reward for killing the Necromancer, as well as information regarding your next contract.

Serve me well, Silencer, and there's no telling just how far you might advance.

The Necromancer Celedaen is dead, and you are not. That is quite an accomplishment. But your work as a Silencer has just begun.

Your next assignment requires you to eliminate not just one target, but five. An entire family, in fact. The unlucky siblings are Perennia Draconis, Matthias Draconis, Andreas Draconis, Sibylla Draconis and Caelia Draconis. The locations of most of the family members are unknown, so you should begin your search with the family matron, Perennia, who resides at the farm called Applewatch.

You must discern the locations of all the Draconis family members and then systematically eliminate them. I suggest you first speak with the mother and find out if she has any valuable information on the whereabouts of her children, before ending her life.

When every member of the Draconis family lies dead, journey to the city of Skingrad. In the castle courtyard you will find a well containing your reward for the Draconis contract, as well as any further assignment I might have.
[139.1] ORDERS: DEAD DROP ORDERS 3-5

[139.1.3] Dead Drop Orders #3

Are you ready to get your hands dirty, Silencer?

Your next target is a Khajiit nobleman by the name of J 'Ghasta, who can be found at his home in the city of Bruma. J 'Ghasta was recently offered the hand of a prominent Cyrodiil noble's daughter, but turned down the offer when he learned of the girl's rather negligible dowry. The girl's family is outraged, of course, and has hired the Dark Brotherhood to make J 'Ghasta pay for his insolence.

Go to J 'Ghasta's house in Bruma and end his miserable life. But be warned! The Khajiit is rich and bored, and spends most of his time honing his skills in unarmed combat. Any opponent who can kill with merely his hands is not to be trifled with, so tread carefully. Even worse, J 'Ghasta is aware someone may be trying to kill him, and has bribed the guards not to interfere if a fight should spill out into the city streets.

When the target has been eliminated, you will find your next dead drop in a rotten box under the Old Bridge, just south of the Imperial City. The box will contain your reward for killing J 'Ghasta, as well as information regarding your next contract.

[139.1.4] Dead Drop Orders #4

J 'Ghasta is dead! Well done! I was right about you, Silencer. You are a useful tool indeed. Let's see if you can continue to impress me.

You must journey now to the Flooded Mine. There you will find Shaleez, an Argonian hunter who was banished from her village near the Black Marsh/Morrowind border for the brutal murder of a Dark Elven family. Relatives of the murdered family members have located Shaleez, and demand retribution. And, since the assignment is a bit far for Morrowind's Morag Tong to handle, the Dark Brotherhood has been commissioned to perform the elimination.

Be warned, Silencer! Shaleez is a skilled and deadly hunter, and will fight like the desperate fugitive she is.

After Shaleez has been eliminated, your reward and another contract will be waiting at the dead drop located in a coffin, just outside the ruins of Fort Redman.

[139.1.5] Dead Drop Orders #5

If you're reading this note, Shaleez is dead. You've done the world a great service, Silencer. It's time to continue the good work.
Your next target is a traveling Dark Elf merchant by the name of Alval Uvani, who is currently renting a house in the city of Leyawiin. Uvani is a well-respected tradesman back in his native Morrowind, but his business often takes him very far from home. Therein lies the problem. Alval Uvani's wife has become disillusioned with her husband's repeated, extended absences and wishes to dissolve their marriage, and has sought the Dark Brotherhood's assistance. Lucky for us Cyrodiil is a bit beyond the reach of Morrowind's Morag Tong.

Alval Uvani is currently traveling around Cyrodiil, and is never in one place for more than a couple of days. In this dead drop you will also find a schedule detailing the Dark Elf's whereabouts; use it to locate him and plan your elimination. Be aware, however, that because he is forced to travel alone to the farthest reaches of the Empire, Uvani has learned to defend himself. He is a master of the Destruction school of Magicka, and is no stranger to killing.

When Alval Uvani lies rotting, journey to the Market District of the Imperial City. There you will find a shop called Stonewall Shields. Your dead drop is located behind that building, in a hollowed-out tree stump. As usual, you will find your reward for the previous contract, as well as information on your next.

Ah yes, I must mention one last detail. Apparently Alval Uvani suffers from a rare Dark Elf condition, a serious allergy to honey. If you could somehow get Uvani to drink the honey-based spirit Mead, perhaps by replacing his food, he would suffer from complete paralysis. This would certainly make the Dark Elf a bit easier to deal with.

[139.1.6] Dead Drop Orders #6

Alval Uvani is dead, just like all the others. You continue to impress me, Silencer, and I am only too eager to indulge your homicidal instincts.

Your next target is a savage Nord barbarian, living alone and exposed at a small campsite on the summit of Gnoll Mountain. This barbarian, Havilstein Hoar-Blood by name, savagely butchered the chieftain of a mead hall on the island of Solstheim. The chieftain's sister has forgone the Nord custom of extracting the monetary retribution of wergild, and instead wants Hoar-Blood to pay with his life. You, dear Silencer, will help put her family at peace.

You are to go to Gnoll Mountain, locate Havilstein Hoar-Blood, and send his soul to Sithis.

When Hoar-Blood has been executed, journey to the Ayleid ruin of Nornal. In the flooded section of that ruin you will find a chest, submerged in the water. As you may have guessed, the chest contains your reward for killing Havilstein Hoar-Blood, and your next contract.

[139.1.7] Dead Drop Orders #7

My compliments on another job well done! Havilstein Hoar-Blood was more swine than man, and deserved to die quivering like an animal! You must not stop! You must kill again!
Your next target is a Wood Elf named Ungolim, who resides in the city of Bravil. Bravil is also home to an ancient statue known as the Lucky Old Lady. It is seen as a symbol of good luck and prosperity, and the fools of Bravil often speak to the statue and wish for good tidings. Every night, poor lovestruck Ungolim visits the Lady and pleads desperately for the heart of a young maiden. This maiden is married, and her husband has learned of Ungolim's affection for his bride. He fears the competition, it would seem, and has commissioned the Dark Brotherhood to help in the matter.

You must go to Bravil, locate Ungolim, and kill him. The Wood Elf owns a house in the city, but he spends his days securely locked inside. I recommend you lie in wait at the Lucky Old Lady statue, and then eliminate Ungolim when he arrives for his nightly visit. He's generally there between the hours of 6:00 PM and 1:00 AM.

By all accounts, Ungolim is a deadly archer and a fearless opponent. I also have reason to believe he is expecting trouble, so if Ungolim senses danger, he may attack you on sight. And, like the Khajiit J 'Ghasta, Ungolim has bribed the guards to look the other way if there is a fight, so they won't interfere. Be vigilant, and bring the Wood Elf down! You must not fail!

When Ungolim's body lies broken at the foot of his dear Lady, you must journey to the city of Anvil. Your dead drop is in a barrel located behind the statue in the pond. As is standard, your reward and next contract will be waiting.

Ungolim is dead! Silencer, you have served me far better than I ever could have imagined. Is there no challenge you can't meet? No opponent you can't best? We shall see.

Your next target is a High Elf whore named Arquen. She has been difficult to locate, but you might try asking around the Grey Mare in Chorrol or the Bridge Inn in Cheydinhal.

Like all of your targets, Arquen is a skilled fighter and will not be eliminated easily.

When Arquen is dead, I will have your reward and next contract waiting at the next dead drop -- under one of the beds in the Leyawiin Coast Guard station.
Jearl -

The Master was pleased to hear of your activities outside of Chorrol. The more gates that we open, the nearer we are to the glorious Cleansing.

The Master has chosen you and Saveri for a most crucial mission, a sign of your advancement through the ranks of the Chosen. We have learned that the Septim heir has gone to ground at Cloud Ruler Temple, the lair of the accursed Blades. The Master has made its destruction the top priority of the Order, and Lord Dagon has committed whatever resources are required.

Pending your report on the Septim's activities at Cloud Ruler Temple, and your assessment of Temple defenses and possible routes of escape, we plan to open a Great Gate in the open ground before Bruma as soon as possible.

Remember: the first three Lesser Gates represent only the preliminary stages of Great Gate Deployment. Do not in any way compromise your cover in defense of these gates. New ones can be quickly and easily reopened. And once the Great Gate is opened, the fall of Bruma is assured. Cloud Ruler Temple cannot stand long after that, and the Septim will be caught like a rat in a trap.

We would welcome any further details you can offer concerning the Imperial agent who rescued Martin from Kvatch, but again, we caution you... do not risk a confrontation. This individual is not to be trifled with.

The Dawn is breaking,

Ruma Camoran
Orders From Lucien Lachance

Eliminator, You have served the Dark Brotherhood well in the short time you have been with us. Indeed, the rate of your advancement has been rather remarkable. Now the Black Hand itself is in need of your abilities. You must proceed with all haste to my private refuge in the ruins of Fort Farragut, located in the forest northeast of the Cheydinhal Sanctuary. When you arrive, we will discuss the nature of your special assignment. I cannot stress to you enough the importance of your swift arrival at Fort Farragut. There are unseen powers working to unravel the very fabric of the Dark Brotherhood. The Black Hand is counting on you to prevent this disaster. Do not share the contents of this message with anyone at the Cheydinhal Sanctuary, including Ocheeva, and make no mention of your journey to Fort Farragut! Also, be warned -- my refuge within Fort Farragut is guarded by denizens who will attack any interloper on sight. Get through these rotting sentinels and you will surely have earned the right to visit my private sanctum. Lucien Lachance
[139.4] Plan for the Big Heist

1) Activate the Old Way using the Glass of Time. It is located inside the Imperial Palace. I do not know what it looks like or exactly where to find it.

2) Find the entrance to the Old Way. It is rumored to be somewhere in the sewers under the Imperial City.

3) Inside the Old Way is an entrance to the heart of the Imperial Palace. Savilla's Stone was only able to scry the two most important obstacles. For one of them you will need to use the Boots of Springheel Jak.

4) To enter the Imperial City you must use the Arrow of Extrication to unlock the final door.

5) Inside the Imperial Palace you must find the Imperial Library. On the bottom floor is some sort of viewing room.

6) I have arranged to have a particular scroll made available in the Chamber. The blind monks that care for the scrolls are expecting Celia Camoran, but you will take her place. Just find the chair assigned to visitors to the library. You must not speak, or they will know it is not her. Just let them bring you the scroll.

7) Once you have the scroll, retrace your steps and deliver it to me. Of course the chances of something going wrong with this plan are very high. When that happens, you'll just have to get creative.
By order of the Legion Commander of the Imperial Watch, Hieronymus Lex is relieved of his duties as a Watch Captain of the Imperial Watch. His services are to be contracted to the Countess of Anvil for the remainder of his Imperial contract. When that contract expires, the Countess of Anvil may choose at her discretion to retain him or release him.

Legion Commander,
Imperial Watch
[140] Origin of the Mages Guild*

See vol. I.
See vol. I.
[142] Palla*

See vol. I.
[143] Pension of the Ancestor Moth

To be read by all novitiates of the Temple:

The Order of the Ancestor Moth is as ancient as it is noble. We nurture and celebrate our beloved ancestors, whose spirits are manifest in the Ancestor Moths. Each moth carries the fyyron of an ancestor's spirit. Loosely translated as the "will to peace," the fyyron can be sung into the silk produced by the Ancestor Moths. When the silk is in turn spun into cloth and embroidered with the genealogy of the correct Ancestor, clothing of wondrous power can be made.

Adepts of our order are gifted with prescient powers. The wisdom of the ancestors can sing the future into the present. For this reason, our order and our order alone has been given the privilege to interpret the Elder Scrolls. These writings exceed even the gods, both aedra and daedra. Such insight into the inner fabric of reality comes at a price. Each reading of the Elder Scrolls is more profound than the last. Each leaves the priest blind for longer, and longer periods of time. Finally, the last reading achieves a nearly sublime understanding of that scroll's contents, but the priest is left permanently blinded to the light of this world. No longer can he read the scrolls.

This Monastery is dedicated to the service of these noble members of our order. They now live out their lives with the Ancestor Moths that they so love. Their underground demenses are well suited to the moths. They raise and nurture the fragile creatures, singing to them constantly. They harvest the silk and spin it into bolts of cloth. They weave the cloth, embroidering it with the genealogies and histories of the ancestors that spun the silk. This is their new life.

As they tend the Ancestor Moths, so we tend the blind monks. While they toil in dark, we serve in the light. They need food and water. We provide. They need tools and furniture. We provide. They need secrecy and anonymity. We provide. They need purveyors to sell the fruit of their labors. We provide.

At one time, we also provided protection. Many generations ago, Gudrun came to our temple. Newly blinded by visions of what was to be, she brought with her new teachings. The visions of the ancestors foresaw the need of the monks to defend themselves. They train and practice the teachings of Gudrun constantly. They are masters of the sword of no sword, the axes of no axe.

As a novitiate, you will learn the teachings of Gudrun. You will learn the way of the peaceful fist. You will learn to serve the blind monks. You will learn to provide. In time, you may attain the peace and insight of the Ancestor Moths.
[144] The Pig Children*

See vol. I.
[145] The Posting of the Hunt*

See vol. I.
The Predecessors

Being an Examination of the Curious Ruins of the Shivering Isles and Their Terrible Significance for our Future

by Yngvar the Wanderer

The ancient ruins that dot the countryside are a familiar sight to the inhabitants of the Shivering Isles. So familiar that their true significance has escaped notice of most, until now. I have recently uncovered the terrible secret hidden in these ruins, and I will now share this secret with you. But be warned - this knowledge may be too much for some, as you will know the awful fate that lies in store for you, but will be powerless to do anything to prevent it. If you are strong enough of mind to withstand the psychic shock of having your grim future laid bare, read on.

My interest in the ruins began with a simple observation: all the ruins visible on the surface appear to be of roughly the same age and architectural style. Who created these once-mighty structures, and what happened to them?

Further investigation revealed an even stranger truth: although the ruins superficially all appear to derive from the same era, they are in fact of wildly differing ages. Many thousands of years separate the ruins of Cylarne (by far the oldest extant on the surface, despite its relatively well-maintained state) from the ruins of Ebrocca, which at almost 1,000 years old is one of the youngest sites in the Isles. For those who would dismiss this conclusion, I invite you to visit the ruins and examine the evidence for yourselves: the depth of strata covering the buried portions of the structures; the weathering of the exposed stone; the growth of vegetation on and around the structures; etc. (I have compiled the evidence in a separate monograph, "Dating the Predecessor Ruins: Shocking New Evidence Comprehensively Explained," which is presently unpublished, though I will gladly make it available for those scholars wishing to delve further into the minutiae of this subject.)

Once I began to accurately establish the dates of the various ruins, a disturbing pattern emerged. The ruins fell into distinct periods, each period separated by exactly 1,000 years from the other (although Cylarne remains the exception, being many thousands of years older than the next oldest extant ruin - suggesting only that the ruins from many earlier eras lie waiting to be discovered, or have been lost to the ravages of time).

What could account for this process of destruction, repeating itself every 1,000 years without fail? The legend of the Greymarch sprang immediately to mind, that ancient tale of a vengeful god venting his wrath upon the land. What if it were more than a legend? What if it were the dimly-remembered account of a real event?

I suddenly realized the significance of the dating of the most recent ruin that I had discovered: Ebrocca, which my tests proved to be about 1,000 years old. Yes, Dear Reader, we come to it at last. The Cataclysm is upon us again. I have dated the ruins of Ebrocca to great accuracy; I know the very year of our Doom. I refrain from publishing the exact date, as this knowledge is a terrible burden that I would not inflict on others.
For a long time I hesitated from issuing even this general warning, fearful of inciting panic or despair. But I have concluded that it is better to have time to prepare for the End in whatever way one sees fit than to have it thrust upon them unawares. I no longer doubt that the legend of the Greymarch is based on historical events, and that the last days of our civilization will be terrible - the blasted and tumbled stones of the mighty cities of bygone eras are testament enough to that. But I find it strangely comforting to know that our end is already written in the stones of our Predecessors, and that struggling against our Doom is as pointless as shouting against the incoming tide. I hope that at least a few of my readers will find equal solace in this bleak foreknowledge.
Proper Lock Design and Construction

I have encountered many thieves whose sole interest in locks is how to open them and thereby pilfer the protected contents of the room or chest. I have taken it upon myself to devise a system of locks that can defeat such villainous intent.

The materials used to create a lock are of utmost importance. Shoddy brass or copper will give way to a well placed kick, thereby rendering the lock itself useless. I recommend steel over iron when choosing a material. More robust materials tend to be prohibitively expensive and necessitate the door being made of similar metals. I have been chagrined to stumble across the shattered shell of a wooden chest, it's dwarven lock intact and still locked.

Once these basics are settled, pay particular attention to the offset of the tumblers. A seven degree offset to the keyhole will allow a torque style key to work smoothly, while at the same time causing numerous headaches for the thief attempting to insert non-torque lockpicks.

In similar fashion, the springs of the tumblers should be made by different smiths. Each smith will unknowingly create a spring with different tension than his fellow smiths. This variance will also create difficulties for anyone attempting to pick the lock.
When one approaches the walls of New Sheoth, the eyes are unavoidably drawn to a magnificent sight: a mystical flame rises from a simple tower that juts from a circular building. To some, the flame is a beacon of strength and guidance, to others, a mockery of their beliefs. It is the epicenter of a most interesting conflict; two sides of the same coin vying for the favor of their God. It is an unremarkable building with a most remarkable past. It is the Sacellum Arden-Sul.

Although the Sacellum itself predates Arden-Sul's life, both the Manics and the Demented contest the history of the Sacellum heavily. The Manics believe that on that very spot before New Sheoth existed, Arden-Sul was first afflicted with the Grand Enlightenment and became blinded. The Demented postulate that the Sacellum was the location where Arden-Sul endured the Hundred Day Torture. However, it was not these purported events of Arden-Sul's life that aligned the Sacellum with the prophet's name... it was his death.

Here again, the Manics and the Demented are divided. The Manics story of Arden-Sul's death begins with a night of superlative revelry in the Sacellum. The event was replete with a seemingly inexhaustible supply of Greenmote and spirits. Arden-Sul and his 213 followers engaged in a veritable orgy of merrymaking and overindulgence, a night fraught with a profusion of singing, dancing, and fornicating. As the celebration reached a crescendo and the event reached its whirlwind apex, one by one, Arden-Sul's followers began to drop to the ground--their lifeblood draining from their bodies until the ground was soaked a crimson red. The excesses of their hedonism had taken its toll and had caused their very hearts to explode. Although details are uncertain, it was said Arden-Sul was the last to die with the look of pure bliss upon his face.

The Demented have a radically different story of the events leading to Arden-Sul's demise. Fearing that one of his followers would one day turn traitor and bury a blade in his back, Arden-Sul sought a method to see deep into a man's soul and reveal his true feelings. After an exhaustive search, he uncovered the secrets of visceromancy, the science of divination through the observation of the entrails of others. Armed with this knowledge, he summoned his flock to the Sacellum. After imbibing the wine Arden-Sul gave them, his followers suddenly felt themselves paralyzed... aware of their surroundings but unable to move. Then, one by one, Arden-Sul cut out the still-beating hearts of his followers and read their lifeblood. After removing all 213 hearts, he still hadn't located the traitor. Furious, he reached into his chest and tore out his own heart. Before the light faded from his eyes, Arden-Sul was reported to have realized the ironic truth; he was the traitor, destined to kill himself.

Whether or not one chooses to take either of these stories seriously is of little import. The truth remains that the Sacellum is a significant location of a highly regarded prophet's death.
To this day, the building is still shared among the Manics and the Demented, and depending on Lord Sheogorath's whim, the favored side becomes its ruling body.
[149] Provinces of Tamriel*

See vol. I.
[150] Public Notice

For public notice:

This property has been seized by the Imperial Legion, and its owner imprisoned.

Rituals to the Night Mother, or any other attempt to contact the Dark Brotherhood, will not be tolerated!

-- Adamus Phillida, Imperial Legion Commander
Purloined Shadows
By Waughin Jarth

* Chapter One *

The candle was lit, and the thief was standing there, blinking, caught. She was young, rather dirty, wearing ragged black clothes that were surely quite smart and expensive weeks ago when she had stolen them from one of the city's best tailors. The look of surprise slipped from her face, and she took on a blank expression as she put the gold back on the table.

"What are you doing here?" the man with the candle asked, stepping from the shadows.

"That's a stupid question," the girl replied, frowning. "I'm obviously robbing you."

"Since nothing I have is missing," the man smiled, glancing at the gold on the table. "I would have to say that you're not robbing me. Attempting to rob me perhaps. The question I have is, why? You know who I am, I assume. You didn't just come in through an unlocked door."

"I've stolen from everyone else. I've taken soul gems from the Mages Guild, I've robbed the treasury of the most secure fortress, I cheated the Archbishop of Julianos ... I even pickpocketed the Emperor Pelagius at his coronation. I thought it was your turn."

"I'm flattered," the man nodded. "Now that your ambition has been thwarted, what will you do? Flee? Perhaps retire?"

"Teach me," the girl replied, a little grin finding its way unconsciously on her face. "I picked all your locks, I slipped past all your wards ... You designed them, you know how difficult that was for someone without training. I didn't come here for six gold pieces. I came here to prove myself. Make me your student."

The Master of Stealth looked at the little girl burglar. "Your skill is not in need of training. Your planning is adequate, but I can help you with that. What is without hope is your ambition. You are past stealing for your livelihood, now you steal for the pleasure of it, for the challenge. That's a personality trait which is incurable, and will lead you to an early grave."

"Have you ever wanted to steal that which can't be stolen?" the girl asked. "Something that would make your name known forever?"

The Master did not answer: he only frowned.

"Clearly I was fooled by your reputation," she shrugged, and opened a window. "I thought you might want a willing accomplice on some great act of thievery which would go down in history. Like you said, my skill at planning is only adequate. I didn't have in mind an escape route, but this will have to do."
The burglar slipped down the sheer wall, dashed across the shadowy courtyard, and within a few minutes was back at her room in the run-down tavern. The Master was waiting for her there, in the dark.

"I didn't see you go past me," she gasped.

"You turned on the street when you heard the owl call," he replied. "The most important tool in the thieves' repertoire is distraction, either planned or improvised. I suppose your lessons have begun."

"And what is the final test?" the girl smiled.

When he told her, she could only stare. She had, it seemed, not misunderstood his reputation for daring. Not at all.

* Chapter Two *

For the week leading up to the Eighth of Hearthfire, the skies above Rindale were dark and alive as clouds of crows blotted out the sun. Their guttural squawks and groans deafened all. The peasants wisely bolted their doors and windows, praying to survival that most unholy of days.

On the night of the summoning, the birds fell silent, their black unblinking eyes following the witches' march into the glen. There were no moons to light the way, only the leader's single torch in the gloom. Their white robes appeared as indistinct shapes, like the faintest of ghosts.

A single tall tree stood in the middle of the clearing, every branch thick with crows, watching the procession without moving. The lead witch placed the torch at the base of the tree, and her seventeen followers formed a circle and began their slow, strange, wailing chant.

As they sang, the glow of the torch began to change. It did not diminish at all, but its color became more and more grey, so it seemed a pulsating wave of ash had fallen on the witches. Then it grew darker still, so that for a moment, though the fire yet burned, it was darkest night in the forest. The penumbra continued until the torch was burning with a color without a name, emptiness beyond mere blackness. It cast a glow, but it was an unnatural scintillation falling on the witches. Their robes of white became black. The Dunmer among them had eyes of green, and ivory white flesh. The Nords appeared black as coal. The crows watching overhead were as pure white as the witches' cloaks.

The Daedra Princess Nocturnal stepped out of the pit of uncolor.

She stood in the center of the circle, the tree of pallid crows her throne, aloof, as the witches continued their chanting, dropping their robes to prostrate themselves naked before their great mistress. Wrapping her night cloak around her, she smiled at their song. It spoke of her mystery, of veiled beauty, of eternal shadows and a divine future when the sun burns no more.

Nocturnal let her cloak slide from her shoulders and was naked. Her witches did not raise their head from the ground, but continued their hymn of darkness.

"Now," said the girl to herself.
She had been up in the tree all day, dressed in a ridiculous suit of mock crows. It was uncomfortable, but when the witches had arrived, she forgot all her aches, and concentrated on being perfectly still, like the other crows in the tree. It had taken considerable planning and study between her and the Master of Stealth to find the glen, and to learn what to expect in the summoning of Nocturnal.

Gently, silently, the burglar eased herself down the branches of the tree, coming closer and closer to the Daedra Princess. She let herself break her concentration for just a moment, and wondered where the Master was. He had been confident in the plan. He said that when Nocturnal dropped her cloak, there would be a distraction, and it could be quickly taken in that instant provided the girl was in position at the precise right moment.

The girl climbed along the lowest of the branches, carefully pushing aside the crows that were, as the Master said, transfixed by the Princess in her naked beauty. The girl was now close enough, if she only reached out her arm, to touch Nocturnal's back.

The song was rising to a crescendo, and the girl knew that the ceremony would soon be over. Nocturnal would clothe herself before the witches ended the chant, and the chance to take the cloak would be over. The girl gripped the tree branch tightly as her mind raced. Could it be that the Master was not here at all? Was this, was this conceivably the entire test? Was it only to show that it could be done, not to do it?

The girl was furious. She had done everything perfectly, but the so-called Master of Stealth had proven himself a coward. Perhaps he had taught her a little in the months that it took to plan this, but what was it worth? Only one thing made her smile. On that night when she had stolen into his stronghold, she had kept one single gold piece, and he had never suspected it. It was symbolic, as symbolic as stealing the cloak of Nocturnal in its way, proving that the Master Thief could be robbed.

The girl was so lost on her mind that she thought she imagined it for a moment when a man's voice yelled out from the darkness, "Mistress!"

The next words she knew she didn't imagine: "Mistress! A thief! Behind you!"

The witches raised their heads, and screamed, ruining the sanctity of the ceremony, as they charged forward. The crows awoke and burst from the tree in an explosion of feathers and toad-like cries. Nocturnal herself whirled around, affixing the girl with her black eyes.

"Who art thee who dares profane?" The Princess hissed, as the pitch shadows flew from her body enveloping the girl in their lethal chill.

In the last instant before she was swallowed alive by darkness, the girl looked to the ground and saw that the cloak was gone, and she answered, as she understood, "Oh, who am I? I'm the distraction."
[152] The Ransom of Zarek*

See vol. I.
The Ravings of Fenroy

The following pieces were gathered from the author's cell shortly before his untimely death at his own hands. Written primarily on bedsheets and the bare stone of his floor, using only his own bodily fluids for ink, some of the transcriptions represent the editors' best guesses at the author's true intent.]

Mother said there was no reason
It's just the way it is
Mother lies
I can see rain, I can feel rain
I can only feel wind
Someone is hiding

If I walk through the forest, the birds stop singing. They're talking about me. I'm sure of it. They're just too scared to do it to my face.

Boat
Moat
Coat
Float
Goat
Note
Wrote
secretnamesecretnamesecretname

He touches me when I'm not looking

Sometimes I hear the people talking about their days. They talk about family and the weather and yesterday and tomorrow. They say What a good day it was and How was your day and Have a nice day. I say talk talk talk talk. How can you enjoy your day when you share it with everyone? Time is a private thing. The dragon hides it from us all, parceling it out in dribs and drabs. Save your time. Save your time. I keep mine locked up tight. Where no one can find it. Not even Him.

Hold me now
Rock me gently
My tears are burning, dear
Don't jinx it
Don't jinx it
Hold your breath, one big one now
One last gasp
And we're done
He talks all the time, but his words are useless. Talking, talking. Let's talk. Never doing. Always talking. Words become meaningless. They float on the air. Dissipate like passed gas. Make him stop talking. Make him stop talking to me.

Always take care when dealing with women. They see things we do not. A smile. A glance. They mean nothing to us, everything to them. They twist their smiles to meet our own. They avert a gaze just so. Watch them closely. They rule the world; they just don't know it.

Am I indecisive? Yes and no.

They came to bring me food today. I ate it, though I know it was poisoned. They lace it with black flour and edgeroot. They think it keeps me quiet, sedate. I know better. Sometimes I chew up the bread and spit it into the corners of my cell. No one notices, and the rats eat it after a time. It keeps them quiet, sedate. When I eat the rats, the poison is more dilute. And I gain their memories.

I don't believe it's fair that I'm forced to deal with the stupid. Or the obtuse. Or the pedantic. Yet they give me rules, like Go here and Do that and Eat this and Kill that. They don't know that I know their names. Eventually I'll get to them. And I'll make the rules.

Just You wait and see
Good Gods come and go, but
All Lords eventually fall
A God can wake up mortal.

If I learn from my mistakes, will I eventually stop making them? Is there a balance I can achieve, a perfect harmony with my self? Shall I seek that point where there are no more mistakes to be made? All the lessons learned? When that happens, do we die? Do we become gods? Do the gods even want us?

Maybe all dogs go outside deliberately. Maybe a decision gets overly deliberate. Might a dream grow overly demented? He knows. He knows. He knows.

Stories are for children and dreamers. Poetry is for weaklings and madmen. Epics glorify the vile and vilify the glorious. Read minds, not words.

I think it's time to go. He's still in my head, but I think he might leave if I'm quiet. Shh. Shh.
[154] The Real Barenziah*

See vol. I.
It is easy to confuse Illusion and Alteration. Both schools of magic attempt to create what is not there. The difference is in the rules of nature. Illusion is not bound by them, while Alteration is. This may seem to indicate that Alteration is the weaker of the two, but this is not true. Alteration creates a reality that is recognized by everyone. Illusion's reality is only in the mind of the caster and the target.

To master Alteration, first accept that reality is a falsehood. There is no such thing. Our reality is a perception of greater forces impressed upon us for their amusement. Some say that these forces are the gods, other that they are something beyond the gods. For the wizard, it doesn't really matter. What matters is the appeal couched in a manner that cannot be denied. It must be insistent without being insulting.

To cast Alteration spells is to convince a greater power that it will be easier to change reality as requested than to leave it alone. Do not assume that these forces are sentient. Our best guess is that they are like wind and water. Persistent but not thoughtful. Just like directing the wind or water, diversions are easier than outright resistance. Express the spell as a subtle change and it is more likely to be successful.
[156] Receipt

Jobasha Bookseller
Lower Waistworks
Foreign Quarter, Vivec
Vvardenfell, Morrowind

Treatise on Ayleidic Cities (damaged)

..........................1,500dr

The Lusty Argonian Maid

..............................15dr

Praise be to Helseth and the Empire!
To create a potion of Cure Poison, mix Ginseng and Redwort Flower in equal portions. Slowly grind them together with a mortar and pestle. The ginseng may leave a sticky residue. Add water for easy swallowing.
For a potion of Cure Disease, grind Clannfear Claws and Mandrake root into a fine powder using a mortar and pestle. It will remain somewhat gritty. It can be mixed in with almost any liquid, but ordinary clear water is safest.
To create a potion of Restore Fatigue, combine any two normal foods, such as meat or seeds. Grind carefully with the mortar and pestle. Place the resulting powder in a small pestle and mix with ordinary clear water.
[158] The Rear-Guard*

See vol. I.
See vol. I.
Though naturally modest, I must admit to some pleasure in being dubbed by our Emperor's father, the late Pelagius IV, as "the finest connoisseur in Tamriel." He was also good enough to appoint me the first, and to this day, the only Master of Cuisine in the Imperial Court. Other Emperors, of course, had master chefs and cooks in their staff, but only during the reign of Pelagius was there someone of rarefied tastes to plan the menus and select the finest produce to be served at court. His son Uriel requested that I continue in that position, but I was forced to graciously decline the invitation, because of age and poor health.

This book, however, is not intended to be autobiography. I have had a great many adventures in my life as a knight of fine dining, but my intention for this book is much more specific. Many times I have been asked, "What is the best thing you ever ate?"

The answer to that is not a simple one. Much of the pleasure of a great meal is not only in the food: it is in the setting, the company, the mood. Eat an indifferently cooked roast or a simple stew with your one true love, and it is a meal to be remembered. Have an excellent twelve-course feast with dull company, while feeling slightly ill, and it will be forgotten, or remembered only with distaste.

Sometimes meals are memorable for the experiences that come before them.

Fairly recently, in northern Skyrim, I had a bit of bad luck. I was with a group of fishermen, observing their technique of capturing a very rare, very delicious fish called Merringar. The fish is found only far from shore, so it was a week's voyage out beyond civilization. Well, we found our school of Merringar, but as the fishermen began spearing them, the blood in the water attracted a family of Dreugh, who capsized the boat and everyone on it. I managed to save myself, but the fishermen and all our supplies were lost. Sailing is not, alas, a skill I have picked up over the years, and it took me three weeks, with no provisions, to find my way back to the kingdom of Solitude. I had managed to catch enough small fish to eat raw, but I was still delirious from hunger and thirst. The first meal I had on shore, of Nordic roast boar, Jazbay wine, and, yes, filet of Merringar would have been excellent under any circumstances, but because of the threat of starvation I had faced, it was divine beyond words.

Sometimes meals are even memorable for the experiences that follow them.

In a tavern in Falinesti, I was introduced to a simple peasant dish called Kollopi, delicious little balls of flesh, thick with spices and juice, so savory I asked the proprietress whence they came. Mother Pasco explained that the Kollopi were an arboreal rodent that fed exclusively on the most tender branches of the graht-oak, and I was fortunate enough to be in Valenwood at the time of the annual harvest. I was invited to join with a small colony of Imga monkeys, who alone could gather these succulent little mice. Because they lived only on the slenderest branches of the trees, and only on the ends of those same branches, the Imga had to climb beneath them and jump up to "pick" the Kollopi from their perches. Imga are, of course,
naturally dexterous, but I was then relatively young and spry, and they let me help them. While I could never jump as high they could, with practice, I found that if I kept my head and upper body rigid, and launched off the ground with a scissors-like kick, I could reach the Kollopi on the lowest branches of the tree. I believe I gathered three Kollopi myself, though with considerable effort.

To this day, I salivate at the thought of Kollopi, but my mind is on the image of myself and several dozen Imgas leaping around beneath the shade of the graht-oaks.

Then, of course, there are the rare meals memorable for what came before, after, and during the meal, which brings me to the finest thing I ever ate, the meal that began my lifelong obsession with excellent cuisine.

As a child growing up in Cheydinhal, I did not care for food at all. I recognized the value of nutrition, for I was not a complete dullard, but I cannot say that mealtime brought me any pleasure at all. Partly, of course, this was the fault of my family's cook, who believed that spices were an invention of the Daedra, and that good Imperials should like their food boiled, textureless and flavorless. Though I think she was alone in assigning a religious significance to this, my sampling of traditional Cyrodilic cuisine suggests that the philosophy is regrettably common in my homeland.

Though I did not enjoy food per se, I was not a morose, unadventurous child in other respects. I enjoyed the fights in the Arena, of course, and nothing made me happier than wandering the streets of my town, with my imagination as my only companion. It was on one such jaunt on a sunny Fredas in Mid Year that I made a discovery that changed my heart and my life.

There were several old abandoned houses down the street from my own home, and I often played around them, imagining them to be filled with desperate outlaws or haunted by hundreds of evil spirits. I never had the nerve to go inside. In fact, had I not that day seen some other children who had delighted in teasing me in the past, I would never have gone in. But I needed a sanctuary, so I ran into the closest one.

The house seemed to be as desolate on the inside as on the outside, further proof that no one lived there, and had not for some time. When I heard footsteps, I could only assume that the loathsome little urchins I hoped to avoid had followed me in. I escaped to the basement, and from there, past a broken-down wall that led to a well. I could still hear the footsteps above, and I decided that I was still loath to confront my tormentors. Knocking aside the rusty locks on the well, I slipped down below.

The well was dry, but I discovered it was far from empty. There was a sort of a sub-basement to the house, three large rooms that were clean, furnished, and evidently not abandoned at all. My senses told me someone was living in the house, after all: not only my sense of sight, but my sense of smell. For one of the rooms was a large red-painted kitchen, and spread out on the coals of the oven was a roast, carved into small morsels. Passing a beautiful and appropriate bas-relief of a mother carving a roast for her grateful children, I beheld the kitchen and the wonders within.

Like I said, food had never interested me before, but I was transfixed, and even now as I write this, words fail me in describing the rich aroma that hung in the air. It was like nothing I had ever smelled in my family's kitchen, and I was unable to stop myself from popping one of the
steaming chunks of meat into my mouth. The taste was magical, the flesh tender and sweet. Before I knew it, I had eaten everything on the stove, and I learned at that very second the truth that that food can and should be sublime.

After gorging myself and having my culinary epiphany, I was conflicted on what to do. Part of me wanted to wait down in that red kitchen until the chef returned, so I could ask him what his secret recipe was for the delicious meat. Part of me recognized that I had stolen into someone's house and eaten their dinner, and it would be wise to leave while I could. That was what I did.

Time and again, I've tried to return to that strange, wonderful place, but Cheydinhal has changed over time. Old houses have been reclaimed, and new houses abandoned. I know what to look for on the inside of the house - the well, the beautiful etching of a woman preparing to carve out a roast for her children, the red kitchen itself - but I have never been able to find the house again. After a while, as I grew older, I stopped trying. It is better as it remains in my memory, the most perfect meal I ever ate.

The inspiration for my life that followed all was cooked up, together with that fabulous meat, right there in the Red Kitchen.
The smell of the bay oozed through the stones of the cellar, salt and brined decay. The cellar itself had its own scents of old wine turned to vinegar, mildew, and the more exotic spices of herbs the healers had brought with them to tend to the wounded. There were more than fifty people squeezed into the big earthen room which had once been forgotten storage for the brothel above. The groaning and whimpering had ceased for now, and all was still, as if the hospital had turned into a mass grave.

"Mother," a Redguard boy whispered. "What was that?"

The boy's mother was about to answer him when there was another rolling roar from outside, which grew louder and louder, as if some great but incorporeal beast had come into the cellar. The walls trembled and dust burst from the ceiling in a rain of powder.

Unlike the last time, no one screamed. They waited until the weird, haunting sound had past, and then was replaced by the soft rumble of the distant battle.

A wounded soldier began whispering Mara's Prayer from the Doomed.

"Mankar," a Bosmer woman curled up in a cot hissed, her eyes feverish, flesh white and wet with sweat. "He is coming!"

"Who is coming?" asked the boy, grasping his mother's skirt tight.


The boy's mother shot an angry look at the old warrior. "She doesn't know what she's saying. She's sick."

The boy nodded. His mother was usually right. He had not yet even been born when people began whispering that the Camoran Usurper was coming towards her little village, and she had packed up their belongings to flee. Their neighbors had laughed at her, she said, saying that Rihad and Taneth would handily defeat him. Her husband, Lukar's father who he was never to meet, had also laughed at her. It was the harvest time, and she would miss out on the celebrations. But his mother, Miak-I, was right. Two weeks after she fled the village, she heard the tale that it had been obliterated during the night with no survivors. Rihad and Taneth had both fallen. The Usurper was unstoppable.

Lukar had been born and grown up in refugee camps throughout Hammerfell. He had never known a friend for more than a few days. He knew that when the sky burned red to the west, they would pack up and move east. When it burned to the south, they moved north. At last, after twelve years of moving from camp to camp, they had taken passage across the Iliac Bay
to the province of High Rock and the barony of Dwynnen. There Miak-I had promised, and hoped, that they would have a peaceful, permanent home.

It was so green there, it blinded him. Unlike Hammerfell, which was only green in certain seasons and in certain places, Dwynnen was verdant year round. Until wintertide, when it began to snow, and Lukar had been frightened of it at first. He was ashamed to think of it now, when there was real danger, but the red clouds of war, the stink and pain of the refugee camp, that was familiar.

Now, the red sky was on the horizon of the bay and coming closer, and he longed for the days when a scattering of white made him cry.

"Mankar!" the Bosmer woman cried out again. "He is coming, and he will bring death!"

"No one is coming," said a pretty young Breton healer, coming to the woman's side. "Hush now."

"Hello?" came a voice from above.

The whole room, almost together as one gasped. A Bosmer limped down the shoddy wooden stairs, his friendly face very obviously not that of the Camoran Usurper.

"Sorry if I frightened you," he said. "I was told there were healers here, and I could use a little help."

Rosayna hurried to take a look at the Bosmer's wounds on his leg and chest. Dishelved but still beautiful, she was one of the favorites at the brothel, who had learned her healing skill along with her more vocational skills at the House of Dibella. She carefully but quickly pulled the rent leather cuirass, chausses, tassets, grieves, and boots off him, and placed them to the side while she examined the injuries.

The old Redguard warrior picked them up and studied them. "You were in the war?"

"Next to it is probably a better way to put it," the Bosmer smiled, wincing slightly at Rosayna's touch. "Behind it, beside it, in front of it. My name's Orben Elmlock. I'm a scout. I try to avoid the real battle, so I can get back and report what I see. A good job for people who don't like the color of their own blood very much."

"Hzim," said the warrior, shaking Orben's hand. "I can't fight anymore, but I can fix up this armor if you're going to return."

"You're a leathersmith?"

"Naw, just a jack of all trades," replied Hzim, opening up a small canister of wax to prep the hard but flexible leather. "I could tell you were a scout from the armor, though. Can you tell us what you've been spying on? We've been down in here for half a day now, with no word from the outside."

"The entire Iliac Bay is one great battlefield on the waves," said Orben and sighed as Rosayna's spell began to close his jagged but shallow wounds. "We've shut off the invasion
from the mouth of the bay, but I was coming from the coast, and the enemy's army is marching over the Wrothgarian Mountains. That's where I had my little scuffle. It's not too surprising, moving the flank in from the side while the front battle is occupied. It's a play right out of Camoran Kaltos's book of tricks the Hart-King borrowed."

"The Hart-King?" Lukar asked. He had been listening quietly, understanding everything except that.

"Haymon Camoran, the Camoran Usurper, Haymon Hart-King, they're all the same, lad. He's a complicated fellow, and needs more than one name."

"You know him?" Miak-I asked, stepping forward.

"Near on twenty years, before this whole black, bloody business. I was Camoran Kaltos's chief scout, and Haymon was his sorcerer and advisor. I helped them both, when they were vying for the Camoran throne, and began the conquest of - Ouch!"

Rosayna has ceased her healing. With eyes of fury, she had reversed her spell, and the closed, mended wounds were opening again, dark infections returning. She held him with surprising strength when Orben tried to pull back.

"You bastard," the healer courtesan hissed. "I have a cousin in Falinesti, a priestess."

"She's fine!" Orben yelped. "Lord Kaltos was very adamant about not harming anyone who did not pose a threat ..."

"I think the people of Kvatch would disagree with that assessment," said Hzim, coldly.

"That was horrible, the worst thing I have ever seen," Orben nodded. "Kaltos wept when he saw what Haymon had done. My master did everything he could to stop it, begging the Hart-King to return to Valenwood. But he turned on Kaltos, and we fled. We are not your enemy, and we have never been. Kaltos could do nothing to prevent the horror that the Usurper has brought to the Colovian West and Hammerfell, and he has fought for fifteen years to prevent more."

The frightening bestial roar passed through the cellar again, even louder than before. The wounded could not help groaning in helpless terror.

"And what is that?" Miak-I sneered. "Another of Camoran Kaltos's tricks that the Usurper picked up?"

"It is indeed a trick, as a matter of fact," Orben yelled, above the screech. "It's a phastasm he employs to scare people. He had to use fear tactics in the beginning when his power was ascending, and he has to fall back on them now for his power is waning. That is why it took him two years to conquer Valenwood, and another thirteen to half-conquer Hammerfell. No offense to you Redguards, but it isn't only your battle prowess that has been holding him back. He does not have the support he used to have from his Master -"

The echoing roar increased in intensity before once again falling silent.
"Mankar!" the Bosmer woman groaned. "He comes, and he will destroy all!"

"His Master?" asked Lukar, but Orben's eyes had gone to the Bosmer woman, curled up in her blood-soaked cot.

"Who is she?" Orben asked Rosayna.

"One of the refugees, of course, from your friendly little war in Valenwood before you and your Kaltos changed sides," the healer replied. "I think her name is Kaalys."

"By Jephre," Orben whispered under his breath, limping over to the woman's cot and wiping the sweat and blood streaked hair from her pallid face. "Kaalys, it's Orben. Do you remember me? How did you get here? Did he hurt you?"

"Mankar!" Kaalys moaned.

"That's all she says," said Rosayna.

"I don't know what that is," Orben frowned. "Not the Usurper, though she knew him too. Very well. She was a favorite of his."

"His favorites, you, Kaltos, her, all seem to turn against him," said Miak-I.

"That is why he will fall," replied Hzim.

Armored footfall rang along the ceiling, and the cellar door burst open. It was the captain of Baron Othrok's castle guards. "The docks are on fire! If you want to live, you'll need to take refuge at Castle Wightmoor!"

"We need help!" Rosayna called back, but she knew that the guards were needed for defense, not to help carry the sick to safety.

With ten guards who could be spared and the most able-bodied of the wounded assisting, the cellar was emptied as the streets of Dwynnen filled with smoke, and fire began to spread through the chaos. It had been a single fireball miscast out at sea striking the docks, but the damage would be tremendous. Some hours later, in the courtyard of the mighty castle, the healers were able to set up the cots and begin to tend once again to the suffering of the innocent. The first person Rosayna found was Orben Elmlock. Even with his wounds reopened, he had helped carry two of the patients into the castle.

"I'm sorry," she said as she pressed her healing hands onto his wounds. "I lost my temper. I forgot that I am a healer."

"Where is Kaalys?" Orben asked.

"She's not here?" Rosayna said, looking around. "She must have run away."

"Run away? But wasn't she injured?"
"It was not a healthy situation, but new mothers can surprise you with what they can do when it's all over."

"She was pregnant?" Orben gasped

"Yes. It wasn't such a difficult birth in the end. She was holding the boy in her arms when I saw her last. She said she had done it herself."

"She was pregnant," Orben murmured again. "The mistress of the Camoran Usurper was pregnant."

Word quickly spread throughout the castle that the battle was over, and more than that, the war was over. Haymon Camoran's forces had been defeated at sea, and in the mountains. The Hart-King was dead.

Lukar watched down from the battlements into the dark woods that surrounded Dwynnen. He had heard about Kaalys, and he imagined a desperate woman fleeing with her newborn baby in her arms into the wilderness. Kaalys would have nowhere to go, no one to protect them. She and her baby would be a refugee, like Miak-I and him had been. Reflecting back, he remembered her words.

He is coming. He is coming, and he will bring death. He will destroy all.

Lukar remembered her eyes. She was sick, but not afraid. Who was this "He" who was coming if the Camoran Usurper was dead?

"Did she say nothing else?" asked Orben.

"She told me the baby's name," Rosayna replied. "Mankar."
Chapter 1: SANCRE TOR AND THE BIRTH OF REMAN

And in those days the empire of the Cyrodiils was dead, save in memory only, for through war and slug famine and iniquitous rulers, the west split from the east and Colovia's estrangement lasted some four hundreds of years. And the earth was sick with this sundering. Once-worthy western kings, of Anvil and Sarchal, of Falkreath and Delodiil, became through pride and habit as like thief-barons and forgot covenant. In the heartland things were no better, as arcanists and false moth-princes lay in drugged stupor or the studies of vileness and no one sat on the Throne in dusted generations. Snakes and the warnings of snakes went unheeded and the land bled with ghosts and deepset holes unto cold harbors. It is said that even the Chim-el Adabal, the amulet of the kings of glory, had been lost and its people saw no reason to find it.

And it was in this darkness that King Hrol set out from the lands beyond lost Twil with a sortie of questing knights numbered eighteen less one, all of them western sons and daughters. For Hrol had seen in his visions the snakes to come and sought to heal all the borders of his forebears. And to this host appeared at last a spirit who resembled none other than El-Estia, queen of ancient times, who bore in her left hand the dragonfire of the aka-tosh and in her right hand the jewels of the covenant and on her breast a wound that spilt void onto her mangled feet. And seeing El-Estia and Chim-el Adabal, Hrol and his knights wailed and set to their knees and prayed for all things to become as right. Unto them the spirit said, I am the healer of all men and the mother of dragons, but as you have run so many times from me so shall I run until you learn my pain, which renders you and all this land dead.

And the spirit fled from them, and they split among hills and forests to find her, all grieving that they had become a villainous people. Hrol and his shieldthane were the only ones to find her, and the king spoke to her, saying, I love you sweet Aless, sweet wife of Shor and of Auriel and the Sacred Bull, and would render this land alive again, not through pain but through a return to the dragon-fires of covenant, to join east and west and throw off all ruin. And the shieldthane bore witness to the spirit opening naked to his king, carving on a nearby rock the words AND HROL DID LOVE UNTO A HILLOCK before dying in the sight of their union.

When the fifteen other knights found King Hrol, they saw him dead after his labors against a mound of mud. And they parted each in their way, and some went mad, and the two that returned to their homeland beyond Twil would say nothing of Hrol, and acted ashamed for him.

But after nine months that mound of mud became as a small mountain, and there were whispers among the shepherds and bulls. A small community of believers gathered around that growing hill during the days of its first churning, and they were the first to name it the Golden Hill, Sancre Tor. And it was the shepherdess Sed-Yenna who dared climb the hill when she heard his first cry, and at its peak she saw what it had yielded, an infant she named Reman, which is "Light of Man."
And in the child's forehead was the Chim-el Adabal, alive with the dragon-fires of yore and divine promise, and none dared obstruct Sed-Yenna when she climbed the steps of White-Gold Tower to place the babe Reman on his Throne, where he spoke as an adult, saying I AM CYRODIIL COME.

Chapter 2: THE CHEVALIER RENALD, BLADE OF THE PIG

And in the days of interregnum, the Chim-el Adabal was lost again amid the petty wars of gone-heathen kings. West and east knew no union then and all the lands outside of them saw Cyrodiil as a nest of snakemen and snakes. And for four more hundreds of years did the seat of Reman stay sundered, with only the machinations of a group of loyal knights keeping all its borders from throwing wide.

These loyal knights did go by no name then, but were known by their eastern swords and painted eyes, and it was whispered that they were descended from the bodyguard of old Reman. One of their number, called the Chevalier Renald, discovered the prowess of Cuhlecain and then supported him towards the throne. Only later would it be revealed that Renald did this thing to come closer to Talos, anon Stormcrown, the glorious yet-emperor Tiber Septim; only later still, that he was under instruction by a pig.

Long glory was wife to the all the knights of the dragon-banner, who knew no other and were brothers before beyond many seas and now were brothers under the law named the blade-surrender of Pale Pass. And having vampire blood these brother-knights lived for ages through and past Reman and then kept guard over his ward, the coiled king, Versidue-Shaie. The snake-captain Vershu became Renald became the protector of the northern west when the black dart was hooked into Savirien-Chorak.

[Here torn pages indicate that the rest of this ancient book has been lost.]
Part I: Preparations

The Emperor's plans for the invasion of Akavir were laid in the 270s, when he began the conquest of the small island kingdoms that lie between Tamriel and Akavir. With the fall of Black Harbor in Esoniet in 282, Uriel V was already looking ahead to the ultimate prize. He immediately ordered extensive renovations to the port, which would serve as the marshalling point for the invasion force and as the main supply source throughout the campaign. At this time he also began the construction of the many large, ocean-going transports that would be needed for the final crossing to Akavir, in which the Navy was previously deficient. Thus it can be seen that the Emperor's preparations for the invasion were laid well in advance, before even the conquest of Esoniet was complete, and was not a sudden whim as some have charged.

When Prince Bashomon yielded Esoniet to Imperial authority in 284, the Emperor's full attention could be devoted to planning for the Akaviri campaign. Naval expeditions were dispatched in 285 and 286 to scout the sea lanes and coastlands of Akavir; and various Imperial intelligence agents, both magical and mundane, were employed to gather information. On the basis of all this information, the kingdom of the Tsaesci, in the southwest of Akavir, was selected as the initial target for the invasion.

Meanwhile the Emperor was gathering his Expeditionary Force. A new Far East Fleet was created for the campaign, which for a time dwarfed the rest of the Navy; it is said to be the most powerful fleet ever assembled in the history of Tamriel. The Fifth, Seventh, Tenth, and Fourteenth Legions were selected for the initial landing, with the Ninth and Seventeenth to follow as reinforcements once the beachhead was secured. While this may seem to the layman a relatively small fraction of the Army's total manpower, it must be remembered that this Expeditionary Force would have to be maintained at the end of a long and tenuous supply line; in addition, the Emperor and the Army command believed that the invasion would not be strongly opposed, at least at first. Perhaps most crucially, the Navy had only enough heavy transport capacity to move four legions at a time.

It should be noted here that the Commission does not find fault with the Emperor's preparations for the invasion. Based on the information available prior to the invasion, (which, while obviously deficient in hindsight, great effort had been made to accumulate), the Commission believes that the Emperor did not act recklessly or imprudently. Some have argued that the Expeditionary Force was too small. The Commission believes that on the contrary, even if shipping could have been found to transport and supply more legions (an impossibility without crippling the trade of the entire Empire), this would have merely added to the scale of the disaster; it would not have averted it. Neither could the rest of the Empire be denuded of legions; the memory of the Camoran Usurper was still fresh, and the Emperor...
believed (and this Commission agrees) that the security of the Empire precluded a larger concentration of military force outside of Tamriel. If anything, the Commission believes that the Expeditionary Force was too large. Despite the creation of two new legions during his reign (and the recreation of the Fifth), the loss of the Expeditionary Force left the Empire in a dangerously weak position relative to the provinces, as the current situation makes all too clear. This suggests that the invasion of Akavir was beyond the Empire's current strength; even if the Emperor could have fielded and maintained a larger force in Akavir, the Empire may have disintegrated behind him.

Part II: The Invasion of Akavir

The Expeditionary Force left Black Harbor on 23rd Rain's Hand, 288, and with fair weather landed in Akavir after six weeks at sea. The landing site was a small Tsaesci port at the mouth of a large river, chosen for its proximity to Tamriel as well as its location in a fertile river valley, giving easy access to the interior as well as good foraging for the army. All went well at first. The Tsaesci had abandoned the town when the Expeditionary Force approached, so they took possession of it and renamed it Septimia, the first colony of the new Imperial Province of Akavir. While the engineers fortified the town and expanded the port facilities to serve the Far East Fleet, the Emperor marched inland with two legions. The surrounding land was reported to be rich, well-watered fields, and meeting no resistance the army took the next city upriver, also abandoned. This was refounded as Ionith, and the Emperor established his headquarters there, being much larger than Septimia and better-located to dominate the surrounding countryside.

The Expeditionary Force had yet to meet any real resistance, although the legions were constantly shadowed by mounted enemy patrols which prevented any but large scouting parties from leaving the main body of the army. One thing the Emperor sorely lacked was cavalry, due to the limited space on the transport fleet, although for the time being the battlemages made up for this with magical reconnaissance.

The Emperor now sent out envoys to try to contact the Tsaesci king or whoever ruled this land, but his messengers never returned. In retrospect, the Commission believes that valuable time was wasted in this effort while the army was stalled at Ionith, which could have been better spent in advancing quickly while the enemy was still, apparently, surprised by the invasion. However, the Emperor believed at the time that the Tsaesci could be overawed by the Empire's power and he might win a province by negotiation with no need for serious fighting.

Meanwhile, the four legions were busy building a road between Septimia and Ionith, setting up fortified guard posts along the river, and fortifying both cities' defences, activities which would serve them well later. Due to their lack of cavalry, scouting was limited, and communication between the two cities constantly threatened by enemy raiders, with which the legions were still unable to come to grips.

The original plan had been to bring the two reinforcing legions across as soon as the initial landing had secured a port, but the fateful decision was now taken to delay their arrival and instead begin using the Fleet to transport colonists. The Emperor and the Council agreed that, due to the complete abandonment of the conquered area by its native population, colonists were needed to work the fields so that the Expeditionary Force would not have to rely entirely on the fleet for supplies. In addition, unrest had broken out in Yneslea, athwart the supply
route to Akavir, and the Council believed the Ninth and Seventeenth legions would be better used in repacifying those territories and securing the Expeditionary Force's supply lines.

The civilian colonists and their supplies began arriving in Septimia in mid-Hearthfire, and they took over the preparation of the fields (which had been started by the legionnaires) for a spring crop. A number of cavalry mounts were also brought over at this time, and the raids on the two Imperial colonies subsequently fell off. Tsaesci emissaries also finally arrived in Ionith, purportedly to begin peace negotiations, and the Expeditionary Force settled in for what was expected to be a quiet winter.

At this time, the Council urged the Emperor to return to Tamriel with the Fleet, to deal with many pressing matters of the Empire while the army was in winter quarters, but the Emperor decided that it would be best to remain in Akavir. This turned out to be fortunate, because a large portion of the Fleet, including the Emperor's flagship, was destroyed by an early winter storm during the homeward voyage. The winter storm season of 288-289 was unusually prolonged and exceptionally severe, and prevented the Fleet from returning to Akavir as planned with additional supplies. This was reported to the Emperor via battlemage and it was agreed that the Expeditionary Force could survive on what supplies it had on hand until the spring.

Part III: The Destruction of the Expeditionary Force

The winter weather in Akavir was also much more severe than expected. Due to the supply problems and the addition of thousands of civilians, the Expeditionary Force was on tight rations. To make matters worse, the Tsaesci raiders returned in force and harried any foraging and scouting parties outside the walls of the two cities. Several watch forts on the road between Septimia and Ionith were captured during blizzards, and the rest had to be abandoned as untenable. As a result, communication between the two cities had to be conducted entirely by magical means, a continuing strain on the legions' battlemages.

On 5th Sun's Dawn, a large entourage of Tsaesci arrived at Ionith claiming to bring a peace offer from the Tsaesci king. That night, these treacherous envoys murdered the guards at one of the city gates and let in a strong party of their comrades who were waiting outside the city walls. Their clear intention was to assassinate the Emperor, foiled only by the vigilance and courage of troopers of the Tenth who were guarding his palace. Once the alarm was raised, the Tsaesci inside the city were hunted down and killed to the last man. Needless to say, this was the end of negotiations between the Emperor and the Tsaesci.

The arrival of spring only brought worse troubles. Instead of the expected spring rains, a hot dry wind began to blow from the east, continuing with varying strength through the entire summer. The crops failed, and even the river (which in the previous year had been navigable by small boats far upstream of Ionith) was completely dried up by Sun's Height. It is unknown if this was due to a previously unknown weather pattern unique to Akavir, or if the Tsaesci manipulated the weather through magical means. The Commission leans towards the former conclusion, as there is no direct evidence of the Tsaesci possessing such fearsome arcane power, but the latter possibility cannot be entirely ruled out.

Due to prolonged bad weather, the supply fleet was late in setting out from Black Harbor. It finally left port in early Second Seed, but was again severely mauled by storms and limped into Septimia eight weeks later much reduced. Because of the increasingly desperate supply
situation in Akavir, the Emperor dispatched most of his Battlemage Corps with the fleet to assist it in weathering the storms which seemed likely to continue all summer. At this time, the Council urged the Emperor to abandon the invasion and to return to Tamriel with the Expeditionary Force, but he again refused, noting that the fleet was no longer large enough to transport all four legions at once. The Commission agrees that leaving one or more legions behind in Akavir to await the return of the fleet would have damaged Army morale. But the Commission also notes that the loss of one legion would have been preferable to the loss of the entire Expeditionary Force. It is the unanimous opinion of the Commission that this was the last point at which complete disaster might have been averted. Once the decision was made to send the fleet back for reinforcements and supplies, events proceeded to their inevitable conclusion.

From this point on, much less is known about what transpired in Akavir. With most of the battlemages assisting the fleet, communication between the Expeditionary Force and Tamriel was limited, especially as the situation in Akavir worsened and the remaining battlemages had their powers stretched to the limit attending to all the needs of the legions. However, it appears that the Tsaesci may also have been actively interfering with the mages in some unknown manner. Some of the mages in Akavir reported their powers being abnormally weak, and the mages of the War College in Cyrodiil (who were handling communications for the Council) reported problems linking up with their compatriots in Akavir, even between master and pupil of long training. The Commission urges that the War College make a particular study of the arcane powers of the Tsaesci, should the Empire ever come into conflict with Akavir again.

What is known is that the Emperor marched out of Ionith in mid-Sun's Height, leaving only small garrisons to hold the cities. He had learned that the Tsaesci were massing their forces on the other side of a mountain range to the north, and he intended to smash their army before it could gather full strength and capture their supplies (of which he was in desperate need). This rapid advance seems to have taken the Tsaesci by surprise, and the Expeditionary Force crossed the mountains and fell on their camp, routing the Tsaesci army and capturing its leader (a noble of some kind). But the Emperor was soon forced to retreat, and the legions suffered heavily on their retreat to Ionith. The Emperor now found himself besieged in Ionith, cut off from the small garrison at Septimia which was also besieged. By this time, it seems that the efforts of the few remaining battlemages were devoted entirely to creating water to keep the army alive, a skill not normally emphasized at the War College. The fleet had arrived safely back to Black Harbor, thanks to the Battlemage Corps, but all attempts to return to Akavir were frustrated by a series of ever more savage storms that battered Esroniet throughout the rest of 289.

The Council's last contact with the Emperor was in early Frostfall. By Evening Star, the Council was extremely worried about the situation in Akavir and ordered the fleet to sail regardless of the risk. Despite the continued storms, the fleet managed to press on to Akavir. Hope was raised when contact was made with the Emperor's battlemage, who reported that Ionith still held out. Plans were quickly laid for the Expeditionary Force to break out of Ionith and fall back on Septimia, where the fleet would meet them. This was the last direct contact with the Expeditionary Force. The fleet arrived in Septimia to find its garrison under savage assault from a large Tsaesci army. The battlemages with the fleet threw back the enemy long enough for the survivors to embark and the fleet to withdraw.
The few survivors of the Expeditionary Force who reached Septimia told how the Emperor had led the army out of Ionith by night two days earlier, successfully breaking through the enemy lines but then being surrounded by overwhelming forces on the road to Septimia. They told of a heroic last stand by the Emperor and the Tenth Legion, which allowed a remnant of the Fourteenth to reach Septimia. Two survivors of the Tenth arrived in Septimia that night, having slipped through the enemy lines during their undisciplined victory celebration. These men confirmed having seen the Emperor die, cut down by enemy arrows as he rallied the Tenth's shield wall.

Part IV: Conclusion

The Commission believes that the invasion of Akavir was doomed from the start for several reasons, none of which could have been foreseen beforehand, unfortunately.

Despite extensive intelligence-gathering, the Expeditionary Force was clearly unprepared for the situation in Akavir. The unexpected weather which plagued the army and navy was particularly disastrous. Without the loss of a majority of the Far East Fleet during the campaign, the Expeditionary Force could have been withdrawn in 289. The weather also forced the Emperor to assign most of his Battlemage Corps to the fleet, leaving him without their valuable assistance during the fighting which soon followed. And of course the unexpected drought which struck Ionith during 289 dashed the hopes of supplying the army locally, and left the Expeditionary Force in an untenable situation when besieged in Ionith.

The Tsaesci were also much stronger than intelligence reports had suggested. Information on the size of the army the Tsaesci were eventually able to field against the Expeditionary Force is vague, as the only serious fighting took place after regular communications were cut off between the Emperor and the Council. Nevertheless, it seems likely that the Tsaesci outnumbered the Emperor's forces by several times, as they were able to force four crack legions into retreat and then keep them under siege for several months.

As was stated previously, the Commission declines to criticize the initial decision to invade Akavir. Based on what was known at the time, the plan seemed sound. It is only with the benefit of hindsight does it become obvious that the invasion had very little chance of success. Nevertheless, the Commission believes several valuable lessons can be taken from this disaster.

First, the Tsaesci may have extremely powerful arcane forces at their command. The possibility that they may have manipulated the weather across such a vast region seems incredible (and it should be noted that three Commissioners strongly objected to this paragraph even being included in this Report), but the Commission believes that this matter deserves urgent investigation. The potential danger is such that even the slight possibility must be taken seriously.

Second, the Tsaesci appear to possess no navy to speak of. The Expeditionary Force was never threatened by sea, and the Far East Fleet fought nothing but the weather. Indeed, initial plans called for a portion of the Fleet to remain in Akavir for use in coastal operations, but in the event there were very few places where the large vessels of the Fleet could approach the land, due to the innumerable reefs, sandbars, islands, etc. that infested the coastal waters north and south from Septimia. Due to the utter lack of trees in the plain around Septimia and Ionith, the Expeditionary Force was unable to build smaller vessels which could have
navigated the shallow coastal waters. Any future military expeditions against Akavir would do well to consider some way of bringing a means for inshore naval operations in order to exploit this clear advantage over the Tsaesci, an advantage that was sadly unexploited by the Expeditionary Force.

Third, much longer-term study needs to be made of Akavir before another invasion could even be contemplated. The information gathered over the four years prior to the invasion was extensive, but clearly inadequate. The weather conditions were completely unexpected; the Tsaesci much stronger than expected; and the attempted negotiations by the Emperor with the Tsaesci a disaster. Akavir proved alien beyond expectation, and the Commission believes any future attempt to invade Akavir should not be contemplated without much greater knowledge of the conditions, politics, and peoples of that continent than presently obtains.

Finally, the Commission unanimously concludes that given what we now know, any attempt to invade Akavir is folly, at least in the present state of the Empire. The Empire's legions are needed at home. One day, a peaceful, united Empire will return to Akavir and exact severe retribution for the disaster at Ionith and for our fallen Emperor. But that day is not now, nor in the foreseeable future.
I am six-hundred-and-eleven years old. I have never had children of my own, but I have many nieces and nephews and cousins who have been raised with the tales and traditions of our ancient, illustrious, and occasionally notorious clan, the Direnni. Few families in Tamriel can boast so many famous figures, wielding so much power over the fate of so many. Our warriors and kings are stuff of legend, and it is not to dismiss their honor and their achievements to say you have heard quite enough about them.

I myself have never picked up a sword or written an important law, but I am part of a lesser known but still important Direnni tradition: the way of the wizard. My own autobiography would be of little interest to posterity - though my nephew, nieces, and cousins indulge me to tell wild tales of life in the chaotic Second Era of Tamriel - but I have a few ancestors whose stories should be told. They may have changed history as we know it as dramatically as my better known relatives, but their names are in danger of being forgotten.

Most recently, Lysandus, the King of Daggerfall, was able to conquer his ancient enemies of Sentinel in part thanks to his court sorceress, Medora Direnni. Her grandfather Jovron Direnni was Imperial Battlemage to the court of the Dunmer Empress of Tamriel, Katariah, assisting her in creating peace in a time of turmoil. His great great grandfather Pelladil Direnni had a similar role with the first Potentate, and encouraged the Guild Act without which we would not have all the professional organizations we have today. His ancestor, many times back, was the witch Raven Direnni, who with her better known cousins Aiden and Ryain, brought an end to the tyranny of the latter Alessian Empire. Before the Psijics of Artaeum, it is said, she created the art of enchantment, learning how to bind a soul into a gem and use that to ensorcel all manners of weaponry.

But it is the story of an ancestor even more ancient, more distant than Raven I wish to tell.

Aslief Direnni harkens back to the humble beginnings of our clan, in the tiny farming village of Tyrigel on the banks of the river Caomus which was then called the Diren, hence the family name. Like all on Summerset Isle in those days, he was a simple planter of the fields. But while others only grew enough to sustain their immediate kin, even distant cousins of the Dirennis worked together. They would decide as a group which fields were best for wheat, orchard, vine, livestock, or apiary, and thereby always have the best yields of any farm which worked alone, doing the best as it could with what it had.

Aslief had a particularly poor farm for most kind of agriculture, but small herbs found its stony, loamless, acidic soil very comfortable. Out of necessity more than anything else he became an expert on all manners of herbs. For the most part, of course, they were used in flavoring cooking, but as you know, hardly any plant grows on the surface of our world without a magickal potential.
Even so long ago, witches already were in existence. It would be ridiculous for me to suggest that Asliel Direnni invented alchemy. What he did, what we can all be grateful for, is that he formulated it into an art and science.

There were no witches' covens in Tyrigel, and, of course, there would be no Mages Guild yet for thousands of years, so people would come to him for cures. He learned for himself the exact formula for combining black lichen and roobrush to create a cure for all manners of poison, and the amount of willow anther to crush and mix with chokeweed to cure diseases.

There were few much greater threats in Tyrigel in those peaceful days than disease or accidental poisonings. Yes, there were some dark forces in the wilderness, trolls, chimera, the occasional malevolent fairy folk and Will-O-The-Wisp, but even the youngest, most foolish Altmer knew how to avoid them. There were, however, a few unusual threats which Asliel had a hand in defeating.

One of the tales told of him that I believe to be true is how he was brought a young niece who had been suffering from an unknown disease. Despite his ministrations, she grew weaker and weaker every morning. Finally, he gave her a bitter tasting drink, and the next morning, ashes were found all around her bed. A vampire had been feeding on the poor girl, but Asliel's potion had turned her very blood into poison, without harming her in the least.

If only this formula had not been lost in the mists of history!

This would have been enough to make him a minor but significant figure in the annals of early Summurset, but at that point in history, a barbarian tribe called the Locvar had found their way down the Diren River, and recognized Tyrigel as a rich target for raids. The Direnni, not being warriors yet but simple farmers, were helpless and could only flee and watch the Locvar take the best of their crops, raid after raid.

Asliel, however, had been experimenting with the vampire dust, and brought his cousins to him with a plan. The next time the Locvar were sighted on the Diren, the word went out and all the most able-bodied came to Asliel's laboratory. When the barbarians arrived in Tyrigel, they found the farms deserted, and assumed that all had fled as usual. As they set about stealing the bounty, they suddenly found themselves under attack by invisible forces. Believing the Direnni farms to be haunted, they ran away very quickly.

They attempted a few more raids, for their greed would always eventually overpower their fear, and each time, they were set upon by attackers who they could not see. As barbaric as they were, they were not stupid, and they changed their mind about the source of their defeat. It could not be that the farms were haunted, because the crops were still being tended and harvested, and the animals seemed to show no fear. The Locvar decided to send a scout to the farm to see if he could spy their secrets.

The scout sent word back to the Locvar that the Direnni farms were populated with flesh and blood, entirely visible Altmer. He continued to watch as his barbarian cohorts moved down the river, and he saw the elderly and children flee for the hills, while the able-bodied farmers and their wives went to Asliel's laboratory. He saw them go in; he saw no one come out.

As usual, the Locvar were repelled by invisible forces, but their scout soon told them what he saw happening in the laboratory.
The next night, two of the Locvar approached Asliel's farm very stealthily, and managed to kidnap him without alerting the rest of the Direnni. The Locvar chieftain, knowing that the farmers could no longer count on the alchemist to make them invisible, considered an immediate attack on the farms. But he was a vengeful sort, and felt he had been humiliated by these simple farmers. A crafty plan emerged in his mind. What if the Direnni, who always saw his barbarian tribe coming, for once did not? Imagine the slaughter if no one even had a chance to flee.

The scout had told the chieftain that Asliel had used the dust of a vampire to make the farmers invisible, but he was not sure what the other ingredient had been. He described an incandescent powder that Asliel had mixed into the dust. Asliel, of course, refused to help the Locvar, but they were experts in torture as well as pillage, and he knew he would have to talk or die.

Finally after hours of torture, he agreed to tell them what the incandescent powder was. He did not know the name, but he called it "Glow Dust," the only remains of a slain Will O The Wisp. He told them they would need a lot of it if they wanted to turn the whole tribe invisible for the raid.

The Locvar grumbled that not only did they have to find and kill a vampire to attain his dust, but find and kill several Will O The Wisps to get theirs. In a few days time, they came back with the ingredients the alchemist asked for. The chieftain, not being a complete idiot, made Asliel taste the potion first. He did as he was told and turned invisible, demonstrating that it did truly work. The chieftain put him to work creating more. No one apparently noticed that while he did, he was nibbling on black lichen and roobrush.

The Locvar took the potion as he doled it out, and soon, but not too soon that they didn't suffer, they were all dead.

The scout who had seen Asliel mixing the invisibility potion had apparently mistook the glow of the candlelight in the laboratory for an incandescence which the second ingredient of the invisibility potion did not possess. The second ingredient was actually dull, simple redwort, one of the most common herbs in Tamriel. When they had insisted during torture that Asliel tell them what the incandescent powder was, Asliel remembered that he had once experimentally mixed glow dust and vampire dust together once and created a powerful poison. It was simple enough to steal a little redwort from the barbarian's camp, mix that with the vampire and glow dust mixture, and create a potion that was in fact an invisibility poison. After curing himself, he gave the poison to the barbarians.

The Locvar, being dead, never again raided the Direnni farms, and having no other enemies, they were able to grow more and more prosperous and powerful. Generations later, they left Summerset and began their historic adventures on the Tamriel mainland. Asliel Direnni, because of his excellence as an alchemist, was invited to Artaeum and became a Psijic. It is not known how many more of the common formulas we know today were invented by him there, but I have no doubt, the science and art of alchemy as we know it today would not exist without him.

But that is all in the distant past. Asliel's innovations, like my modest ones, like the achievements of the Dirennis throughout history, are but a stepping stone to the wonders which will come in the future. I wish I could be there to witness them, but if I can only share
some of the past with the children of Direnni and the children of Tamriel, then I will consider my life well spent.
Response to Bero's Speech*

See vol. I.
Rislav The Righteous

By Sinjin

Like all true heroes, Rislav Larich had inauspicious beginnings. We are told by chroniclers that the springtide night in the 448th year of the first era on which he was born was unseasonably cold, and that his mother Queen Lynada died very shortly after setting eyes upon her son. If he were much beloved of his father, King Mhorus of Skingrad, who already had plenty of heirs, three sons and four daughters before him, the chroniclers make no mention of it.

His existence was so very undistinguished that we hear virtually nothing of him for the first twenty years of his life. His schooling, we can suppose, was similar to that of any "spare prince" in the Colovian West, with Ayleid tutors to teach him the ways of hunting and battle. Etiquette, religious instruction, and even basic statecraft were seldom a part of the training of a prince of the Highlands, as it was in the more civilized valley of Nibenay.

There is a brief reference to him, together with his family, as part of the rolls of honor during the coronation of the Emperor Gorieus on the 23rd of Sun's Dawn 1E 461. The ceremony, of course, held during the time of the Alessian Doctrines of Marukh, and so was without entertainment, but the thirteen-year-old Rislav was still witness to some of the greatest figures of legend. The Beast of Anequina, Darloc Brae, represented his kingdom, giving honor to the Empire. The Chieftain of Skyrim Kjoric the White and his son Hoag were in attendance. And despite the Empire's intolerance of all elves, chimer Indoril Nerevar and dwemer Dumac Dwarfking were evidently there as well, diplomatically representing Resdayn, all in relative peace.

Also mentioned on the rolls was a young mer in service to the Imperial court of High Rock, who was to have a great history with Rislav. Ryain Direnni.

Whether the two young men of about the same age met and conversed is entirely the stuff of historian's fancy. Ryain is spoken of in praising words as a powerful land-owner, eventually buying the island of Balfiera in the Iliac Bay and gradually conquering all of High Rock and large parts of Hammerfell and Skyrim, but Rislav is not heard of again in history's books for another seventeen years. We can only offer supposition based on the facts that follow.

Children of kings are, of course, married to the children of other kings to bind alliances. The kingdoms of Skingrad and Kvatch skirmished over common territory throughout the fifth century, until they reached a peace in the year 472. The details of this accord are not recorded, but since we know that Prince Rislav was in the court of Kvatch six years later, as husband to Belene, the daughter of King Justinius, it is fair to make an educated guess that they were married then to make peace.

This brings us to the year 478, when a great plague swept through all of Cyrodiil and seemed particularly concentrated in the independent Colovian West. Among the victims were King Mhorus and the rest of the entire royal family in Skingrad. Rislav's only surviving elder
brother, Dorald, survived, being in the Imperial City as a priest of Marukh. He returned to his homeland to assume the throne.

Of Dorald, we have some history. The King's second son, he was slightly simple-minded and evidently very pious. All the chroniclers spoke of his sweetness and decency, how he saw a vision in his early years that brought him - with his father's blessing - from Skingrad to the Imperial City and the priesthood. The priesthood of Marukh, of course, saw no difference between spiritual and political matters. It was the religion of the Alessian Empire, and it taught that to resist the Emperor was to resist the Gods. Given that, it is scarcely a surprise what Dorald did when he became King of the independent kingdom of Skingrad.

His first edict, on his very first day, was to cede the kingdom to the Empire.

The reaction throughout the Colovian Estates was shock and outrage, nowhere more so than in the court of Kvatch. Rislav Larich, we are told, rode forth to his brother's kingdom, together with his wife and two dozen of his father-in-law's cavalry. It was surely not an impressive army, no matter how the chroniclers embellish it, but they had little trouble defeating all the guards Dorald sent to stop them. In truth, there was no actual battling, for the soldiers of Skingrad resented their new king's decision to give up their autonomy.

The brothers faced one another in the castle courtyard where they had grown up.

In typical Colovian fashion, there was no trial, no accusations of treason, no jury, no judge. Only an executioner.

"Thou art no brother of mine," Rislav Larich said, and struck Dorald's head from his shoulders in one blow. He was crowned King of Skingrad still holding the same bloody axe in his arms.

If King Rislav had no battle experience beforehand, that was shortly to change. Word spread quickly to the Imperial City that Skingrad, once offered, was now being taken back. Gorieus was an accomplished warrior even before taking the throne, and the seventeen years he had as Emperor were scarcely peaceful. Only eight months before Dorald's assassination and Rislav's ascendancy, Gorieus and the Alessian army had faced another of his coronation guests, Kjoric the White, on the fields of the frozen north. The High Chieftain of Skyrim lost his life in the Battle of Sungard. While the pact of chieftains was selecting a new leader, Cyrodiil was busily grabbing back the land of southern Skyrim that it had lost.

In short, Emperor Gorieus knew how to deal with rebellious vassals.

The Alessian army poured westward "like a flood of death," to borrow the chronicler's phrase, in numbers far exceeding what would be required to conquer Skingrad. Gorieus could not have thought actual battle was likely. Rislav, as we said, had little to no experience at warfare, and only a few days' practice at kingcraft. His kingdom and all of the Colovian West had just been ravaged by plague. The Alessians anticipated that a mere show of arms, and a surrender.

Rislav instead prepared for battle. He quickly inspected his troops and drew up plans.

The chroniclers who had heretofore ignored the life of Rislav now devote verse after verse describing the king's aspect with fetishistic delight. While it may lack literary merit and taste,
we are at least given some details at last. Not surprisingly, the king wore the finest armor of his era, as the Colovian Estates then had the finest leathersmiths - the only type of armor available - in all of Tamriel. The king's klibanion mail, boiled and waxed for hardness, and studded with inch-long spikes, was a rich chestnut red, and he wore it over his black tunic but under his black cloak. The statue of Rislav the Righteous which now stands in Skingrad is a romanticized version of king, but not inaccurate except in the armor represented. No bard of the Colovian West would have gone to the market so lightly protected. But it does, as we will see, include the most important accouterments of Rislav: his trained hawk and his fast horse.

The winter rains had washed through the roads to the south, sending much of the West Weald spilling into Valenwood. The Emperor took the northern route, and King Rislav with a small patrol of guards met him at a low pass on what is now the Gold Road. The Emperor's army, it is said, was so large that the Beast of Anequina could hear its march from hundreds of miles away, and despite himself, the chroniclers say, he quaked in fear.

Rislav, it was said, did not quake. With perfect politeness, he told the Emperor that his party was too large to be accommodated in the tiny kingdom of Skingrad.

"Next time," Rislav said. "Write before you come."

The Emperor was, like most Alessian Emperors, not a man of great humor, and he thought Rislav touched by Sheogorath. He ordered his personal guards to arrest the poor madman, but at that moment, the King of Skingrad raised his arm and sent his hawk flying into the sky. It was a signal his army had been waiting for. The Alessian were all within the pass and the range of their arrows.

King Rislav and his guard began riding westward as fast as if they had been "kissed by wild Kynareth," as the chroniclers said. He did not dare to look behind him, but his plan went faultlessly. The far eastern end of the pass was sealed by rolling boulders, giving the Alessian no direction to go but westward. The Skingrad archers rained arrows down upon the Imperial army from far above on the plateaus, remaining safe from reprisal. The furious Emperor Gorieus chased Rislav from the Weald to the Highlands, leaving Skingrad far behind, all the while his army growing steadily smaller and smaller.

In the ancient Highland forest, the Imperial army met the army of Rislav's father-in-law, the King of Kvatch. The Alessian army likely still outnumbered their opponents, but they were exhausted and their morale had been obliterated by the chase amid a sea of arrows. After an hour's battle, they retreated north into what is now the Imperial Reserve, and from there, further north and east, to slip back to nurse their wounds and pride in Nibenay.

It was the beginning of the end of the Alessian hegemony. The Kings of the Colovian West joined with Kvatch and Skingrad to resist Imperial incursions. The Clan Direnni under Ryain was inspired to outlaw the religion of the Alessian Reform throughout his lands in High Rock, and began pushing into Imperial territories. The new High Chief of Skyrim, Hoag, now called Hoag Merkiller, though sharing the Emperor's official xenophobia, also joined the resistance. His heir, King Ysmir Wulfharth of Atmora, helped continue the struggle upon Hoag's death in battle, and also insured his place in history.

The heroic King of Skingrad, who faced the Emperor's army virtually alone, and triggered its end, justly deserves his sobriquet of Rislav the Righteous.
[167] The Ruins of Kemel-Ze

See vol. I.
I have met countesses and courtesans, empresses and witches, ladies of war and slatterns of peace, but I have never met a woman like The Night Mother. And I never will again.

I am a writer, a poet of some small renown. If I told you my name, you may have heard of me, but very likely, not. For decades until very recently, I had adopted the city of Sentinel on the coast of Hammerfell as my home, and kept the company of other artists, painters, tapestrists, and writers. No one I knew would have known an assassin by sight, least of all the queen of them, the Blood Flower, the Lady Death, the Night Mother.

Not that I had not heard of her.

Some years ago, I had the good fortune of meeting Pelarne Assi, a respected scholar, who had come to Hammerfell to do research for a book about the Order of Diagna. His essay, 'The Brothers of Darkness' together with Ynir Gorming's 'Fire and Darkness: The Brotherhoods of Death' are considered to be the canon tomes on the subject of Tamriel's orders of assassins. By luck, Gorming himself was also in Sentinel, and I was privileged to sit with the two in a dark skooma den in the musty slums of the city, as we smoked and talked about the Dark Brotherhood, the Morag Tong, and the Night Mother.

While not disputing the possibility that the Night Mother may be immortal or at least very long-lived, Assi thought it most likely that several women - and perhaps some men - throughout the ages had assumed the honorary title. It was no more logical to say there was only one Night Mother, he asserted, than to say there was only one King of Sentinel.

Gorming argued that there never was a Night Mother, at least no human one. The Night Mother was Mephala herself, whom the Brotherhood revered second only to Sithis.

'I don't suppose there's any way of knowing for certain,' I said, in a note of diplomacy.

'Certainly there is,' whispered Gorming with a grin. 'You could talk to that cloaked fellow in the corner.'

I had not noticed the man before, who sat by himself, eyes hidden by his cloak, seemingly as much a part of the dingy place as the rough stone and unswept floor. Turning back to Ynir, I asked him why that man would know about the Night Mother.

'He's a Dark Brother,' hissed Pellarne Assi. 'That's as plain as the moons. Don't even joke about speaking with him about Her.'

We moved on to other arguments about the Morag Tong and the Brotherhood, but I never forgot the image of the lone man, looking at nothing and everything, in the corner of the dirty
room, with fumes of skooma smoke floating around him like ghosts. When I saw him weeks later on the streets of Sentinel, I followed him.

Yes, I followed him. The reader may reasonably ask 'why' and 'how.' I don't blame you for that.

'How' was simply a question of knowing my city as well as I do. I'm not a thief, not particularly sure-footed and quiet, but I know the alleys and streets of Sentinel intimately from decades worth of ambling. I know which bridges creak, which buildings cast long irregular shadows, the intervals at which the native birds begin the ululations of their evening songs. With relative ease, I kept pace with the Dark Brother and out of his sight and hearing.

The answer to 'Why' is even simpler. I have the natural curiosity of the born writer. When I see a strange new animal, I must observe. It is the writer's curse.

I trailed the cloaked man deeper into the city, down an alleyway so narrow it was scarcely a crack between two tenements, past a crooked fence, and suddenly, miraculously, I was in a place I had never seen before. A little courtyard cemetery, with a dozen old half-rotted wooden tombstones. None of the surrounding buildings had windows that faced it, so no one knew this miniature necropolis existed.

No one, except the six men and one woman standing in it. And me.

The woman saw me immediately, and gestured for me to come closer. I could have run, but - no, I couldn't have. I had pierced a mystery right in my adopted Sentinel, and I could not leave it.

She knew my name, and she said it with a sweet smile. The Night Mother was a little old lady with fluffy white hair, cheeks like wrinkled apples that still carried the flush of youth, friendly eyes, blue as the Iliac Bay. She softly took my arm as we sat down amidst the graves and discussed murder.

She was not always in Hammerfell, not always available for direct assignment, but it seemed she enjoyed actually talking to her clientele.

'I did not come here to hire the Brotherhood,' I said respectfully.

'Then why are you here?' the Night Mother asked, her eyes never leaving mine.

I told her I wanted to know about her. I did not expect an answer to that, but she told me.

'I do not mind the stories you writers dream up about me,' she chuckled. 'Some of them are very amusing, and some of them are good for business. I like the sexy dark woman lounging on the divan in Carlovac Townway's fiction particularly. The truth is that my history would not make a very dramatic tale. I was a thief, long, long ago, back when the Thieves Guild was only beginning. It's such a bother to sneak around a house when performing a burglary, and many of us found it most efficacious to strangle the occupant of the house. Just for convenience. I suggested to the Guild that a segment of our order be dedicated to the arts and sciences of murder.
'It did not seem like such a controversial idea to me,' the Night Mother shrugged. 'We had specialists in catburglary, pick-pocketing, lock-picking, fencing, all the other essential parts of the job. But the Guild thought that encouraging murder would be bad for business. Too much, too much, they argued.

'They might have been right,' the old woman continued. 'But I discovered there is a profit to be made, just the same, from sudden death. Not only can one rob the deceased, but, if your victim has enemies, which rich people often do, you can be paid for it even more. I began to murder people differently when I discovered that. After I strangled them, I would put two stones in their eyes, one black and one white.'

'Why?' I asked.

'It was a sort of calling card of mine. You're a writer - don't you want your name on your books? I couldn't use my name, but I wanted potential clients to know me and my work. I don't do it anymore, no need to, but at the time, it was my signature. Word spread, and I soon had quite a successful business.'

'And that became the Morag Tong?' I asked.

'Oh, dear me, no,' the Night Mother smiled. 'The Morag Tong was around long before my time. I know I'm old, but I'm not that old. I merely hired on some of their assassins when they began to fall apart after the murder of the last Potentate. They did not want to be members of the Tong anymore, and since I was the only other murder syndicate of any note, they just joined on.'

I phrased my next question carefully. 'Will you kill me now that you've told me all this?'

She nodded sadly, letting out a little grandmotherly sigh. 'You are such a nice, polite young man, I hate to end our acquaintanceship. I don't suppose you would agree to a concession or two in exchange for your life, would you?'

To my everlasting shame, I did agree. I said I would say nothing about our meeting, which, as the reader can see, was a promise I eventually, years later, chose not to keep. Why have I endangered my life thus?

Because of the promises I did keep.

I helped the Night Mother and the Dark Brotherhood in acts too despicable, too bloody for me to set to paper. My hand quivers as I think about the people I betrayed, beginning with that night. I tried to write my poetry, but ink seemed to turn to blood. Finally, I fled, changing my name, going to a land where no one would know me.

And I wrote this. The true history of the Night Mother, from the interview she gave me on the night we met. It will be the last thing I ever write, this I know. And every word is true.

Pray for me.

Editor's Note: Though originally published anonymously, the identity of the author has never been in serious doubt. Any layman familiar with the work of the poet Enric Milnes will
recognize Sacred Witness's familiar cadence and style in such books of his as 'The Alik'r.' Shortly after publication, Milnes was murdered, and his killer was never found. He had been strangled, and two stones, a black one and a white one, crushed into his eyesockets. Very brutally.
[169] The Seed*

See vol. I.
Sentinels of the Isles: A treatise on Golden Saint / Dark Seducer culture and history within the Shivering Isles

By Andoche Marier

Author's Note

This volume attempts to catalogue and analyze known, suspected, and rumored facts about the two races that serve to maintain order within the Shivering Isles. It is by no means intended to serve as the authoritative work on the matter; rather, it is a personal effort on the part of the author to better understand these unique creatures.

In the Service of the Lord

It is beyond the scope of this work to determine the origins of the Golden Saints and Dark Seducers. They are Daedra, and as such their base existence is a mystery to those mortal-born. The commonly held belief that all Daedra are incapable of Creation suggests that even Lord Sheogorath himself is not responsible for the genesis of these races. Yet, it is worth noting that the Prince of Madness has motives and powers that none may guess; to attempt to do so would only confuse the subject further.

It is enough, then, to see that they exist and know that it is so. Beyond this knowledge, however, it is curious that the Saints and Seducers serve Lord Sheogorath unerringly. This allegiance is ultimate and eternal, from all indications, but its source is unknown. Could it be that they themselves were tricked into service by the Madgod? Or do they simply ally themselves with the greatest power in the realm? Previous literary works suggest that Daedra choose to serve their masters so they might find protection and safe harbor. Clearly the Saints and Seducers have this in the Shivering Isles; indeed, they have fortresses which few not of their race are allowed to enter. They have power in the realm, acting as guardians of those who serve Lord Sheogorath. Constantly they vie for the favor of Our Lord, fighting any who oppose him and, at times, even each other. It is reasonable to assume, then, that they have made a willing choice to take up their role in the Isles.

Character and Society

The immediate image called to mind when hearing the name "Golden Saint" suggests an angelic figure, elegant and benevolent. It is ironic then, that while the Golden Saints embody this image in form, their behavior is in stark contrast to it. The Saints are a proud, arrogant race, quick to anger and cruel in their punishment. There is no question that they view all in the Isles as inferior, and make no effort to hide this in their interactions.

Dark Seducers also exhibit little beyond their appearance to match their names. While they too assert their superiority over all others in the realm, they appear to have a more patient, introspective nature about them. They often appear humble in their dealings with mortals, and are known to be patient with the "lesser races."
In fact, the terms "Golden Saint" and "Dark Seducer" are external constructs. While the two groups recognize and respond to these names, they have their own names for their races: The Aureal and the Mazken, respectively. It is possible the Daedra simply have no concern for the names and titles given to them by lesser beings, or perhaps they find amusement in the names. Further research into this subject is necessary but daunting, as the Saints and Seducers do not freely offer personal information about themselves.

Other information can be gathered from observation. It is easy to see that the two groups are strongly militaristic in their societal structure; one's strength and discipline determines one's place in society. Military commanders, for example, are revered by their subordinates. With further observation, a second distinction becomes apparent: both societies are Matriarchal in nature. Females lead the guards within New Sheoth, and have the highest positions of power. Males, while not openly denigrated, are clearly subservient to their female superiors. It is unclear where this practice began, but has been wholly integrated into the daily lives of both races.

Conflict and Conquest

Any resident of the Shivering Isles can confirm that it is unwise to provoke the Golden Saints and Dark Seducers. They thrive on conflict and warfare, and are quick to punish any and all who disobey. Acting in their capacity as guardians of the realm does not satisfy them, however, and so they often engage in combat with one another, despite being garrisoned in areas where they are unlikely to interact. It is possible that this is more than an outlet for aggressive behavior; repeated engagements between the two races may be an effort to gain favor with Lord Sheogorath. If one can triumph over the other, it would prove superiority and a right to gain sole control over the realm. The battle for Cylarne is of particular interest, as both sides have been locked in combat with no hope of resolution for time beyond memory. Does this combat serve to sharpen the skills of the two sides, or weaken them when they could be directed elsewhere? If the conflict cannot be resolved, why then does Lord Sheogorath not step in and settle it himself?

Religion and Ceremony

Little is known about the private customs of the Golden Saints and Dark Seducers. They are reclusive when it comes to matters specific to their race, particularly regarding the mysterious process by which they return to the realm in the unlikely event of their death.

It is common knowledge that Golden Saints and Dark Seducers, as Daedra, cannot be killed. The Animus of the Daedra is cast back into the darkness of Oblivion, and can return to the realm to take form once more. But reports of the time it takes for a Daedra to return to the realm from the Waters of Oblivion are anecdotal and inconclusive; the process by which this return occurs remains shrouded in mystery. Based on behavior patterns and strength of numbers, it can be deduced that the stronghold for each race plays some major part in this process. Common phrases in language (such as "May the chimes call you home") suggest that rather than merely a metaphor, sound may play some role in the sequence of events. It is believed that the chimes referenced by Saints and Seducers do indeed exist and are considered almost holy relics. Attempts to gain information about these chimes, or the process by which they are used, has been met with exceptional hostility and so have been abandoned.
Any and all information regarding the Golden Saints and Dark Seducers, particularly relating to private customs and origins, should be brought to the attention of the author immediately. The greater the scope of our knowledge, the better our ability to understand these compelling creatures.
Shezarr and the Divines

By Faustillus Junius
Subcurator of Ancient Theology and Paleonumerology
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The position Shezarr enjoys in Cyrodilic worship is often misconstrued. He, and a thousand other deities, have sizeable cults in the Imperial City. Shezarr is especially venerated in the Colovian West, though he is called Shor there, as the West Kings are resolutely, and religiously, Nordic.

The haziness of Shezarr's relationship to the Divines (he is often called their 'Missing Sibling') begins with St. Alessia, the so-called 'Slave Queen of Cyrodiil, the founder figure of the original Cyrodilic Empire. In the earliest Cyro-Nordic stories of the Heartland, Shezarr fought against the Ayleids (the 'Heartland Highelves') on mankind's behalf. Then, for some unknown reason, he vanishes from the stage (presumably to help other humans elsewhere), and, without his leadership, the Ayleids conquer the humans and enslave them.

This slavery lasts for generations. The isolated humans eventually begin to venerate the pantheon of their masters, or at least assimilate so much of High Elven religious practices into their native traditions that the two become indistinguishable.

In 1E242, under the leadership of Alessia, her demigod lover, Morihau-Breath-of-Kyne, and the infamous Pelinal Whitestrake, the Cyrodilic humans revolt. When Skyrim lends its armies to the Slave-Queen of the South, the revolution succeeds. The Ayleid Hegemonies are quickly overthrown. Shortly thereafter, White Gold Tower is captured by Alessia's forces, and she promptly declares herself the first Empress of Cyrodiil. Part of the package meant that she had to become the High Priestess of Akatosh, as well.

Akatosh was an Aldmeri god, and Alessia's subjects were as-yet unwilling to renounce their worship of the Elven pantheon. She found herself in a very sensitive political situation. She needed to keep the Nords as her allies, but they were (at that time) fiercely opposed to any adoration of Elven deities. On the other hand, she could not force her subjects to revert back to the Nordic pantheon, for fear of another revolution. Therefore, concessions were made and Empress Alessia instituted a new religion: the Eight Divines, an elegant, well-researched synthesis of both pantheons, Nordic and Aldmeri.

Shezarr, as a result, had to change. He could no longer be the bloodthirsty anti-Aldmer warlord of old. He could not disappear altogether either, or the Nords would have withdrawn their support of her rule. In the end, he had become "the spirit behind all human undertaking." Even though this was merely a thinly-disguised, watered-down version of Shor, it was good enough for the Nords.

As for why Tiber Septim has not attempted to 'revitalize' Shezarr during his wars against the Aldmeri Dominion, we can only speculate that, at this time, memories of the Alessian Order's
follies (the Dragon Break, the War of Righteousness, the defeat at Gelnumbria Moors) would only damage his campaign for the Imperial Crown.
Many, many things.

Wet things and dry things. Things from plants, things from animals, things from stone and sky and tree and man and mer.

So many beautiful things for potions. All of them there for the taking, waiting to be plucked and put to use. "Grind me! Take my essence and turn me into something new, something wonderful!" they cry out to me.

I have given my life to finding so many of the wondrous things of Tamriel, and now the things that lie beyond. The realm of the Madgod, dangerous and beckoning, has so many new things to offer that I have trembled with excitement over it. I stop to take note of what I have found, so that I may not forget it in the coming days when I spend my time searching, mixing, and discovering.

The Apprentice will find that Marrow from the Shambles and fins from Scalons merge to make a deadly poison that strikes at one's very heart, damaging the health of those who ingest it. Many a blade did I sink into wet flesh and dry bone to learn this, but what I have found pleases me.

Flame stalks and the very essence of Flesh Atronachs can be mixed by even a Novice to counter that damage, as one can drink a potion made from these two to feel healthy again. The Expert may find that rather than risk himself against those walking monstrosities, the Screaming Maw can be used instead.

For Magicka (and without Magicka where would I stand now?) the ichor of an Elytra can be mixed with Withering Moon by a Novice or Thorn Hook by a Journeyman. No explorer in the Shivering Isles should venture forth without looking for these.

The tongue of a Hunger -- by itself a marvel of anatomy -- can be eaten to cure poisons or matched with Withering Moon to cure disease. (I cannot help but wonder what disease would be so dire as to risk one's life against a Hunger....)

I have been most pleased to find that to the Expert Alchemist, Rot Scale, and Worm's Head Caps can be mixed to paralyze one's enemies. This has proven most useful in extracting ingredients from the Isles' less cordial residents.
For my good friend and colleague Venristwie, who protected the creatures of all the Realms.

Although my early education involved extensive research into all forms of fauna, nothing prepared me for the surprises I've uncovered while exploring the Shivering Isles on the Great Expedition. Even though I've lived here all of my life, I am just now discovering how wonderful and unique the creatures of the Isles can be.

The Expedition was an extensive six-year exploration of every nook and cranny of the Isles in an attempt to categorize the indigenous fauna and record this information back for posterity and science. Below, I've done my best to describe each creature in detail. Please note that this information was obtained at the cost of many lives, and this work should be regarded as the most complete and definitive reference of its kind.

Baliwog

The Baliwog is an extraordinarily ugly aquatic-dwelling creature that frequents the lakes, rivers and bogs of the Shivering Isles. Although the Baliwog, or "Wog" as some of the locals call it, walks on all fours, it should by no means be considered stupid or docile. A fully-grown adult Baliwog can deliver a nasty blow from its claws or a potentially deadly bite from its razor-sharp teeth. The lethality of this beast comes not from the actual damage it can deliver, but from the horrible diseases it seems to generate. Also of note is the Baliwog's uncanny ability to regenerate when immersed in water. From our observations, it's best just to avoid these brutes, although it's said some of them carry flawless pearls in their bodies, though it is not known why they would swallow them, or what use they may serve to the creatures.

Elytra

The Elytra are large insect-like creatures indigenous to much of the Isles. Although there is a marked color difference between the Northern (Mania) Variety and the Southern (Dementia) Variety, they are remarkably similar in behavioral patterns and physical makeup. The Elytra pose a serious threat to the casual traveler, as they have two interesting mechanisms that benefit them in combat. The first is their uncanny ability to block weapon attacks. Through my observations, I have deduced that they utilize their antennae as an early warning system to detect incoming attacks, say from a sword blade or an arrow. The antenna sends a signal to their brains, and they instinctively lift their arms to block. Their second ability is natural venom in their sting. This venom is very deceiving, as it is very low yield, but its real deadly nature comes from its duration. Gone unchecked, the venom can slay the average man over a period of hours. Especially deadly is the Elytra Matron's venom, which can last much longer than the poisons found on the lesser varieties of the creature.
Flesh Atronach

One of the most unusual creatures in the Isles, the Flesh Atronach appears as a sewn-together conglomeration of skin and muscle adorned with mystical symbols and wearing an iron collar. Although it's uncertain whether Sheogorath or some other Daedric Prince created this creature, it's obvious that the intent was to use them as guardians. Usually found inhabiting underground ruins, the Flesh Atronach will defend areas it's set to guard until it's destroyed. A unique visual feature of this creature is the energy spots located on its body. These colored areas seem to glow with an inner light and denote the power of the Atronach. In increasing order of magnitude, these seem to be Yellow, Purple, and Red. The function for these spots is still a mystery, but from my observations, I suspect them to be a magic dampening gland of some kind. As expected, the Flesh Atronachs are all completely impervious to disease and poison and highly resistant to fire and frost. Shock magic seems to affect them adversely, which appears to be their largest weakness. The Purple and Red varieties also seem to possess innate magic abilities, including healing and fireballs.

Gnarl

Perhaps the strangest creature of all is the Gnarl, or "Walking Tree" as it's sometimes called. Like the Elytra, this animated plant can be found roaming almost anywhere on the Isles. One of Sheogorath's truly unique creations, the Gnarl has the most unusual trait of being able to use magic cast upon it, and harness that power to bolster its own defense. Once struck with fire, frost or lightning, the Gnarl grows physically larger and becomes resistant to just that element for short time. Interestingly, this is where the Gnarl's vulnerability comes into play. At the same time the Gnarl is resisting that element it was struck with, it becomes vulnerable to all of the other elements. Our guide on the expedition demonstrated this by striking the Gnarl with a flame arrow then a frost arrow and then back to a flame arrow and so on.

Grummite

The Grummite represents the only native weapon-wielding creature in the Shivering Isles. These primitive aquatic-born humanoids are organized in a tribal-like system, though it is uncertain who or what they worship. It would be presumed the Grummite worship Sheogorath, their creator, but their religious totems don't seem to bear the Madgod's likeness. What is known is that they maintain a simple hierarchy, including Shaman and Boss Grummites who seem to command the rest. The Grummite have mastered the art of spellcasting as well, evidenced by the Magus Grummite, which can be quite deadly. Curiously, the Grummite possess a defense mechanism similar to the Baliwog: when immersed in water, the Grummite will begin to regenerate damaged flesh. Unlike the Baliwog, this regeneration extends to rain as well, making them quite formidable on a stormy day. This aquatic healing ability leads me to believe the Baliwog and Grummite are somehow related, but even in my extensive research, I was unable to come up with a solid connection.

Hunger

If any creature represents the darker side of Sheogorath, it's the Hunger. These are pure-born Daedric creatures placed here on the Isles as servitors and guards. The Hunger is not to be trifled with; it boasts superior speed and lightning reflexes along with its primary ability of draining its victim's fatigue. My best advice when encountering this horrible creature is to
give it a wide berth or slay it quickly. Be wary, as it is said that conjuration magic exists that is able to summon the Hunger and unleash it upon the caster's foes.

Scalon

Another aquatic native of the Shivering Isles is the Scalon. Looking strikingly similar to an upright Baliwog, the Scalon features large fin-laden appendages and dorsal spines. These creatures are usually quite fearsome, lumbering slowly after its prey. Don't mistake its speed for its weakness, as the Scalon has an incredible leaping attack that allows it to strike at its victims from a surprising distance. Another connection that it shares with the Baliwog is the fact that its bite or claws can transfer disease to its victim. It's recommended that these creatures be dealt with at extreme range with spells or missiles, as the can be quite ferocious in close proximity.

Shambles

The Shambles appears to be some sort of an undead construct made of bone and lashed together with wire or bits of cloth. Oddly, the bones used in their makeup appear to have no correlation to one other. They might have skulls for kneecaps or leg bones for arms, to cite a few examples. The Shambles may be undead, but they pursue any victim as if they were a predator chasing down its prey. Like its undead bony brethren, the Shambles is fully resistant to disease, poison and paralysis; however, they possess a unique resistance to all frost magic. Furthermore, upon death, the Shambles will explode in a spectacular shower of frost. This ability seems to have been added by its creator as an interesting last-ditch defense mechanism. This fact was initially unknown to me, and one of our best guides was lost when his hammer struck the fatal blow. If you intend to combat these undead creatures, be certain to carry frost protection or destroy them at range.

Skinned Hound

These nasty undead beasts are generally encountered inside and around the ruins that dot the Isles. The Skinned Hound is extremely fast and agile, and has an insatiable hunger for flesh. Like the Flesh Atronach, it appears to be all skin and muscle that is roughly sewn together, but I am uncertain whether they are summoned or merely constructed. The Skinned Hound is not an adversary to be taken lightly; they feature an incredible invisible charging attack not unlike a ghost, limited frost resistance, and a complete immunity to disease and poison. This beast's weakness is fire. They don't seem intelligent enough to be frightened by it, but it's certainly very efficient at dispatching them quickly.

Although this work only touches upon the combat related aspects of the creatures, I feel this is of primary importance to any traveler within the confines of the Shivering Isles. In future works, I will touch upon the other aspects of these creatures such as reproduction or creation, magical origins, and even some delicious recipes I've discovered in my travels. My best advice when walking the roads and paths of the Isles is to remain ever vigilant and always be prepared. Knowing your foe can mean the difference between a gruesome death and survival.
A Short Life of Uriel Septim VII

by Rufus Hayn

3E 368-389: Strategist and Conciliator

The early decades of Emperor Uriel's life were marked by aggressive expansion and consolidation of Imperial influence throughout the empire, but especially in the East, in Morrowind and Black Marsh, where the Empire's power was limited, Imperial culture was weak, and native customs and traditions were strong and staunchly opposed to assimilation. During this period Uriel greatly benefitted from the arcane support and shrewd council of his close advisor, the Imperial Battlemage, Jagar Tharn.

The story of Uriel's marriage to the Princess Caula Voria is a less happy tale. Though she was a beautiful and charming woman, and greatly loved and admired by the people, the Empress was a deeply unpleasant, arrogant, ambitious, grasping woman. She snared Uriel Septim with her feminine wiles, but Uriel Septim thereafter soon regretted his mistake, and was repelled by her. They heartily detested one another, and went out of their ways to hurt one another. Their children were the victims of this unhappy marriage.

With his agile mind and vaunting ambition, Uriel soon outstripped his master in the balanced skills of threat and diplomacy. Uriel's success in co-opting House Hlaalu as an advance guard of Imperial culture and economic development in Morrowind is a noteworthy example. However, Uriel also grew in pride and self-assurance. Jagar Tharn fed Uriel's pride, and hiding behind the mask of an out-paced former master counselor, Tharn purchased the complete trust that led finally to Uriel's betrayal and imprisonment in Oblivion and Tharn's secret usurpation of the Imperial throne.

3E 389-399: Betrayed and Imprisoned

Little is known of Uriel's experience while trapped in Oblivion. He says he remembers nothing but an endless sequence of waking and sleeping nightmares. He says he believed himself to be dreaming, and had no notion of passage of time. Publically, he long claimed to have no memory of the dreams and nightmares of his imprisonment, but from time to time, during the interviews with the Emperor that form the basis of this biography, he would relate details of nightmares he had, and would describe them as similar to the nightmares he had when he was imprisoned in Oblivion. He seemed not so much unwilling as incapable of describing the experience.

But it is clear that the experience changed him. In 3E 389 he was a young man, full of pride, energy, and ambition. During the Restoration, after his rescue and return to the throne, he was an old man, grave, patient, and cautious. He also became conservative and pessimistic, where the policies of his early life were markedly bold, even rash. Uriel accounts for this change as a reaction to and revulsion for the early teachings and counsel of Jagar Tharn. However, Uriel's
exile in Oblivion also clearly drained and wasted him in body and spirit, though his mind retained the shrewd cunning and flexibility of his youth.

The story of Tharn's magical impersonation of the emperor, the unmasking of Tharn's imposture by Queen Barenziah, and the roles played by King Eadwyre, Ria Silmane, and her Champion in assembling the Staff of Chaos, defeating the renegade Imperial Battlemage Jagar Tharn, and restoring Uriel to the throne, is treated at length in Stern Gamboge's excellent three-Volume Biography of Barenziah. There is no reason to recount that narrative here. Summarized briefly, Jagar Tharn's neglect and mismanagement of Imperial affairs resulted in a steady decline in the Empire's economic prosperity, allowed many petty lords and kings to challenge the authority of the Empire, and permitted strong local rulers in the East and the West to indulge in open warfare over lands and sovereign rights.

3E 399-415: Restoration, the Miracle of Peace, and Vvardenfell

During the Restoration, Uriel Septim turned from the aggressive campaign of military intimidation and diplomatic accommodation of his earlier years, and relied instead on clandestine manipulation of affairs behind the scenes, primarily through the agencies of the various branches of the Blades. A complete assessment of the methods and objectives of this period must wait until after the Emperor's death, when the voluminous diaries archived at his country estate may be opened to the public, and when the Blades no longer need to maintain secrecy to protect the identities of its agents.

Two signal achievements of this period point to the efficacy of Uriel's subtle policies: the 'Miracle of Peace' [also popularly known as 'The Warp in the West'] that transformed the Iliac Bay region from an ruly assortment of warring petty kingdoms into the well-ordered and peaceful modern counties of Hammerfell, Sentinel, Wayrest, and Orsinium, and the colonization of Vvardenfell, presided over by the skillful machinations of King Helseth of Morrowind and Lady Barenziah, the Queen-Mother, which brought Morrowind more closely into the sphere of Imperial influence.

3E 415-430: The Golden Peace, King Helseth's Court, and the Nine in the East

Following the 'Miracle of Peace' [best described in Per Vetersen's Daggerfall: A Modern History], the Empire entered a period of peace and prosperity comparable to the early years of Uriel's reign. With the Imperial Heartland and West solidly integrated into the Empire, Uriel was able to turn his full attention to the East -- to Morrowind.

Exploiting conflicts at the heart of Morrowind's monolithic Tribunal religion and the long-established Great House system of government, and taking advantage of the terrible threat that the corrupted divine beings at the heart of the Tribunal religion presented to the growing colonies on Vvardenfell, Uriel worked through shadowy agents of the Blades and through the court of King Helseth in Mournhold to shift the center of political power in Morrowind from the Great House councils to Helseth's court, and took advantage of the collapse of the orthodox Tribunal cults to establish the Nine Divines as the dominant faiths in Hlaalu and Vvardenfell Districts.

Hasphat Anabolis's treatment of the establishment of the Nine in the East in his four-volume Life and Times of the Nerevarine is comprehensive; however, he fails to resolve the central mystery of this period -- how much did Uriel know about the prophecies of the Nerevarine,
and how did he learn of their significance? The definitive resolution of this and other
mysteries must await the future release of the Emperor's private papers, or a relenting of the
Blades' strict policies of secrecy concerning their agents.
[175] Sithis*

See vol. I.
[176] Sixteen Accords of Madness

[176.6] 16 Accords of Madness VI†

Sixteen Accords of Madness
Volume VI

Hircine's Tale

Ever proud and boastful, Oblivion's Mad Prince stood one fifth day of mid year among the frigid peaks of Skyrim, and beckoned forth Hircine for parlay. The Huntsman God materialized, for this was his day, and the boldness of Sheogorath intrigued him.

Wry without equal, Sheogorath holds in his realm giggling loons, flamboyant auteurs, and craven mutilators. The Mad Prince will ply profitless bargains and promote senseless bloodshed for nothing more than the joy of another's confusion, tragedy, or rage. So it was that Sheogorath had set a stage on which to play himself as rival to Hircine.

Without haste, the coy Prince proffered his contest; each Prince was to groom a beast to meet at this place again, three years to the hour, and do fatal battle. Expressionless behind his fearsome countenance, Hircine agreed, and with naught but a dusting of snow in the drift, the Princes were gone to their realms.

Confident, but knowing Sheogorath for a trickster, Hircine secretly bred an abomination in his hidden realm. An ancient Daedroth he summoned, and imbued it with the foul curse of lycanthropy. Of pitch heart and jagged fang, the unspeakable horror had no peer, even among the great hunters of Hircine's sphere.

In the third year, on the given day, Hircine returned, where Sheogorath leaned, cross-legged on a stone, whistling with idle patience. The Prince of the Hunt struck his spear to the ground, bringing forth his unnatural, snarling behemoth. Doffing his cap, sly as ever, Sheogorath stood and stepped aside to reveal a tiny, colorful bird perched atop the stone. Demurely it chirped in the bristling gusts, scarcely audible.

In a twisted, springing heap, the Daedroth was upon the stone, leaving only rubble where the boulder had been. Thinking itself victorious, the monster's bloodied maw curled into a mock grin, when a subdued song drifted in the crisp air. The tiny bird lightly hopped along the snout of the furious Daedroth. Sheogorath looked on, quietly mirthful, as the diminutive creature picked at a bit of detritus caught in scales betwixt the fiery eyes of the larger beast. With howling fury, the were-thing blinded itself trying to pluck away the nuisance. And so it continued for hours, Hircine looking on in shame while his finest beast gradually destroyed itself in pursuit of the seemingly oblivious bird, all the while chirping a mournful tune to the lonesome range.

Livid, but beaten, Hircine burned the ragged corpse and withdrew to his realm, swearing in forgotten tongues. His curses still hang in those peaks, and no wayfarer tarries for fear of his wrathful aspect in those obscured heights.
Turning on his heel, Sheogorath beckoned the miniscule songbird to perch atop his shoulder, and strolled down the mountain, making for the warm breezes and vibrant sunsets of the Abecean coast, whistling in tune with the tiniest champion in Tamriel.
Sixteen Accords of Madness  
Volume IX

Darius Shano found himself running as fast as he could.  
He had no idea what he was running from or towards, but he didn't care. The desire saturated his mind -- there was nothing in the world except flight. He looked around for landmarks, anything to place himself or to use as a target, but to no avail -- the featureless grasslands through which he was sprinting extended as far as the eye could see. "Just have to keep running", he thought to himself. "I have to run as fast as I can". On and on he ran, with no end in sight or in mind....

Standing over Darius Shano while he lay quietly in his bed were his mistress, Vaermina the Dreamweaver, and the Madgod Sheogorath. Vaernima looked down with pride at this disciple of hers, and was boastful of her little jewel.

"Such potential in this one! Through dreams of inspiration, I have nurtured literary talent into fruition, and now he stands in acclaim as an emerging bard and poet! He will gain much favor before I tire of him." Sheogorath, too, gazed at the young Breton artist and saw that he was indeed famous among the other mortals.

"Hmmm," mused Sheogorath, "but how many are there who hate this mortal whom you have built? It is the hatred of the mortals which confirms greatness, and not their love. Surely you can accomplish this as well?"

Vaernima's eyes narrowed. "Yes, the mortals are indeed often foolish and petty, and it is true that many of their most bold have been despised. Do not worry, mad one, for I have the power to achieve many forms of greatness with this one, hatred among them."

"Perhaps, Dreamweaver, it would be amusing to show who has this power? Inspire foolish, arrogant hatred of this mortal for ten years, and then I will do the same. We shall see whose talents are most efficient, free of aid or interference from any of the Daedra."

At this, she relaxed into confident pleasure. "The Madgod is indeed powerful, but this task is suited to my skills. The mortals are repulsed by madness, but rarely think it worthy of hate. I shall take pleasure in revealing this to you, as I bring the more subtle horrors out of this mortal's subconscious."

And so, in the 19th year of his life, the dreams Darius Shano had been experiencing began to change. Fear had always been part of the night for him, but now there was something else. A darkness began to creep into his slumber, a darkness that sucked away all feeling and color, leaving only emptiness behind. When this happened, he opened his mouth to scream, but found that the darkness had taken his voice as well. All he had was the terror and the void,
and each night they filled him with a new understanding of death. Yet, when he woke, there was no fear, for he had faith that his Lady had a purpose.

Indeed, one night Vaernima herself emerged from the void. She leaned in close to whisper into his ear.

"Watch carefully, my beloved!" With that, she pulled the void away, and for hours each night she would reveal to Darius the most horrible perversions of nature. Men being skinned and eaten alive by other men, unimaginable beasts of many limbs and mouths, entire populations being burned -- their screams filled his every evening. In time, these visions gnawed at his soul, and his work began to take on the character of his nightmares. The images revealed to him at night were reproduced on the page, and the terrible cruelty and hollow vice that his work contained both revolted and fascinated the public. They reveled in their disgust over every detail. There were those who openly enjoyed his shocking material, and his popularity among some only fed the hatred of those who found him abhorrent. This continued for several years, while the infamy of Darius grew steadily. Then, in his 29th year, without warning, the dreams and nightmares ceased.

Darius felt a weight lifted, as he no longer endured the nightly tortures, but was confused. "What have I done to displease my Mistress?", he wondered aloud. "Why has she abandoned me?" Vaernima never answered his prayers. No one ever answered, and the restless dreams faded away to leave Darius in long, deep sleeps.

Interest in the works of Darius Shano waned. His prose became stale and his ideas failed to provoke the shock and outrage they once had. As the memory of his notoriety and of his terrible dreams faded, the questions that raced in his mind eventually produced resentment against Vaernima, his former mistress. Resentment grew into hatred, from hatred came ridicule, and over time ridicule became disbelief. Slowly it became obvious -- Vaernima had never spoken to him at all; his dreams were simply the product of a sick mind that had righted itself. He had been deceived by his own subconscious, and the anger and shame overwhelmed him. The man who once conversed with a deity drifted steadily into heresy.

In time, all of the bitterness, doubt, and sacrilege focused in Darius a creative philosophy that was threaded throughout all of his subsequent work. He challenged the Gods themselves, as well as the infantile public and corrupt state for worshiping them. He mocked them all with perverse caricatures, sparing no one and giving no quarter. He challenged the Gods in public to strike him down if they existed, and ridiculed them when no such comeuppance was delivered. To all of this, the people reacted with outrage far greater than they had shown his previous work. His early career had offended only sensibilities, but now he was striking directly at the heart of the people.

His body of work grew in size and intensity. Temples, nobles, and commoners were all targets of his scorn. Finally, at age 39, Darius wrote a piece entitled "The Noblest Fool," ridiculing The Emperor God Tiber Septim for integrating into the pathetic Nine Divines cult. The local King of Daenia, who had been humiliated by this upstart in the past, saw his chance -- for his sacrilege against the Empire, Darius Shano was executed, with a ceremonial blade, in front of a cheering crowd of hundreds. His last, bitter words were gurgled through a mouthful of his own blood.
20 years after their wager was first placed, Vaernima and Sheogorath met over Darius Shano's headless corpse. The Dreamweaver had been eager for this meeting; she had been waiting for years to confront the Daedric Prince over his lack of action.

"I have been deceived by you, Sheogorath! I performed my half of the bargain, but during your ten years you never contacted the mortal once. He owes none of his greatness to you or your talents or your influence!"

"Nonsense," croaked the Madgod. "I was with him all along! When your time ended and mine began, your whispers in his ear were replaced with silence. I severed his link to that from which he found the most comfort and meaning, and withheld the very attention the creature so desperately craved. Without his mistress, this man's character could ripen under resentment and hatred. Now his bitterness is total and, overcome by a madness fueled by his rage, he feeds me in my realm as an eternal servant."

Sheogorath turned and spoke to the empty space by his side.

"Indeed; Darius Shano was a glorious mortal. Despised by his own people, his kings, and even by the Gods he mocked. For my success, I shall accept three-score followers of Vaernima into my service. And the dreamers will awaken as madmen."

And thus did Sheogorath teach Vaernima that without madness, there are no dreams, and no creation. Vaernima will never forget this lesson.
Malacath's Tale

In the days before the Orsinium's founding, the spurned Orc-folk were subjected to ostracism and persecutions even more numerous and harsh than their progeny are accustomed to in our own age. So it was that many champions of the Orsimer traveled, enforcing what borders they could for the proliferation of their own people. Many of these champions are spoken of yet today, among them the Cursed Legion, Gromma the Hairless, and the noble Emmeg Gro-Kayra. This latter crusader would have certainly risen to legendary status throughout Tamriel, had he not been subject to the attention of certain Daedric Princes.

Emmeg Gro-Kayra was the bastard son of a young maiden who was killed in childbirth. He was raised by the shaman of his tribe, the Grilikamaug in the peaks of what we now call Normar Heights. Late in his fifteenth year, Emmeg forged by hand an ornate suit of scaled armor, a rite of ascension among his tribe. On a blustery day, he pounded the final rivet, and draping a heavy cloak over the bulky mantle, Emmeg set out from his village for the last time. Word of his exploits always returned home, whether defending merchant caravans from brigands or liberating enslaved beast folk. News of the noble Orc crusader began to grace even the lips of Bretons, often with a tinge of fear.

Less than two years after ascending to maturity, Gro-Kayra was making camp when a thin voice called out from the thickening night. He was surprised to hear the language of his people spoken by a tongue that obviously did not belong to an Orc.

'Lord Kayra', said the voice, 'tales of your deeds have crossed the lips of many, and have reached my ears.' Peering into the murk, Emmeg made out the silhouette of a cloaked figure, made wavy and ephemeral by the hazy campfire. From the voice alone he had thought the interloper an old hag, but he now decided that he was in the presence of a man of slight and lanky build, though he could discern no further detail.

'Perhaps,' the wary Orc began, 'but I seek no glory. Who are you?'

Ignoring the question, the stranger continued, 'Despite that, Orsimer, glory finds you, and I bear a gift worthy of it.' The visitor's cloak parted slightly, revealing nothing but faintly glinting buttons in the pale moonlight, and a bundle was withdrawn and tossed to the side of the fire between the two. Emmeg cautiously removed the rags in which the object was swathed, and was dazzled to discover the item to be a wide, curved blade with ornately decorated handle. The weapon had heft, and Emmeg realized on brandishing it that the elaborate pommel disguised the more practical purpose of balancing the considerable weight of the blade itself. It was nothing much to look at in its present condition, thought the Orc, but once the tarnish was cleaned away and a few missing jewels restored, it would indeed be a blade worthy of a champion ten times his own worth.
'Her name is Neb-Crescen' spoke the thin stranger, seeing the appreciation lighting Gro-Kayra's face. 'I got her for a horse and a secret in warmer climes, but in my old age I'd be lucky to even lift such a weapon. It's only proper that I pass her on to one such as yourself. To possess her is to change your life, forever.' Overcoming his initial infatuation with the arc of honed steel, Emmeg turned his attention back to the visitor.

'Your words are fine, old man,' Emmeg said, not masking his suspicion, 'but I'm no fool. You traded for this blade once, and you'll trade for it again tonight. What is it that you want?' The stranger's shoulders slumped, and Emmeg was glad to have unveiled the true purpose of this twilight visit. He sat with him a while, eventually offering a stack of furs, warm food, and a handful of coins in exchange for the exotic weapon. By morning, the stranger was gone.

In the week following Emmeg's encounter with the stranger, Neb-Crescen had not left its scabbard. He had encountered no enemy in the woods, and his meals consisted of fowl and small game caught with bow and arrow. The peace suited him fine, but on the seventh morning, while fog still crept between the low-hanging boughs, Emmeg's ears pricked up at the telltale crunch of a nearby footfall in the dense snow and forest debris.

Emmeg's nostrils flared, but he was upwind. Being unable to see or smell his guest, and knowing that the breeze carried his scent in that direction, Emmeg's guard was up, and he cautiously drew Neb-Crescen from its sheath. Emmeg himself was not entirely sure of all that happened next.

The first moment of conscious memory in Emmeg Gro-Kayra's mind after drawing Neb-Crescen was the image of the curved blade sweeping through the air in front of him, spattering blood over the virginal powder coating the forest floor. The second memory was a feeling of frenzied bloodlust creeping over him, but it was then that he saw for the first time his victim, an Orc woman perhaps a few years younger than himself, her body a canvas of grisly wounds, enough to kill a strong man ten times over.

Emmeg's disgust overwhelmed the madness that had overtaken him, and with all his will enlisted, he released Neb-Crescen from his grip and let the blade sail. With a discordant ringing it spun through the air and was buried in a snowdrift. Emmeg fled the scene in shame and horror, drawing the hood of his cloak up to hide himself from the judging eyes of the rising sun.

The scene where Emmeg Gro-Kayra had murdered one of his own kind was a macabre one. Below the neck, the body was flayed and mutilated almost beyond recognition, but the untouched face was frozen in a permanent expression of abject terror.

It was here that Sheogorath performed certain rites that summoned Malacath, and the two Daedric Lords held court in the presence of the disfigured corpse.

'Why show me this, Mad One?' began Malacath, once he recovered from his initial, wordless outrage. 'Do you take such pleasure in watching me grieve the murder of my children?' His guttural voice rumbled, and the patron of the Orismer looked upon his counterpart with accusing eyes.
'By birth, she was yours, brother outcast,' began Sheogorath, solemn in aspect and demeanor. 'But she was a daughter of mine by her own habits. My mourning here is no less than your own, my outrage no less great.'

'I am not so sure,' grumbled Malacath, 'but rest assured that vengeance for this crime is mine to reap. I expect no contest from you. Stand aside.' As the fearsome Prince began to push past him, Lord Sheogorath spoke again.

'I have no intention of standing between you and vengeance. In fact, I mean to help you. I have servants in this wilderness, and can tell you just where to find our mutual foe. I ask only that you use a weapon of my choosing. Wound the criminal with my blade, and banish him to my plane, where I can exact my own punishment. The rights of honor-killing here belong to you.'

With that, Malacath agreed, took the wide blade from Sheogorath, and was gone.

Malacath materialized in the path of the murderer, the cloaked figure obscured through a blizzard haze. Bellowing a curse so foul as to wilt the surrounding trees, the blade was drawn and Malacath crossed the distance more quickly than a wild fox. Frothing with rage, he swung the blade in a smooth arc which lopped the head of his foe cleanly off, then plunged the blade up to its hilt in his chest, choking off the spurs of blood into a steady, growing stain of red bubbling from beneath the scaled armor and heavy cloak.

Panting from the unexpected immediacy and fury of his own kill, Malacath rested on a knee as the body before him collapsed heavily backwards and the head landed roughly upon a broad, flat stone. The next sound broke the silence like a bolt.

'I - I'm sorry...' sputtered the voice of Emmeg Gro-Kayra. Malacath's eyes went wide as he looked upon the severed head, seeping blood from its wound, but somehow kept alive. Its eyes wavered about wildly, trying to focus on the aspect of Malacath before it. The once-proud eyes of the champion were choked with tears of grief, pain, and confused recognition.

To his horror, Malacath recognized only now that the man he had killed was not only one of his Orismer children, but very literally a son he had blessed an Orc maiden with years hence. For achingly long moments the two looked upon each other, despondent and shocked.

Then, silent as oiled steel, Sheogorath strode into the clearing. He hefted Emmeg Gro-Kayra's disembodied head and bundled it into a small, grey sack. Sheogorath reclaimed Neb-Crescen from the corpse and turned to walk away. Malacath began to stand, but kneeled again, knowing he had irreversibly damned his own offspring to the realm of Sheogorath, and mourned his failure as the sound of his son's hoarse pleas faded into the frozen horizon.
[177] Sketch of the High Fane

[178] Soiled Writ of Assassination

Commander Telani Adrethi

The afore-mentioned personage has been marked for honorable execution in accordance to the lawful tradition and practice of the Morag Tong Guild. The Bearer of this non-disputable document has official sanctioned license to kill the afore-mentioned personage.
[179] Song Of Hrormir

Hrormir
Son of Hrorgar
Summoned to the Court of Vjindak,
Son of Vjinmore, King of Evensnow.
"Mighty caster of magic,
I charge thee to go to Aelfendor,
For its hoary Warriors do threaten my Land
And bring forth their cousin Demons
To terrify my People."
Hrormir
Son of Hrorgar
Heard the Words of Vjindak Evensnow.
"By Icestaff,
Surely I would help thee
But I have already a Quest to drink
Twelve Flagons of Mead in one Hour,
And then to bed four Wenches,
Twice each.
So I must with grace decline."
The King he did not smile
At Hrormir and his jolly Spirit.
"By thine Honor
Must thou aidest my Cause
For must thou takest up the Sword
Of thy Companion Darfang
Who took the Quest and failed."
Hrormir laughed.
"Now I know thou jest.
My boon Mate Darfang wouldst not fail.
There be no finer Bladesman.
If thou chargest him, he wouldst not fall."
"I did not say he fell.
He joined the Dark Kings of Aelfendor
And by doing so dishonored
Himself and thee, his Friend."

Hrormir could not believe the Words,
And yet, he knew Eversnow
Didst not lie.
So for twenty Days and three rodeth he
To the Land of Night, the Kingdom of Fear,
Where the Peasants ever carried Candles
Knowing what Evil awaiteth them
Should they stray beyond the Glow.
The Sovereignty of three Dark Kings:
Aelfendor.
There, Torch in Hand, didst Hrormir
Pass through haunted Countryside
And frightened Villages,
And through the black Gates
Of the blacker Castle of Aelfendor.
The three Dark Kings didst sneer
At the sight of mighty Hrormir
And summoned they their Champion
Darfang the Blade.
"My boon Companion!"
Hrormir called in the Hall of Night.
"I dare not trust my Eyes,
For then I wouldst believe
That thou hast joined with Evil,
And turned thy Way from Honor
And Brotherhood!"

"Hrormir!"
Darfang the Blade didst cry.
"If thou dost not go now,
One of us must die, for I hate thee!"
But Hrormir was battle ready,
And in the echoing Halls of Night
The Blade of Darfang
And the Staff of Hrormir
Didst strike again and yet again.
Mighty Warriors and Mages both,
The boon Companions now Foes,
Shook Mundus with their War.
They might have fought for a Year
If there were Sun in Aelfendor
To mark Time,
And either Hrormir or Darfang
May verily have won.
But Hrormir saweth through the Dark
The Tears in the Eyes of his former Friend,
And then he saweth the Shadow of Darfang
Wert not his own.
And so with Icestaff, he did strike
Not Darfang, but his Shadow, which cried.
"Hold, Mortal Man!"

The Shadow becameth the Hag,
Bent and twisted, in her Cloak and Hood.
From her faceless Shadows, she hissed.
"Mortal Man called Hrormir
The Soul of thy boon Companion
Is my Plaything,
But I will take thine in trade,
For though ye both have strong Arms,
Thou hast the more clever Mind
Which my Sons the Dark Kings need
For a Champion of Aelfendor."
Hrormir the brave didst not take a Breath
Or pause before he boldly said.
"Shadowy Hag, release Darfang,
And thou mayst use me as thou will."
The Hag didst laugh and freed Darfang,
"To save thine Honor this thou hast done,
But now thou must be without Honor
Mortal Man, as the Champion
Of the Dark Kings, my Heirs of Gray Maybe,
Thou must help them divide Aelfendor,
And love me,
Thy Shadowy Hag and thy Mistress well."

For his loss of Honor,
And his dear Friend's Sacrifice,
Noble Darfang prepared to take his Dagger
And plunge it in his good Heart,
But Hrormir stayed his Brother's Hand and whispered.
"No, boon Companion,
Wait for me at the Village Banquet Hall."
And then did Darfang the Blade leave the Castle
While Hrormir took the withered Claw
Of the Hag, and pressed it to his Lips.
"Shadowy Hag, to thee I pledge
To only honor thy black Words
To turn my back on Truth
To aid thy Dark Kings' Ambition
To divide their Inheritance fairly
To love thee
To think thee beautiful."
Then to the Chamber in the Heart of Night
Hrormir and the Hag did retire
Kissed he there her wrinkled Lips
And her wrinkled, sagging Breasts,
For ten Days and Nights and three did Hrormir
And his Icestaff
Battle thus.

Then Sweet Kynareth blew honeyed Winds
O'er the Hills and Forest Glens of Aelfendor,
And the Caress of warm blooded Dibella
Coaxed the Blossoms to wanton Display
So that Aelfendor became a Garden
Of all the Senses.
The frightened Servants of the Dark Kings
Woke to find there was naught to fear
And through the once dark Streets of the Village
Came the Cries of Celebration.
In the Banquet Hall of the Village
Hrormir and his boon Companion Darfang
Embraced and drank of rich Mead.
The Shadowy Hag too was smiling,
Sleeping still in her soft Bed,
Until the morning Sun touched her naked Face
And she awoke, and saw All,
And knew All saw her.
And she cried out:
"Mortal Man!"

Night fell fast upon the Land
As the Hag flew into the Banquet Hall
Casting blackest Darkness in her Wake
But all the Celebrants still could see
Her Anger
In her monstrous Face
And they shook with Fear.
The Hag had said the Kingdom was
To be divided among her Heirs.
But Aelfendor had been kept whole
While her Children divided,
Drawn and quartered.
Hrormir was mightily amused.
He swallowed his Laughter
In his Mead,
For none should laugh outright
At the Daedra Lord Nocturnal.
Without her gray Cowl of shadowed Night,
Her hideous Face forced the Moons
To hide themselves.
Hrormir the mighty did not quail.
"Wherest be thine Hood, shadowy hag?"
"Mortal Man hast taken it from me unaware.
When I awoke, my Face unmasked,
My Kingdom cast into the Light,
My Dark King Heirs in Pieces cast,
And here, my Champion smiles.
Yet in truth, thou kept thy Promise truly,
To never keep thy Promise true."

Hrormir
Son of Hrorgar
Bowed to the Hag, his Queen.
"And evermore,
'Til thou releaseth me, will I serve thee so."
"A clever Mind in a Champion
Is a much overvalued Trait."
The Hag released Hrormir's Soul
And he released her Hood.
And so in the Light of darkest Dark,
She left Aelfendor evermore.
And after drinking twelve Flagons of Mead,
And bedding four Wenches
Twice each,
Did Darfang return to Eversnow
With Hrormir
Son of Hrorgar.
...drawn and quartered. Hrormir was mightily amused. He swallowed his laughter in his mead, for none should laugh outright at the Daedra Lord Nocturnal. Without her gray cowl of shadowed night, her hideous face forced the moon to hide itself. Hrormir the mighty did not quail.

"Wherest be thy hood, shadowy hag?"

"Mortal man hast taken it from me unaware. When I..."
That he took the name "Pelinal" was passing strange, no matter his later sobriquets, which were many. That was an Elvish name, and Pelinal was a scourge on that race, and not much given to irony. Pelinal was much too grim for that; even in youth he wore white hair, and trouble followed him. Perhaps his enemies named Pelinal of their own in their tongue, but that is doubtful, for it means "glorious knight", and he was neither to them. Certainly, many others added to that name during his days in Tamriel: he was Pelinal the Whitestrake because of his left hand, made of a killing light; he was Pelinal the Bloody, for he [drank] it in victory; he was Pelinal Insurgent, because he gave the crusades a face; he was Pelinal In Triumph, as the words eventually became synonymous, and men-at-arms gave thanks to the Eight when they saw his banner coming through war; he was Pelinal the Blamer, for he was quick to admonish those allies of his that favored tactics that ran counter to his, that is, sword-theory; and he was Pelinal the Third, though whether this was because some said he was a god guiser, who had incarnated twice before already, or that, simpler, he was the third vision given to Perrif, anon Alessia, in her prayers of liberation before he walked among the quarters of rebellion, is unknown.
[181.2] The Song of Pelinal II

The Song of Pelinal
Volume 2: On His Coming

[Editor's Note: Volumes 1-6 are taken from the so-called Reman Manuscript located in the Imperial Library. It is a transcription of older fragments collected by an unknown scholar of the early Second Era. Beyond this, little is known of the original sources of these fragments, some of which appear to be from the same period (perhaps even from the same manuscript). But, as no scholarly consensus yet exists on dating these six fragments, no opinions will be offered here.]

[And then] Perrif spoke to the Handmaiden again, eyes to the Heavens which had not known kindness since the beginning of elven rule, and she spoke as a mortal, whose kindle is beloved by the Gods for its strength-in-weakness, a humility that can burn with metaphor and yet break [easily and] always, always doomed to end in death (and this is why those who let their souls burn anyway are beloved of the Dragon and His Kin), and she said: "And this thing I have thought of, I have named it, and I call it freedom. Which I think is just another word for Shezarr Who Goes Missing... [You] made the first rain at his sundering [and that] is what I ask now for our alien masters... [that] we might sunder them fully and repay their cruelty [by] dispersing them to drown in the Topal. Morihaus, your son, mighty and snorting, gore-horned, winged, when next he flies down, let him bring us anger." ... [And then] Kyne granted Perrif another symbol, a diamond soaked red with the blood of elves, [whose] facets could [un-sector and form] into a man whose every angle could cut her jailers and a name: PELIN-EL [which is] "The Star-Made Knight" [and he] was arrayed in armor [from the future time]. And he walked into the jungles of Cyrod already killing, Morihaus stamping at his side frothbloody and bellowing from excitement because the Pelinal was come... [and Pelinal] came to Perrif's camp of rebels holding a sword and mace, both encrusted with the smashed viscera of elven faces, feathers and magic beads, which were the markings of the Ayleidoon, stuck to the redness that hung from his weapons, and he lifted them, saying: "These were their eastern chieftains, no longer full of their talking."
Pelinal Whitestrake was the enemy of all elfkind that lived in Cyrod in those days. Mainly, though, he took it upon himself to slay the sorcerer-kings of the Ayleids in pre-arranged open combats rather than at war; the fields of rebellion he left to the growing armies of the Paravania and his bull nephew. Pelinal called out Haromir of Copper and Tea into a duel at the Tor, and ate his neck-veins while screaming praise to Reman, a name that no one knew yet. Gordhaur the Shaper's head was smashed upon the goat-faced altar of Ninendava, and in his wisdom Pelinal said a small plague spell to keep that evil from reforming by welkynd-magic. Later that season, Pelinal slew Hadhuul on the granite steps of Ceya-Tar, the Fire King's spears knowing their first refute. For a time, no weapon of the Ayleids could pierce his armor, which Pelinal admitted was unlike any crafted by men, but would say no more even when pressed. When Huna, whom Pelinal raised from grain-slave to hoplite and loved well, took death from an arrowhead made from the beak of Celethelel the Singer, the Whitestrake went on his first Madness. He wrought destruction from Narlemae all the way to Celediil, and erased those lands from the maps of Elves and Men, and all things in them, and Perrif was forced to make sacrifice to the Gods to keep them from leaving the earth in their disgust. And then came the storming of White-Gold, where the Ayleids had made pact with the Aurorans of Meridia, and summoned them, and appointed the terrible and golden-hued "half-Elf" Umaril the Unfeathered as their champion… and, for the first time since his coming, it was Pelinal who was called out to battle by another, for Umaril had the blood of the 'ada and would never know death.
[181.4] The Song of Pelinal IV

The Song of Pelinal
Volume 4: On His Deeds

[Editor's Note: Volumes 1-6 are taken from the so-called Reman Manuscript located in the Imperial Library. It is a transcription of older fragments collected by an unknown scholar of the early Second Era. Beyond this, little is known of the original sources of these fragments, some of which appear to be from the same period (perhaps even from the same manuscript). But, as no scholarly consensus yet exists on dating these six fragments, no opinions will be offered here.]

[Pelinal] drove the sorcerer armies past the Niben, claiming all the eastern lands for the rebellion of the Paravania, and Kyne had to send her rain to wash the blood from the villages and forts that no longer flew Ayleid banners, for the armies of Men needed to make camps of them as they went forward. ...[and] he broke the doors open for the prisoners of the Vahtache with the Slave-Queen flying on Morihaus above them, and Men called her Al-Esh for the first time. He entered the Gate at ... to win back the hands of the Thousand-Strong of Sedor (a tribe now unknown but famous in those days), which the Ayleids had stolen in the night, two thousand hands that he brought back in a wagon made of demon-bone, whose wheels trailed the sound of women when ill at heart... [Text lost]... [And after] the first Pogrom, which consolidated the northern holdings for the men-of'-kreath, he stood with white hair gone brown with elfblood at the Bridge of Heldon, where Perrif's falconers had sent for the Nords, and they, looking at him, said that Shor had returned, but he spat at their feet for profaning that name. He led them anyway into the heart of the hinterland west, to drive the Ayleids inward, towards the Tower of White-Gold, a slow retreating circle that could not understand the power of Man's sudden liberty, and what fury-idea that brought. His mace crushed the Thundernachs that Umaril sent as harriers on the rebellion's long march back south and east, and carried Morihaus-Breath-of-Kyne to Zuathas the Clever-Cutting Man (a nede with a keptu name) for healing when the bull had fallen to a volley of bird beaks. And, of course, at the Council of Skiffs, where all of the Paravania's armies and all of the Nords shook with fear at the storming of White-Gold, so much so that the Al-Esh herself counseled delay, Pelinal grew furious, and made names of Umaril, and made names of what cowards he thought he saw around him, and then made for the Tower by himself, for Pelinal often acted without thought.
It is a solid truth that Morihaus was the son of Kyne, but whether or not Pelinal was indeed the Shezarrine is best left unsaid (for once Plontinu, who favored the short sword, said it, and that night he was smothered by moths). It is famous, though, that the two talked of each other as family, with Morihaus as the lesser, and that Pelinal loved him and called him nephew, but these could be merely the fancies of immortals. Never did Pelinal counsel Morihaus in time of war, for the man-bull fought magnificently, and led men well, and never resorted to Madness, but the Whitestrake did warn against the growing love with Perrif. "We are ada, Mor, and change things through love. We must take care lest we beget more monsters on this earth. If you do not desist, she will take to you, and you will transform all Cyrod if you do this." And to this the bull became shy, for he was a bull, and he felt his form too ugly for the Parvania at all times, especially when she disrobed for him. He snorted, though, and shook his nose-hoop into the light of the Secunda moon and said, "She is like this shine on my nose-hoop here: an accident sometimes, but whenever I move my head at night, she is there. And so you know what you ask is impossible."
[Editor's Note: Volumes 1-6 are taken from the so-called Reman Manuscript located in the Imperial Library. It is a transcription of older fragments collected by an unknown scholar of the early Second Era. Beyond this, little is known of the original sources of these fragments, some of which appear to be from the same period (perhaps even from the same manuscript). But, as no scholarly consensus yet exists on dating these six fragments, no opinions will be offered here.]

[And it is] said that he emerged into the world like a Padomaic, that is, borne by Sithis and all the forces of change therein. Still others, like Fifd of New Teed, say that beneath the Pelinal's star-armor was a chest that gaped open to show no heart, only a red rage shaped diamond-fasion, singing like a mindless dragon, and that this was proof that he was a myth-echo, and that where he trod were shapes of the first urging. Pelinal cared for none of this and killed any who would speak god-logic, except for fair Perrif, who he said, "enacts, rather than talks, as language without exertion is dead witness." When those soldiers who heard him say this stared blankly, he laughed and swung his sword, running into the rain of Kyne to slaughter their Ayleid captives, screaming, "O Aka, for our shared madness I do this! I watch you watching me watching back! Umaril dares call us out, for that is how we made him!" [And it was during] these fits of anger and nonsense that Pelinal would fall into the Madness, where whole swaths of lands were devoured in divine rampage to become Void, and Alessia would have to pray to the Gods for their succor, and they would reach down as one mind and soothe the Whitestrake until he no longer had the will to kill the earth in whole. And Garid of the men-of-ge once saw such a Madness from afar and maneuvered, after it had abated, to drink together with Pelinal, and he asked what such an affliction felt like, to which Pelinal could only answer, "Like when the dream no longer needs its dreamer."
[181.7] The Song of Pelinal VII

The Song of Pelinal
Volume 7: On His Battle with Umaril and His Dismemberment

[Editor's Note: This fragment comes from a manuscript recovered from the ruins of the Alessian Order's monastery at Lake Canulus, which dates it to sometime prior to the War of Righteousness (1E 2321). However, textual analysis suggests that this fragment actually preserves a very early form of the Song, perhaps from the mid-sixth century.]

[And so after many battles with] Umaril's allies, where dead Aurorans lay like candlelight around the throne, the Pelinal became surrounded by the last Ayleid sorcerer-kings and their demons, each one heavy with varliance. The Whitestrake cracked the floor with his mace and they withdrew, and he said, "Bring me Umaril that called me out!" ... [And] while mighty in his aspect and wicked, deathless-golden Umaril favored ruin-from-afar over close combat and so he tarried in the shadows of the white tower before coming forth. More soldiers were sent against Pelinal to die, and yet they managed to pierce his armor with axes and arrows, for Umaril had wrought each one by long varliance, which he had been hoarding since his first issue [of challenge]... [Presently] the half-Elf [showed himself] bathed in [Meridian light] ... and he listed his bloodline in the Ayleidoon and spoke of his father, a god of the [previous kalpa's] World-River and taking great delight in the heavy-breathing of Pelinal who had finally bled... [Text lost] ... [And] Umaril was laid low, the angel face of his helm dented into an ugliness which made Pelinal laugh, [and his] unfeathered wings broken off with sword strokes delivered while Pelinal stood [frothing]... above him insulting his ancestry and anyone else that took ship from Old Ehlnofey, [which] angered the other Elvish kings and drove them
to a madness of their own... [and they] fell on him [speaking] to their weapons... cutting the Pelinal into eighths while he roared in confusion [which even] the Council of Skiffs [could hear]... [Text lost] ...ran when Mor shook the whole of the tower with mighty bashing from his horns [the next morning], and some were slain-in-overabundance in the Taking, and Men looked for more Ayleids to kill but Pelinal had left none save those kings and demons that had already begun to flee... It was Morihaus who found the Whitestrake's head, which the kings had left to prove their deeds and they spoke and Pelinal said things of regrets... but the rebellion had turned anyway... [and more] words were said between these immortals that even the Paravant would not deign to hear.
[Editor's Note: This is the oldest and most fragmentary of all the extant Pelinal texts. It is, however, likely closest to the original spoken or sung form of the Song, and therefore has great value despite its brevity. Strangely, it appears that Pelinal is present at Alessia's deathbed, although he was killed by Umaril earlier in the saga (years before Alessia's death). Some scholars believe that this fragment is not actually a part of the Song of Pelinal, but most accept its authenticity although there is still much debate as to its significance.]

"... and left you to gather sinew with my other half, who will bring light thereby to that mortal idea that brings [the Gods] great joy, that is, freedom, which even the Heavens do not truly know, [which is] why our Father, the... [Text lost]... in those first [days/spirits/swirls] before Convention... that which we echoed in our earthly madness. [Let us] now take you Up. We will [show] our true faces... [which eat] one another in amnesia each Age."
[182] The Song of the Alchemists*

See vol. I.
The nature of the soul is not knowable. Every wizard that has attempted it vanishes without a trace. What can be known is that souls are a source of mystic energy that can be harvested.

Every creature, living or dead, is powered by a soul. Without it, they are just lumps of flesh or piles of bones. This animating force can be contained within a soul gem, if the soul gem has the capacity. From the gem, the power can be used to power magical items.

Centuries of experimentation has demonstrated that there are black souls and white souls. Only the rare black soul gem can hold the soul of a higher creature, such as a man or an elf. While the souls of lesser creatures can be captured by gems of many colors, they are all categorized as white soul gems. Hence the division of souls into black and white.

White souls are far safer than black souls, although not as powerful. Beginning students of Mysticism should not dabble in black souls or black soul gems. Even if one were to ignore the guild strictures against the necromantic arts used to power black soul gems, it is dangerous to the caster to handle them for long. If the gem is not precisely the size of the encased soul, small bits of the caster's soul may leak into the gem when it is touched.
[184] Spirit of the Daedra*

See vol. I.
The Standing Stones
by Anonymous

Any visitor to the Shivering Isles will soon come across the dreadful shape of a tall, crystalline stone looming over them like an accusing finger. Variously known as standing stones or obelisks, they cannot be avoided in traveling the Shivering Isles, no matter how hard you might try.

There are many theories on the origin and purpose of these stones. (Purpose? Can a stone have a purpose? Is it a sentient being, or an inanimate object? Is it listening to you - watching you - whispering to you?) Some claim they are simply interesting geological formations. Not so. Not so. They cannot be chipped or cracked or even scorched. Believe me, I've tried. Nothing harms them. (Although perhaps they still feel the blows. They seemed angry for a while. I sang to them and that seemed to soothe them. I can't say why.) And if you've tried to dig one up, as I have, you know that they go down forever. (Months I spent, digging down. No matter how deep, there it was, still gleaming in the secret darkness beneath the earth. They know the secrets, even those that are buried deep.)

I have spent many years trying to understand these stones. (Avoiding doesn't work. As I said, they're everywhere. So try for understanding, as I have. What is the humming? What do the whispers mean?) I can't say that I know everything about them, but I have learned many things, some of which I can share with you. (But I don't know what they want. Not yet. Perhaps if I knew what they wanted, I wouldn't be so afraid. They whisper secrets to me, but I promised not to tell. They know many secrets. They're always watching. They never sleep. Not even at night, in the dark of the moon.)

I know they are old, older perhaps than the world itself. They have seen civilizations rise and fall. And they hate us. They are waiting for their master to return. (They won't tell me who, or when. If they hate me so, why do they tell me their secrets? Is it because they know my secrets already?)

You may not believe me. Most don't, but most have not spent the time that I have in trying to learn about these stones. I have spent days listening to their secret whispers and learning their language. (They talk, you know. To each other, mostly. But now to me.) At first it was just a humming, which you can hear if you lean against a stone and listen very closely. It may take hours, or days, but you will hear them. And once you hear the voice of the standing stones, you will never be able to shut it out.
[186] Summon Rufio's Ghost

Rise, Rufio! Come forth once more to the land of the living, and unleash your vengeance!
[187] Surfeit of Thieves*

See vol. I.
[188] Tamrielic Artifacts*

See vol. I.
By the intercession of St. Alessia, you may be so filled with grace, and the strength and wisdom that comes from grace, that through these teachings you may come to the true meaning of the Nine Divines and Their glories. To convey to man's mind all the manifold subtleties of truth and virtue may not be done, were all the seas ink, and all the skies the parchment upon which Their wisdoms were writ. Yet Akatosh, in His wisdom, knowing how impatient is man, and how loathe he is to travel upon the hard roads of truth, has allowed these ten simple commands to be made manifest with powerful clarity and concise definition.

1. Stendarr says: Be kind and generous to the people of Tamriel. Protect the weak, heal the sick, and give to the needy.

2. Arkay says: Honor the earth, its creatures, and the spirits, living and dead. Guard and tend the bounties of the mortal world, and do not profane the spirits of the dead.


4. Zenithar says: Work hard, and you will be rewarded. Spend wisely, and you will be comfortable. Never steal, or you will be punished.

5. Talos says: Be strong for war. Be bold against enemies and evil, and defend the people of Tamriel.


7. Dibella says: Open your heart to the noble secrets of art and love. Treasure the gifts of friendship. Seek joy and inspiration in the mysteries of love.

8. Julianos says: Know the truth. Observe the law. When in doubt, seek wisdom from the wise.

9. Akatosh says: Serve and obey your Emperor. Study the Covenants. Worship the Nine, do your duty, and heed the commands of the saints and priests.

10. The Nine say: Above all else, be good to one another.

If only each man might look into the mirror of these Commands, and see reflected there the bliss that might enfold them, were he to serve in strict obedience to these Commands, he would be cast down and made contrite and humble. The obedient man may come to the altars of the Nine and be blessed, and may receive the comfort and healing of the Nine, and may give thanks for his manifold blessings.
Heedless, the wicked man turns away, and forsaking the simple wisdoms granted to him by the All-Wise and All-Knowing Nine, he lives in sin and ignorance all the days of his life. He bears the awful burden of his crimes, and before Men and God his wickedness is known, and neither blessing nor comfort may he expect from the altars and shrines of the Nine.

Yet the wicked and foolish are not doomed, for in their infinite mercies, the Nine have said, "Repent, and do Good Works, and the Fountains of Grace shall once more spill forth upon you."

Repent your crimes! Tender unto the Emperor the fines of gold, that they may be used to spread the Faith and its Benefits to all Men!

Do yourself good works! Redeem your infamy by shining deeds! Show to all Men and the Nine the good Fame of the Righteous Man, and you may once again approach the altars and shrines of the Chapel to receive the comfort and blessings of the Nine.
If the reader has not yet had the pleasure of reading the first volume in these series on the life of Eslaf Erol, 'Beggar,' he should close this book immediately, for I shan't recap.

I will tell you this much, gentle reader. When we last saw Eslaf, he was a boy, an orphan, a failed beggar, running through the wildy winter woods of Skyrim, away from his home of Erolgard. He continued running, stopping here and there, for many more years, until he was a young man.

Eslaf discovered that among the ways of getting food, asking for it was the most troublesome. Far easier was finding it in the wilderness, or taking it from unguarded market stalls. The only thing worse than begging to get food was begging for the opportunity to work for the money to buy it. That seemed needlessly complicated.

No, as far as Eslaf was concerned, he was best off being a scavenger, a beggar, and a thief.

He commited his first act of thievery shortly after leaving Erolgard, while in the southern woods of Tamburkar in the rugged land near Mount Jensen just east of the village of Hoarbeld. Eslaf was starving, having not eaten anything but a rather scrawny raw squirrel in four days, and he smelled meat cooking and then found the smoke. A band of minstral bards was making camp. He watched them from the bushes as they cooked, and joked, and flirted, and sang.

He could've asked them for some food, but so many others had refused him before. Instead, he rushed out, grabbed a piece of meat from the fire, and wincing from the burns, scrambled up the nearest tree to devour it while the bards stood under him and laughed.

'What is your next move, thief?' giggled a fair, red-headed woman who was covered with tattoos. 'How do you intend to disappear without us catching and punishing you?'

As the hunger subsided, Eslaf realized she was right. The only way to get out of the tree without falling in their midst was to take the branch down to where it hung over a creek. It was a drop off a cliff of about fifty feet. That seemed like the wisest strategy, so Eslaf began crawling in that direction.

'You do know how to fall, boy?' called out a young Khajiiti, but a few years older than Eslaf, thin but muscular, graceful in his slightest movements. 'If you don't, you should just climb down here and take what's coming to you. It's idiotic to break your neck, when we'd just give you some bruises and send you on your way.'
'Of course I know how to fall,' Eslaf called back, but he didn't. He just thought the trick of falling was to have nothing underneath you, and let nature take its course. But fifty feet up, when you're looking down, is enough to give anyone pause.

'I'm sorry to doubt your abilities, Master Thief,' said the Khajiiti, grinning. 'Obviously you know to fall feet first with your body straight but loose to avoid cracking like an egg. It seems you are destined to escape us.'

Eslaf wisely followed the Khajiiti's hints, and leapt into the river, falling without much grace but without hurting himself. In the years that followed, he had to make several more drops from even greater heights, usually after a theft, sometimes without water beneath him, and he improved the basic technique.

When he arrived in the western town of Jallenheim on the morning of his twenty-first birthday, it didn't take him long to find out who was the richest person, most deserving of being burgled. An impregnable palace in a park near the center of town was owned by a mysterious young man named Suoibud. Eslaf wasted no time in finding the palace and watching it. A fortified palace he had come to learn was like a person, with quirks and habits beneath its hard shell.

It was not an old place, evidently whatever money this Suoibud had come into was fairly recent. It was regularly patrolled by guards, implying that the rich man was fearful of being burgled, with good reason. The most distinctive feature of the palace was its tower, rising a hundred feet above the stone walls, doubtless giving the occupant a good defensive view. Eslaf guessed that if Suoibud was as paranoid as he guessed him to be, the tower would also provide a view of the palace storehouse. The rich man would want to keep an eye on his fortune. That meant that the loot couldn't be directly beneath the tower, but somewhere in the courtyard within the walls.

The light in the tower shone all night long, so Eslaf boldly decided that the best time to burgle was by the light of day, when Suoibud must sleep. That would be the time the guards would least expect a thief to pounce.

And so, when the noon sun was shining over the palace, Eslaf quickly scaled the wall near the front gate and waited, hidden in the crenelations. The interior courtyard was plain and desolate, with few places to hide, but he saw that there were two wells. One the guards used from time to time to draw up water and slake their thirst, but Eslaf noticed that guards would pass by the other well, never using it.

He waited until the guards were distracted, just for a second, by the arrival of a merchant in a wagon, bearing goods for the palace. While they were searching his wagon, Eslaf leapt, elegantly, feet first, from the wall into the well.

It was not a particularly soft landing for, as Eslaf had guessed, the well was not full of water, but gold. Still, he knew how to roll after a fall, and he didn't hurt himself. In the dank subterranean storehouse, he stuffed his pockets with gold and was about to go to the door which he assumed would lead to the tower when he noticed a gem the size of an apple, worth more than all the gold that was left. Eslaf found room for it down his pants.
The door did indeed lead to the tower, and Eslaf followed its curving stairwell up, walking quietly but quickly. At the top, he found the master of the palace's private quarters, ornate and cold, with invaluable artwork and decorative swords and shields on the walls. Eslaf assumed the snoring lump under the sheets was Suoibud, but he didn't investigate too closely. He crept to the windows and looked out.

It was going to be a difficult fall, for certes. He needed to jump from the tower, past the walls, and hit the tree on the other side. The tree branches would hurt, but they would break his fall, and there was a pile of hay he had left under the tree to prevent further injury.

Eslaf was about to leap when the occupant of the room woke up with a start, yelling, 'My gem!'

Eslaf and stared at him for a second, wide-eyed. They looked alike. Not surprising, since they were brothers.

Eslaf Erol's story is continued in the book 'Warrior.'
[191] Thief of Virtue

Let me tell the tale of the Thief of Virtue. In the land of Hammerfell in the city of Sutch there lived a Baron who was quite wealthy. He was a noted collector of rare coins. The Baroness Veronique found the whole thing quite tedious. However, she did appreciate the lifestyle that the Baron's wealth provided.

Ravius Terinus was a noted thief. He claimed to be a master thief in the mythical guild of thieves. However, that was most like just braggadocio. The only known Thieves Guild was wiped out over 450 years ago.

Ravius decided that the Baron should share his wealth. Specifically he should share it with Ravius. The wily thief crept into the Baron's castle one night intending to do just that.

The walls of the castle were noted for their height and unscalability. Ravius cleverly used an Arrow of Penetration to affix a rope to the top of the battlements. Once on the battlements, he had to evade the Baron's guards. By hiding in the shadows of the crenelations, he was able to work his way to the keep undetected.

Entering the keep was child's play for a thief of his caliber. However, a cunning lock with no less than 13 pins protected the private quarters of the Baron. Ravius broke only 9 lockpicks to open it. Using only a fork, a bit of string, and a wineskin, he disabled the seven traps guarding the Baron's coin collection. Truly Ravius was a master among thieves.

With the coins safely in his grasp, Ravius began his escape only to find the way blocked. The Baron had found the opened door and was raising the guard to scour the castle. Ravius fled deeper into the castle, one step ahead of the questing guards.

His only way out led through the boudoir of Baroness Veronique. He entered to find the lady preparing for bed. Now it should be said at this point that Ravius was noted for his handsome looks, while the Baroness was noted for her plainness. Both of these facts were immediately recognized by each of the pair.

"Doest thou come to plunder my virtue?" asked the lady, all a tremble.

"Nay, fair lady," Ravius said, thinking quickly. "Plunder be a harsh term to ply upon such a delicate flower as your virtue."

"I see thou hast made off with mine husbands precious coins."

Ravius looked deeply into her eyes and saw the only path by which he would escape this night with his life. It would require a double sacrifice.

"Though these coins are of rarest value, I have now found a treasure that is beyond all value," Ravius said smoothly. "Tell me, oh beauteous one, why doest thy husband set seven deadly traps around these tawdry coins, but only a simple lock upon the door of his virtuous wife?"

"Ignace protects those things that are dearest to him," Veronique replied with ire.
"I would give all the gold in my possession to spend but a moment basking in your radiance."

With that Ravius set down the coins he had worked so hard to steal. The Baroness swooned into his arms. When the captain of the guard asked to search her quarters, she hid Ravius most skillfully. She turned over the coins, claiming the thief dropped them when he fled out the window.

With that sacrifice made, Ravius steeled himself for the second. He robbed the lady Veronique of her virtue that night. He robbed her of it several times, lasting well into the wee hours of the morning. Exhausted, yet sated, he stole away in the pre-dawn hours.
[192] The Third Door*

See vol. I.
For Our Lord Sheogorath, without Whom all Thought would be linear and all Feeling would be fleeting.

Blessed are the Madmen, for they hold the keys to secret knowledge.

Blessed are the Phobic, always wary of that which would do them harm.

Blessed are the Obsessed, for their courses are clear.

Blessed are the Addicts, may they quench the thirst that never ebbs.

Blessed are the Murderous, for they have found beauty in the grotesque.

Blessed are the Firelovers, for their hearts are always warm.

Blessed are the Artists, for in their hands the impossible is made real.

Blessed are the Musicians, for in their ears they hear the music of the soul.

Blessed are the Sleepless, as they bask in wakeful dreaming.

Blessed are the Paranoid, ever-watchful for our enemies.

Blessed are the Visionaries, for their eyes see what might be.

Blessed are the Painlovers, for in their suffering, we grow stronger.

Blessed is the Madgod, who tricks us when we are foolish, punishes us when we are wrong, tortures us when we are unmindful, and loves us in our imperfection.
[194] Tome of Unlife
I will not be the first scholar to point to a combination of benign intent and arrogance on behalf of the Ayleids as the source of many ruinous affairs for the old heartland elves.

The Nefarivigum, a foul construct of Mehrunes Dagon, was erected to be ever watchful for the pilgrim who would approach it and best an unknown trial of worth. It is said that such a pilgrim would be rewarded with the blessing of Mehrunes Razor, a vicious blade through which Dagon himself can claim the very souls of those it strikes.

Benign intent compelled Ayleid folk to seek out the Nefarivigum. Arrogance let them believe themselves capable of disbarring any who would seek the Razor. So was built Varsa Baalim, a great, ringed, labyrinthine city, during the height of Ayleid rule.

Sure as death, pilgrims came to Varsa Baalim, and for years the Elves drove back many, until it came to pass that a vampire slipped into the city unnoticed. Merfolk were touched with the foul affliction, throwing the city into a gathering storm of madness and ruin, and soon it seemed none was left to prevent the Razor from being recovered.

Then, suddenly, Varsa Baalim was gone. Historic accounts dispute whether it happened through some final safety, a natural cataclysm, or by the touch of the Divines themselves. Whatever the cause, history agrees on the result: the mountains of the Eastern Niben swallowed Varsa Baalim, and the Nefarivigum with it, where has remained hidden since the early days of the First Era.

If the tale is true, then somewhere on the eastern fringes of the Niben Valley, where man's rule has scarcely reached through the years, the Nefarivigum still lies in wait, among a city of unliving abominations entombed within the cold bowels of the mountain.
Argonian alchemists of the Black Marsh have long held that the phases of the moon dictate the precise positioning of the Calcinator. During the full moon, the Calcinator should face due South, aligned with the Southron pole star. It is well known that the Southron pole star is slightly offset from true south. The diligent Alchemist will refer to star charts for the specific day and time to more precisely align the Calcinator.

For each night of the phases of the moon after full, the Calcinator should be rotated clockwise one twenty-eighth of a circle. If the Alchemist is closer to the Southron pole star than the Northern Sisters, he should rotate it counter-clockwise instead. Set the device where the moonlight is shining on half of it. Of course, if it is a new moon, the Calcinator should be fully exposed instead.

Proper alignment of the Calcinator will create one part in forty-seven more purity of the distillate. Obviously this is a highly desired attribute, even though the effect may not be that noticable.
Trials of St. Alessia

[from the Trials of St. Alessia]

Akatosh made a covenant with Alessia in those days so long ago. He gathered the tangled skeins of Oblivion, and knit them fast with the bloody sinews of his Heart, and gave them to Alessia, saying, 'This shall be my token to you, that so long as your blood and oath hold true, yet so shall my blood and oath be true to you. This token shall be the Amulet of Kings, and the Covenant shall be made between us, for I am the King of Spirits, and you are the Queen of Mortals. As you shall stand witness for all Mortal Flesh, so shall I stand witness for all Immortal Spirits.'

And Akatosh drew from his breast a burning handful of his Heart's blood, and he gave it into Alessia's hand, saying, 'This shall also be a token to you of our joined blood and pledged faith. So long as you and your descendants shall wear the Amulet of Kings, then shall this dragonfire burn -- an eternal flame -- as a sign to all men and gods of our faithfulness. So long as the dragonfires shall burn, to you, and to all generations, I swear that my Heart's blood shall hold fast the Gates of Oblivion.

So long as the Blood of the Dragon runs strong in her rulers, the glory of the Empire shall extend in unbroken years. But should the dragonfires fail, and should no heir of our joined blood wear the Amulet of Kings, then shall the Empire descend into darkness, and the Demon Lords of Misrule shall govern the land.'

-- from the liturgy of the Re-Kindling of the Dragonfires
[198] The True Nature of Orcs

See vol. I.
[199] 2920, The Last Year of the First Era*

See vol. I.
Varieties Of Daedra
By Aranea Drethan,
Healer and Dissident Priest

There is little chance of our ever understanding the various orders of Daedra and their relationships to the Daedra Lords and their dominions. Of the varieties of Daedra that appear in our world, and the varieties of their relationships to their fellows and their Daedra patrons, there is no end. In one place and time they are seen to be this, and in another place and time they are seen to be the opposite, and in another place and time they are seen to be both this and that, in completely contradictory terms.

What Daedra serves this Prince? What Daedra gives orders, and what Daedra serves, and in what hierarchy, and under what circumstances? What Daedra exist in fellowship with one another, and what Daedra have eternal enmity to one another, and what Daedra are solitary, or social, and by turns solitary or social? There are no limits to the varieties of behaviors that may be observed, and in one place they may be this, and in another place they may that, and all rules describing them are always found to be contradictory and in exception to others.

Further, from whom may we seek answers to our questions about these orders? From mortals, who know little but what they may observe of another world? From the gods, who speak in riddles, of enigmas wrapped in mysteries, and who keep things from us, the better to preserve their dominion over us? From the Daedra themselves, who are never the models of straightforwardness or truth telling, but rather are famous for misstatements and obfuscations?

And even were the Daedra to speak the truth, how can we know if they know themselves, or that there is any truth about them that is to be known, or are all arrangements among the Daedra protean and ever subject to change?

In short, what is to be known is little, and and what is to be trusted is nothing.

These things being said, I shall venture to relate what I have observed and heard of the relationships of the servants of Lord Dagon in my brief service to the Telvanni Wizard Divayth Fyr, when I sought him out and offered to bring peace to the victims of corprus in his sanitarium, once the Prophecies of the Incarnate had been fulfilled, and Dagoth Ur had been destroyed, and the Blight had been banished from the island of Vvardenfell forever.

Divayth Fyr told me that he, by choice, trafficked only with two Daedra Powers -- Mehrunes Dagon and Azura.

Azura, he said, knew and understood all things, and declined to speak of these things, or only spoke in riddles.

Mehrunes Dagon, on the other hand, out of pride, fixity of purpose, and a predictable lack of subtlety in thought, knew nothing and understood nothing, and was inclined to speak freely and without falsehood.
Divayth Fyr said that Dagon's chief servants, the Dremora, were like him in pride, fixed purpose, and lack of subtlety, with the addition of the peculiar traits of honor and loyalty, both within their class and within their relationship to Lord Dagon.

And Divayth Fyr said that the Dremora were ordered into clans and castes, and these clans and castes were well-defined. Individual Dremora might rise or fall in ranks, or move back and forth among clans, but only when regulated by complex oaths, and only at the will and pleasure of their Lord Dagon.

The Dremora refer to themselves as 'The Kyn' ('the People'), contrasting themselves to other Daedra, whom they consider unthinking animals. The term 'kynaz' refers to a member of the Dremora race ('he of the Kyn').

The least of kyn castes are the Churls, the undistinguished rabble of the lowest rank of Dremora. Churls are obsequious to superiors but ferociously cruel to humans and other Daedra.

Next in rank are the Caitiffs, creatures of uncalculating zeal, energy without discrimination. Caitiffs are used as irregulars in the faction wars of the Daedra, as berserkers and shock troops, undisciplined and unreliable, but eager and willing.

The highest of the regular rank-and-file of Dremora troops are the Kynvals, warrior-knights who have distinguished themselves in battle, and shown the deliberate steadiness of potential war leaders.

Above the rank and file warriors of the Churl, Caitiff, and Kynval castes are the officer castes.

A Kynreeve is a clan sheriff or clan officer. Kynreeves are typically associated either with a clan fighting unit or an administrative office in the order of battle.

The Kynmarcher is the lord and high officer of a Daedric citadel, outpost, or gate. A Kynmarcher's command is usually associated both with a unit and with a 'fief' -- a location or territory for which he is responsible.

Above the Kynmarcher is the Markynaz, or 'grand duke'. A Markynaz is a lord of lords, and member of the Markyn, Mehrunes Dagon's Council of Lords.

The highest rank of Dremora is the Valkynaz, or 'prince'. This warrior duke is a member of the Valkyn, Mehrunes Dagon's personal guard. The Valkynaz are rarely encountered on Tamriel; normally they remain by Mehrunes Dagon's side, or serve as commanders of operations of particular importance or interest to Dagon.

Of the varieties of other Daedra I encountered while I served in Divayth Fyr's Corprusarium -- Ogrims and Golden Saints, Daedroths and Winged Twilights, Scamps and Clannfear -- there is much that might be said, but little that is helpful or reliable.

I did note, however, that when Divayth Fyr sought a Daedra of a character like unto the Dremora, but of greater power, and greater inclination for independence and initiative, or solely as a master, he summoned Xivilai, who are like the Dremora in personality and
temperment, except that they hate subordination, and are liable to disloyalty and betrayal when they feel they have not been treated with the proper deference and respect.

The feral, beastlike Daedra like the Clannfear and the Daedroth appear in the service of many different Daedric Powers, and may represent common creatures existing like wild animals in the wildernesses of Oblivion. Other savage, semi-intelligent creatures like Scamps and Spider Daedra may also be found in the realms of various Daedra Lords.

The case of the Elemental Atronachs, on the other hand, is less certain. Flame and Frost Atronachs, for example, appear to be highly intelligent, but not all varieties of Elemental Atronachs seem to be social or to have the power of speech. Divayth Fyr preferred not to summon or deal with these creatures, had little experience with them, and showed no inclination to speculate upon their nature, so I learned little about them during my time at Tel Fyr.
...the Cyrodiilic Rat appears less aggressive than its counterpart in various other provinces. They are prevalent in all parts of Cyrodiil, equally at home in basement dwellings, caves, ruins, or grasslands. They are known to carry disease, and their bites can be painful....

...though once thought to be intelligent. They are social creatures, often appearing in groups numbering twenty or more. The largest male dominates this clan structure, and seems to have breeding rights with all females of reproductive age. Younger males will often challenge the older, dominant males in a fight to the death. Their horns locked, the two minotaurs will wrestle until one can no longer continue. This often....

...called "Billies" by many of the local farmers. But, is this so-called "land dreugh" actually of any relation to the sea-dwelling dreugh? There certainly seem to be similarities in morphology, especially in the region of the head and thorax. And they produce the same "dreugh wax" found in the aquatic creatures. However, while true dreugh are known to be cunning, even intelligent, these "land dreugh" demonstrate none of the same intelligence. They are violent and aggressive, killing indiscriminately.

Some believe them to be of Daedric origins, perhaps related to the Spider Daedra. That, however, is not the opinion of this researcher. It appears more likely that the "land dreugh" are a distant relative of the true dreugh, perhaps an ancestor from far back on the evolutionary timeline....

Much has been made of the fact that trolls can be killed only by application of fire, whether it be by spell or torch. This is, in fact, a myth. Trolls do seem to have a weakness to fire and fire-based spells, and a fantastic ability to regenerate tissue, but they can be killed by conventional means. One should note, however, that trolls should absolutely not....

[The rest of this journal is unreadable.]
[202] Vernaccus and Bourlor*

See vol. I.
Vitharn: the Fall

Chapter I

In which the Keep Vitharn is established and passes from the first generation of rule to the second.

Count Vitharn, who built and appointed his keep from the mud of Dementia, gathered to himself any who would pledge themselves as liege. Nearby tribes of Fanatics were united as vassals to protect his lands and line, and thus the Count lived out his days in the Isles. He and his Countess Mawean bore Csaran and Nweala, the first son and daughter of Vitharn.

Csaran's mother and father believed that with the proper political influence, Csaran could certainly usurp Sheogorath and carry the Shivering Isles into a prosperous age. For his part, Count Vitharn refused even to acknowledge Sheogorath, thinking himself and his heirs irrefutable rulers of the Isles.

This, of course, amused the Madgod to no end, and so he allowed the marriage of Csaran to Sheen-in-Glade, daughter of an Argonian midwife who believed that the mortal sphere would afford her daughter nothing but hatred and oppression.

Sheen-in-Glade was as excellent a Countess to Csaran as any in the Isles could ask for, wanting nothing but to bring pride and honor to her adopted house and Court. For years her mind was untouched, even living as she did in the heart of Dementia. Alas, none may reside too long in the Isles without the blessing of Lord Sheogorath, and so Sheen-in-Glade was finally pushed to the brink by the infidelity of her Husband, the Count.

Csaran was obsessively nepotistic, and distrustful of anyone with whom he shared no blood relation including his bride. Though Sheen-in-Glade bore a son by the Count (who disappeared from the Isles in his twentieth year), it is known that the two shared their bed with decreasing frequency as Csaran's paranoia grew, and he found himself in the arms of his birth-sister Nweala, who bore of their incestuous affair the heir apparent, Cesrien. There are those of us who remember personally the reign of Cesrien, and his contribution to the fall of Vitharn.

Chapter II

In which the birth of Count Cesrien heralds a glorious, bloody, and brief age for Vitharn.

Violent-natured and quick of temper, Cesrien sought enemies where there were none. His early days on the seat of Vitharn saw the extermination of every tribe of man, mer, or beast within sight of the keep, until none were left.

During his brief reign, much of the southeastern coastline of Dementia was unsafe to travel, littered with the corpses of trespassers in the lands of Vitharn, staked to trees as territorial
markers. Beside his sadistic temper, Count Cesrien of Vitharn was known also for his slow wit and ailing health.

Indeed, Cesrien was born with legs that seemed mismatched in length, and breathed with a laborious rasp. As a youth, tutors were hard-pressed to school the dull boy. Midwives and nurses surrounded him, attending his every ailment with balms and vapors from every corner of the Isles, but when he came of age he sent them away, often becoming violent in their dismissal.

Perhaps showing the influence of his father, Cesrien became increasingly introverted, allowing only a select few courtiers in his presence. He was seen in public only when organizing his vassal Fanatics for yet another raid on the countryside.

Atypically adhering to the desperate counsel of his advisors, Cesrien paused in his plundering to take a wife and ensure the continuation of Vitharn's noble line. The increasingly ill Count chose a vibrant peasant women as his betrothed, from a Heretic Commune in the wilds of Mania. Indeed, Countess Jideen could not have been any more his opposite. Vassal Fanatics, long loyal to their ancestral agreement with Count Vitraen, were inflamed by this heresy, and tensions grew as the health of Cesrien finally failed, and his young son, Cirion, ascended the throne of Vitharn.

Chapter III

In which conflict besets Vitharn and the Irenic Count Cirion is overwhelmed.

Young Count Cirion had scarcely been seen in public before his hasty coronation in the bailey of Vitharn Keep. Some say he still bore bruises from beatings at the feeble hand of his father during his final hours during the ceremony. Had Cirion been old enough to govern, his gentle, reserved demeanor may have been enough to ease the seething tension among the Vassal tribe, but his mother, Countess Jideen was forced to assume many of the duties her husband had so long ignored.

By all accounts, Jideen was a fit Countess; loved by her people -- but the leaders of the Vassal Fanatics could not contain indefinitely their personal sentiments of outrage at her Manic heritage. Despite her exceedingly tactful attempts at diplomacy, the animosity against her was deep-seated, and grew over the years. It is perhaps admirable that the Vassals remained true to the oaths so long.

When Cirion finally came of age to rule, the sheepish boy-Count tried in earnest to ascend gracefully, but his fear of the world was so great that even the shadow of a passing bird would startle him visibly. He was all but unable to address the people publicly, and when he attempted to placate the Vassals -- still outraged by his Mother's heritage -- he could scarcely contain his fright, and some say that he even soiled himself before fleeing the throne chamber.

Certain as the march of fate, the tolerance of the Vassal Fanatics snapped, and warriors encircled Vitharn. The Count's personal guards were ill-suited to repel the attack and the siege lasted a single day. Since the day of that battle, no living soul has wandered away from Vitharn. Local myth tells of a tireless struggle between the spirits of the Fanatic vassals and Vitharn's meager defenders, damned by the treachery of Fanatics and the cowardice of Cirion to replay their final moments in perpetuity.
[204] Wabbajack*

See vol. I.
The Gray Fox

Wanted for theft, embezzlement, forgery, pickpocketing, counterfeiting, burglary, conspiracy to commit theft, grand larceny, tax evasion, slander, fraud, perfidy and impertinence.

Description: wears a gray cloak that conceals his appearance. Presumed male and Colovian. Height between 5 and 6 feet. Normal weight. Hair and eye color unknown.

Any citizen with information should contact the Imperial Watch.

Watch Captain Hieronymus Lex
The Warp in the West

A Report Compiled By Ulvius Tero, Blades Archivist

* Secret: For Your Eyes Only *

Let me offer my congratulations to Your Lordship for your recent appointment as ambassador to the Court of Wayrest.

Your Lordship asked me for a review of existing Blades accounts from 3E 417 concerning 'The Warp in the West', and for a summary of the current state of affairs there.

Since Your Lordship was in Black Marsh serving in the staff of Admiral Sosorius at the time, you probably know of these events only from Imperial proclamations and Chapel declarations, which identify this period as the 'Miracle of Peace'. During the 'Miracle of Peace', according to official accounts, the formerly war-wracked Iliac Bay region was transformed overnight from a patchwork of squabbling duchies and petty kingdoms into the peaceful modern counties of Hammerfell, Sentinel, Wayrest, and Orsinium. The 'Miracle of Peace', also known as the 'The Warp in the West', is celebrated as the product of the miraculous interventions of Stendarr, Mara, and Akatosh to transform this troublesome region into peaceful, well-governed Imperial counties. The catastrophic destruction of landscape and property and the large loss of life attending upon this miracle is understood to have been 'tragic, and beyond mortal comprehension.'

In as much as this account confirms and validates the current borders of these counties, and identifies the rulers and boundaries of these counties as 'ordained by the Nine', the 'Miracle of Peace' serves Imperial objectives of peaceful consolidation of ancient petty states and sovereigns into manageable Imperial jurisdictions. The other remarkable features of these events -- mass disappearances, armies mysteriously transported hundreds of miles or completely annihilated, titanic storms and celestial phenomena, apparent local discontinuities of time -- fit comfortably into the notion that these events are part of a vast, mysterious divine intervention.

However, this is only the public account of these events, and, as you may suspect, it conflicts with many other accounts. In short, while this explanation suits Imperial policy, it has little historical validity.

Your Lordship should know that the Blades have concluded there is no plausible historical account of these events, and despairs that a plausible historical account shall ever be produced. The Blades have concluded that a 'miracle' occurred, insofar as the events are inexplicable, but the Blades strongly doubt the miracle was of divine origin.

There is good reason to believe that the ruling families of the four modern Iliac Bay counties had forewarning of the event. There is also some evidence that some of these ruling families may have been directly or indirectly responsible for the event. We do not know the exact
sequence of actions that produced the event, although we are confident that the 'Totem' artifact was involved, and that a Blades agent was involved in employing that artifact. We unfortunately lost contact with that agent immediately after the event; his report might have gone some way to resolving the contradictory and paradoxical accounts of the event.

The Blades have on file few reports from agents dating from the "Warp in the West" period. Most of our agents were lost in the initial dislocations, and others were lost in the confusion after the event. I present a few of these reports to give you a general sense of their limitations, including the report of your diplomatic predecessor, Lord Strale. You will have had access to other private and rumored accounts of the period. I believe you will agree that these documents raise more questions than they answer.

The Report of Hammerfell Agent 'Briarbird'

'I was on assignment in the Alik'r Desert, a few miles south of Bergama on the 9th of Frostfall. I was encamped, as it was still early morning, when I felt the ground shake so violently, I was thrown to the ground. Dazed, I was aware of a great roar of a sandstorm, which alarmed me, as I had been on a high dune and had seen nothing like that on the horizon. It was on me before I was even on my knees, burying me and my camp.

When I crawled my way out of the sand, I realized that I must make haste and get to Bergama as soon as possible, as all my food and water had been swept away. The sun was just rising as I began, like I said. When I reached Bergama, it was nightfall. The town was in chaos, filled with the soldiers of Sentinel. The Lord of Bergama's fortress was in ruins.

There had been an attack, but no one had seen it, only the invasion that followed it. The soldiers of Queen Akorithi of Sentinel refused to be interviewed about how they had accomplished this sneak attack, but I came to learn that the whole of northern Hammerfell now belonged to them. Even stranger, I discovered that my walk from sunrise to sundown had not taken me not one day, but two. It was now the 11th day of the month, not the 10th. I had lost a day somewhere, and so apparently had everyone else... except Akorithi's soldiers, who somehow were aware of the correct date.

I since have concluded that they had received advance warning, and so were better prepared to deal with the strange confusion of time and dates associated with the Warp.'

The Report of High Rock Agent 'Graylady'

'I was, at the time of the Warp, undercover as a witch in the Skeffington Coven of Phyrgias, in central High Rock. In order to give my report, I had volunteered for an expedition to gather supplies, which would allow me the freedom to reach my contact in Camlorn. I was traveling north-east along the foothills of the Wrothgarian Mountains, on the 9th of Frostfall, when I felt a great heat behind me, like a fire. I turned, but I regret to say I cannot tell you what I saw. The healers tell me my eyes were burned out of my sockets.

I think I must have fallen into a state of semi-consciousness, for I distinctly remember falling as the ground seemed to give way beneath me. Then there was a series of explosions in the distance, to the south, and I heard high whistling noises that were getting louder, coming closer. I had my shield with me, and fortunately anticipated that volleys of some sort were
falling from the sky. Though I could not see them, I could hear them coming from a distance away, and was able to use my shield to block them from striking me.

The assault stopped suddenly, and I could smell smoke. I learned later that most of the forest of Ykalon and Phygias had caught fire, in an inferno that started further south in Daenia and the Ilessan Hills. Fortunately, I kept my bearings, and moved north, finally reaching a temple in the wilderness where my wounds were healed, as well as they could be.

It was there I learned that there had been a three-way clash between Daggerfall, Wayrest, and Orsinium not far from where I had been, and that the land midway between their kingdoms had been decimated.¹

The Report of Ambassador Lord Naigon Strale

'His Imperial Majesty had sent me on a delicate errand, the details of which I cannot convey in this unsecure report, but my official capacity was to be the Emperor's ambassador to the court of Wayrest. From there, I was to meet with an old friend, Lady Brisienna, who was already in the vicinity. Forgoing any attempt at stealth, I was on an Imperial barge, sailing westward on the Bjoulsae, the morning of the 9th of Frostfall. I remember it was a slightly chilly day, but the sky was very blue.

'We had just passed the delightful riverside village of Candlemass when the captain sounded the alarum. There, in front of us, was a colossal wall of water, at least thirty feet high. It smashed our barge to splinters before any of us had a chance to react. I woke up on the shore, having been rescued by one of my servants who had miraculously not lost consciousness. He and I and one other man were the only survivors.

I thought at first that it was suspiciously similar to what happened to another agent of ours in High Rock but a short time before, where a freak storm had shipwrecked him in the Iliac Bay near Privateer's Hold. Furious and determined to see if similar forces were at work, I began a quick march to Wayrest.

The march, however, was not so terribly quick. The villages all along the Bjoulsae were on fire, and battles raged between the orcs of Orsinium and the soldiers of King Eadwyre in the formerly independent principality of Gauvadon, just east of Wayrest. I am an accomplished mage, and quite able to defend myself, but it took the better part of a week to make it those few miles to Wayrest.

King Eadwyre and his queen Barenziah were celebrating their great victories when I arrived. By then, I had gathered the barest facts of the matter, that simultaneously there were seven great battles in the Iliac Bay, and no one could describe them at all, only their bloodsoaked aftermath.

To summarize: on the 9th of Frostfall, there had been forty-four independent kingdoms, counties, baronies, and dukedoms surrounding the Iliac Bay, if one includes the unconquered territories of the Wrothgarian Mountains, the Dragontail Mountains, the High Rock Sea Coast, the Isle of Balfiera, and the Alik'r Desert. On the 11th of Frostfall, there were but four - Daggerfall, Sentinel, Wayrest, and Orsinium - and all the points where they met lay in ruins, as the armies continued to do battle.
I was determined to find the truth from the King, even if I had to be a most undiplomatic diplomat to do it.

Eadwyre, though a generally jovial sort, had blustered, saying he did not want to give out military secrets. The Queen, ever calm with those unreadable red eyes of hers, told me, 'We do not know.'

I think it is safe to assume that Barenziah did not tell me everything, but the facts of her story - which I later verified after pointed interviews in Daggerfall, Sentinel, and Orsinium - was that they had learned that a certain powerful, ancient weapon was going to be activated. I shan't give the name of it here. Out of fear that it would be used against Wayrest, the King had attempted to buy it from the young adventurer who had discovered its whereabouts. Eadwyre believed, as it turns out quite rightly, that other powers in the Bay had also attempted to win ownership of this device.

What happened then, as Barenziah said, 'We do not know.'

The morning of the 9th and the morning of the 11th somehow merged through some sort of Warp in the West, and Wayrest found themselves at war. Their land had expanded three-fold, but they were under attack by Daggerfall to the west, Orsinium to the east, and Sentinel to the south. There had been no time to understand what had happened, the King said. They had simply reacted, sending their armies to defend their lands against these enemies whose kingdoms had also gained great territorial advantage.

The battles continue on, now months later, as I return to the Imperial City to make my report. What more do I have to say? They are bloody, violent clashes, as is always the case with modern warfare, but I have been to the blackened, desolate no-man's land between the four remaining kingdoms. No mortal army caused that devastation.

I can say that the force that shook the Iliac Bay on the 10th of Frostfall 3E 417 was infinitesimally greater than the power these mighty kingdoms are wielding today.

I can say that there were other strange events on that day which kept the kingdoms from breaking free of the Empire, and accomplished likely more besides.

And I can say there is nothing left of it - this power, this weapon - in the Bay. The Warp that it created swallowed it up.'

Current Political Affairs in the Iliac Bay

Almost twenty years have passed, and the region, though transformed, has stabilized. There are no more disputed territories, and the kingdoms of Daggerfall, Wayrest, Sentinel, and Orsinium hold their new borders in relative peace.

Wayrest spreads across the eastern coast of the Bay, stretching from the land formerly called Anticlerc to half of Gauvadon. Eadwyre has passed on to his ancestors, leaving his kingdom in the hands of his daughter, Elysana, who has two children by her royal consort, and seems likely to hold her father's lands. Your Lordship may also choose to communicate directly with King Helseth and Queen Barenziah in Mournhold. Their primary preoccupations are, of course, with Morrowind's affairs, but they may still have useful observations upon Wayrest's
ruling families and political environment that may aid you in your understanding of the court of Queen Elysana.

King Gortwog of Orsinium controls much of the Wrothgarian Mountains as well as the profitable rivercoast of the Bjoulsae. He persists in his demands that Orsinium be recognized as an Imperial province separate from High Rock. The Elder Council treats Gortwog as a recognized king, and collects taxes directly from Orsinium, but officially Orsinium remains a county of High Rock, though technically it spans both the provinces of High Rock and Hammerfell.

Sentinel has gained the most land, sprawling across the entire southern Iliac Bay from Abibon-Gora, beyond the Dragontail Mountains, to the edge of Mournoth, Orsinium's territory. Queen Akorithi at her death left her enormous kingdom to her only surviving son, Lhotun, who is now surely one of the most powerful kings in Tamriel.

Daggerfall is still ruled by the Breton King Gothryd and the Redguard Queen Aubk-I. Their land now encompasses all of western High Rock, from the border they share with Wayrest at Anticlere to the east, to Ykalon to the north. They have four children now, and are much beloved in their realm.

If there are other repercussions of the mysterious Warp in the West, they have not yet come to our attention in the course of twenty years of observation.
This is the third book in a four-book series. If you have not read the first two books, 'Beggar' and 'Thief,' you would be well advised to do so.

Suoibud Erol did not know much of his past, nor did he care to.

As a child, he had lived in Erolgard, but the kingdom was very poor and taxes were as a result very high. He was too young to manage his abundant inheritance, but his servants, fearing that their master would be ruined, moved him to Jallenheim. No one knew why that location was picked. Some old maid, long dead now, had thought it was a good place to raise a child. No one else had a better idea.

There may have been children with a more pampered, more spoiled existence than young Suoibud, but that is doubtful. As he grew, he understood that he was rich, but he had nothing else. No family, no social position, no security at all. Loyalty, he found out on more than one occasion, cannot truly be bought. Knowing that he had but one asset, a vast fortune, he was determined to protect it, and, if possible, increase it.

Some otherwise perfectly nice people are greedy, but Suoibud was that rare accident of nature or breeding who has no other interest but acquiring and hoarding gold. He was willing to do anything to increase his fortune. Most recently, he had begun secretly hiring mercenaries to attack desirable properties, and then buying them when no one wanted to live there any more. The attacks would then, of course, cease, and Suoibud would have profitable land which he had purchased for a song. It had begun small with a few farms, but recently he had begun a more ambitious campaign.

In north-central Skyrim, there is an area called The Aalto, which is of unique geographical interest. It is a dormant volcanic valley surrounded on all sides by glaciers, so the earth is hot from the volcano, but the constant water drizzle and air is frigid. A grape called Jazbay grows there comfortably, and everywhere else in Tamriel it withers and dies. The strange vineyard is a privately owned, and the wine produced from it is thus rare and extremely expensive. It is said that the Emperor needs the permission of the Imperial Council to have a glass of it once a year.

In order to harass the owner of The Aalto into selling his land cheap, Suoibud had to hire more than a few mercenaries. He had to hire the finest private army in Skyrim.

Suoibud did not like spending money, but he had agreed to pay the general of the army, a woman called Laicifitra, a gem the size of an apple. He had not given it to her yet - payment was to be delivered on the success of the mission - but he had trouble sleeping knowing that he was going to giving up such a prize. He always slept during the day so he could watch his storehouse by night, when he knew thieves were about.
That brings us up to this moment when, after a fitful sleep, Suoibud woke up at about noon, and surprised a thief in his bedroom. The thief was Eslaf.

Eslaf had been contemplating a leap from the window, a hundred feet down, into the branches of a tree beyond the walls of the fortified palace, and a tumble into a stack of hay. Anyone who has ever attempted such a feat will testify that it takes some concentration and nerve to do such a thing. When he saw that the rich man sleeping in the room had awakened, both left him, and Eslaf slipped behind a tall ornamental shield on display to wait for Suoibud to go back to sleep.

Suoibud did not go back to sleep. He had heard nothing, but could feel someone in the room with him. He stood up and began pacing the room.

Suoibud paced and paced, and gradually decided that he was imagining things. No one was there. His fortune was safe and secure.

He was returning to his bed when he heard a clunk. Turning around, he saw the gem, the one he was to give to Laicifitra on the floor by the Atmoran cavalry shield. A hand reached out from behind the shield and grabbed it up.

'Thief!' Suoibud cried out, grabbing a jeweled Akaviri katana from the wall and lunging at the shield.

The 'fight' between Eslaf and Suoibud will not go down in the annals of great duels. Suoibud did not know how to use a sword, and Eslaf was no expert at blocking with a shield. It was clumsy, it was awkward. Suoibud was furious, but was psychologically incapable of using the sword in any way that could damage its fine filligree, reducing its market value. Eslaf kept moving, dragging the shield with him, trying to keep it between him and the blade, which is, after all, the most essential part of any block.

Suoibud screamed in frustration as he struck at the shield, bumping its way across the room. He even tried negotiating with the thief, explaining that the gem was promised to a great warrior named Laicifitra, and if he would give it back, Suoibud would happily give him something else in return. Eslaf was not a genius, but he did not believe that.

By the time Suoibud's guards came to the bedroom in response to their master's calls, he had succeeded in backing the shield into a window.

They fell on the shield, having considerable more expertise with their swords than Suoibud did, but they discovered that there was no one behind it. Eslaf had leapt out the window and escaped.

As he ran heavily through the streets of Jallenheim, making jingling noises from the gold coins in his pockets, and feeling the huge gem chafe where he had hidden it, Eslaf did not know where he should go next. He knew only that he could never go back to that town, and he must avoid this warrior named Laicifitra who had claims on the jewel.

Eslaf Erol's story is continued in the book 'King.'
[208] The Warrior's Charge*

See vol. I.
[209] The Waters of Oblivion*

See vol. I.
Untrained pugiliists are known to make a club of the hand and beat on their opponents like a drum. It is a truly uncouth way to victory. The way of the exposed palm is far more sophisticated and far more deadly.

Consider this question. A man is struck in the chest by the flat of a plate. There is a small bruise but he is otherwise unharmed. Now break the plate and strike him in the chest with a shard using the same force. Now the man is dead or grievously wounded. How can this be? How can a small object harm more than a larger?

This essential point is the first finger of the way of the exposed palm. The five part way is concentration, reaction, equilibrium, speed, breath control. To master unarmed combat all five digits must be mastered.

The parable of the man and the plate is concentration. All of the blow is concentrated into a small point. Therefore it is more potent. To strike with just the thumb can be more deadly than to strike with the whole fist. However, only the highly trained fighter can do this.

The second aspect of concentration is the mental discipline to think hard about what is being done. Distractions are ignored as the will maintains the ultimate goal. The truly deadly fighter can even block out his own pain in this manner.
[211] *Withershins*

See vol. I.
[212] The Wolf Queen*

See vol. I.
Zealotry of Sheogorath

The self-proclaimed Zealots of Sheogorath believe our liege lord to be not just a man of mysterious and wondrous powers, but a living god. They believe his will sustains the lands and his whim supports all things in it. They believe Arden-Sul, Who Reads the Winds in Our Entrails, was the mortal aspect of Lord Sheogorath, and will come again to cleanse the Realm. Since these claims are clearly ridiculous, it can be assumed that all Zealots are quite mad.

The Zealots cannot be reasoned with. They cannot be treated with easily. They attack almost anyone on sight, assuming them to be heretics or non-believers. They fight to the death, reveling in the carnage.

The reader might ask, then how does one join the Zealots? After much research, I discovered that Zealots sneak into settled areas and leave sets of robes behind. Anyone inclined toward Zealotry can don these robes and approach the Zealots safely. It is said that Zealot leaders can see the true heart of a supplicant, even if he wears the robes, and will slay any false supplicants.

Even then, the Zealots have painful rituals meant to prove their fealty to Sheogorath. Only the most devout supplicants are accepted into their ranks. Those who fail these tests are put to death.

Once a supplicant is accepted as a Zealot, he is taught ceremonies and sorcerous secrets. The best known of these is summoning Flesh Atronachs to do their bidding. These powerful creatures are formidable foes.
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