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1 Ourselves and immortality

The sound of someone trying to drag a heavy box as quietly as possible was very distracting. Aemilia strove to maintain poise, but the words in her head tumbled and fragmented and were gone. She put down her pen with a pointed "click" and turned round in her chair.

"Sorry, Aemelia." Diogenes did not sound sorry. He had his sleeves rolled up and was rooting through some of the storage chests that sat under the bookshelves. "What are you working on?"

"A poem about death." She replied flatly. "Or I was until someone decided they needed to rearrange the library right this second. Now I'm talking to you."

"Sorry again." He still didn't sound sorry. "But there's been news. The Archmage has called the Court of Rope together. All three of them. For the Solstice. Marcus wants us to be ready to offer Tribute."

"I thought the Queen was still under enmity?" Aemelia had not been keeping track.

"Not since last Winter," replied Diogenes cheerily. He ran his finger through the frosted tips of his bleached hair and then swore quietly as he realised he'd caked his head in dust. "Queen and Knight at neutrality, King remains amitous."

"That isn't a word." Aemelia corrected her coven mate on reflex, more out of pedantic habit than any confidence he would stop making up words.

"*Definitely* all three of them? Not just the King?" Poise alone kept Aemelia's tone neutral. "Hag Queen and Burnt Prince as well? In the same parley?"

Diogenes was only half listening, busy selecting scrolls and stuffing them into the pockets in his sash.

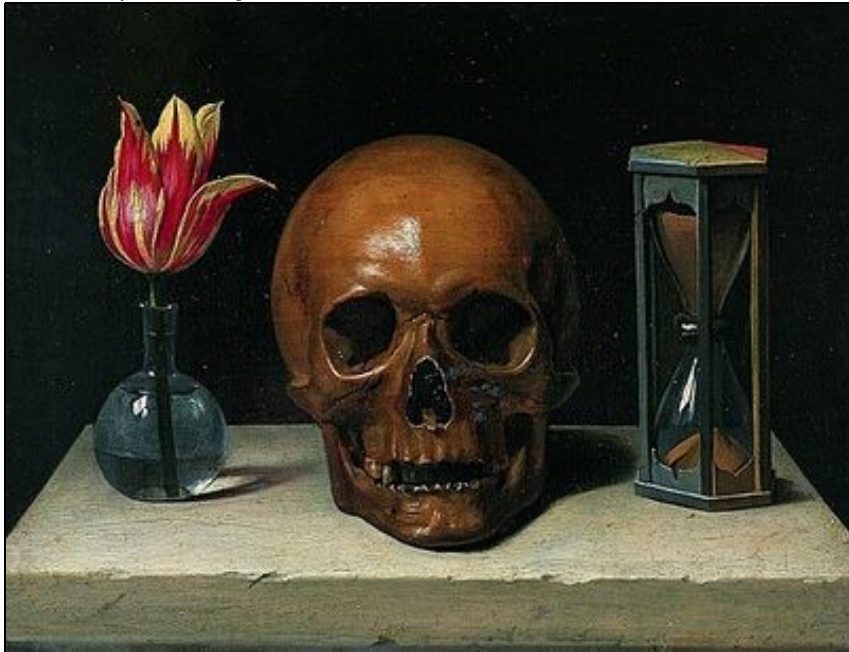
"Well, the heliopticon says it's all three of them. Tupenties from Moonwell Spire says it's *as monarchs* as well if that matters."

It did, in fact, matter. Aemelia caught herself nibbling her thumbnail, and it took an effort to put her hand back in her lap.

"How long has it been since all three of them have been approached together?" She asked mildly. "As the Court I mean, rather than individually?"

"Years, I suppose. I hadn't really given it any thought. Why?"

"No reason, just thinking out loud." She did not let her eyes stray to the shelf where the *Tome of Ruinous Omens* lay innocently on its side, fat with visionary dreams and carefully curated advice about the Court of the Three and the dangers of getting entangled with them. "I just seem to recall that last time they were all together, it caused a bit of a fuss. But I'm sure *this* time it will be *absolutely fine*."



Everything is sure to be well, to be well.

1.1 Overview

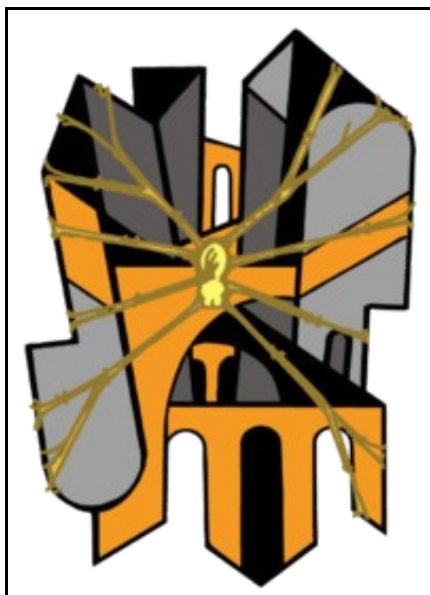
- Six eternal have sent emissaries to Anvil, apparently in response to plenipotentiary messages from the Imperial archmages
- Five have agreed to meetings of one kind of another, either in person or via emissaries
- The other has provided messages, opportunities, or gifts of one type or another

As the Winter Solstice approaches, the **eternals** respond to the **plenipotentiary** messages of the six **archmages**. Each of the six is empowered to send a single message to an eternal of their **realm** each season, with certain expectation of *some* kind of response. Some eternal will arrange a **parley** or some kind, a personal meeting with themselves or more commonly one of their favoured lieutenants. Others may take more direct action, offering **opportunities** to secure boons or enlist the eternal's power to change the Empire in some way. Sometimes they decline the offer of meetings or boons, but even then they are likely to provide their reasons for doing so.

Since the Autumn Equinox, messengers representing six eternal have come to the Empire from their eternal patrons, detailing the response to each plenipotentiary missive.

1.2 Before a House

- The Sovereign Lord of the City of Bridges welcomes the plenipotentiary of the Autumn Archmage
- A parley will take place in a chamber reached via the Hall of Worlds at 16:05 on Saturday during the summit
- Prospero requests the Archmage bring someone capable of speaking for the Celestial Arch along with them
- The Archmage may include up to two others as part of their entourage
- The current Archmage of Autumn is Vossk of Zenith Ascendant



It has been a **little over two years** since last a formal emissary of the **City of Bridges** visited the Empire. The minotaur, resplendent in robes of incarnadine and viridian, again visits the **Castle of Thorns** rather than visiting **the Hub**. Their message is short and devoid of unnecessary details. It seems that the **Sovereign Lord of the City of Bridges** requests formal **parley** with **Vossk of Zenith Ascendant**, the new **Archmage of Autumn**.

The meeting will take place in a chamber set aside for the purpose, at **16:05** on Saturday during the coming Winter Solstice. The main topic of conversation will be the matter of ritual magic - **Threadweaver** is interested to hear how the Archmage believes the **City of Bridges** might provide support to the Imperial war machine in the manner Vossk has outlined, although the minotaur is quick to point out that nothing is promised.

On the matter of promises, however, the **Reckoner of Ebony and Bone** is keen to conclude the matter of the favour owed by the **Celestial Arch** following his **provision of a meeting** with the people of **Skoura**. It is time for that favour to be called in, and as such Vossk is requested to bring a member of the **Conclave order** with the authority to discuss such matters to the parley. As with the favour provided to the **Rod and Shield**, which was repaid by the **dissemination** of a **military ritual** to the magician-princes of Jarm, the expectation is that the repayment will be of commensurate value to the favour provided.

There are provisions for up to two others - secretaries, clerks, or **scriveners** as the Archmage deems appropriate. The agenda for the meeting is set, however, and Prospero is unlikely to be amused by attempts to introduce new matters for discussion once it begins.

1.3 I Would Not Stop



- Siakha offers parley to the Archmage of Spring at 21:30 on Friday during the summit
- The *Marvath* will discuss the matter of destruction the Archmage has raised
- Three new rituals have appeared in Urizen lore without warning, apparently as a gift to Ibiss Briarheart
- The current Archmage of Spring is Ibiss Briarheart

During some of the worst weather of the early Winter, a creature emerges from the *Imperial Regio* at *Anvil*. It is a *tempest*, one of the children of *Maelstrom*. A storm given flesh, a thing of barely contained disruptive force. This one is a little different to those encountered on battlefields supporting the *Children of Wrecks*. It bears a staff of *tempest jade* and wears an open dark green robe that evokes the wind-tossed breakers of the *Bay of Catazar*. It jerks and twitches in time to some inaudible rhythm only it can hear. Moving through *Anvil* with impressive directness, anyone who gets in its way even slightly is *hurled aside* without warning. By the time it reaches the *Hub*, there are magistrates and militia waiting for it. It does not waste time on formalities, simply delivering its message to anyone who is near enough to hear its loud, rumbling words.

Thunder-That-Speaks has heard the words of **Ibiss Briarheart**. She accepts the petition for parley. There will be an opportunity for the Archmage of Spring to speak with her favoured lieutenant the *Marvath* who is empowered to talk of the destruction desired by Briarheart. That meeting will take place on Friday evening at 21:30 in a chamber created for the purpose. Only the Archmage themselves, or their proxy if they cannot come themselves, is invited to attend.

There will be no talk of *Grendel*, nor of wreckers. Nothing to say about Sarvos, nor *Asavea*, nor the lords of Winter. The matter the *Hurricane Queen* is interested in is the devastation, slaughter, and loot that the Archmage has proposed. She will offer her gift... if the Archmage is strong enough to accept it. Indeed, she has provided gifts to the people of Urizen as Briarheart has asked.

Message delivered, the *tempest* returns by the same direct route that it arrived, this time with an armed escort that it does not acknowledge in any way. It disappears through the gate at the heart of the *Imperial regio* with neither another word nor a backward glance.

1.4 Civility





- The Thrice-cursed Court accept the offer of parley
- They will accept a delegation from Anvil at midnight on Friday
- Each of the three has matters of interest to them
- The current Keeper of Tharim's Throne Claudia Varkulova Remislav is invited to join the courtiers of the Thrice-cursed to help facilitate the meeting
- The current Archmage of Winter is Ematius "Icebreaker" Ankarien, although they have indicated their intent to retire

On the evening of the first day of Winter proper, the air is sharp with the promise of snow and ice, and a messenger arrives at Anvil. It comes not from the Imperial Regio, but along the main road that runs through the settlement. It takes its time, savouring the sights and sounds, and pausing to observe folk about their early evening business. It is clearly a **creature of the realms**, and of the **Winter realm** in particular. Pallid skinned, with lengths of rusted metal woven into and out of its flesh, it observes with empty eye sockets that nonetheless seem to see everything that transpires. A foul aura surrounds it, and those who get too close feel their skin crawling - that feeling of being on the edge of sleep and hearing a noise from a part of the room you know to be empty. Chained to its wrist is a book, the binding of which does not bear close inspection by those of faint heart or weak stomach.

Weakness and the Hall of Worlds

The last time all three members of the Thrice-cursed Court were together, they appeared in the Hall of Worlds. Their departure triggered an unpleasant effect. Everyone in the Hall of Worlds was struck with **weakness**. There's no indication this was done on purpose; it might just be an effect of the Thrice-cursed monarchs withdrawing their presence from the Hall. There's also no indication this will happen again, but it is something to be aware of.

But to be on the safe side, it's worth a reminder that one cannot leave the Hall of Worlds while subject to **weakness**, because one cannot cast **operate portal**. It is important to remember that you can only move *yourself* between the Hall of Worlds and Anvil (and vice versa) with the **operate portal** spell. The **Ambassadorial Gatekeeper** ritual allows other options but must either be cast in advance, or performed in the Hall of Worlds.

It's also tricky to remove weakness while one is experiencing it, given the way it restricts a character's abilities. The most reliable way would be to use a potion such as **Feverfail Elixir** or **Maledict's Medicament**. A magician who does so would then be free to cast the **purify** spell, or take part in a ritual such as **Renewed Strength of the New Day** to help their fellows overcome any lingering curse. It's also important to remember that, as with **venom**, weakness does not go away naturally - it must be treated in some way before it is removed.

Again, there's no particular reason to believe this may become an issue, but this is a good a time as any to remind people of the dangers of being weakened while in the Hall of Worlds.

When it reaches the Hub, it bows low and begins to read from the book. It bears a greeting from the **Court of Broken Hearts**. From the **King-in-Chains**, from the **Prince-of-Ashes**, and from the **Queen-of-Nails**. They accept the invitation of the **Archmage of Winter**. They also express their regret: they have heard that the Archmage of Winter Ematius "Icebreaker" Ankarien has chosen to step away from their powerful position to pursue other interests. Ematius was a worthy Archmage, say the Three, and whomever steps up to replace them will surely have their work cut out for them, given how difficult the other eternal of the Winter realm can be to deal with.

Regardless, they offer formal parley on Friday night, at midnight, during the coming Summit. The new Archmage may bring two others as their aides if they wish. In addition to the Archmage, the Keeper of Tharim's Throne **Claudia Varkulova Remislav** is invited to attend as a guest of the King. During the parley they may speak as they see fit, with no constraints placed on them by the Archmage. They may bring a servant of their own along if they desire. The Keeper of Tharim's Throne is also empowered to bring one other specific person if the wish: the **Marcher General** of the **Drakes**, **William Guildenstern**. Tharim leaves it entirely to Claudia's discretion whether they believe Guildenstern will provide any benefit to the parley.

As to the parley itself, each of the three monarchs of the *Court of Rope* has topics of interest to them. The King-in-Chains and his lieutenant *Lord-Captain Catenatus* will discuss the matter of the wicked folk of **Skoura**, and of the murder of *Obligatus*. The *Prince-of-Ashes* will speak of the clever artisans of Skoura, and of knights and **regio**, as well as on the matter of the **vallorn**. The *Queen-of-Nails* will speak of the peculiar folk of Skoura, the **boon of Catena**, and of other gifts that the Court are minded to offer to their Imperial friends.

These gifts will *not* however include the ritual to *Unleash Wild Fire*. The Empire has proved reticent to actually use the magical lore that the *Court of Locked Doors* has offered in recent years and while **Armand Remislav Who Was Remys** is beloved of the court, they would be better served seeking other boons.

In response to questions, or requests for clarification, the messenger simply smiles and shakes their head. Once they have finished delivering their messages, they depart Anvil the way they came - not via the Imperial regio, but along the road leading out of the town. Those few brave enough to follow a herald of the Thrice-cursed soon lose it as the evening darkens into night and the first curtains of snow close around it.

1.4.1 Tribute Collectors

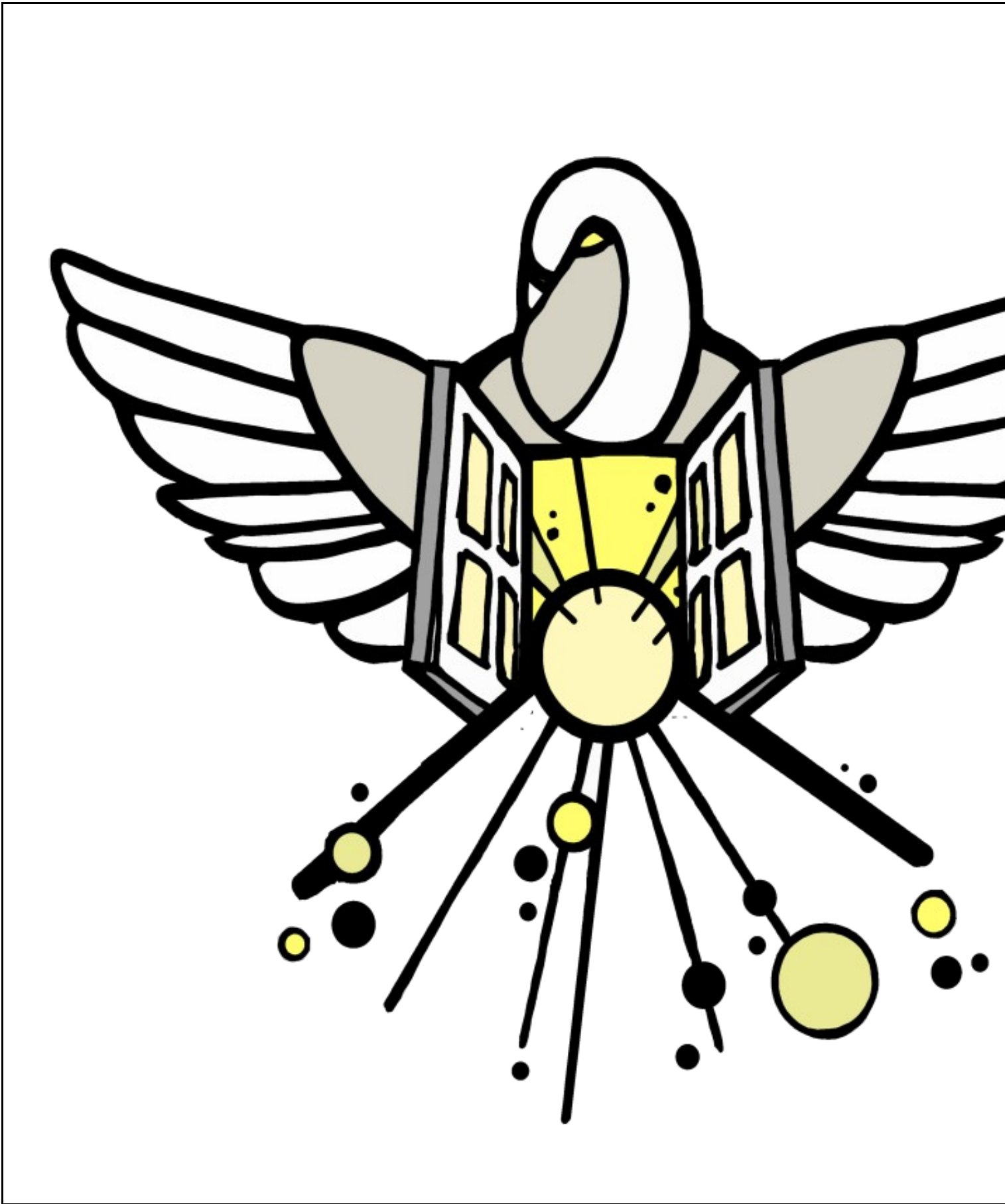
- **Surut intends to send tribute collectors to Anvil prior to the parley**
- **These tribute collectors are due to arrive at Anvil around 22:00 on Friday**
- **They are only interested in speaking to "warriors" - whatever that means**

There is another matter to consider; the *Burnt Knight* intends to send some of his heralds to Anvil before the parley proper to collect "tribute". They will be looking for warriors - and the herald stresses they must be warriors - prepared to accept a tiny portion of Surut's curse for a time. This will apparently involve the herald-knights **injuring** the arms or legs of those prepared to receive their strike. They may arrange for **physicks** to be on hand if they wish; the important thing is the willingness to offer tribute.

The herald is close-mouthed about the details of this peculiar ceremony. They do let slip, however, that this is about the fact that the Thrice-cursed Court all too often deals only with magicians. This may be acceptable to the *Thronebound* and the *Contemptuous*, but the *Ashen Prince* values the raw strength of the warrior more than he does honeyed words or clever magic.

Before departing, the herald also mentions that Surut is expecting that there will be at least some warriors prepared to show respect to him. It is not stated explicitly but there is a subtext that Surut would likely be displeased to discover that the Empire is not willing to offer sufficient tribute, and this will directly impact his mood in the parley.

1.5 And Eternity



- Ylenwe has responded to a request for parley from the Archmage of Day
- A herald of Ylenwe named Trunembra of the Strings will visit the Hall of Worlds during the arcane colloquium

- In addition to the Archmage of Day, Ylenwe has requested that the High Bard of the Empire be there
- The current Archmage of Day is Skywise Gralka

On a blustery autumn day a quiet herald with mottled silver and indigo scales appears at the Hub. They arrive without comment, and the first anyone is aware of them is when, seated on a three-legged stool, they start to play quiet notes on their cerulean-and-weltsilver lyre. Their harmonious melody quells the often garrulous crowds in the Hub.

As they pluck their soothing strings, they deliver their message from the *Mistress of Music*. Zie has heard the words of the Archmage of Day, and seen the results of their cooperation at Bulgakov, and in the *White Wood*. Yet there are limits to what Ylenwe can achieve - and here the heralds music turns mournful, bringing a tear to the eye of all save the most hard-hearted. The *Sungate* in Kronemark is beyond the power of *Zie of the Perfect Morning*.

According to her herald the Sungate is not a scar, some residue of the harm the *Oblivion Flame* inflicts upon the world. Rather it is an open wound, a thing directly supported by the disharmonious fury of the *End Of Songs*. The howling empty heart of the *Light Destructive* cannot be moved by the music of the *Dove*; there is no way to close the Sungate or to allow mortals to approach the fane of such relentless, irresistible hatred. If things change in the future then fate may deliver an opportunity to deal with this burning beacon of despite, but for now there is nothing to be done but avoid it.

The heralds' notes fall silent, and they bow their scaled head for several moments in contemplation. When their music resumes it has a more hopeful tone. When it comes to the *White Wood* and its song, though, the *Shape of Sound* can achieve something a little more wholesome. She intends to send her herald *Trunembra of the Strings* to the Hall of Worlds during the *Arcane Colloquium*. Once the Archmage of Day has completed their hosting duties, there will be a chance to discuss matters. The eternal asks that the *High Bard of the Empire* also be there, if possible. There will be discussion of musical instruments, and the role that music can play in uplifting the spirit and honing understanding of the world.

1.5.1 Passed the Setting Sun

- Ylenwe proposes to serve as patron for a house of harmonious music in Skarsind
- Zie wishes the Archmage and High Bard to consider how to help those threatened by Cold Sun

The Harmonious Hall

Commission Type: Edifice

Location: TBC, Skarsind

Cost: 15 weirwood, 10 mithril, 10 ilium, 75 crowns

Time: 1 season

Upkeep: None

Requirement: Must be ceded to Ylenwe (??)

Effects:

- Unclear at this time

The *Harmonious Chorister* proposes the construction of a hall of music in the *White Wood*, a place where Imperial citizens can come together to study magic especially as it relates to the *Realm of Sea and Sky* and the pursuit of harmony. The herald is not clear on what precisely this means - this is partly the matter that is to be discussed with the Archmage and the High Bard - but they do deliver plans for the structure. It appears to be a spacious hall, designed to complement the natural beauty of the area, with plenty of room for musical study and performance. The hall of music is an *edifice* that would require 15 wains of weirwood, 10 wains of mithril, 10 rings of ilium, and 75 crowns to construct, and would need to be conceded to Ylenwe. This last point raises a few eyebrows, but the herald gently suggests that questions would be better held until *Trunembra of the Strings* can answer them with more authority.

There is another matter that *Zie of the Dawn* wishes to speak of. The *Oblivion Flame* has been *kindled again* in the mortal world. Its creatures have erupted into lands torn by war, suspicion, and disharmony. It rampages unchecked, destroying and killing without pause. *Cold Sun* has learned much from its recent incursion into the Empire, and Ylenwe asks that the Archmage and the High Bard use all their influence to encourage the *Imperial Senate* to offer whatever aid the Empire can spare to the people of both the *Commonwealth* and *Jarm* - both of whom are facing a storm that the Empire alone has successfully weathered. Again, there will be a chance to talk about this with *Trunembra of the Strings*.

1.6 Only Gossamer, My Gown



- **The Whisper Gallery have responded to the request for parley from the Archmage of Night**
- **They intend to take possession of the Hall of Worlds late on Saturday**
- **Exact details of what will be discussed, and precisely who with, are not clear**
- **The current Archmage of Night is Bella Vicente d'Apulian**

It is not a herald that arrives at Anvil as Autumn ages toward Winter, but an orc from distant **Apulian**. She comes in the **dramaturgical** guise of the **Mountebank** - or perhaps more correctly **sailor**. Of particular note is her **cloak** which seems to billow around her with a life of its own, and whose hood does a remarkable job of concealing her identity even without her mask - a crudely carved piece of driftwood whose simplicity seems quite at odds with her flamboyant garb.

She comes as a messenger of the *Seers of the Empty Thrones*, the *Repairers of Reputation*, the *Chiaroscuran Courtiers of the Echoed Fall* - the **Whisper Gallery**. They have received the art of *sweet Bella* - **Bella Vicente d'Apulian** presumably - the delicious **Archmage of Night**. The specific requests contained within have piqued their interest. They choose to accede, and will send their sommelier to meet with the Archmage and any other Imperial magicians who wish to be present, late on Saturday night in the Hall of Worlds. The *Weavers of the Improbable Loom* will reach out to that place shortly before the meeting and fashion it suitable to their needs; they presume the Archmage understands their need to do so.

They do however place stipulations on the parley. All those who attend must be masked; those who do not accept this requirement will find they are unable to enter the Hall and will instead find themselves returning to Anvil. This misdirection of the paths between Anvil and the Hall of Worlds will persist until the parley - and it will be a parley - has been completed.

They are especially interested in seeing certain folk attend. In addition to sweet Bella, they invite the wise **Fausta**, Grandmaster Silver Chalice; the ambitious **Genoveva Barossa d'Apulian**, *Senator* for *Spiral* and cunning **Rafael Barossa d'Apulian**, Custodian of *Legacy*; the perceptive **Mikael Reskovich**, High Bard; and the hateful **Morgan Waystone Path**, *Speaker of the Magpies*. If they are in attendance they may accompany the Archmage into the Hall as part of their entourage. The Sommelier has words to convey to each from the *Praetori Exsilium in Litore*.

Delightful Bella has, with honeyed words, asked for aid in uncovering secrets and the lieges of the Gallery shall be interested to see whether they are successful in doing so. There may be talk of **Axos**, the fall of the empire of dreams, and the Spider of Lost Days. There may be talk of the **War of Whispers**, and of the destruction of the **Magpies**, and of the **Whispering Shadow Courtiers**.

The message is vague, perhaps unsurprisingly. On one matter, though, the orc is quite clear. The Whisper Gallery are not friends of, or allies to, the Empire of **Vesna Borkovna Prochnost**, the *Throne of Pumpkins*. Imperial thieves are too keen to drag secrets from the shadowed places of the world and expose them to the harsh noonlight. The Court continues to oppose them, wherever they can, and will urge others to do so. The enmity they bear against secret-slaughterers has not been slaked, not even a little.

However for this single night at the Winter Solstice, there will be a chance for good-mannered discussion. Things change, and while the enmity of the Court has not lessened, the shape it takes is as mutable as anything else drowned in the shadows. With that in mind, any members of the militia, or any magistrates, who attempt to exert their authority over the people visiting their friends in the *Court of Disrule* will be ejected. They are welcome as long as they come masked, and remain civil, but any who attempt to harass or impose boundaries on their fellow citizens will find the patience of the *Dancers of the Gossamer Pavane* extremely limited.

With that, the orc bows politely, and takes her leave. A pair of magistrates stand ready outside the Hub to ask her some significant questions, but almost as soon as she steps out of the tent she is mobbed by two dozen figures dressed identically in the same voluminous cloak. The shapes wheel around each other and before the magistrates can do much more than raise the alarm, each of them races off in a different direction. While several of these interlopers are caught, they are Imperial citizens from every nation - a mix of humans and orcs. The only thing they have in common is that they are all actors, who say they had been paid for a unique thespian opportunity. None of them have ever met before, each was recruited by a different agent, and they all resolutely claim to have no idea they were dealing with the Whisper Gallery. Of the orc who delivered the message of the Whisper Gallery there is no sign.

1.6.1 Participation : Parley

- **Anyone who wants to visit the Hall of Worlds during the parley must wear a mask**
- **While in the Hall of Worlds during the parley, it is impossible to remove a mask**
- **Everyone in the Hall of Worlds during the parley experiences a roleplaying effect**
- **Additional options exist for leaving the parley**

The Whisper Gallery are using the invitation to parley to "twist" the gate that leads to the Hall of Worlds. Anyone who is not masked in some way will be unable to reach the meeting. Anyone who enters the Hall of Worlds will find that they cannot remove their mask; it is impossible for anyone to take their own or another character's mask off while the parley is underway. Veils can also be used provided they cover the entire face.

Furthermore everyone in the Hall of Worlds will experience a **roleplaying effect**: *your mask represents your true face and you find it easy to act in accordance with its identity*. This effect becomes more pronounced as the parley continues. The dramaturgical personae offer some suggestions as to roleplaying effects tied to the traditional roles, but its up to you how you interpret the identity your mask represents. The effect fades within a few minutes of leaving the Hall of Worlds.

The twisting of the paths to and from the Hall of Worlds has a second effect. Anyone leaving the Hall of Worlds can choose to go immediately to the out-of-character area rather than return to Anvil directly. They're free to come back into play through the entrance between the out-of-character area and Anvil if they wish. This doesn't represent teleportation but rather the character being escorted, unseen, by heralds wreathed in **Night magic** until they reach the relative safety of the alleys of **Outer Anvil** - a clear effort from the Whisper Gallery to stymie attempts to intercept, search, or detain anyone visiting their parley.

During the parley any herald of the Whisper Gallery may call **CURSE** against anyone attempting to disrupt the meeting. If this is done, the target should immediately leave the Hall of Worlds by the nearest exit and return to Anvil; they are unable to enter the Hall of Worlds again until time out.

Finally, we ask all participants to be mindful of our **conduct** rules around roleplaying conflict, especially those concerning physical intimidation.

1.7 Cornice



- **Adamant has declined a formal parley from the Archmage of Summer**
- **They have made a number of proposals relating to ritual magic**
- **The current Archmage of Summer is Mirella of the Twisted Rose**

There is, of course, a sizable contingent of *koboldi* busy at Anvil following the Autumn Equinox. While they are mostly focused on anchoring the **new structure**, one of them takes time out of their schedule to visit the Hub. A cheerful, friendly individual with silver scales buffed to mirror sheen, they wear a splendid golden coat inlaid with hundreds of tiny gemstones that twinkle and glitter as they move. Somewhat apologetically, they indicate that they have been charged with delivering a message from the *King Under the Mountain* in response to the **plenipotentiary** of the **Archmage of Summer**. It is, they warn, a fairly mixed bag all things told.

The *koboldi* delivers the bad news first - *?to get it out of the way so that one can focus on happier things?*. While the *King Under the Mountain* would be happy to see more great fortresses of **white granite** built in northern Varushka, they are concerned that the Vorazi do not see the bigger picture. The court of Adamant might help make a fortress larger, more impressive, or harder to destroy. They might help it be built more swiftly. They might even aid in enchanting it so that it can be more easily repaired or its garrison granted additional strength. The one thing they are *not* going to do is make it *cheaper*. As the *koboldi* says philosophically *?you really don't want to cut corners when you're building something that's meant to withstand armies, do you??*

The request to intercede with Imperial roads is not something Adamant is interested in at the moment. The **Senate** is doing a wonderful job repairing and maintaining the grand highways, says the *koboldi*. Yet the **ruinous** magic of Spring - the *koboldi* shudders at the thought of it - has a way of tearing down even those things crafted from the strongest mundane materials. Infusing an entire Empire's worth of roads with adamant - even the pale shadow of true adamant that can be worked in the mortal world - would take massive effort and not be achieved quickly. For something as mundane, and lacking in **majesty** as a network of roads? Is such an endeavour worthy of the *King Under the Mountain*? It isn't impossible to achieve but would require a great

deal of fast talk, and likely involve the kind of **Imperial enchantment** that has been illegal since the **interdiction of Cassandra i Periera i Erigo made such things a crime.**

Finally on the matter of the Ashen Flame, the Archmage must understand that there is no shortage of covens and individual magicians seeking the patronage of *Sharaz on the Adamant Throne*. Their master is not uninterested, but at the moment there is little to make that coven stand out. If the Ashen Flame is serious about impressing Adamant, says the *koboldi*, they should prevail on the Archmage of Summer to arrange a meeting on their behalf with some of Adamant's assessors. They should outline what they actually want, and why Adamant should give it to them. If this is the sole purpose of a plenipotentiary missive, the *Master of Gnomes* is much more likely to be amenable to honouring that request.



Dima Vasilyevna Novosad, Master of the Koboldi



© Richard Burge Photography

Laughlan vi Temeschwar, Master of Rings



Lucrezia Corvinascura, Chair of the Wolf

1.7.1 Throne of the Mountains

- **Adamant offers an arcane projection that might be codified to conjure a powerful castle from his domain**
- **Unlike the Frozen Citadel of Cathan Canae, the conjured fort would focus on protecting a single region of hills**
- **In return for their aid they request that certain titles have their powers expanded**
- **All four titles could be amended with a single Senate motion**

After all that negativity, the *Dragon of Stone* is interested to hear the request of **Joseph of the Ashen Flame** regarding the conjuration of *actual* citadels rather than simple castles that simply *claim* to be citadels. It is within the power of the *Imperishable Potentate* to do so. Adamant is prepared to provide a *document* that can serve as the basis for a ritual called *Throne of the Mountains* that could be codified at any Imperial *college of magic*. It would conjure a powerful defensive structure from the domain of Adamant that would offer superlative protection to the region of *hills* where the enchantment was cast. This defence would make it significantly harder for an enemy army to claim the region, and they would find attempts to do so particularly punishing. Beyond that the *koboldi* provides no other details. A little cross-questioning from a member of the *Unfettered Mind* who happens to be present leaves them with the distinct impression that the *koboldi* is outlining something similar in basic outline to the *Basalt Citadel*, but for enchanting hills or mountains. Attempts to get a more specific explanation just send the *koboldi* off into a tangent about how great fortifications are in general. In return for this boon, the *Stone King* wishes to see the powers of certain *Imperial titles* amended. At the moment, the epic builders of the Empire often have little lists of things they can and cannot build - *clearly* an oversight suggests the cheerful *koboldi*. The *Throne of Adamant* *?simply?* wishes the *Imperial Senate* to amend the powers of the *Master of the Koboldi*, *Legion Engineer*, *Master of Rings*, and *Chair of the Wolf* such that these titles can build *any commission* that creates a structure. This would mean they could commission any current *or future military* or *civilian* commission that makes a structure (this would exclude, for example, mustering an *army* or raising a *navy*).

The *koboldi* cheerfully points out that this will save the Senate a lot of trouble in the long run as they won't have to keep tweaking the titles as they come up with new things to build.

Obviously, any other restrictions about how and where and when they can build things will remain as per the individual titles. If the Senate does so before the Conclave Session on Saturday night, a *koboldi* will try and make sure the Archmage of Summer has the document in their hands during the session.

1.7.2 Monolithic Stronghold

- **Adamant considers the power of Monolithic Stronghold of the Gemstone Dragon**
- **In return for aid, they ask that the Imperial Master of Works have their power to commission fortifications restored**

Likewise, when it comes to the *Monolithic Stronghold of the Gemstone Dragon*, Adamant is prepared to examine the *arcane projection* and see if it can be improved. The *koboldi* cautions that this might increase the magnitude of the enchantment; it's hard to say. In return Adamant wishes to see the Senate show their commitment to building and maintaining mundane *fortifications* - they ask that the Archmage use their political influence to restore the power of the *Imperial Master of Works* to *commission* such structures. The civil service indicate that it would be possible to limit the number of times each season that this power could be used - in much the same way as the power of the *Imperial Spymaster* to build *spy networks* is limited. Again, if this is done before the last Conclave Session of the summit, the *koboldi* will do their best to deliver a modified arcane projection to the Archmage during that time although they can't promise to be successful.

1.7.3 On Gnomes

- **Gnomes are inhabitants of the Summer realm, part of Adamant's court**

As a final note, which the *koboldi* almost forgets to mention, there is the matter of gnomes. They are *inhabitants* of the *Summer realm* that serve as excavators in the ranks of Adamant's court. They are simple yet powerful creatures of earth and stone that can swim through rock, and reshape it as they wish with their bare hands. The *koboldi* is a little sniffy when they recount this - there are strong hints that their people and the gnomes do not get along well. Indeed, the little silver herald finished by saying that they don't see why **Dima Vasilyevna Novosad** would be worried about gnomes when they have so many delightful *koboldi* to work with.

1.7.4 Collecting Stones

- **Adamant has also received a missive from the Stone Smith**

It seems that the Archmage of Summer is not the only person who has requested parley with the *the Unturned Stone*. The *Stone Smith*, **Gemma Brightsmith** has also sought counsel from the *Swordbreaker* on behalf of her fellow *smiths* through the auspices of an *Autumn eternal*. Rather than reply in the same fashion as he does with an Archmage, however, it seems Adamant has chosen to send his heralds directly to *the Marches* to present his response. You can find more detail about this in the *In the ground* wind of fortune.

1.8 Timetable

There are comparatively few meetings taking place during this summit. The times, the locations, and the eternal involved, are summarised here.

Day	Time	Eternal	Realm	Note
Friday	21:30	<i>Siakha</i>	Spring	Parley; only the Archmage is invited to the chamber where it will take place
Friday	00.00	<i>The Thrice-cursed Court</i>	Winter	Limited attendance parley in a chamber
Saturday	15:00	<i>Ylenwe</i>	Day	A herald will attend the <i>Arcane Colloquium</i> after the formal business is completed
Saturday	16:05	<i>Prospero</i>	Autumn	Parley in a chamber
Saturday	00.00	<i>Whisper Gallery</i>	Night	Parley in the Hall of Worlds

2 Speak to me

Jorgen pulled his cloak more tightly around him as the rain pounded and the thunder growled, and thanked the paragons for its waterproof coating. His companion raised a lightstone lantern - few fully mundane lamps could survive weather like this - casting a wedge of dim light between the stones of the Imperial regio. The Wintermark civil servant suppressed a shudder.

The creature that stood in the midst of the monolith-bounded circle was clearly inhuman. It towered over the two civil servants before it, even hunched over. It had impossibly long limbs, impossibly thin and bone-like, and the tattered black dress that clung to its frame did little to reduce the horror it radiated. If not for the mobility of its features, set in a milk-white face as round as the full moon, it would have been easy to mistake it for a disturbing mannikin or piece of art abandoned in the regio. As it was, there was no doubt as to the thing's animation - she moved like an insect shifting between absolute stability and insect-like flurry of action without warning. Jorgen did his best to suppress the insistent shouting from his legs, both of whom seemed keen on the idea of running away and not looking back.

He cleared his throat. And then cleared it again. "And is that the full message from your mistress, Madame Baroness?"

The thing moved, jerking forward, and suddenly its great dinner-plate face was barely six inches from Jorgen's. It did not blink, its eyes fixed on those of the civil servant. Its thin lips split into a broad smile, revealing dozens of tiny little teeth like those of a child.

"Yes," it said, voice like cracking ice. "except perhaps to remind you that obviously the Pale Empress expects total honesty and sincerity in this matter, just as the Archmage would expect of Her."

Jorgen swallowed, and nodded his head jerkily.

The Baroness, having delivered her message, bowed her great luminous head and turned to leave. The winds whipped the sodden cloth of her ragged garb around her, and she paused for a moment. Her head, impossibly, began to move, swivelling independently of her spindly neck and body to face the Wintermarker. Its face was locked in a grotesque grimace and a strange greenish light had ignited behind its pale eyes.

"Oh," she said, as if just remembering some minor matter of trivial concern. "It is just possible that the Archmage has begun hearing things in his sleep. Bells at sea, perhaps, Haunting his dreams. Given the fall of the Lighthouse at Nikephoros and its implications, you understand. He is not to worry, or be afraid, or indeed pay it any mind. It will only... encourage them... you see?"

With his final cryptic remark, she took her leave fading away into the darkness without moving, grinning visage still facing the civil servants, her stick-thin body facing the other way. The last things to fade were her eyes, which flared once like dreadful lamps just before she disappeared completely.

"Well that was bloody awful," said Jorgen's companion flatly after a few moments.

Jorgen didn't reply, just wrapped himself in his cloak and slipped his damp notebook into the satchel he wore beneath. As they turned back toward the hub, and the hot tea awaiting them, Jorgen once again gave silent thanks for the fact that he was not the Winter Archmage, and so did not need to deal with any of... this.

But it was some time before he slept a whole night in which his dreams not troubled by the distant sound of tolling bells and cracking ice.



2.1 Overview

- Six eternal have responded to plenipotentiary messages from the Imperial archmages
- 4 of them have agreed to some sort of meeting at the Spring Equinox, while 2 have taken other steps

Every season, each of the six archmages is empowered to send a single plenipotentiary message to an eternal of their realm. The eternal are bound to respond, although not always in a way the archmage may wish. Sometimes they will arrange personal meetings; often they will send their own emissaries to treat with the Empire in the form of the archmage; occasionally they take direct action in response to the requests contained in the missive; rarely they decline formally although even then they will tend to communicate the reasons for their unhappiness.

Following the Winter Solstice, as the new year dawns, six eternal have responded to invitations to parley via their emissaries.

2.2 Pale Empress



• Skathe of the Thrice-cursed Court offers parley in a suitable chamber at 21.55 on Saturday

- Along with the Archmage, the Grandmaster of the Celestial Arch and the Custodian of the Bleak Tower are invited to attend the parley
- The Archmage of Winter is Ematius of the Great Library of Ankarien

It is a dark and stormy night when a towering figure emerges from the *Imperial regio*. Dressed in a striking tattered black dress and nearly nine feet tall, she introduces herself as the *Baroness of All Pains*, a member of the cursed court of the *Hag Queen*. She speaks in a voice that cracks like ice to relay the word of the Witch of the Thrice-Cursed Court to the civil servants at the Hub.

Apparently *Her Imperial Majesty of Cares* would be *delighted* to welcome the *Archmage of Winter* to formal parley at the Spring Equinox, at five to ten on Saturday night in a chamber she is already preparing for just this very purpose. The *Lady of Laments* is grateful for the Archmage's admission that events that transpired in *the League*, (in *enlightened Holberg* and *beautiful Sarvos*), were down to the actions of Zephaniah's Lament and not she, the *Giver of Gifts*. The Baroness explains that her mistress would be happy to clear up any lingering doubts or questions about that sorry affair, which was of course initiated by members of that unlamented *Highborn* chapter when they reached out to the *Painted Mirror* for help - help that was freely offered and accepted at a known price. She would be happy to continue the general conversation that was begun in the halls of the *Charred Prince* so recently, as well, though she intends to be discreet on the matter.

Having delivered this preamble, the Baroness of All Pains begins to cackle at the thought of what follows, and she begins once more to relay her queen's words. The *Hexenkönigin* would be happy to have the *Grandmaster* of the *Celestial Arch* and the *Custodian of the Bleak Tower* join the Archmage as his right and left hand, as the *masters of the High Peaks* have always been her most favourite and brilliant companions in the long and constant years she has been a friend to the Empire. She is excited to hear of the well of bitterness towards the *Druj* that the Archmage claims swells within the heart of the *heirs of Alderei the Fair* and the *scions of Terunael*.

She has, at great effort, prepared a smattering of generous gifts to assist in bringing weal to the many inhabitants of the *Sarangrave*. This will, however, depend on whether the Archmage and his companions can weave a suitably delightful and sincere picture of the Empire's blackened heart and their committed, spiteful, hateful intent to strike back at the wicked *Druj*. If it seems their heart is not in it in the moment, then she is sure someone else can make use of her gifts, so the Archmage needn't worry on her account. The tall figure sneers as she remarks that, of course, the *Pale Empress* expects total honesty and sincerity in this matter, just as the Archmage would expect of her, and then departs.

2.3 Invisible Hand



- Emissaries of the City of Gold and Lead have responded to the Autumn archmage by interceding directly
- They present proposals in the **Louder than words** wind of fortune

- **The current Archmage of Autumn is Edmundo of Damakan's forge**

The trade envoy who emerges from the Imperial regio shortly after the Winter Solstice is swathed in silken veils. This is not the first time they (or someone very like them) has visited **Anvil** on behalf of the **City of Gold and Lead**. In answer to the plenipotentiary of the Autumn Archmage, the City chooses to take direct action. Specifically, a number of assessors, brokers, and long-term planners have been dispatched from the City, not only to the Empire but also into **Otkodov**. The City has good relations with the **Thule** in general, and has agreed to draw on their relationship to see what can be done about the request of the redoubtable Edmundo. The herald offers a personal plaudit to **Vossk of Zenith Ascendant**, thanking her for writing such a commendably concise and informative missive that leaves little doubt as to what the Archmage desires.

Obviously, the City of Gold and Lead cannot deliver its findings immediately - they will need time to talk to mortals in both the north and the south - but they offer assurances that the agents of the *Invisible Hand* will return shortly before the Spring Equinox to share their findings with their Imperial customers. The herald notes that there will be no additional charge for this service at this time; the City is well pleased with the Empire's commitment to trade and commerce at all levels from the remarkable response to the markets taking greater control of the **Ephisis' Scale** ritual all the way down to the constant flow of money and goods that swirls through Anvil during a summit.

In due course, detailed proposals are presented to the hub, as well as to a number of universities and the offices of respected builders and traders, a few weeks before the Spring Equinox. The details of their efforts are included in the **Louder than words** wind of fortune.

2.4 Mistress of Ice and Darkness



- Cathan Canae will send her favoured lieutenant Volstann the Eater of Boars to take counsel with the Archmage
- The boisterous messenger is expected to meet the Archmage in their hall at 20.00 on Friday

- **The Archmage can bring up to four additional people - Cathan Canae has suggested one of these be the Legion Engineer**
- **The current Archmage of Summer is Mirella of the Twisted Rose**

Midway between Winter and Spring, with a thick layer of frost on the ground in the Imperial Regio, a massive dog-like creature emerges without fanfare and plods down to the civil service hub. It is a stout hound, similar to a St Bernard but built on a much larger scale. Five feet at the shoulder, with rolls of thick skin that shift as it stomps about its business, the only other sign that it is not a mundane beast is that it wears a suit of boiled leather or hide barding tooled with the runes of **strength** and **victory**. It has fierce fangs, but those who encounter it describe it as having "gentle eyes" - whatever that means. When it reaches the Hub, it plonks down with a tired sigh in the middle of the entrance and refuses to budge. When one of the civil servants musters the courage to approach, they find that hung around its neck is a carved ivory scroll tube. The beast stares impassively as numb fingers work the catch to retrieve the scroll and then, without a backward glance, the massive creature heads back to the Imperial regio and returns whence it came.

The message scroll bears greetings from the court of the **Mistress of Blizzards** in response to the missive from **Mirella of the Twisted Rose**. The Queen on the Throne of Ice requests parley, and intends to send her trusted servant *Volstann Eater of Boars* to speak on her behalf. The meeting cannot take place in Kalpaheim, but rather will take place in the Hall of Heroes, a part of Volstann's personal hall that sits between the **Summer realm** and the mortal world. The primary topic of conversation will be the terms regarding Imperial access to the **frozen citadels**. The **assurance** of the ritual is not up for discussion, but there is an opportunity here for the Archmage to make their case with regard to the Empire's cowardly ceding of its territory to satisfy their enemies.

On the matter of Eoradal, Cathan Canae has an interest in the Imperial Orcs' new territory and how they intend to hold it. As such she proposes that the Archmage bring along the **Legion Engineer** to make their own case to Volstann as to how the *Immovable One* might offer her aid. Why she should be interested, what they will offer in return, and why they seek her aid instead of that of the **Dragon Beneath the Mountain**.

While the defenders of Redoubt are clearly heroes, the *Great Bear* wishes to know why the Archmage considers the three she has mentioned worthy of especial note ahead of all the other protectors of the Empire who fight and shed blood to keep their enemies at bay. Why these three, why this conflict? Furthermore, there will be no talk of Sydanjaa. It is not a matter that the *Crown of Black Ice* has any interest in, and neither does her retainer. Indeed, the matters to be discussed - citadels, the Empire's dominion, and the building in Eoradal - are clear and significant digression is unwelcome.

The message ends by saying that the Archmage is invited to bring no more than four other individuals with her to speak with Volstann - which can include the Legion Engineer if they wish. The meeting will take place at eight o'clock on Friday evening, and Volstann's hall will be reached via the Hall of Worlds - which may mean the Archmage will need to secure means for those who are not magicians to accompany them.

2.5 Father of Bats



- The Night eternal Sadogua agrees to a parley but intends to send some of his heralds to meet with the magicians of the Empire on his behalf
- They are expected to arrive in the Hall of Worlds at around 21.30 on Saturday
- At the same time Sadogua wishes to speak with some members of the Unfettered Mind in a more private setting about the Lyceum
- The meeting with the Unfettered Mind will take place at the same time as the more celebratory meeting in the Hall of Worlds
- The current archmage of Night is Eliina "Realm's Visionary" Lailasdottir

Shortly before the Spring Equinox, a pompous little figure in a remarkable red and black coat that drags along the ground behind them, appears at the hub and delivers a message from their lord and master, the redoubtable *Brother of Wizards*. *Globbersnotch* thanks the Archmage of Night for proposing an inspirational banquet, and as such requests what he refers to as "informal parley" - everyone agrees not to hit each other but the daft rule about who can speak when is ignored. In return he will send some of his most favoured children, agents, emissaries, apprentices, and friends to visit with Imperial magicians, and enjoy the music, poetry, stories, art, and dance on his behalf. Some of those heralds will be in a position to speak on his behalf on various topics, such as the *Cup of Dreams*, and potentially even provide a new burst of power to the trinkets he has given to Imperial magicians in the past. He is particularly hopeful that a certain *imp of magic* might be in attendance, with tales of the sorceries the little frog has helped support since last he spoke to it.

He also invites the *Arcane Architect* to seek counsel with some of his heralds, so that the *Father of Bats* might consider if there are other ways he could help them discharge their duties. Also any magicians of the *Marches* might seek his apprentices and discuss matters of magic - the *Toad King* is interested in where their magical studies will take them next. He wishes to remind them that this is the last season they will have easy access to the *Well of Shadows* - when the Summer Solstice dawns he will be seeking a new scholar in the well to enjoy its gifts. Hopefully the magicians of Wintermark responsible for the recent *splendid enchantment* will also be there - some of his heralds are keen to learn more about this excellent piece of magic. Finally, the magicians of Navarr might discuss the magical places they consider to be under threat in Therunin and what they think *Wyrmynd* can do about it. It would also be ideal if whoever was... ah... *honouring* a certain wyrm-like creature in the Hall of Worlds during the last summit found a suitable herald to speak to about it. Quietly given how much trouble it might get people into.

And of course anyone else who would normally attend these things - he hopes that even if they don't speak to one of his emissaries the magicians of Anvil take this opportunity offered by the Archmage of Night to relax a little during trying times.

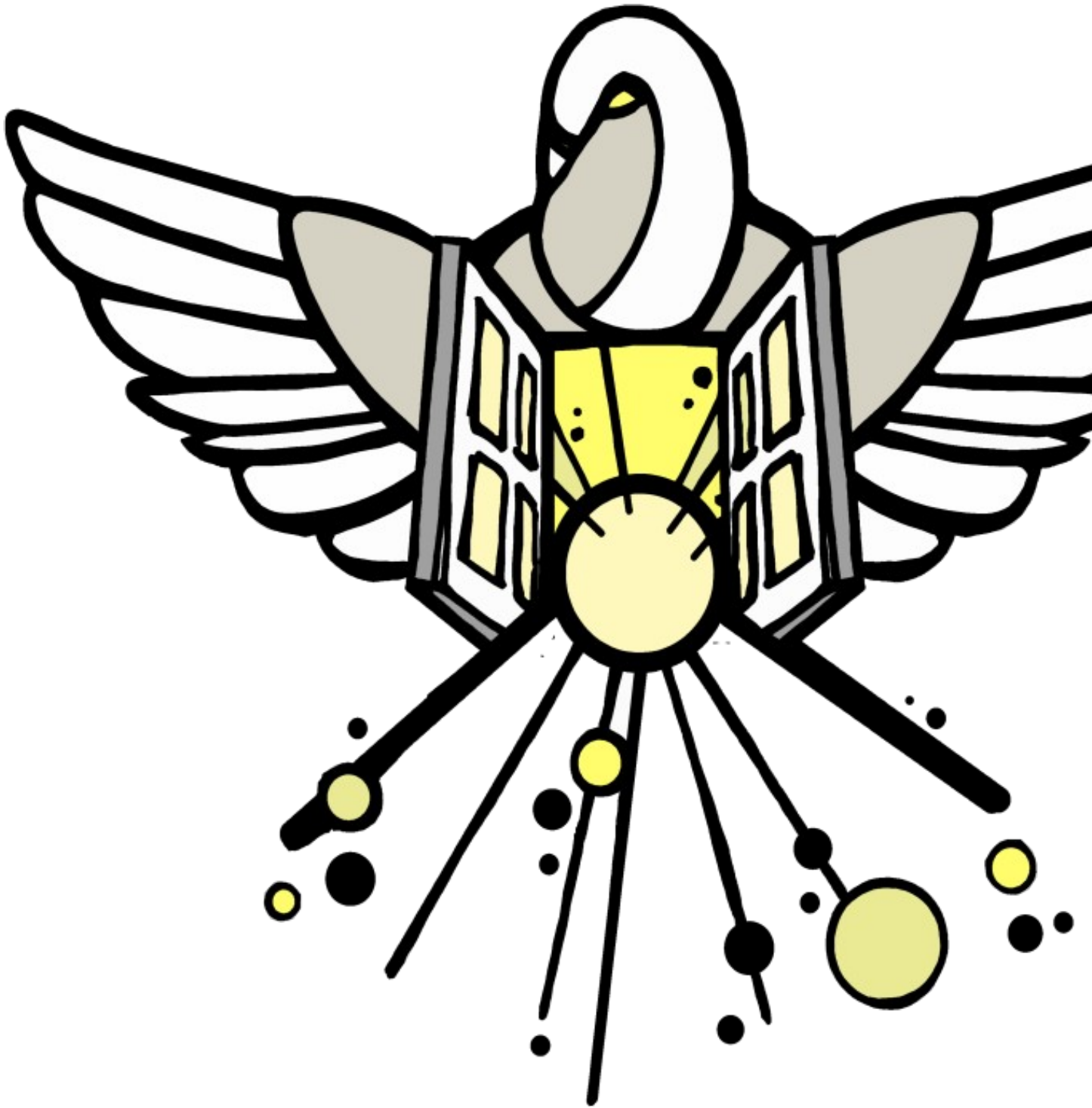
The heralds of Sadogua intend to arrive in the hall of worlds around half-past-nine on Saturday evening, and hope that will not cause too many difficulties for the Archmage of Night following so closely on the heels of Conclave.

At the same time his chosen servants are celebrating with Imperial magicians, the *Brother of Wizards* wishes to meet with some members of the *Unfettered Mind* to discuss the matter of the *Lyceum*. *Palaphon Ankarien* is of course invited to attend this meeting, but he requests that the *Archmage of Night* remain to ensure nothing goes wrong with his heralds. He hopes to meet at most half a dozen Unfettered Mind magicians to hear their suggestions as to how to handle the wards he has placed around the island of the Lyceum - how to get Imperial magicians in and out without risking enemies gaining access - given that after he put his *guardian beasts* into the mists he pretty much ran out of ideas. The hypnotic *Wyrmynd of Sleggoth* and the deadly *Nightwing* may in fact have made matters slightly worse as it turns out they are not brilliant at differentiating attacking ships from friendly ships. The *Toad-King* is adamant however that *only* members of the Unfettered Mind are invited to attend - he is still in *a bit of a difficult mood*, confides the short herald.

That *difficult mood* probably goes some way to explaining two appendices to the message. First, *Varushkan* members of the Unfettered Mind should probably be very cautious about attending the meeting to discuss the Lyceum, and be prepared for things to "go tits up" when the *Brother of Wizards* loses his temper. And secondly, Sadogua has apparently rather snippily suggested that the Archmage of Night make sure nobody kidnaps any of his beloved heralds and carries them off to start new lives as Varushkan lawn adornments, or whatever.

It seems the *Globbersnotch* is *still* very unhappy about the *Towers of Zulgan Tash*.

2.6 Zie of the Morning



- Ylenwe offers zir assistance in dealing with the matter of the white forest
- Zie has also offered aid in the matter of damming the Doubt in Spiral

• The current Archmage of Day is Skywise Gralka

On a day of gentle Spring showers, a quiet herald with mottled silver and indigo scales arrives at the Hub. they carry a lyre of beautiful blue wood, and quietly ask for a stool to sit on. While they pluck harmonious notes from the strings of their instrument they deliver a message from *the Dove*, the *Mistress of Music*. Zie has heard the words of the *Archmage of Day* but must decline formal parley at this time. That is not to say zie cannot offer aid in the matters requested - far from it - only that zie does so from arm's reach. The herald-musician plays quietly on their lyre as they provide further details, allowing the civil servants plenty of time to make notes.

The goal of bringing fresh water to *Mareave* is laudable, although Ylenwe hopes that the Empire has considered that they are disrupting the natural order in pursuit of a transformation that might, ultimately, prove costly to maintain. Bringing water into an environment where it does not naturally flow can be challenging indeed, and may of course bring unexpected consequences. The recent inundation of *the Brass Coast* is perhaps a case in point. Yet zie judges that the proposals put forward are likely gentler and more harmonious than those which unleashed the unconstrained fury of the Scorrero. The damming of the Doubt is a fascinating project; even as zir messenger comes to Anvil zie has dispatched *heralds* to *Solen's Doubt* to see what could be done about the dangers there. This matter is addressed in more detail in the *Damming the Doubt* wind of fortune.

There is nothing Ylenwe has to say about the churning chaos of Sydanjaa - zie does not believe zie has anything to add about that mournful place and the sad traditions associated with it. The other matter that is worthy of discussion, however, is that of the warped white wood in *Skarsind*, and zie believes that there are real possibilities for zir help. As the Archmage has provided music, so *Zie of the Morning* will provide notes of zir own.

2.6.1 Song of the White Wood

- Ylenwe presents an opportunity to use the Music of the Spheres to cleanse the white wood of Skarsind
- Completing the cleansing requires a complex ritual using magical notes, and a sapling taken from the tainted woods

The situation at the white wood in Skarsind is quite different to Bulgakov, and as such requires its own approach. Whereas in Bulgakov the area could simply be cleansed of Cold Sun's influence, the wood is said to be in "dissonance" with its surroundings - though what this claim actually means, neither Ylenwe nor any herald has explained. This dissonance, apparently, is where the danger lies. Bringing the wood into harmony with itself and the wider *Southpines* would not return it to its original form, but would render the dangerous *Day magic* remaining in the area inert. It's not known what the precise effects of the transformed but harmonised wood would be, but its harmonization can be achieved through the *Music of the spheres*.

Out of Character info:

Some players who have ranks of Day Lore and whose resource is a *mana site*, will find a chime ribbon in their pack at the start of E2. A chime represents a mana crystal which has been infused with particular day magic. It can be phys repped in the same way as you normally phys rep your mana crystals.

To extract the melody from a chime, cast *Distillation of Diverse Parts* on it at the regio. Please process the ritual with a referee before doing the roleplay. The ritual will destroy the chime.

To use a chime before performing a melody ritual as part of aligning the white tree to a particular mode of *Music of the spheres*, simply hand the ribbon to the referee overseeing the white wood ritual before beginning to perform.

To harmonise the white wood, Ylenwe asks that a single tree from the edge of the forest be brought to the Imperial regio in Anvil. Musicians of the Empire could then wash this tree in melodies of powerful resonance which, once the tree is planted back at the edge of the wood, will sing from tree to tree and transform the resonances of the area into perfect harmony.

Since receiving the archmage's correspondence, Ylenwe has considered the state of discordance currently affecting the Southpines. During this season of contemplation, zie claims to have spent a moment singing to the crystalline mana structures being grown at the mana sites of certain Day mages throughout the Empire. Zir songs have embedded in a small number of crystals like a seed, and grown into melodies of balance and consonance. Zie calls these transformed crystals 'chimes'.

Even Ylenwe zirself does not know what form the chimes' melodies have taken, but advises that their musical form reflects the Empire's understanding of music of the spheres. As such, there are 7 different melodies hidden inside the crystals, one for each mode used within music of the spheres, each able to harmonise the tree to their associated realm.

Extracting the melodies from the chimes is a delicate procedure, but it can be achieved through casting *Distillation of Diverse Parts* with Ylenwe's oversight. Until 23:00 on the Saturday of the spring equinox, casting the ritual on a chime whilst using the Imperial regio will result in the extraction of the melody.

On the Saturday of the spring equinox, Ylenwe will align the Imperial regio to zirself from 23:00-23:30, making it possible to harmonise a tree from the white wood within this time period. For this to succeed, the tree must be placed within the Imperial regio. Up to six musicians must then step inside the regio, crush a chime of the relevant mode and spend two minutes performing the associated melody. This process should be repeated in sequence through each mode of the music of the spheres, from Ionian to Locrian.

Accessibility info:

When casting Distillation of Diverse Parts on a chime, a sheet music transcription of the melody will be provided. It will also be possible to opt out of the transcription for any players who would prefer to use memorisation or transcribe it themselves. For further accessibility information, please email plot@profounddecisions.co.uk before the event or find a ref during the event.

For example, the sequence of rituals should begin with up to six musicians entering the regio, crushing an Ionian chime and spending two minutes performing music in the Ionian mode and incorporating the Ionian melody previously extracted from a chime.

Zie does warn that this process will not only transform the tree, but that any musician participating in the rituals will find their very self resonating in harmony with the mode they perform - with unknown, and possibly unpleasant consequences. If they were to then attempt to step inside the regio for a further ritual, they would produce a discordance which would disrupt the entire process. Each ritual will need a unique group of musicians to perform its melody.

2.7 Brother Harvest



- Ossegrahn has agreed to parley with the Archmage of Spring during the Spring Equinox
- The meeting will take place in a chamber at 15.00 on Saturday

- **The Archmage can bring up to five additional people and Ossegrahn has suggested some whose presence might be useful**
- **The current Archmage of Spring is Ibiss Briarheart**

It is raining when the messenger of *Lord Rain* arrives at *Anvil*. They are a lithe, green skinned figure with long dark-blue hair wearing little more than a homespun tunic of blue wool that quickly becomes sodden. They appear supremely unconcerned by this, any more than they are worried about the mud churned up by the early spring downpour and the passage of *Anvil's* travellers. In a voice like water splashing over rocks they ask for directions to "the servants of the people" and eventually end up at the Hub where they reportedly drip over some quite important paperwork while delivering their message.

Lord Rain welcomes the request for parley from **Ibiss Briarheart**, the *Archmage of Spring*. He requests parley, and will speak directly to the archmage and a small number of others who wish to accompany him - no more than five additional people please. A chamber is being made ready, and will open from the Hall of Worlds at three in the afternoon on Saturday. *Tarnfather* is aware that this clashes with the *Arcane Colloquium* and will entirely understand if the Archmage and their party are slightly late.

The matter of bringing fresh water to Mareave is something *Greenfount* is eager to discuss, and has been following developments in the arid eastern territory with interest. He asks the Archmage ensure they bring several *Imperial Orcs* along with them to speak of what they think they need and how they think Ossegrahn can help. To make arid land like Mareave bloom and burst with life would be a grand project, one that he thinks might help the Empire better understand the *renewal and life-affirming power of Spring magic*. There are some founts of water in north-eastern Mareave in particular he may be able to help with, perhaps supplementing the progress the *Imperial Orcs* have made already with some aid of his own, if there are any suggestions as to how he might best offer his aid. With that in mind he suggests the Archmage may also wish to bring a representative of *Spiral* along with him, someone who can speak about the plans to release the waters of *Solen's Doubt* and to help channel them into *Icarion*. He is also eager to discuss the chances of peaceful resolution between the *Brine Turtles* and the *Imperial Orcs* - if he can help in any way he stands ready to do so.

Other matters are less appealing *Llomon* is prepared to talk about are this matter of a *fane* in *Redoubt*, and why the *Urizen* think that he would desire such a thing, but does not entirely understand why they would want other eternal involved. *The Chalice* is something that the eternal knows about only through discussion with mortal magicians, and understands there is nothing gentle about it, nothing of *true* healing. He is prepared to listen, nonetheless, but the herald does not hide how sceptical the *Rainkeeper* is about it. Likewise mention of needing help to grow wholesome food on *mana sites* perplexes Ossegrahn. *Fountain's Bounty* is already known by the *Urizen*, and does just that. *Brother Harvest* is not opposed to helping if the problem can be properly explained to him because in the ideal world nobody should go hungry or thirsty. Perhaps it is a matter the Archmage can explain when they meet?

One matter that is *not* raised is that of the *Declaration of Concord* raised during the *Winter Solstice* by the *Imperial Magus, Izarra i Riqueza*. Directed primarily to the people of the *Brass Coast*, relating to *decisions made* during the *flooding of the Scorrero* it does touch on boons offered by *Healing Hand* and apparent unhappiness that they were not used. As such it is notable that there is no talk of this in the plenipotentiary response - perhaps it is something the eternal plans to discuss in the parley?

There is however one other serious matter to discuss, but the herald carefully explains the details of their master's request so that it can be discussed before the parley. Time is short for *Therunin*, and the moment where the *Leafbeard* can help is fading fast.

2.7.1 Regarding Peakedge Stead

- **Ossegrahn will continue to protect Peakedge Stead and the Houses of Healing, potentially permanently, against not only the Druj but any other threat**
- **In return he wishes the Imperial Conclave to permanently remove Rivers Run Red and Mountain Remembers Its Youth from Imperial lore**
- **This will require the Senate to reconsider the power of Remorse discussed several times previously**
- **Without this sacrifice, Ossegrahn cannot commit to protecting the ancient hospital from the Druj in Therunin**

As the archmage has no doubt *already seen*, *Coomarta of the Rains* has taken direct action in *Therunin* against the *Druj* and protected both *Peakedge Stead* - its healers, patients, and defenders - and his *Houses of Healing*. The protection cannot last, however, and maintaining it against the spite of the *Druj* will require a significant sacrifice from the eternal himself. If he is to do this, he must be certain that the Empire is moving in the correct direction to justify this commitment. If the Empire can satisfy his request, he will do whatever it takes to ensure that *Peakedge Stead* and the *Houses* remain protected as long as they are under threat - not only by the *Druj* but also by the *vallorn*. If the Empire is sincere in its desire to destroy the *folly of Terunael* then *Peakedge Stead* will be threatened by old *Tharunind*, even if the current threat is neutralised. Ossegrahn believes that the ancient hospital, coupled with his own houses of healing, will provide a powerful sanctuary for those who fight the *vallorn* in *Therunin* and perhaps even *Sarangrave*.

But before he is prepared to commit to this, he wants the Empire to make a commitment of their own. He asks that the Imperial Conclave remove *Rivers Run Red* and *Mountain Remembers Its Youth* from Imperial Lore. *Bogfearthan* knows this is not a power the Conclave has - but it is one that could be given to them by the *Senate*. The so-called power of *Remorse*, the ability to permanently remove a ritual from the body of Imperial Lore. It will be a

challenge for the Senate to both provide this power and for the Conclave to use it, but *Willowbraid* believes that if they are truly committed they can achieve it.

In addition to continuing to protect Peakedge Stead and the Houses of Healing, when the current protection fades from *Thornsong House*, *Beckburn* will be happy to discuss enfolded it in his ring of protection also, although that will require a further expenditure of his power it will be much less than what is needed to establish the permanent ring of protection. Finally, if the Archmage wishes, Ossegrahn is prepared to discuss a way for Imperial magicians to gain access to his children that create these walls of impenetrable thorns and water, with an eye toward codifying it and adding it to Imperial Lore to protect other threatened places. Backed by Ossegrahn's power the protection offered would rival a *Wooden Fastness*, although it would be restricted to defending a single region rather than warding a whole territory. The Archmage says that the Empire is in more danger than it has been before, and so Ossegrahn can offer at least a little assistance if they choose to accept it.

If the Senate and the Conclave are not in agreement, then the protection around Peakedge Stead will fail within a day of the Spring Equinox, and there will be nothing further Ossegrahn can do to preserve the hospital, its patients, or its brave defenders from the murderous impulses of the Druj. Even if they retreat immediately, they will do so after they have destroyed the ancient stading.

The civil service have issued guidance on the matter of timings around Remorse. If the Imperial Senate pass a motion to create the power on the Friday evening or Saturday afternoon session, then it would be possible for a Declaration of Remorse to be raised at the Saturday evening session of Conclave, provided that the declaration is submitted before 18:00. If a Declaration of Remorse is passed at the same summit as a Declaration of *Dissemination* for the same ritual, then no funds will be taken for the latter and a ritual text will not be created regardless of in what order each declaration is passed in.

2.8 Plenipotentiary in Public

- **The opportunity to allow archmages to make their plenipotentiary messages public remains available**

Last season the *prefects of the Conclave* presented a potential additional power to be used with plenipotentiary - the ability to make the wording of the missive public knowledge. The *Conclave* has not chosen to embrace this power, but given it is simply a procedural change the opportunity to do so remains available to the magicians of the Empire for the foreseeable future - unless something significantly changes. The change is discussed in detail in the *Secret meeting* wind of fortune.

2.9 Timetable

These meetings are taking place in a number of places; in chambers reached via the Hall of Worlds. The times, and the eternal involved, are summarised here.

Day	Time	Eternal	Realm	Note
Friday	20.00	Cathan Canae	Summer	Meeting with Volstann, in a chamber
Saturday	15.00	Ossegrahn	Spring	Formal parley, in a chamber
Saturday	21.30	Sadogua	Night	Informal meeting in the hall of worlds, and a chamber
Saturday	21.55	Skathe	Winter	Formal parley, in a chamber

3 Have you seen me lately

Jorgen was not in the best of moods. He'd just finished a slightly tense "discussion" with Ekaterijna about the disposition of a box of pens both thought the other had taken custody of. There had been no recriminations - just two tired friends who are also colleagues doing their level best not to have a blazing row about something trivial in the chaos that was the Hub after a summit. In the end, it had come to light that Magistrate Abraham had simply... wandered off with it. The discovery had provided a welcome relief, as the two Civil Servants shared a companionable moment of eye-rolling at their doddering old fool of a valued colleague.

Now he was busy trying to sort out which pieces of paperwork needed to go back to the Castle of Thorns, which would be kept at Anvil in storage, and which could be torn up and burnt without losing anything vital. His job was being made more difficult by the fact he could tell he was being watched,

The Varushkan had come in nearly an hour ago - a professional storyteller by their patched rainbow cloak. He sat quietly on a bench across from Jorgen's desk, and kept *smiling* at him in a way the Civil Servant found a little disconcerting. Jorgen examined him from under beetled brows while pretending to review a list of Synod judgements. The storyteller was staring at him with an unreadable expression. Someone dropped a crate of crockery nearby with a crash, and the stranger never even glanced in that direction. Eventually he could stand it no more.

"I'm sorry, can I help you, citizen?" He asked as politely as he could manage.

"You seem very busy," the little man replied, still smiling away. "I would not want to interrupt. There's plenty of time."

"You're not interrupting," lied Jorgen with practiced skill. "What can I do for you?"

The storyteller stood with a symphony of creaking and "oof"ing, and approached the paper-laden desk. He leant on a gnarled old staff hung with feathers, and little bells, and dozens of beautifully carved and painted trinkets - spiders, squirrels, geese, dogs, even a little golden rabbit. He smelled faintly of wood smoke and honey. Close up, Jorgen got the impression he was older than he looked, his face lined with at least a dozen more winters that the civil servant had first assumed.

"I apologise for bothering you at this busy time," the man began. He spoke softly, but not quite so softly that Jorgen couldn't hear him over the hustle and bustle surrounding him. He still found himself leaning in, however, to make sure he didn't miss anything. It made their exchange just that little more intimate, that much easier to forget there were other people nearby.

"Honestly it's no bother, it's like this all the time, we're just packing away for the Winter. Please, go on."

"The thing is, I've been asked to deliver a message for the Archmage. By a mutual friend. And I understand I can leave it with you?" The storyteller sounded genuinely apologetic, the faintest smile of awkward regret on his lips, head cocked slightly to one side as he looked up at the taller man.

"Oh for goodness... You're not a bird are you?" said Jorgen without really thinking. The storyteller's pleasant demeanour evaporated instantly, his face suddenly hard.

"I'm sorry?" He asked, in a tone of voice more commonly used for asking if someone had a problem, pal. Jorgen was suddenly aware that he had just accused a *Varushkan* of secretly being a *bird*, held his hands up as if to ward off a blow, and quickly tried to explain.

"No, no, no, I'm the one that's sorry. Sorry. I didn't think. You see, there's this bird who likes to make my life a living hell, works for the Kind One, thinks he's so much smarter than me, and the way you were... your head..." He trailed off. He wasn't sure what it was in the storyteller's demeanour that had flustered him. He'd faced Jotun charges and gone toe-to-toe with a Thule warlock in his youth without as much as a quaver, and this little Varushkan had turned his knees to jelly with two words. Jorgen didn't like it. He was glad he always kept an axe under the desk, very much wanted to feel it in his hand, but knew that Leonardo would be disappointed if he went for a weapon again without very good cause indeed.

"No, I am not a bird, nor on this occasion have I come in the name of the Clever Spider." The storyteller was all smiles again, and for a moment Jorgen might almost have thought he'd imagined the change in his guest's demeanour. He hadn't though. "I am here to speak for the Whispering Wind. I've been here before but you probably don't remember. I won't take up too much of your time, I hope, but I'd rather see my duty discharged before sunset if you don't mind?"

Jorgen nodded, and reached for his pen. Only to discover that, of course, the box of pens had been taken away by Abraham. He desperately tried to catch the eye of John of Meade, who was in the middle of patiently explaining how to find the Senate building to a pair of serious looking Commonwealth visitors. The storyteller cleared his throat, holding out a little knife and a multicoloured feather from some unfamiliar bird. For a moment Jorgen had the horrible impression he was going to need to make notes in his own blood again before he realised the knife was to help him make a quill, and there were not one but three bottles of ink on his desk.

"It has been a long day, I sense?" The Varushkan seemed faintly amused.

"A long year," said Jorgen as he expertly turned the multicoloured feather into a pen, oblivious to the storyteller's slightly sinister smile. "A long year indeed. Now. What is this message you have for the Archmage?"



Could you tell me the things you remember about me, and have you seen me lately?

3.1 Overview

- Six eternal responded to plenipotentiary messages from the Imperial archmages.
- Four have requested formal parleys
- One has declined a parley but still requests a meeting
- One has declined a meeting but still intends to help Imperial citizens in his own way
- The Arcane Colloquium begins at 15:00 on Saturday afternoon

Every season, each of the [archmages](#) can send a [plenipotentiary](#) message to an [eternal](#) of their realm. Eternals who receive a plenipotentiary message are bound to respond, although not always in the way the archmage expects. The most common response is for the eternal to agree to an [formal parley](#). Such meetings sometimes involve the eternal themselves, more often they involve carefully chosen emissaries. The representatives of the realms meet with the archmage, who treats with the eternal or their servants on equal footing.

As the Spring Equinox approaches, some of the eternal have responded with offers of [parley](#) at the coming summit - a special meeting where both Empire and eternal are bound by powerful laws of hospitality and respect. Others... have not done that.

This summit also sees the second [Arcane Colloquium](#), when the archmages will address their peers. The Arcane Colloquium is split into six quarter-hour sessions, each given over to one of the archmages. Seniority is given to the archmage who has served in the post for the longest uninterrupted period. The running order is based on the length of service of the individual archmages. The current order is [Day](#), [Spring](#), [Summer](#), [Night](#), [Autumn](#), and finally

Winter. The Arcane Colloquium continues to evolve; following the advice of a civil servant an additional fifteen minute session has been added between the third and the fourth period to allow those who wish to attend the whole thing to take a short break.

3.2 Sung



- Sung has accepted an invitation to formal parley with the Archmage of Night
- The meeting will take place at 22:30 on Friday night
- The Archmage is asked to bring the Shaman of Wintermark and four others who can present a wide perspective
- The current Archmage of Night is Elyssiathian

Not long after the Winter Solstice, a dim lantern bobs and dances along the main avenue that runs through the heart of Anvil. As dusk has fallen, work has ceased and people retire to their fires or to the Forge. This is not the first time this Varushkan storyteller has visited Anvil. A little over a year ago, he brought a message from the Rainbow Serpent; his second visit serves the same purpose. The Hub is busy, with documents and stationary being packed away for the Winter, but the storyteller simply sits quietly on a bench until one of the Civil Servants notices him. He delivers his message in a quiet, lilting voice.

The Lady of Glamours welcomes the invitation of the Archmage of Night. She will attend a formal parley at the Spring Equinox. A herald will greet them in the Hall of Worlds at half-past ten on Friday evening and convey them to the presence of the Coiling Question. She asks that they bring with them the Shaman of Wintermark, as mentioned in the plenipotentiary message.

As to the rest... it seems that the Archmage wishes to bring more than half the Imperial nations to speak to her. Mystery thrives where there is time for silence, where there is space for emptiness. Where there are many voices, all calling and shouting at once, there is only confusion.

Moreover, she has no idea why any of these people wish to speak to her and while she is intrigued, the Crowned Enigma prefers that a formal parley be more focused. She has sponsored a ritual, with the aid of the Dean of the Lyceum, which allows any magician versed in the lore of the Night realm to seek her counsel. Is that no longer enough for the Empire? Given that the Archmage has not specified what they wish to talk about, Sung will set the tempo for the meeting herself. The three topics that will be discussed will be: the mystery of the Labyrinth, and what it means to see the past; the mystery of Freedom, and what it means to be free; and the mystery of the Shears, and what it means to end.

Along with the Shaman, the Archmage may bring up to four others who are interested in discussing these mysteries with the One Cloaked in Feathers. She requests that they each be representatives of a different nation, and if they are human that no more than one of any single lineage be represented. When one discusses mysteries, the more perspectives available, the better. She hopes the Archmage understands that there will be no opportunity for these individuals to ask for boons or to "beseech" her for aid; they are here to take part in a discussion of mysteries. If the Archmage wishes her to consider any petitions, they should form the basis of a future plenipotentiary. In common with many other eternal, Sung does not make decisions without careful consideration.

3.3 Ylenrith



- The eternal Ylenrith agrees to a formal parley
- The meeting will take place at half-past one on Saturday afternoon

- **Ylenrith is currently considered an enemy of the Empire**
- **The current Archmage is Skywise Gralka**

A few scant weeks after the Winter Solstice, *Termé*, a herald of *the Swan*, appears for the second time in the Hall of Worlds. Unlike *last season*, though, they are on formal business. It seems that the Archmage of Day has reached out to their mistress, and offered parley with the Empire. Ylenrith is keen to accept.

?Much has changed,? Termé says. ?Our mistress is not as she was when last she had dealings with Imperial citizens.? The *Mistress of Music and Mathematics* wishes to discuss how she may regain the trust of the Empire's magicians. The main topic of conversation however will concern something Termé calls the *Cold Sun*, and the potential threat it presents; unfortunately the herald is not in a position to provide any other guidance.

The Archmage has also offered to bring musicians with her, who can share new music with the eternal. The Swan is appreciative; as such she proposes that the Archmage bring up to seven other people to the meeting on the understanding that some of these visitors will provide music during the meeting. A herald will be sent to the Hall of Worlds at half-past one on Saturday afternoon to bring the Archmage and their guests to the *Kantanta Fontano* ? a chamber between the mortal realm and the Day realm.

The magistrates remind the Archmage of Day that while it is not illegal to meet with an eternal who has been declared an enemy of the Empire, trading or dealing with them *is*. They are advised to err on the side of caution when dealing with the eternal, and to advise their guests to do likewise.

3.4 Ossegrahn



- **Ossegrahn has declined a parley with the Empire**
- **The eternal has made several opportunities available following the Archmage's suggestions**
- **Lord Rain proposes the Conclave could send a delegation to Caitun, in Faraden**
- **The current Archmage of Spring is Ibiss Briarheart**

With *Spring magic rising like a flood* across the Empire, a lone herald of *Lord Rain* arrives at Anvil and politely declines a parley with the Empire. Despite the weather being quite dry, the blue-skinned figure glistens as if they have just come in out of the rain. The *Cupbearer* is already busy taking advantage of the *consummate Spring enchantment* created by Imperial magicians. *Willowbraid* provides his blessings to Imperial farmers and fishers, just as the plenipotentiary requested. Furthermore, they have sent heralds out to the Empire to see how else they can *help the people to prosper in good health*, keeping the Archmage's suggestions in mind. The herald is quick to stress that the decision not to attend a parley is not intended as a slight; *Coomarta of the Rains* is hard at work trying to help the Empire directly.

There is one matter that the herald is keen to address directly, however. The archmage asked about "the city in Faraden that you sponsor" and *Beckburn* presumes that this means *Caitun* in *Pelabuhan*? Ossegrahn is proud to serve as a patron to, and friend of, the wizards of the Tchemetzi family who nominally rule the territory. They specialise in the beneficial aspects of Spring magic; healing, douse wells, and bless farmers' fields with life-giving rain ? an important service in the relatively arid west. The family has no contact with the Empire at this time, but with a little nudge from *Llomon*, and some work by the Conclave, that might change.

A *Declaration of Concord* from the *Conclave* could be used to arrange for a *conclave order* to send a diplomatic emissary to the Tchemetzi. The choice as to which order to send would determine the kind of reception they would receive. In theory any order might be chosen, but in practice there are three obvious choices. The *Silver Chalice* would focus on a shared appreciation of healing magic, while the *Celestial Arch* would pursue a broader diplomatic approach. The third possibility would be the *Shattered Lantern*, who would assess the Tchemetzi for any potential threat and evaluate whether they have any secret lore that might be useful to the Empire, acquiring it by whatever means seemed appropriate if there were.

The Conclave could also seek to guide the tenor of this envoy, but it would ultimately be the nature of the order that would determine the results. There is no particular time pressure here; as long as Ossegrahn is not considered an enemy of the Empire, they will support a meeting with the raincallers. Regardless of when the Conclave takes advantage of this opportunity, if ever, only one order could be asked to arrange an envoy, and a given order can only be asked to pursue *one* opportunity on behalf of the Conclave each season.

Following that very specific piece of advice, the herald does not return to the Imperial regio, but strikes out along the trods toward Syrene. Apparently there are farmers there who will not only benefit from the herald's assistance, but also a little lingering blight from last year's flood that *Father Tarn* wishes to offer his aid to remove.

Details of the opportunities Ossegrahn presents to the Empire, as well as some discussion of some of the opportunities it is *not* presenting, can be found in the **Rain king** wind of fortune.

3.5 Ephisis



- **The City of Gold and Lead has requested a meeting with the Archmage in the Hall of Worlds**
- **The meeting begins at 16:45 on Saturday and will *not* be a formal parley, to better allow the heralds attending the meeting to engage in their business**
- **The current Archmage of Autumn is Edmundo of Damakhan's Forge**

The four-armed herald from the **City of Gold and Lead** is accompanied by two massive minotaur guardians when they emerge from the Imperial regio. Bound in bronze harness, with rune-carved axes and tower shields bearing the insignia of the *Braided Rope Coster*. While the bodyguards are grim and battle-ready, the emissary themselves remains as polite as they have during each of their previous visits to Anvil.

The City of Gold and Lead acknowledges the invitation of the Archmage to engage in parley to discuss recent events. There are a number of voices who wish to express both their concerns and their support for the Empire's recent actions with regard to free trade. As such, the decision has been made to auction the opportunity to speak to the Archmage and their fellow Imperial magicians. Several citizens of the City will attend the parley consecutively, each with their own matters to discuss. The heralds will begin to arrive at the Hall of Worlds at quarter-to-five on Saturday afternoon, and each will have only a limited time to complete their business.

Despite the fact that the Empire has recently demonstrated its willingness to destroy representatives of the realm of trade, the City of Gold and Lead has chosen to waive the protection of a formal parley for the duration of the meeting. The formal requirement for the Archmage to recognise Imperial citizens who wish to speak during a parley is often an impediment to conducting business, after all. Given recent developments this is also a sign of the high esteem with which Archmage Edmundo is held in the City of Gold and Lead. They are known in the Autumn realm as one who values negotiation over conflict as a means to settle disputes, and will surely still be able to ensure no harm comes to any of the visitors.

3.6 Rhianos



- **Rhianos accepts a formal parley**
- **Favoured heralds of Rhianos will visit the Hall of Worlds at 14:00 on Saturday afternoon**
- **A herald of Meraud will also be in attendance but is explicitly *not* part of the parley**
- **The current Archmage of Summer is Brother Luke**

A fortnight before the Spring Equinox, a brightly-dressed herald bursts out of the Imperial regio, bringing a message from the *Regent of the Eternal Sea*. The Summer archmage requests a parley, and Rhianos is keen to respond, albeit with some caveats. The Archmage has provided a list of *adventures* that Imperial citizens are interested in and after due consideration Rhianos has agreed to explore some while declining others. Reading from a long

scroll, the herald assures the Civil Servants that support the Conclave that Brother Luke will know what they are talking about.

Rhianos cannot offer assistance with regard to three of the Archmage's requests. As far as the eternal knows, there *is* no regalia of the first Empress, as such, so there's nothing to be done there. There are no particular staves of power belonging to the Thule elite; individual Thule have magic staves certainly but 'the staves of power' isn't really a thing. Rhianos doesn't know what 'the most sacred temple of the Iron Confederacy' is, and even if they did they'd be loathe to help Imperial citizens 'loot' it.

The herald pauses here to cheerfully explain that their liege likes *adventures* - unusual, risky, and daring experiences - not smash-and-grab expeditions. They are a patron of *adventurers* not *burglars*. 'Loot' is a side-effect of adventure, not its purpose. The Empire should speak to other eternals if it just wants to rob and murder people.

Back to the list. The *Liege of the West Star* finds *Atun's Ring* more interesting; it's a unique treasure whose whereabouts is unknown. Rhianos would be fascinated to find out why the Empire thinks it is in the Autumn realm - although the herald cautions that if it *is* even the Regent of the Eternal Sea may be at a loss as to how to get it back. Hopefully those interested in this quest will be at the parley to provide more information. The matter of the sword *Fortinbras* is even more interesting. As a gift of the Summer realm, earned by a hero of Dawn from the *Lord of the Crossroads*, Rhianos might be able to offer aid in tracking it down. Rhianos asks that the Archmage make sure those interested in securing the blade come to the parley to explain *why* they are keen to get the weapon back - and how they plan to claim it from the immortal knight.

There's also the matter of the *Eastern Sky*. Rhianos is still considering what the people of Dawn might do to win their favour. While they like the idea of a *statue* to watch over knights adventuring in *Brocéliande*, their excitement has waned slightly following the *grand adventure* there. They will give some more thought to what might secure their support and pass that on to any of the *enchanters* of Dawn who attend the parley.

The heralds are also looking forward to a chance to hear from the *three champions* who represented their master in the tourney to determine patronage of the *Icy Crag*. What have **Tancred Enrico i Taziel i Riqueza**, **Captain Quiberon Otterscourge**, and **Chiara of the Burning Beasts** been up to in the months since?

Finally, Rhianos has asked the *Summer Mage* to send one of his apprentices along to talk about *coral fortresses* with the Empire. People are, apparently, always asking Rhianos for aid with such sorceries, and the *Rejoicing One* would rather they stopped. The herald mentions in an off-hand way that Meraud's representative will *not* be attending under the protection of parley - it will make it easier for them to go off and talk with the magicians interested in coastal fortresses without derailing the main discussion of adventure - but they're sure that can't possibly go wrong.

The Herald is kind enough to repeat all of this until it has been written down, and then heads to *the Forge* for an hour or two of culture before returning to the Summer realm. As an afterthought as they are leaving, they explain that Rhianos will send some of his favoured heralds to the Hall of Worlds during the Spring Equinox at two-o'clock on Saturday afternoon. The Regent of the Eternal Sea assumes there will be plenty of time to address everything that needs to be discussed before the Arcane Colloquium.

3.7 Kaela



- **Kaela has agreed to a parley in two parts**
- **The first part will begin at quarter to midnight on Saturday and take place in the Hall of Worlds**
- **The second part is for the Archmage themselves and will take place in a chamber after the meeting in the hall of worlds is concluded**
- **The current Archmage of Winter is Ematius of the Great Library of Ankarien**

For some time it seems that there has been no plenipotentiary sent to the Winter realm. A few days before the Spring Equinox, however, a messenger in dusty robes arrives at the Hub. She brings a message from the *Dark-Between-the-Stars*, the eternal *Kaela*. Perhaps once a citizen of *Axos*, there is something deeply unsettling about her. Her skin crinkles and rustles like parchment when she walks, and does not move right when she speaks or gestures - it is as if she is wrapped in old paper from head to foot. She is clearly one of the undying legions that attend upon the *Sorrowful One*. She delivers her message quickly, wasting little time.

The Archmage has (apparently) suggested a parley in two parts, and so Kaela has likewise responded in two parts.

First, she sends some of her Grim Legion to the Hall of Worlds to accept tribute on her behalf. These undying warriors will arrive at a quarter-to-midnight on Saturday. The *Circle of the Drowned*, the *Nation's Guard*, the *Wolves of the Pale Raven*, *Glory's Shadow*, the *Envoys of the White Stag*, and *Wick's Rest* are all invited to attend and present their gifts of song and story, and share what they have learned of endings. Those who win the favour of the Grim Legion will receive boons in their turn.

One other group are also invited to send an emissary. The *Suns of Couros* have earned the enmity of the Lady of Silence, through insult, and through the theft of her legions. Her injunction that whenever they use her ritual to aid the Empire, she will send thrice as many of her own legionnaires to aid their enemies still applies. She has set a method whereby this enmity might be ended ? the inclusion of *Abandon the Mortal Shackles* in Imperial lore. If one of the Suns of Couros wishes to come to the parley, and express their regret for the actions of their coven, the Grim Legion will provide them with a copy of the ritual text. Should they even wish to resolve their grievance with the *Dark-Between-the-Stars* of course.

Once this matter of the Legions is complete, the Archmage themselves is invited to come and discuss the private matters they have raised. Not with Kaela herself, but with the *Archivist of the Drowned*, one of her most favoured servitors, who records and studies the end of all endless things.

3.8 Using Plenipotentiary

The **plenipotentiary** power can be challenging to use. The page [talking to eternal](#)s lays out some of the **common pitfalls** relating to sending a message to an eternal. It is vital that the archmage tell the eternal **what they want to discuss**, and to bear in mind that **nobody is omniscient**. We want to make sure that a parley is an interesting and hopefully fun experience, and the less we know about what the players involved want to achieve with the meeting, the less able we are to provide a satisfying encounter.

It is important to be clear what you want to talk about in a plenipotentiary. It's fine to lay out a list of things, as long as you realise that the eternal will only talk about the things it is interested in.

3.9 Timetable

These meetings are taking place either in the Hall of Worlds or in an encounter tent. The times, and the eternal's involved, are summarised here.

Day	Time	Eternal	Realm	Note
Friday	22:30	Sung	Night	Parley; Chamber between worlds
Saturday	13:30	Ylenrith	Day	Parley; Chamber between worlds
Saturday	14:00	Rhianos	Summer	Parley; Hall of Worlds
Saturday	16:45	Ephisis	Autumn	Not a Parley; Hall of Worlds
Saturday	23:45	Kaela	Winter	Parley; Hall of Worlds and Chamber

4 Hunter of stars

Something got between Jorgen and the sun. The civil servant frowned, glancing up from his paperwork to find two tall figures looming over him. Both were wrapped in leather and fur, wearing masks that looked to have been crafted from animal skulls. Jorgen wrinkled his nose slightly - they were surrounded by a strong smell of sweat and a kind of rank, earthy musk strong enough to make his eyes water, almost.

He closed his book around his quill, and stood up from his bench. He barely came up to their shoulders.

"Can I help you gentlefolk?" he asked in neutral tones.

They did not look like citizens. They were human enough in outline but their eyes were the eyes of beasts. Golden iris, massive black pupil, like owls perhaps. They had horns too - although the civil servant knew of no people who had both stag-like antlers and ram-like horns on the same head. He was keenly aware that they were well-armed - each had a six-foot spear, and a number of knives.

The two figures continued to watch him for several moments. One turned its head from side to side, looking at him first with its left eye then its right eye, then looking at its companion for confirmation of something. Jorgen began to feel uneasy - a creeping awareness that these creatures were weighing him up against some set of criteria he was not privy to. He could not shake the suspicion that if he made any sudden moves one of them would stab him with its spear. Flint spears, he noticed incongruously.

"Is everything alright?" There was a rough semicircle of militia behind the two hide-bound visitors. Beyond them a small crowd of interested onlookers were beginning to gather. The more inquisitive of the two visitors turned slightly to the side and gazed impassively at the crowd behind them. It shifted its hand slightly on the haft of its spear. The militia captain made it clear she was ignoring it, and made a great show of focusing her attention on Jorgen.

"Everything is fine, captain, yes. I am sure these two gentlefolk just have a question...?"

"Are you the archmage of Spring?" the taller of the two spoke suddenly, its voice rumbling and low like a growling bear.

Jorgen considered for a moment. This might explain what was going on though. "No. I'm a civil servant. Do you have a message for the Archmage?"

The figure nodded slowly.

"A message was sent. To Capradan. Asking for a meeting."

"Oh, that explains it then. A plenipotentiary from the Archmage. Is that what this is about?"

They stared at Jorgen for several moments, then the taller continued as if Jorgen had not spoken.

"That one will not speak with you. That one has not been given leave. The one we all serve does not care for you people. Send no further messages."

Jorgen opened his book again, made a note. The shorter of the two watched intently as his quill scratched across the page. It reminded the civil servant of the way his cat watched a beetle skittering hither-and-yon across the floor.

"And who is the message from?"

Neither creature replied. They just watched Jorgen, as if waiting for him to do something, as if his words had no meaning.

"Is it from ... Yaw'nagrah? Arhallogen? Irra Harah? Llofir? Or - now what is it, oh yes - Siakha? One of those? The one you serve?"

The larger one blinked slowly. It narrowed its eyes. Its voice when it spoke again was flat, unimpressed, cold.

"The message comes from the one we serve. The one Capradan serves. The one who does not care for you people. Send no further messages. Do you hear what has been said?"

Jorgen nodded. Swallowed, his throat suddenly, unaccountably dry.

"Then the task is done. We will leave now."

The two turned on their heels and walked back along the road at an easy pace, neither fast nor slow, trailed by the militia and some of the interested onlookers. The rest went back to their business preparing for the influx of guests who would soon arrive at Anvil for the Spring Equinox.

Jorgen grumbled under his breath, and went to tell someone that the Archmage of Spring's plenipotentiary reply had arrived.

4.1 Plenipotentiaries

- Ylenrith, Estavus, Sorin, Adamant, and the Boar King have publicly responded to plenipotentiary messages.
- A plenipotentiary from the Spring Archmage has been declined.

Each **archmage** has the ability to send a **plenipotentiary** message to an **eternal** once during each summit. Following the Autumn Equinox, six **eternals** have responded to these messages and either confirmed that they accept a formal parley, or declined to attend a meeting with the archmage.

In each case, the eternal has specified the topics about which they or their representatives will discuss. Within the bounds of the parley, they are likely to refuse to discuss matters that fall outside the potentially rigid list of things they have agreed will fall under the purview of the parley. It is still possible to try and bring up topics outside of the matters agreed on in advance, but there is absolutely no guarantee the representative of the realms will want to discuss them - and some of the more formal entities might well be annoyed enough to end the parley early if they are badgered by (for example) a crowd of magicians all wanting *their* opportunity to explain why the eternal should pay attention to them.



4.1.1 Capradan

A week before the Spring Equinox, a pair of strange heralds arrive in the Hall of Worlds. They are humanoid in outline, each with a pair of stag-like antlers surmounting a pair of curling ram-like horns. They are dressed in scraps of leather tied to their rail thin frames, and their faces are concealed behind masks made from the skulls of unfamiliar animals. Each is armed with a flint spear decorated with feathers, talons, teeth, and bones. Their manner is quiet and contained, but everyone who interacts with them receives the impression that at any moment they might explode into bloody violence.

A message has been sent, they say, to a creature called "Capradan" by the Archmage of Spring. Capradan has not been given leave to respond to this message; their mutual master does not wish to parley with the magicians of the Empire. It is not clear who they represent, but the heralds do not seem to serve **Siakha**, **Yaw'nagrah**, **Arhallogen**, **Irra Harah**, or **Llofir**.



4.1.2 Boar King

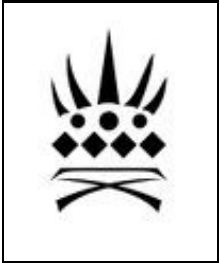
A week before the Spring Equinox, a message is delivered to the Civil Service hub in Anvil. It arrives late at night, brought to the desk by a short, bald, wizened creature with eyes like saucers. It has large protruding boar's tusks that make it hard to understand what it is saying. The message claims to be a reply to "Little Owl of the Academy, the Archmage of Night" or possibly "Little Owl *and* the Archmage of Night." The message is from the entity calling itself the Boar King, an eternal of the realm of Night. It agrees to a formal parley, and asks that the Archmage ensure that Little Owl, Sovica of the Company of the White Fame, and anyone else who has business with the King of the Boars attend said parley at nine o'clock on Saturday night.



4.1.3 Ylenrith

A herald dressed in the manner of a Highborn wearing a deep red surcote over a white tunic appeared in the Imperial regio shortly after the Winter solstice, representing the Eternal Ylenrith, called the Swan. It politely announced that the Eternal Flame would be pleased to attend a parley with the Archmage of Day during the Spring Equinox.

As a state of enmity exists between the Empire and the Pure, it suggests a place of parley that is neither of the world nor the realm - a chamber - and invites the Archmage to bring as many as eight other people with them should they agree to attend. Servants of Ylenrith will be in the Hall of Worlds at eleven o'clock on Friday night to transport the Archmage and the rest of their party to the chamber. Conditions of a formal parley would, of course, exist during the meeting.



4.1.4 Estavus

Halfway between Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox, a messenger brings a missive from the eternal Estavus. A squat construct of brass and porcelain in the shape of an oversized child, it delivers its message in a clicking, off-kilter voice.

The Forgemistress agrees to another parley with the Empire. It will meet with the Archmage and no more than four others. Estavus will send two representatives to the meeting. They will allow Imperial citizens to trade personal materials for Autumn vis - Estavus desires them to bring [Ambergelt](#) only. She will give them one pouch of ashes for every five measures of ambergelt they bring to trade.

She has no interest in arranging a long-term trade deal or arranging for ashes to be made available by any means other than the ritual [Before the Throne of Estavus](#) which she has already shared with the Empire. There will be no discussion of this matter. There will be an opportunity to discuss the matter off the lost art of the blacksmith; she anticipates this will make up the bulk of the meeting. The meeting will be a formal parley; as such there will be no fruitful discussion of other matters.

Assuming these stipulations are acceptable to the Archmage, a guide will be sent to the Hall of Worlds at one o'clock Saturday afternoon.

OOC Note: As this is taking place in a chamber of Estavus, the meeting is likely to involve some smoke, and some walking from the Hall of Worlds to an encounter tent.



4.1.5 Adamant

A *koboldi* messenger of **King Adamant** delivers a proclamation written in a neat cursive hand on fine parchment to the Timekeeper of the Conclave a week after the Winter Solstice. Dressed in a beautiful moonsilver mantle, the short herald is excruciatingly polite and reads the proclamation in a reedy, chirping voice before handing it over to the civil servant. King Adamant confirms that he will send a representative to treat with the Summer Archmage during the Spring Equinox. The *King on the Granite Throne* expresses some mild disappointment that in most cases the boons the Empire request are boons he has already offered in one form or another and had declined, but he is minded to be magnanimous.

His representative will speak on four topics: the Throne of Stone and its construction; the Walls of Holberg; the fortification Remember Exile; the mines of Skarsind. The herald will indicate the actions the Archmage can make to secure the boons that have been asked for, but should be aware that the King is not a common peddler or mendicant tinker and is disinterested in haggling over minor details. The boons come in return for the acts required - the *Silent Mountain* is confident the Summer Archmage understands this.

Formal parley with a high-ranking representative of the *Court of the Gnome King* shall begin at eight o'clock on Friday night.



4.1.6 Sorin

The staff at the Castle of Thorns recognise the soberly dressed Draughir with dark red hair when she arrives at dusk one day midway between Solstice and Equinox. Ania of Necropolis is once again bearing word from the Heralds of the Silent Kingdom, and this time they speak for The Tomb King himself. The message she hands over is from a Herald known as Evanesce. It states "Since misconceptions about the nature of the Silent Kingdom abound in the Empire, from smallest child to proudest Archmage, The Empty One will respond to the plenipotentiary message sent, under formal Parley. Be prepared to receive the wisdom of The Hungry Wolf and his Heralds within the Hall of Worlds at 3 o'clock on the Saturday of the Equinox." Ania also hands over a list of people expected to attend. Others might have been apologetic, where she was not, because the list is not short.

- Archmage Emilia
- A representative of those who claim to know better than the Hungry Wolf himself what was fair and right punishment for the Chapter of The Frozen Oak
- Syn Nighthaven and any three Imperial Generals, who should bring with them the Testament of Ahsaver
- Ursa of Wintermark and at least two others who suffer from a curse from the same source
- Eleanor Novarion
- General Jack of the Marches
- Bloodcrow Shettehs

It concludes with a note: the Heralds may engage in discussion with others not named. It should be firmly understood that *The Empty One* will not do so and will only speak on the matters directly raised in the plenipotentiary.

OOC Note: We intend to use low levels of smoke in this encounter, please let us know if this is a problem for you personally and this encounter is important to you and we will make adjustments. Some of the Sorin and Herald costumes make lip-reading impossible and some speech in this encounter will be via loudspeaker. Please let us know if you expect to be at the centre of the encounter and rely on lip-reading we will ensure that the parts most relevant to you are not delivered through the horse head masks.

4.2 Timetable

Day	Time	Eternal	Realm	Formal Parley
Friday	8pm	Adamant	Summer	Yes
Friday	11pm	Ylenrith	Day	Yes
Saturday	1pm	Estavus	Autumn	Yes
Saturday	3pm	Sorin	Winter	Yes

Day	Time	Eternal	Realm	Formal Parley
Saturday	9pm	Boar King	Night	Yes