

BRIDGEWAYS

Return of the Phantom Isle



Karl Hendricks

A dark and evil presence has come to Bridgeways, the wind-swept archipelago on the verge of the Upper Skies. A recent food shortage, coupled with more frequent glowmadness outbreaks, have pushed the people of this peaceful island chain to the breaking point.

Unfortunately for the citizens of Bridgeways, respected steam priest and community leader Marchus Bronzeye is the cause of their untimely woes. Guided by a dark and unseen force, Marchus works to sow the seeds of the island's destruction and undermine the efforts of any who seek to save it.

Meanwhile on the Isle of Chimes, high wind priest Jamos senses there is more at work on Bridgeways than meets the eye. The winds have whispered dark tidings that spell doom for the island and its inhabitants. Jamos suspects Marchus is hiding something and dispatches one of his most talented acolytes to uncover the truth.

Bridgeways: Return of the Phantom Isle is a solo World vs Hero session report set in the fantastical world of the Sundered Skies.



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Bridgeways: Return of the Phantom Isle

A World vs. Hero Solo Session

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Karl Hendricks

2017

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For my game group.

Christmas 2016

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Preface

This story is a World vs Hero solo game session set in the fantastical world of the Sundered Skies. If you have no idea what that means, you might want to check out the two Appendices at the rear of this book before diving in. Appendix 1 describes how World vs Hero works and why the story is structured the way it is. Appendix 2 contains some basis details about the Sundered Skies setting and the major concepts that are needed to fully understand the story. If you've never played Sundered Skies or World vs Hero before, I recommend checking these out.

For a little over two years, my tabletop RPG group has been adventuring in the Sundered Skies. It is honestly one of the best fantasy settings I've ever run a game in. The world is highly detailed and varied. There's so much going on, and nothing feels generic. This story came to be when I dropped a plot hook for the game group, but had no idea what was going to happen.

In the continuing narrative of our tabletop adventure, the heroes are recovering the lost artifacts to repair the Soulshield and uncovering the plots of the Lord of Misrule and the Godshifters. In a recent game session, the characters talked to the Artificer himself and the mechanical god informed them that a dark presence was growing on Bridgeways, but even he was unable to pierce the veil of its evil. I knew the story of the Lord of Misrule needed to be developed more, but I had no idea what direction to take things.

This story is the tale of what's really happening on Bridgeways, the tale of a mysterious Godshifter and his plot to sow terror in the Skies. It's all part of the continuing narrative of our RPG and whatever happens in these pages will be considered canon in our ongoing game. When I started writing, I had no idea how it would end.

The characters and places in this story are pulled straight out of our game. Several of the main characters (Lauris and Mikael, for instance) are recurring NPCs and have actually played a role in the game up to this point. The players met the two wind priests during a previous visit to Bridgeways. The current food shortage actually happened as a result of the players' adventures on the isle. Quinn and Robere are mentioned in the Sundered Skies source material, but only played minor roles. I've taken some liberties to turn them into real, heroic personas. Quinn, in fact, is little more than a pun in the written adventures. I'm happy that now these characters can hopefully really shine in their own rights.

Whether you're familiar with Sundered Skies or not, part of my game group or just found this by accident, I hope you enjoy the tale of adventure that follows. It's not perfect, and I'm certainly not a professional writer, but I had a ton of fun writing this and discovering the adventure as I went along.

Cheers and happy adventuring,

Karl Hendricks
December 2016

Game Setup

World Description

Sundered Skies: The Isle of Bridgeways

Genre: Skyship Fantasy

Size: Chain of floating islands and the city that covers it

After the Sundering, it is said the Artificer gathered a group of islands and linked them with stone bridges formed from his own blood. Some of these islands are several miles across, while others are little bigger than the one or two buildings upon them. This island chain is now known as Bridgeways. Every race of the Skies is represented on the islands, with the majority being human. Pilgrims visiting the Bridges and the Isle of Chimes almost double the population.

Bridgeways is scoured by high winds, and the wind chill is severe, with temperatures dropping as low as 5 degrees Fahrenheit. Still, the island chain serves as a sort of cultural and economic hub for the upper skies. Both the Lady of the Winds and the Artificer have strong followings on the isle and attract pilgrims to their respective holy sites in droves. The market plaza at the Crossroads contains many exotic goods from across the Skies and the inns and taverns that surround it are known for their relative luxury and lively entertainment.

For all its merits, Bridgeways has its fair share of dark secrets. No one is really sure the origin of the smooth black bricks that form the bridges between islands.

Many credit the Artificer with their construction, but others speak of darker, more demonic origins. Fungus farmers working the under-isles tell stories of the dead rising from their graves and strange blood red flowers that spread glowmadness. With recent whispers of unrest and in-fighting among the church of the Lady of the Winds, not even the Isle of Chimes offers a truly safe haven any longer.

Dark forces are at work on Bridgeways that seek to turn the peaceful archipelago into a foothold of evil in the Upper Skies.

Heroes

Lauris Windfound

Human Wind Priestess - Acolyte of the Isle of Chimes

Lauris is a young and bull-headed wind priestess who has spent her entire life on Bridgeways. Orphaned before she could even walk, Lauris was found drifting in a deserted island hopper that washed up near the Isle of Chimes. Jamos, high priest of the temple, raised the young girl as his own and taught her the ways of the goddess. Since then, she has grown up in the temple, becoming well known around Bridgeways for her passion and fiery spirit.

A young woman of roughly 20 years (though no one knows for sure), Lauris can always be seen wearing the flowing white and blues vestments of the Lady of the Winds. She is assertive and quite attractive with wind-blown dark hair and icy blue eyes that smolder with the contained fury of the storm.

Though she rarely has a chance to leave the islands, Lauris yearns for adventure and often creates her own when there is none to be found. An outspoken devotee of the Aspect of Storms, the young priestess can be brash and somewhat unpredictable. When her antics inevitably get her into trouble, she can always count on her lifelong friend Quinn to bail her out and smooth any ruffled feathers.

Suit Abilities

Hearts [4] – Wind Priestess of the Storm: commands divine magic from the Lady of the Winds

- Elemental Manipulation (Air)
- Lightning Blast
- Fly
- Wind Wall
- Evoke Storm

Diamonds [2] – Clever Thinker: finds unique and unexpected solutions to problems

Clubs [1] – Attractive Presence: makes an impression with her beauty and assertiveness

QH [FX] – Lady's Fury: creates a massive thunder vortex that can destroy ships and ravage entire islands

Disadvantages

Hearts [2] - Hot Headed: passionate and unyielding, often acts without thinking

Quinn Shimmerscale

Drakin Acrobat - Tavern Waitress and Performer

Quinn is a drakin, a dragon-like humanoid covered in scales. Drakin are generally small and slight of build, Quinn especially so. Standing well under 4 feet tall, she has clawed hands and feet, a tail, and tiny wings not usable for flight. She has iridescent opal scales that cover her entire body and piercing violet eyes.

Quinn works at the Journey's End tavern as a waitress and acrobat in the evening stage troupe. Quirky and ever-so-likeable, Quinn is a favorite among many of the tavern's patrons. She always shows up with a mug of ale and a friendly ear, ensuring the diminutive performer is always up to date on the latest gossip going on in Bridgeways.

All her smiles and charm belie a more mischievous side, however. More than a few of her drunken admirers have left the Journey's End with their coin purse a bit light. She also walks the fine line between confidant and information broker. Thankfully her friend Lauris turns a blind eye to such behavior... as long as some of the proceeds make it back to the church coffers.

Suit Abilities

Spades [3] - Daring Acrobat: can perform amazing feats of balance and dexterity

Diamonds [3] - Streetwise: observant and highly charismatic, has a way of finding out what she wants to know

Spades [1] - Hidden Blade: carries a hidden blade and knows how to use it

QD [FX] - Friends in Low Places: call in a favor from Bridgeways' less desirable crowd

Disadvantages

Clubs [2] - Small and Frail: avoids intense confrontation, relatively weak and frail

Robere Gallendown

Elven Salvage Captain - Boughbreaker Operative

Mercenary captain and salvage crew boss Robere Gallendown is never in one place for too long. Captaining the heavily modified sky sloop the *Daring Dasher* has earned Robere his fair share of adventure in the Skies... and maybe more than his share of infamy. He and his crew are wanted on Heartland, Shadowhaven, and elsewhere on charges of smuggling, piracy, and opposing the Willow Court. And Robere wouldn't have it any other way.

Since leaving Heartland over a decade ago, Robere has done what he can to support the Boughbreakers and their efforts to lead wildling slaves off the island. If he and he crew can make a nice profit in the process, all the better.

Tall and with a muscular build, Robere is built like a fighter. His earth-colored skin bears the marks of many battles and his deep green eyes carry the wisdom of a leader. As an elf, his plant heritage is visible in the occasional vine or leaf poking out from under his skyfaring attire. A mop of dirty, moss-colored hair is kept tied loosely behind his head.

Suit Abilities

Clubs [2] - Ironwood Swordsman: deadly in combat with the traditional elven weapon

Diamonds [2] - Skyship Captain: experienced sailor and leader, commands a small crew

Spades [2] – Master of Misdirection: skilled at double-talk, distractions, and confusing adversaries

Hearts [1] - Freedom Fighter: can inspire and rally those around him

JC [FX] - Secret Modifications: the *Daring Dasher* and her crew are just full of surprises

Disadvantages

Diamonds [2] - Wanted: perpetually on the run from the Willow Court and Trade Council

Adventure Premise

Let's start things out with a random adventure idea.

Mythic Seed: Change / New Ideas

Is the change of ideas related to the recent undead outbreak (50/50): VERY YES

Seems like the city is on edge after repeated attacks. It's the talk of the town right now!

What sort of new ideas are being proposed (Complex): Increase / Food

The city is looking for a new source of food since the under-isles may be corrupted.

Anything else (50/50): YES

What else are they planning (Complex): Expose / Evil

Well that's pretty blunt. They're trying to figure out what's behind the attacks and how the black bricks and blood roses tie into everything.

I assume Lauris is involved with the investigation as a member of the temple (Likely): YES

What's the nature of her task and objective (Complex): Cruelty / Possessions

Looks like she will be sent to investigate someone who has something related to the incident.

I know a Godshifter will oppose her digging too deeply.
What's his (or her) deal (Complex): Extravagance / Opposition

The Godshifter holds a position of power and privilege in Bridgeways.

Is the Godshifter a political official (50/50): VERY NO

Definitely not? What's the opposite of politics... religion, then? (Very Likely): YES

Uh oh, looks like the Godshifter is a high-ranking disciple of the Artificer or the Lady of the Winds.

Is it Jamos, Lauris' adopted father and high priest of the Isle of Chimes (50/50): NO

Whew, that's a relief. I guess that leaves the Artificer...

Is it Marchus Bronzeye, head steam priest and overseer of the Crossroads markets (Very Likely): VERY YES

I guess that explains the extravagance; Marchus is both a steam priest and a business mogul. He would certainly have a ton of power and wealth.

What does Marchus have planned for those who stand in the way of his plans (Complex): Betray / Hope

Sounds like an ambush under false pretenses.

I think that's enough to get started. Let's begin...

Adventure Description

A sudden and unexpected famine has come to Bridgeways, the wind-swept archipelago at the verge of the Upper Skies. A recent undead outbreak on the under isles has jeopardized the crops of edible fungus that usually sustain the island's inhabitants. Imported food has become scarce as well after word of a horrible pestilence on Plenty has plunged the entire Skies into a fearful conservation. Imported food is a rare and treasured commodity on the island... and a necessity that carries a very high price.

As the undead attacks continue and the food supplies grow low, the citizens of Bridgeways look for a leader to save them from the hardships that threaten their very lives. As both a respected religious leader and head of the Crossroads Artisans Guild, dwarven steam priest Marchus Bronzeye has promised to be the peoples' salvation. Forming an emergency coalition of merchants and militiamen, Marchus has sworn to save the island by finding new sources of food and rooting out the cause of the undead plague by any means necessary.

Unfortunately for the citizens of Bridgeways, Marchus himself is the cause of their untimely woes. Guided by a dark and unseen force, Marchus works to sow the seeds of the island's demise and undermine the efforts of any who seek to save it. Behind a pious veil, Marchus directs his followers on witch hunts in the streets of Bridgeways while orchestrating the undead attacks behind the scenes. With the food supply firmly in his grip, a long

and deadly famine awaits the people of the wind-swept isles.

Meanwhile on the Isle of Chimes, high wind priest Jamos senses there is more at work on Bridgeways than a simple undead nuisance. The winds have whispered dark tidings that spell doom for the island and its inhabitants. Jamos suspects Marchus is hiding something about the true origin on the undead attacks and dispatches one of his most talented acolytes to uncover the truth.

Prologue

With practiced agility and grace, Quinn Shimmerscale wove her way through the crowded floor of the Journey's End tavern, balancing a tray of stew and ale tankards over her head. Standing barely four feet tall, the petite drakin was used to being dwarfed by pretty much everyone around her... even the dwarves... of which there were a lot today. Word on the street was that a pilgrim ship from Mount Ore had just pulled into the harbor, unloading a gaggle of the bearded beasties come to see the bricks.

Quinn shuffled up to a table full of the dwarven visitors, sliding the mugs of brew across the wooden surface and plopping down bowls full of mushroom stew. Lowering the tray, she peered over the tabletop, which came to her mid-chest, and flashed her most charming smile at the patrons.

"Long trip, boys?" she said with a twinkle in her violet eyes.

"You can say that again," barked one of the dwarves, downing his tankard in a single gulp and slamming down the mug. "These bloody bricks had better be worth it."

Quinn giggled for the sake of her customers as she nimbly jumped up onto the table to remove the empty beer mug. Bloody bricks was right. The jet-black bricks that made up the bridges that gave Bridgeways its name had gotten somewhat of a bad reputation of late. That

didn't seem to stop the hordes of pilgrims from coming to see the Artificer's handiwork, though. Whatever. Pilgrims were good for business.

One of the dwarves looked down at his mushroom stew with bewilderment as he prodded it with his wooden spoon. "Where's the rest of it?!" he demanded, looking at the opal-scaled waitress with dismay. "I ordered the stew, not the damn dish water!"

Quinn frowned sympathetically as she leaned on the edge of the dwarves table. "I'm sorry, sweetie" she cooed, touching the dwarf's arm with her clawed hand. "I'll see what they can do in the back... our mushroom crop isn't the best this year..." She trailed off, sensing the dwarves' frustration rising. There wasn't anything she could do. It was a miracle the kitchen was even open at all with the shrinking food stores. Time for a diversion.

"Hey, you wanna hear a joke?" Quinn's violet eyes shimmered in the torchlight and she moved in closer, as if about to tell a secret. The dwarves instinctively tilted their heads in as well.

"What's the difference between a Trade Council bureaucrat... and a gay elf?"

She paused for a moment.

"One has a stick up his ass... and the other..." Quinn grinned mischievously, "... well I guess they aren't that different after all."

The dwarves erupted with laughter as the nimble drakin jumped off the table and quickly scurried back to the kitchen to fetch a another round of drinks. It was going to be a long shift.

#

On the other side of the tavern, mercenary captain Robere Gallendown leaned back in his somewhat uncomfortable chair and kicked his boots up. Around the table, two members of his crew flirted with some local girls while the other ran his typical card hustle on an unsuspecting dwarf. Being elves, the salvage crew normally drew at least a little bit of attention in port, but not here. There was always something more interesting going on in Bridgeways than a crew of Heartland salvagers on shore leave.

Polishing off a dirty glass of root whisky with a grimace, Robere scanned the busy tavern with dark green eyes. The dwarves from the docks were definitely making themselves at home, he noted. Either these were the rowdiest pilgrims he'd ever seen or drunkenness was part of the dwarven religion. It wasn't the dwarves he was interested in, though. His eyes darted to the darkened tables in the corners looking for anyone who happened to be looking back.

Sure enough, Robere locked eyes with a silver-haired human sitting by himself at a back table. With practiced nonchalance, the stocky elf excused himself from the table and pushed his way through the crowds, heading for the back. As he walked by the darkened table, the

older man started blinking strangely at him and making complicated hand gestures.

Robere sighed. Everyone thought they knew the secret Boughbreaker signal. There was no secret Boughbreaker signal.

"You Dumont?" Robere asked, kicking back a stool at the table and taking a seat. The other man nodded. Robere threw an arm up on the table and leaned in towards his contact. "What you got for me?"

"Weapons," the man answered, visibly nervous as he glanced side to side. "Refined iron... enough to arm two dozen peasants in your little rebellion. Do you have the supplies?"

Robere nodded. "Fresh grains and produce from Heartland, six crates of it."

The old man's eyes widened as he leaned back slowly in his seat. "Good. Where is it?"

Robere raised an eyebrow. They must really be desperate for food this far up in the Skies. "It's on the ship, why don't we—"

"Good," the man cut him off, quickly standing and walking around the table. "I must be going. We will arrange for the exchange tomorrow." With that, he quickly walked away through the crowd and vanished through the door.

"Guess he had somewhere to be," the elf muttered to himself, grabbing the man's half-finished mug of ale. An attractive bar maiden walked past and Robere's head turned to follow. Too bad. It was going to be a good evening.

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"You're going to get yourself killed, you know," the wind priest said humorlessly to the young woman balanced precariously on the rocky outcropping overlooking the void.

Lauris looked back over her shoulder at her reluctant companion. "Don't get your hopes up, Mikael," she said, winking. "I know how much you'd like that."

Mikael scoffed, but said nothing as he continued to watch the slender priestess inch her way to the edge of the broken bridge. Beside him, the young boy whose kite had blown off the edge looked on in gape-mouthed disbelief.

Lauris brushed the strands of dark and perpetually wind-blown hair from her face as she leaned out over the endless, glowing sky below. There was the kite, some twenty feet down, its string snagged on a gnarled root that extended from the underside of the isle. Beyond that, there was only the dizzying depths of the void.

"Wish me luck," she said, nervously. Mikael simply stared at her while the boy next to him nodded slowly, mouth never closing.

She reached her arms out beside her, struggling to keep her balance on the precipice as the wind whipped her white and blue vestments around her body. She looked down, focusing on the kite. "It's too far down," she began, turning slightly, "I don't think I can --"

Suddenly, the wind priestess lost her balance, arms flailing as a gust of wind caught her from behind. She screamed as she tumbled out of view and into the waiting void. The boy screamed as well, rushing forward to the ledge to try to save the priestess. Falling to his knees, he peered fearfully over the ledge... but there was nothing there.

The boy sat back, shocked, the chill wind still stinging his teary eyes. Behind him, a pair of feet touched down lightly on the ruined bridge amidst a swirl of blue cloth and his missing kite appeared suddenly before his face. He turned around slowly to see Lauris standing there, smiling, with the kite in her outstretched arm.

"Someday that's not going to work, you know," Mikael grumbled as he walked up behind Lauris. The two turned away at once, leaving the stunned boy holding his kite on the edge of the bridge.

"Nonsense," Lauris said. "The Lady of the Winds favors me."

"The Aspect of Storms favors you," Mikael corrected. "The other Aspects may decide to punish your arrogance someday."

Lauris shrugged. Mikael had never approved of her devotion to the Aspect of Storms and the awe-inspiring power it granted her. Probably just jealous.

The two wind priests continued their trek across Bridgeways' middle levels, leaving the broken bridge behind. Though the time was getting late, the glow of the void was as bright and constant as ever. Up ahead, they could see the busy markets and taverns of the Crossroads.

Round 1

Journey's End Tavern, Bridgeways

Journey's End is a Known Location.

1. Drunk bar patrons
2. Journey's End wait staff
3. <generated by Mythic>
4. Bar tables, stools, furnishings, etc
5. Bridgeways militia
6. <generated by Mythic>
7. Grong, the orcish barkeep
8. Priests from a local temple
9. <generated by Mythic>
10. <generated by Mythic>

Lauris and Mikael crested the top of the arched bridge and looked down onto the busy Crossroads below. The market plaza was still busy even at this late hour, though many of the shoppers were leaving the market stalls for the inns and taverns nearby. The busiest such establishment was undoubtedly the Journey's End. A small crowd was forming at the door to the popular tavern, which was certainly packed inside.

"Looks good to me," Mikael said as he gazed over the unofficial city center, the meeting point of seven major bridges. The duo's daily walks through the city always ended here.

Lauris looked at her companion. "I suppose that means you'll be heading back then?"

Mikael nodded. "There is much to be done at the Isle of Chimes. And few devoted acolytes to do it."

Lauris ignored the slight. “Yes, I suppose someone must dust the effigies or the Skies themselves will fall down upon us all.”

Mikael scoffed again and turned his head slightly to the younger acolyte. “Try not to come back drunk this time,” he said coldly.

Lauris flashed him a sarcastic smile, but the wind priest had already turned his back, heading back across the bridge toward the Isle of Chimes.

Lauris spun back towards the Crossroads, fuming. “Wouldn’t hurt him to have an evening out now and then,” she said to herself, blowing a lock of dark hair from her face. Besides... not all the Lady’s work took place within a temple.

Several of the market stalls were closing as Lauris descended the bridge of black bricks into the massive outdoor market. The glow of the void was as bright as ever, and many of the citizens and visitors to Bridgeways were seeking shelter from the maddening glow inside the nearby inns and taverns. She looked at the line forming outside the Journey’s End. Might as well see how Quinn was handling the new influx of pilgrims.

World – Round 1, Turn 1



Use 9H – Thing, Mysterious / Dominate / Anger
[High Impact]

Interpretation: Dominate / Anger definitely sounds like glowmadness. But how can we make it mysterious...

Lauris was still half way across the Crossroads market plaza when she heard the first screams. A nervous murmur fell over the crowds of shoppers in the plaza as everyone looked around for the cause of the commotion. The distant screams grew louder, and then the first people started to run past. Something was definitely not right.

Lauris ran over to a nearby merchant cart and jumped up on it to get a better view. Her eyes immediately fell on the Journey's End. Bright flashes of void light pulsed from within the tavern's windows. The crowds of people who had been waiting outside scattered in terror. Panic spread through the Crossroads like a wave. A sinking feeling gripped Lauris' stomach before she even heard the first screams of warning. "Glowmad are in the city! Run for your lives!"

Inside the Journey's End, blinding flashes of void light washed over the confused patrons, but there was no source to be seen. Some tried to cover their eyes, but the insidious light drilled deep into their heads. One by one, the screams of terror turned into shrieks of rage as the glow dragged its victims into madness. The bewildered patrons suddenly panicked, surging toward the front doors as they tried desperately to escape whatever terrible fate awaited them.

Hero – Round 1, Turn 1



Use 6D – Robere, Skyship Captain [Low Impact]

Robere struggled to stay standing in the panicking crowd as he pushed his way towards his crew. Every pulse of the hellish light burned into the back of his eyes and he could feel his anger quickly rising. The glow seemed to come from nowhere. And how was it this intense inside a building?

“Dashers! To me!” the elf bellowed above the screams of panic and rage that surrounded him. He squinted his eyes against the blinding flashes, barely able to make heads or tails of his surroundings. Something was manipulating the glow, concentrating it into some sort of attack.

“Over here, Captain!” It was one of his men. Robere staggered towards the voice, using his powerful frame to force his way through the panicking crowd. Between the flashes of light, he saw the face of his navigator moving through the mob. The next thing he knew he was being dragged down to the ground behind an overturned table.

Chest heaving with barely-contained rage, Robere clinched his teeth and shut his eyes tight against the maddening light. Around him, the sounds of panic and chaos continued as he used every ounce of his willpower to maintain control. He opened his eyes slowly to the

frightened faces of his crew and a few other bar patrons. They were all cowered in a corner behind an overturned table. It wasn't much, but it shielded them from the worst of the glow.

World – Round 1, Turn 2



Use AS – Drunk bar patrons
[Low Impact]

Howls of rage and madness filled the Journey's End as the mysterious void light claimed more victims. The poor souls grabbed their heads and wailed in agony as Lightbringer's curse took hold.

The first thing to change was the eyes, which ruptured from within and melted down their terror-ridden faces. Beams of intense void glow erupted from their sockets like lanterns and their bodies twisted and contorted with mutation as skin turned to cracked scales and horrid claws of bone grew from their hands.

With minds forever lost to madness, the glowmad abominations shrieked with rage and leaped across the chaotic bar room to attack the fleeing crowd with super human strength.

Hero – Round 1, Turn 2



Use AS – Quinn, Character Assumption

[Low Impact]

As an employee of the Journey's End, Quinn knows another way out of the tavern.

Robere peered around the side of the overturned table. Mutated glowmad leaped onto the fleeing masses, their claws wet with blood. Their desperate victims clamored over one another trying to squeeze out the door. Robere frowned. The front exit was out of the question.

“Anyone have any ideas?” The elf yelled above the clamor, turning back to the small group of frightened patrons hiding behind the table.

“I do.” It was a petite drakin that spoke, the opal-scaled waitress he’d seen fetching drinks earlier.

Keeping her head low, Quinn slid over next to the elven captain. “There’s a service door in the back past the kitchen... if you think we can make it.”

“Oh, we can make it,” Robere said, placing a hand on the hilt of his ironwood sword. “Beats the hell out of staying here.”

“Alright,” Quinn said, looking at the rest of the frightened patrons. “We’re gonna have to make a run for it. I’ll lead the way. Try to keep up.” She forced a grin despite her terror. The others nodded reluctantly.

Robere took a deep breath. “Let’s go!” he yelled, drawing his sword as he shot to his feet and kicked the downed table aside.

The void light assaulted the group again as Quinn led them across the battered and ruined tavern hall toward the kitchen.

World – Round 1, Turn 3



Use 6D – Being, Aggressive / Abandon / Goals
[Moderate Impact]

Interpretation: A powerful glowmad escapes the tavern and rampages across the Crossroads markets.

Lauris ran through the market plaza, weaving against the fleeing crowd toward the Journey’s End. Ahead, she could see dozens of terrified people forcing their way out the front door of the tavern. Behind them, blinding flashes of void glow silhouetted a gruesome scene within. A glowmad outbreak in the Crossroads? How was this even possible?

Suddenly a horrible sound, like stone grinding stone, filled the courtyard. Thousands of tiny cracks formed in the side wall of the tavern, causing the stonework to weaken and crumble. With a loud burst of sound and pressure, the side wall blew outward in a cloud of dust, leaving a perfectly circular 10-foot hole.

From the dust cloud emerged a horrible, mutated creature. It was hairless like a mole, but with massive, misshapen muscles and wicked claws two feet long. It lumbered out on all fours, sniffing the air menacingly. Concentrated void glow blazed from its two empty eye sockets.

An Earthbane! Lauris had heard the stories. It was a powerful glowmad formed from a particularly strong dwarf. Lightbringer apparently took great pleasure in perverting his victims into a mockery of their former selves. Lauris froze in her tracks, unable to take her eyes off the monstrosity.

As if it could sense the wind priest's gaze, the Earthbane turned slowly towards Lauris. Its blazing eyes seemed to cut through her like a knife. Then, with an otherworldly bellow, it charged.

Hero – Round 1, Turn 3



Use 7H with 9H – Lauris, Storm Priestess: Lightning Blast
[Moderate Impact]

Shaken from her trance, Lauris looked quickly around her. “Everyone run! Get out of here!” she yelled into the crowds as she took several reflexive steps backward. The crowd didn’t need much convincing.

The muscle-bound monstrosity charged toward her, scattering screaming peasants in its wake. Its wicked claws dug deep gashes into the stone beneath it as it ran. Lauris braced herself, but didn't move. She was the hand of the goddess, and these people needed her protection.

A gust of wind swirled around the priestess, whipping her robes around her as she extended her hands toward the charging Earthbane. With a sudden crack of thunder, brilliant streaks of blue lightning erupted from her fingertips, scoring deep, burning gashes across the mutant's exposed flesh.

The creature howled with pain and rage as the lightning ripped through its body, finally crashing to the ground mere feet from where Lauris stood. It slid to a stop, convulsing from the shock, with tendrils of lightning arcing across its back. It was incapacitated... for now.

World – Round 1, Turn 4



Use 7H – Grong the orcish barkeep
[Moderate Impact]

Inside the Journey's End, Quinn stood on the bar top, squinting against the glare of the glow which seemed to come from everywhere and nowhere at the same time. The room swirled as the insidious light worked its way into her head. The rest of the survivors were behind her

with the burly elf and his crew helping to cut a path through the battlefield.

“Over here!” she yelled. “Hurry!”

As the others reached the bar, Quinn threw open the door to the kitchen, holding it open as the rest of her companions staggered inside. She quickly closed the door behind them. The glow was still strong here, but not as overwhelming.

“What now?” panted Robere, bracing himself against a rack of cookware.

“To the back,” Quinn said as she darted among the survivors to make sure everyone was okay. “Past the store room. There’s a door that leads out the side.”

A loud crash from deeper in the kitchen caused them all to jump. A broad-shouldered orc stumbled in from the back hallway, crashing face first into a food prep table. Two shrieking glowmad followed in hot pursuit.

Quinn recognized him immediately. “Grong! NO!” she screamed in horror as the insane ravagers leaped on top of her friend with their vicious claws.

Hero – Round 1, Turn 4



Use 4C – Robere, Ironwood Swordsman
[Low Impact]

Robere looked down at the distressed drakin. Her violet eyes shone back at him, pleading. She'd risked her life to get them this far. That was definitely worth something in his book. The elf nodded solemnly at the dragon-woman and readied his sword.

"I'll get these two, the rest of you get to the back!"

Quinn's eyes locked with his for a short moment, a silent thank you, before turning to the others. "Come on, everyone follow me!"

While the others moved along the wall to the right, Robere dashed forward across the cluttered kitchen towards the two glowmad and their orcish victim. With a forceful cry, he swung his sword at the vile creatures, catching one under the jaw and knocking it backwards into a stack of unwashed dishes. The other looked up at the elf with glow filled eyes and shrieked with rage.

Robere readied his sword for the counter attack, dodging backwards as the crazed humanoid lunged wildly at him. His blade parried a series of wild swings, but the creature kept advancing.

Robere dodged left and right, ducking as his opponent's claws ripped through the space where his head had just been. The creature spun around, reeling from the force of its own attacks. The elf grinned at the careless tactic and swung his sword forcefully at his opponent's exposed side.

The ironwood sword connected solidly, smashing bone as it spun the glowmad human around and sent it

sprawling into a heap on the floor. With both targets dispatched, Robere sheathed his weapon and rushed to help the drakin's orc friend. He only hoped he wasn't too late.

World – Round 1, Turn 5



**Use 4C – Bar tables, stools, furnishing, etc.
[Moderate Impact]**

Robere knelt beside the wounded orc, who still lay motionless on the floor of the Journey's End's kitchen. He was badly wounded, with numerous gashes on his chest and face from the glowmad's vicious claws. Thankfully he was still alive.

"Let's go, buddy," the elf said grabbing Grong's meaty hand in his own. "There's a dragon lady waiting out back who'll be really happy to see you still breathing."

Crashes and screams could still be heard from the front of the tavern and pulses of void light shone from the cracks in the door. It was only a matter of time before more glowmad found them back here.

Pain twisted across the orc's face as he looked up at his rescuer. Saying nothing, he motioned downward toward his feet. Robere looked down and saw the cutting table Grong had crashed into while fleeing the glowmad. The heavy wooden block had flipped over in the

confrontation, crushing one of the orc's legs beneath its bulk.

"It's broken," the orc choked. "Leave me. Save yourself!"

Hero – Round 1, Turn 5



Use 9H – Robere, Freedom Fighter
[Low Impact]

Robere looked down at the bloody orc with determination in his emerald eyes. "I'm not in the habit of leaving men behind, friend. Especially for nothing more than a broken leg." He glanced at the heavy table pinning the orc's leg. "Now let's get you out of here."

It wasn't going to be easy. The table was a solid block of wood several feet thick with short iron legs. The thing probably weighed 300 pounds... and it was laying directly on top of the orc's mangled leg.

"In the storage room..." Grong said through gritted teeth. "... there's a keg cart..."

Just then, the door to the main tavern room crashed open as the body of a mangled bar patron was forcibly thrown through it. Horrible void light poured into the kitchen, silhouetting the mutated forms of multiple glowmad moving through the dining room toward them.

“Time’s up!” Robere shouted, kneeling down and pressing his shoulder against the heavy mass of wood. “We’re going NOW! Put those orc muscles of yours to work and help me push... one... two... THREE!”

Grong yelled in pain as the heavy table rolled across his broken leg and fell to the floor with a thud. Before he knew it, the stocky elf had grabbed him beneath the arms and was dragging him down the back hallway toward the exit.

Robere shuffled down the darkened hallway, lugging the heavy body of the wounded orc behind him. The screams of madness still echoed in his ears as he strained toward the open door. Somehow, fighting the Oakthorn in the wilds of Heartland seemed inviting compared to their current situation. “Almost there,” he grunted to the orc. “Stay with me!”

The two men emerged from the back door into an alley behind the tavern. Robere’s elven crew immediately rushed to his aid, grabbing the wounded orc and pulling them both quickly through the doorway. Behind them, the sounds of crashing dishware echoed down the hall as the glowmad reached the kitchen.

As soon as everyone was safely outside, Quinn slammed the door shut while the rest of the survivors tipped over an empty supply cart that was sitting in the alley to block the glowmad inside.

Round 2

Crossroads Markets, Bridgeways

The Crossroads is a Known Location.

1. Merchant carts selling assorted wares
2. Crowds of shoppers
3. <generated by Mythic>
4. A dispute among merchants
5. Bridgeways militia
6. Salvage crew with a problem
7. <generated by Mythic>
8. Priests from a local temple
9. <generated by Mythic>
10. <generated by Mythic>

Another bolt of lightning flashed across the market plaza outside the Journey's End as the howling glowmad collapsed into a pile of smoldering flesh. Mere minutes before, the mutated creature had been a normal citizen of Bridgeways, or perhaps a visitor, enjoying a drink after a busy day in the markets. How quickly things changed in the Skies.

Lauris Windfound braced herself against the terrified crowds rushing past her. Her breath came in quick gasps, both from concentration required to control the Lady's divine storms, and from the fear of seeing the horrible glow abominations emerge from the tavern. She had heard stories of glowmadness outbreaks before, but never like this. Never this far within a city... and certainly never *inside* a building.

The horrible light that mysteriously appeared inside the tavern had faded, but the damage was done. Dozens of citizens had succumbed to Lightbringer's maddening curse, transforming into rage-fueled monstrosities and tearing into the fleeing crowds like wolves on helpless cattle.

A handful of armed militiamen were struggling to keep the madness outbreak contained, but with limited success. The screams of the dead and dying mixed with howls of rage as the rampaging Blinded threw themselves at anything that moved.

Lauris looked down at the smoking corpse in front of her. It was barely recognizable with the horrible mutations that twisted its flesh. Glowmadness had no known cure. Once the infernal light claimed a person's mind, they were doomed to a living hell of unending rage until they were mercifully destroyed. The person before her... what was left of them... had been someone's father... someone's brother... someone's friend...

Quinn...

Lauris' heart sank in her chest. In the chaos of the fighting she'd forgotten that Quinn had been working inside the tavern when the outbreak occurred. Her lifelong friend could be dead right now... or worse. A lump caught in her throat as she looked back down at the wretched mutant at her feet. She prayed that wasn't the case.

“QUINN!!” she yelled, her icy blue eyes searching the chaos for any sign of the small drakin. Panic gripped the young priestess’ chest as she moved through the crowds. If Quinn was in trouble, she had to find her quickly.

“QUINN!!”

#

In the cramped alley behind the Journey’s End, Robere, Quinn, and the three elven crewmen huddled over the injured orc. On top of a broken leg, Grong had numerous deep wounds from the Blinded’s frenzied attacks. Quinn wiped some of the blood from his face with a wadded-up bar apron.

“You alright, big guy?” the drakin asked, leaning over Grong’s bloodied face with a look of deep concern.

The orc nodded. “I’ll be fine, kid. No worse than breaking up a bar fight back on the floating city.” The two smiled, then Grong’s expression turned serious. “I thought I was dead back there.” He looked at Robere. “You saved me. Thank you.”

Robere nodded simply at the orc. “Without your drakin friend’s help, we’d all likely be dead.”

Quinn turned around to the others and extended her clawed hands in a pacifying gesture. “Alright, alright,” she said with a slight smile. “We can discuss how amazing we all are later. For now, we have to keep moving. That old cart won’t hold those things in there forever.”

World – Round 2, Turn 1



**Use 3S – Being, Mysterious / Negligence / Victory
Activate Disadvantage – Robere, Wanted
[Moderate Impact]**

Interpretation: Sounds like whoever caused the glowmadness outbreak is still nearby to gloat about their victory.

“Leaving so soon?” The voice came from behind them. The gathered survivors spun around to see an older human man with silver hair standing confidently at the mouth of the alley.

Robere squinted at the man. It was his contact from earlier, the one he was meant to trade with for the weapons. “Dumont? What in the hell are you doing here? Are you responsible for this... this madness?” The elf motioned to the chaos that gripped the market plaza outside the tavern.

The older man chuckled. “I’m afraid it is *you* who are responsible, my dear Captain. At least that’s what the guards will say when they seize the cargo of the infamous pirate captain, Robere Gallendown.”

Robere ignored the surprised looks from Quinn and the others. “And find what,” Robere demanded, “some old grain sacks and a crate of over-ripe Heartland pears? I thought we had a deal...”

The man grinned wickedly. “No, no... the food creates are already in our possession. What they’ll find is one of these.” He produced a strange black cube from within his tunic. It was made of polished stone, like the famous bricks of Bridgeways, but composed of several interlocking pieces that fit together like a puzzle. Concentrated void light shone brightly from within the device’s core.

“There’s another one inside the tavern, of course. I’m impressed you managed to survive the detonation. No matter, the militia are already on their way. Enjoy prison, Captain... if they don’t kill you first.”

Hero – Round 2, Turn 1



Use 2C – Lauris, Attractive Presence
[Low Impact]

“You’ll be the one in irons once we expose the truth of the attack.”

The man spun around to see a raven-haired wind priestess in bright white and blue robes standing at the entrance to the alley behind him. Lightning flashed behind her piercing gaze as she strode confidently toward him. “That is if I don’t strike you down where you stand for what you’ve done to these people.”

Behind her wind-blown locks, a bead of sweat formed on Lauris’ brow. She was exhausted from the fight in the

market plaza and it was all she could do to maintain the feeble storm effects that surrounded her now. Looked like a bluff was her best chance to get to Quinn and the others. She hoped this mysterious aggressor couldn't sense her weakness.

The man laughed again as he looked between the angry wind priestess on one side and the mercenary captain with drawn sword on the other. "Very well," he chuckled. "Looks like I'll have to deal with you later." His mocking smile suddenly turned to a scowl. "... all of you."

With that, the silver-haired man made a quick arcane gesture and vanished in a burst of light and foul smoke.

World – Round 2, Turn 2



Use 7D – Being, Passive / Disrupt / A plot
[Moderate Impact]

"Lauris!" Quinn shouted, running up to her friend. "Boy am I glad to see you."

The storm effects surrounding the priestess faded as she knelt down and met the small drakin in a relieved embrace. "You're glad to see *me*? I thought you were dead! What in the infinite Skies was going on in there?"

"Almost was!" Quinn began, turning back to the group of survivors still huddled in the alley. "I was serving drinks,

you see, when the glow started... brighter than I've ever seen!"

"We can catch you up later," Robere said, interrupting Quinn's excited story. "Right now we have bigger problems." He pointed down at Grong. The wounded orc was still bleeding badly from his injuries and had lost consciousness.

"He needs help... and fast."

Hero – Round 2, Turn 2



Use 7D – Lauris, Clever Thinker
[Low Impact]

All eyes turned to Lauris. Some priests and priestess of the Skies were known to command powerful healing magic. Many could call down divine miracles of restoration from their chosen gods.

Lauris met their gaze and looked down at the orcish barkeep lying unconscious on the ground. She knew him from her frequent visits to the Journey's End. It was hard to see him like this; the Blinded had really done a number on him. If he didn't get help, he would die from his injuries within an hour.

"We need to get him to the Isle of Chimes," she said, finally. "My storm devotion won't be able to save him. Mikael follows the Aspect of Rain. He'll be able to help."

“I’m coming with you,” Robere said, stepping forward toward the attractive priestess. “There’s no way you two will make it on your own. Not with glowmad on the loose.” He turned to his crew. “The rest of you get back to the *Dasher*. I don’t know what they’re planning to do to it, but see if you can stop them.”

“How are we even going to get him there?” Quinn asked. “We can’t just carry him.”

Lauris looked around the alley, her eyes settling on the overturned supply cart that was blocking the back door to the tavern. The large cart was heavy and made of sturdy wood, but it could be pushed by someone as strong as their elven friend.

Quinn followed Lauris’ gaze and frowned. “Umm, you do realize there are swarms of enraged glowmad directly behind that door, right?”

Lauris nodded.

Quinn sighed and looked up at her friend with bright violet eyes. “Y’know, sometimes I think you enjoy putting us in mortal danger.”

Lauris shrugged. Sometimes. This time they didn’t have any other choice.

World – Round 2, Turn 3



Use 2C – Crowds of shoppers **[Low Impact]**

Robere stared at the closed door behind the overturned cart. Behind the two inches of wood, he could hear the screams of the Blinded and the crashes of tables as they hunted for any survivors. The door shook and bent as one of the creatures directly on the other side threw itself against it again and again.

The elf looked up to the top of the doorframe where Quinn was perched, knife grasped in her tiny hand. The wind priestess was behind him, holding a piece of scrap wood like a club. Robere tightened his grip on the heavy wagon.

“Everyone ready?”

The two ladies nodded.

Robere dropped low against the side of the wagon and pushed as hard as he could. With the sound of creaking wood, the aging cart slid away from the door and flipped back onto its wheels in the middle of the alley with a loud thud.

Almost immediately, the back door to the tavern flew open as an enraged Blinded crashed through it. The creature shrieked with rage and leaped towards Robere with outstretched claws.

Hero – Round 2, Turn 3



Use 4S with 3S – Quinn, Daring Acrobat
[Moderate Impact]

Quinn leaped into the air as the enraged glowmad burst through the door below her. Blade still firmly in her hand, she tucked into a front flip and flung herself toward the charging creature's back as it bore down upon Robere.

The monster stumbled forward as Quinn landed between its shoulder blades and plunged the knife deep into the base of its neck. The two combatants fell forward into the alley. The Blinded collapsed to the ground, unmoving, while Quinn nimbly flipped over its shoulder and rolled to her feet near the wheel of the cart.

“Let's go!” she chirped, slapping Robere on the hip. “There'll be more where that came from.”

With sword only half drawn, Robere looked down at the opal-scaled waitress and grinned. That was two he owed her now.

“We'll have to cut through the market,” Lauris said, rushing over. “The bridge on the far side leads directly to the Isle of Chimes. They'll be able to help Grong there.”

Robere nodded as he grabbed the wounded orc by the shoulders and hoisted him into the back of the cart.

Lauris and Quinn led the way out of the alley while Robere pushed the heavy cart out into the market plaza after them.

World – Round 2, Turn 4



**Use AC – Merchant carts, selling assorted wares
[Low Impact]**

In front of the Journey's End, armed militiamen fought back against the Blinded that emerged from the front on the ruined tavern. Screams coming from deeper in the maze of merchant stalls indicated that they had not been entirely successful in containing the outbreak.

Lauris and Quinn led the way past the chaos in front of the Journey's End and into the labyrinthine pathways of the Crossroads market plaza. Robere pushed the wagon behind them. Hundreds of merchant carts were set up in the wide-open area, forming twisting pathways that changed almost daily. A few people still lingered among the deserted carts, but most had fled.

“Which way?” Quinn asked, jumping on top of the cart to get a better view. A sea of merchant wagons and brightly-colored streamers surrounded them.

Lauris looked around, disoriented. The markets were often intentionally confusing, leading shoppers in circles to keep their interest for as long as possible.

“This way... I think,” the priestess said uncertainly. She knew where the bridge to the Isle of Chimes was... just not how to get there quickly through the mess of stalls.

Around them, they heard the panicked screams of fleeing citizens and the wild shrieks of the glowmad echoing through the empty merchant stalls. They needed to move quickly.

Hero – Round 2, Turn 4



Use 3S – Quinn, Daring Acrobat
[Low Impact]

“Let me take a look,” Quinn said as she leaped from the cart onto the side of one of the nearby merchant stalls. Grabbing a bit of brightly colored cloth that hung from the side, she climbed on top of the wooden stall and gazed out over the plaza.

A maze of interconnected carts and merchant shops sprawled out across the plaza at the center of Bridgeways. Quinn’s eyes narrowed as she looked for a clear way through the twisting paths to the bridge on the other side. A few Blinded had made it into the plaza and were charging through the stalls looking for victims. It wasn’t going to be easy.

“Follow me,” Quinn said, looking down at Lauris and the elf below. “I think I see a way though... but be ready for some excitement.”

With that, the agile drakin took off across the tops of the merchant stalls, leaping from shop to shop as she led the others toward the distant bridge.

World – Round 2, Turn 5



Use 4S – A dispute among merchants
[Moderate Impact]

Robere kept his head low and his shoulders thrown forward as he labored to push the heavy cart through the narrow streets of the Crossroads markets. At the front of the cart, Lauris did her best to steer the awkward vehicle using the detached yoke while the opal drakin leaped across the canopies above them to guide their path. Around them, the frenzied screams of the Blinded were growing louder.

Suddenly, Quinn came to a screeching halt at the edge of a market canopy overlooking an intersection. Spinning on her heels she dashed quickly to the left and leaped to another cart, only to slide to a stop again.

“Which way?” Lauris yelled, struggling under the weight of the yoke.

Dismally, Quinn peered down at the two. “Neither! They’re all around us! Get ready!”

Robere barely had time to draw his sword before the first Blinded burst through the merchant stall to his left.

Hundreds of tiny glass figurines spilled onto the ground him as the mutated human crashed through the storefront and tumbled into the street. Immediately after, another one rounded the corner in front of them, glow blazing from its empty eye sockets. The two creatures shrieked with rage as they closed in on their prey.

Hero – Round 2, Turn 5



Use AC with 2C – Robere, Ironwood Swordsman
[Moderate Impact]

With no hesitation, the skilled elven swordsman spun to his left and struck low at the Blinded that had just crashed through the storefront. The creature was still off balance from the hail of glass figurines that surrounded it and barely had time to react before Robere's blade caught it behind the knees, sending it crashing to the ground. The Blinded shrieked with rage and pain as the elf lunged in, delivering a fatal strike to its exposed chest.

"Lauris! Look out!" It was Quinn that shouted from the canopy.

Robere spun around to see the second glowmad closing in on the unarmed priestess. The woman turned to run, but it was too late. The enraged mutation leapt forward with unnatural strength, soaring over the top of the wagon and slamming into Lauris as she tried to flee. The

two tumbled to the street in a clash of claws and tangled limbs.

“Lauris!” Quinn yelled in horror, rushing down the side of the canopy toward her friend.

“Stay back!” Robere shouted at Quinn as he charged towards the melee. For all her agility and nimble tricks, the tiny drakin would be as good as dead in a grapple with one of the beasts.

Lauris rolled to a stop on her back in the middle of the street. Disoriented, she looked up into the glow-filled eyes of the Blinded directly on top of her. Fear gripped her heart as a face of pure madness and hatred stared back. Any shred of humanity had been erased by Lightbringer’s curse. The creature’s eyes blazed with infernal light as it raised its wicked claws to strike.

Robere’s blade swung swiftly through the air as the Blinded’s claws descended upon the helpless priestess. The strike connected solidly with the side of its mutated, scaly head, lifting it off the ground and sending it crashing into the ruined merchant stall. It didn’t move.

A strong hand reached down and pulled Lauris to her feet. “You alright,” Robere asked between rapid breaths.

Lauris blinked a few times. “I think so.” She was a bit banged up from the fall, but otherwise uninjured. If the elf had been a few seconds later, it might have been a different story.

“Let’s get out of here, then” Robere said, moving back to the cart. “I’ve had enough close calls for one day.”

“I’ll drink to that,” Quinn replied, grinning happily from the roof of the merchant shack. “We’re almost to the bridge. Try to keep up!”

Interlude 1

The Isle of Chimes, Bridgeways

It was the middle of the sleep cycle when Grong finally opened his eyes. The room swirled around him, slowly coming into focus. He was laying on a bed, covered with a simple blanket. Around him were stone walls and furnishing he didn't recognize. Dark cloths were wrapped around his arms and chest. Bandages?

"Where... am I?" he choked, looking around.

Almost immediately Quinn's dragon-like face appeared in his vision. Her violet eyes were marked with worry and fatigue. "Welcome back," she said with a smile. "Just try to relax. You're at the Isle of Chimes... in the recovery ward. You were messed up pretty bad."

Grong closed his eyes as memories of the glowmad outbreak came rushing back to him. The glow... it had come from nowhere.

Quinn looked down at her friend and co-worker from her perch on the bedside table. They had rushed him to the temple as quickly as they could. Thankfully the priests had been able to mend the worst of his wounds. His leg had been thoroughly crushed, however, and currently sat in a brace. It would still be weeks before he fully recovered, but at least he was alive.

“Just try to get some rest,” she said soothingly, placing a clawed hand gently on the orc’s shoulder.

Grong nodded as best he could before sleep took him once more.

#

High Priest Jamos stood solemnly on the windy bluff overlooking Bridgeways. Though the hour was late, the glow shone brightly as ever on the exposed surface of the Isle of Chimes. Around him, the Effigies of the Aspects rose majestically like silent guardians overlooking the city below. Each of the five great stone pillars, carved by the winds themselves, represented one face of the Lady of the Winds.

Lauris stood next to the older man, her dark hair whipping wildly in the icy winds that scoured the unprotected face of the uppermost isle in Bridgeways. Robere huddled behind them, shivering visibly from the freezing wind that somehow didn’t seem to affect the other two. They had come here to commune with the goddess after Lauris explained the outbreak in the tavern, but Robere didn’t see much communing going on. They had been standing there in silence for a very long time.

“The wind brings dark tidings,” Jamos said at last, turning slowly towards the shivering elf. He was human, aging but not old, with wind-blown hair streaked with gray and a short-cut beard. Like Lauris, he wore the white and blue vestments of the Lady of the Winds.

“And what, exactly, does that mean?” Robere asked bluntly, doing his best not to let his teeth chatter. He’d never had much patience for cryptic religious prophecies... especially when they occurred at the top of a freezing bluff in the middle of the sleep cycle.

“It means the attack today was just the beginning,” Lauris cut in.

Jamos nodded and looked at his acolyte and adopted daughter. “The device you described, the black cube filled with void light... it must be the work of the dark presence I have sensed growing on Bridgeways.”

The young priestess nodded knowingly.

Robere looked between the two wind priests. He was still confused. “What does all this have to do with my ship?”

Jamos’ gaze drifted out over the city below. “That, I am not sure.” He paused for a long moment and then looked back at Lauris and the elven captain. “But we must find out.”

He continued. “Go with the captain to his ship, Lauris. Uncover the origin of this horrible device. The winds speak of a dark force growing... a Godshifter with the ability to pervert the power of the gods themselves. Every day its strength grows. We must do what we can to stop it here on Bridgeways... before it unleashes its plight of madness and destruction upon the Skies.”

Round 3

The Docks, Bridgeways

The Docks are an Impromptu Location. All challenge list entries will be generated by Mythic.

The World Player has the advantage and receives 1 Impact Token.

Robere hadn't wanted to sleep, but he did. With all the talk of dark prophecies and Godshifters and mysterious wizards with glow weapons, the elf was almost positive the *Dasher* and his crew were in danger. Dumont has certainly been interested in his cargo for some reason, and Robere had a sneaking suspicion it wasn't because the old man had a taste for Heartland produce.

He had wanted to leave for the docks immediately, maybe catch Dumont and his conspirators in the act before they could do whatever dark dealings they had planned. Quinn, however, had talked him out of it.

She had a point, too. He was a wanted man, and Dumont had already had plenty of time to rig a trap for him if that's what he wanted to do. Hell, the old sorcerer had practically taunted them into chasing him there. No, now was the time for a more indirect approach. Unfortunately, Robere had already sent his crew walking headlong into whatever the villain had planned.

"Looks quiet today," Lauris said as the trio looked down on the docks from the top of one of the city's famous

bridges. Several hours had passed since the outbreak at the Journey's End and most of the city was waking again after an uneasy sleep cycle.

Below, large wooden piers jutted out into the empty sky at the edge of one of Bridgeway's outermost islands. Dozens of skyships of all makes and sizes were all tied off along the piers. While the docks were usually packed with merchants trading wares and salvagers hauling crates of exotic cargo, they were unusually quiet, even for the early hour.

"Maybe the glowmad scared everyone off," Quinn offered with a smirk, but she didn't fully believe it.

Robere tightened his cloak around his shoulders and flipped the heavy hood up over his head to hide his features. "There's the *Dasher*," he said, pointing at an unassuming sky sloop tied off midway down the docks. "Let's check it out. Be on your guard."

World – Round 3, Turn 1



Use 4H – Thing, Concrete / Refuse / Bureaucracy [Moderate Impact]

Interpretation: A sign at the entrance to the harbor states that access to the docks is currently denied.

The three companions walked down the long bridge of black bricks to find a crowd forming at the gateway to the harbor. The chunk of land that held the docks,

though it was quite large, had only a single bridge connecting it to the rest of the island chain. Here at the base of the bridge, a large stone gateway served as a sort of customs checkpoint for goods entering and leaving Bridgeways.

A barrier had been set up across the gateway to prevent entry into the harbor. A group of uniformed militiamen stood in front of it and were doing their best to answer questions from the frustrated crowd. On top of the barrier was a hand-painted sign with bold lettering.

HARBOR CLOSED
INVESTIGATION OF GLOWMAD
OUTBREAK IN PROGRESS
SEEK LOCAL ACCOMODATIONS

Hero – Round 3, Turn 1



Use KH with 4H – Lauris, Storm Priestess
[Moderate Impact]

“Great,” Robere said, the heavy hood hiding most of his face. “I guess Dumont wasn’t lying about planting that evidence on the *Dasher*.”

Quinn frowned as she looked up at the sign. “Either that or someone doesn’t want us following their tracks,” she said. “Maybe this Godshifter of yours has friends in high places.”

Lauris nodded slowly as she looked out over the agitated crowd and into the mostly empty docks beyond. Jamos had been tracking the dark presence for months, ever since the undead first appeared on the underisles. It made sense that whoever was behind it all might have gained a bit of status within the city. Whatever the case, they had to get to the elf's ship.

“Let's try the direct approach,” Lauris said suddenly, looking at the other two with a hint of lightning behind her icy blue eyes. “Stay close and keep your mouths shut.” With that, she started walking quickly forward through the crowd.

Quinn knew better than to protest when the hot-headed priestess got an idea in her head. It was better just to play along. She gave Robere a gentle shove of encouragement and the two followed the young woman as she pushed her way through the crowd toward the barrier.

“Ma'am, please stay back!” one of the militiamen stated firmly as Lauris emerged from the front of the crowd. “The harbor is closed due to a glowmadness threat.”

“Yes, I know,” Lauris said with an air of authority as she straightened her white and blue vestments. “My companions and I have been sent from the Isle of Chimes to help identify and remove the threat.”

Several of the militiamen looked at one another. “I haven't heard of any— ”

“Of course not,” Lauris interrupted. “Likely due to the sensitive nature off the discovery. You have heard about the device, haven’t you?”

The guards were silent as the priestess stared intensely at them. Storm devotees were not known for their patience.

#

“I can’t believe that worked,” Robere said from under his hood as the trio walked quickly across the empty boardwalk toward the docks. “What if they’d recognized us?”

“They didn’t,” Lauris said with a confident smile.

“Luckily...” Quinn added.

“Luck had nothing to do with it,” the priestess retorted with a smile. “The Lady of the Winds favors me.”

World – Round 3, Turn 2



Use KH – Being, Passive / Reject / Opulence
[High Impact]

Interpretation: Marchus Bronzeye and his conspirators are hanging around the docks.

“There’s the *Dasher*,” Robere said, pointing down the boardwalk toward his ship. The three had made is

across the harbor storefronts with virtually no resistance.

The unassuming sky sloop floated out over the void some 50 yards down the pier. A handful of militiamen lingered in front of Robere's ship, along with a few men who looked like merchants and a stocky dwarf in extravagant attire.

"Looks like someone beat us here." Quinn said cautiously.

Lauris narrowed her eyes and she looked down the pier at the assembled group. "That's Marchus Bronzeye," she said with a hint of surprise in her voice. "He runs the Artificer temple just off the Crossroads. What's he doing here?"

"Same thing we are?" Robere offered. "Maybe he can help us."

"Maybe..." Lauris said, unconvinced. Jamos had mentioned his suspicion of the dwarf before. After the first undead outbreak was tied to the black bricks, Marchus had used the publicity to lure hordes of pilgrims into his temple... and temple markets. His involvement in all this certainly didn't bode well.

Hero – Round 3, Turn 2



Use 8C – Lauris, Attractive Presence
[Low Impact]

“No reason to stop now,” Lauris said with a resigned sigh.
“Let’s go see what they’ve found.”

Quinn and Robere followed close behind the attractive priestess as she strode confidently down the pier. Quinn eyed the gathered men cautiously while Robere kept his face turned to the wooden planks to hide his features. As they approached, the assembled figures turned to watch them.

“Good day, gentlemen,” Lauris said cheerfully as they approached, flashing her most endearing smile. “My name is Lauris Windfound, disciple from the Isle of Chimes.” She bowed deeply, brushing some stray locks of hair from her face. “My companions and I have come to assist with the glowmadness investigation. How may we be of service?”

World – Round 3, Turn 3



Use 5C with 5D – Thing, Abstract / Inspect / Lies
[High Impact]

Interpretation: Marchus feigns cooperation and offers to let them inspect the ship, but it’s a trap.

First we should know something about Marchus. What type of person is he (Description): Crazily / Dry Interpretation: He's a sociopath, humorless and insidious.

We know he's wealthy and wears extravagant clothing. What else is notable about him (Description): Fully / Disgusting

Interpretation: He's greatly obese and unwashed, stuffing his own gullet while others starve around him. Was he expecting the heroes to show up (50/50): YES

Several of the merchants looked at one another uncertainly as Marchus turned slowly to face the new arrivals. The head steam priest was a man of prodigious girth, clad in layers of fine clothing, heavily stained with food, and ornate iron jewelry. A nappy mess of russet hair and a greasy beard covered most of his head and face while cold, humorless eyes peered out from underneath. An iron cane, topped with the Artificer's cog, helped support his weight.

He looked at Lauris and the others for a long moment. "Well, I'm glad ye've come," he said finally. "We've found something on board this ship here potentially linked to the glowmadness outbreak. A strange device smuggled in by elven pirates."

The obese dwarf turned and motioned back toward Robere's ship. "Maybe you and yer companions can make somethin' of it." He put on a forced smile. "Won't ye please come have a look?"

Hero – Round 3, Turn 3



Use 5D – Quinn, Streetwise **[Low Impact]**

If Quinn had had any hairs on her opal scaled body, they would have been standing on end as the dwarf's cold gaze washed over her. Something was definitely not right here. Her violet eyes darted between the disgusting priest, the armed militiamen, and the nervous merchants. An odd assembly, to say the least. The militiamen even had their hands resting on the hilts of their weapons. This whole thing was probably a set up.

Lauris returned the dwarven priest's smile, seemingly unaware of the looming danger. "We'll certainly do our best," she said, taking a step toward the gangplank. Robere followed at her side, anxious to get back on board his ship.

Quinn didn't move.

"Any sign of the crew?" she asked suddenly, desperate to delay her companions without arousing suspicion.

Marchus turned back toward the diminutive drakin. "What's that... little lady?" he said, evenly. Tension was building in the air as the gathered figures all turned to her at once.

"The elven pirates," Quinn said again. "Did you manage to catch them?"

There was a moment's pause. "I'm 'fraid not, my dear." Marchus said, moistening his greasy lips. "No sign of em yet."

Robere's back straightened slightly. He'd ordered his men to return to the *Dasher* after the attack at the Journey's End. They should have been on the ship when it was searched... or at least still be in the area. And with the docks being closed off, *someone* would have seen them.

Robere stopped just short of the gangplank.

World – Round 3, Turn 4



Use 5D with 5C – As above (Marchus sets a trap)
[High Impact]

Interpretation: Once it's obvious the heroes are suspicious, Marchus and his conspirators move in to capture them.

Lauris turned to see what why her companions weren't following her just as the unmistakable sound of drawn steel cut across the quiet harbor. The priestess froze as chills ran down her spine. Around her, militiamen with drawn weapons moved in to block their escape.

"If only ye'd had the good sense to keep yer noses out of matters," Marchus said evenly, leaning on his cane.

“Where’s my crew?” Robere demanded, finally flinging the hood back from his face. His eyes blazed with defiance.

Marchus stared at the elf, his expression unchanging. “In our custody, of course. To stand trial for yesterday’s horrible attack.” He smiled ruefully. “Fortunately, it looks like we’ve managed to catch their captain and his conspirators as well.”

“It wasn’t them,” Lauris said hastily. “It was a man named Dumont. We saw him commit the attack at the tavern. He planted evidence on this ship!”

Marchus chuckled slowly, almost like a cough. “Oh I know, my dear. But someone has to take the blame, don’t they? It’s a shame ye had to involve yourself in this.” The dwarf paused, looking Lauris up and down with his cold eyes. “Pity. I’ve always had a fondness for ye.”

The militiamen closed in around the heroes. “Now drop yer weapons and let’s make this simple,” Marchus said evenly. “Patsies work somewhat better when they’re still alive.”

Hero – Round 3, Turn 4



**Use 4H with KH – Lauris, Storm Priestess, Wind Wall
[Moderate Impact]**

Lauris took a step backward as the armed guards closed in around the three of them. Robere had his hand on his sword and Quinn looked ready to spring into action as the three backed toward the edge of the pier with the looming void behind them.

Unfortunately, these weren't just some back-alley thugs confronting them. These were uniformed Bridgeways militia... along with a respected priest and unarmed merchants. Any violence here could only lead to more trouble. But they couldn't very well just give up either.

"Winds of the goddess protect us," Lauris whispered as she extended her arms out to her sides. Almost immediately, the harbor winds picked up behind her, blowing in strongly from the void. The ships around them tilted and bobbed above the endless expanse as the winds grew to gale force within a matter of moments.

The militiamen leaned forward and shielded their eyes against the howling wind as they tried to close in on their quarry. The relentless gusts slammed into them like a wall, pulling at their clothing and halting their advance amidst a whirlwind of debris. Lauris remained motionless with arms extended, her robes whipping violently in the divine currents.

"Get on the ship!" Robere shouted above the howling gale. It looked like that was their only way out.

World – Round 3, Turn 5



Use 8C with Impact Token – Locale, Deliberate / Take / Possessions

[Extreme Impact]

Interpretation: The heroes rush onto the ship... and right into Dumont's trap. But it looks like Marchus wants them alive.

Quinn and Robere ran up the narrow gangplank and onto the ship while Lauris continued to direct the hurricane winds at the figures gathered below. The guards and merchants shielded themselves against the gusts that ripped across the exposed pier, unable to pursue.

“Cut the rope!” Robere yelled, moving quickly across the deck to prepare the vessel for flight. Quinn rushed down the side of the ship to detach it from the dock.

“That won’t be necessary.” The voice came from the opening leading to the lower decks.

Suddenly, bright flashes of void light ripped across the deck of the *Daring Dasher* like miniature explosions, enveloping the heroes in its maddening glow. The world began to spin as the insidious light once again worked its way into their heads.

The violent winds slowed to a calm as Lauris stumbled backward on the deck, covering her eyes with both hands to shut out the horrible light. Robere struggled to keep

his balance, eventually collapsing to the deck, while Quinn braced herself against the blinding flashes by burying her head between her knees.

Behind them, Dumont cackled with perverse glee amidst the blasts of void energy. “Yes! YES! Give in to the glow! Let the madness take hold! Your minds belong to the Lightbringer!”

“Enough!” Marchus Bronzeye stood at the top of the gangplank, breathing heavily from the climb. “We need the captain alive to stand trial.”

“Oh, he’ll still be alive,” the older man said with a wicked grin. “More alive than ever before! The glow will show us all the true nature of this world!” He cackled with mad elation. Around him, the flickering glow explosions intensified.

“I said, enough!” Marchus’ voice was not his own, replaced by a deep, distant tone. His eyes became pitch black, like dark holes through his head, and the air around him darkened ominously. “Need I remind you that you, and your so called ‘Lightbringer’, work for me?”

A look of fear spread across Dumont’s face as he looked helplessly into the hollow eyes of the Godshifter. Almost immediately, the void attacks faded.

“Good,” Marchus said in the otherworldly voice. “Now, tie them up and place them with the others.” His black, vacant eyes fell on Lauris, laying on the deck with her hands still shielding her head. “And bring that one to me.”

Hero – Round 3, Turn 5



Use 5C – Lauris, Attractive Presence **[Low Impact]**

Lauris felt herself being lifted as consciousness slowly returned to her. The horrible flashes of void light still echoed in her vision, twisting the world around her into a nightmarish blur. She tried to move her hands, but couldn't.

“Quinn?!” She looked around frantically for her drakin friend. It was dark.

“I’m here,” Quinn said feebly. She was tied up next to the priestess. They were in the back of some sort of covered wagon.

“Everyone okay?” Robere asked. He twisted his head to look at his bound companions. The cart bumped and shook as it rattled down the road, though he couldn't tell where.

“Well that didn't go as planned,” the priestess said, letting her head fall back against the hard wood.

“I tried to warn you,” Quinn replied.

“Doesn't matter,” Robere said. “They have us now... probably my crew too. We'll be lucky if they just kill us outright instead of turning us over to that lunatic void priest.”

“Don’t worry, it’ll be alright,” Lauris said.

Both Robere and Quinn looked at her incredulously.

She forced a quick smile. “The goddess favors me.”

Round 4

Unknown Underground Complex, Bridgeways

The underground complex is an Impromptu Location.
All challenge list entries will be generated by Mythic.

*The World Player has the advantage and receives 1
Impact Token.*

*Let's ask some questions of Mythic to get this scene
started.*

*What does Marchus have planned for Lauris (Complex):
Move / Stalemate*

*He needs her in order to advance his plans, which have
run into some sort of snag.*

*Does he need the powers of a wind priest for some
reason (Somewhat Likely): VERY YES*

Yes, and it's something that only a wind priest can do.

*What does he need her to do (Complex): Kill / A path
Destroy a bridge! Wow, I guess he does have some bad
things planned for Bridgeways. I can probably use this
to tie the story in with the Phantom Isle adventure like I
planned.*

*Surely she would never help willingly. How does he
plan to coerce her into playing along (Complex): Punish /
Misfortune*

*By hurting those she cares about. Of course. What else
would a sociopathic Godshifter do?*

Lauris walked down the darkened stone hallway, flanked
on either side by armed guards. Her hands were bound
behind her back and the guards kept a firm grip on her
as they walked. Torchlight faintly illuminated the

narrow passageway in front on them. The tunnels twisted and branched off into a confusing maze of subterranean passages. At least she had a momentary break from the glow.

She had no idea where they were. Some sort of tunnel network under one of the larger islands, presumably. All she and the others had seen since being unloaded from the wagon were the barren stone walls and the inside of their holding cell. She hoped that Quinn and the elf captain were okay.

The guards and their captive came to a stop in front of a thick wooden door set into the side of the tunnel wall. It was unmarked, but the polished wood and extravagant iron bands set it apart from the other furnishings in the dank passageways. One of the militiamen knocked, then pushed the door open while the other roughly escorted the bound priestess inside.

Beyond the door was a wide and opulent office, very much out of place in the moldy dungeon. Lauris blinked in surprise as she took in the unusual surroundings. Fine crimson carpet covered the floor, and the walls were lined with book shelves and expensive artwork. One side of the room held workbenches, stacked with bizarre trinkets that Lauris didn't recognize, while the other was dominated by a strange stone altar covered with profane implements.

At the center of the room, Marchus Bronzeye sat behind a heavy wooden table. A feast of exotic food, enough to feed a dozen starving Bridgeways residents, covered both

the tabletop and most of his bearded face. Still chewing, he stared at Lauris with cold, humorless eyes as the guards dragged her closer.

“That’ll do,” he said to the guards, who turned quickly and left.

Lauris stared defiantly at her captor, struggling against the bonds that held her wrists. Apparently Jamos had been right to suspect the steam priest and merchant lord for his involvement in the dark schemes taking place on Bridgeways. She shuddered to think what he had planned for her.

World – Round 4, Turn 1



Use 9S – Locale, Deliberate / Arrive / A project [High Impact]

Interpretation: Marchus taunts the priestess with his twisted inventions.

Marchus gulped down his bite of food and wiped some of the mess from his beard with greasy fingers. Standing from the table, he walked slowly towards the captive priestess, his iron cane making an ominous, rhythmic thud on the carpet as he approached.

“That was quite a show ye put on today,” the dwarf said darkly, bracing on his cane as he leaned in close to Laruis. The priestess recoiled slightly from the smell of old food and unwashed flesh. His cold eyes dug into her.

“Ye have quite a command over the winds, my dear... for an acolyte.”

Lauris said nothing.

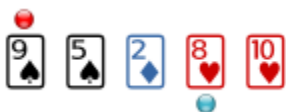
Marchus lingered for a long moment, then turned slowly toward the workbenches in the corner. “I hear you managed to survive the first detonation.” The obese steam priest lumbered over to one of the benches and picked up a black stone cube about the size of a small cabbage. “Tell me... how was it?”

“A lot of innocent people died because of you,” Lauris snapped angrily, breaking her silence. “What kind of monster unleashes a glowmadness outbreak in the middle of a city?”

Marchus did not smile as he stared back at the fuming priestess. “The worst kind, I assure ye.”

He sat the cube down on the table and stepped to the side. Lauris’ heart sank as she realized for the first time what was spread out over the workbenches. Black stone cubes, in various stages of assembly... there were easily over a hundred of them.

Hero – Round 4, Turn 1



Use 8H with TH – Lauris, Storm Priestess
[Moderate Impact]

Lauris swallowed hard against the feeling of dread that suddenly washed over her. If just one of those horrible devices had caused the outbreak at the tavern, there was no end to the terror the mad dwarf could inflict with a stockpile like that. A coordinated attack could spread glowmadness to the entirety of Bridgeways.

“How can you do this, Marchus?” Lauris asked, looking at the steam priest with shock. “You and I are servants of the gods. We have vowed to protect the people of the Skies... to improve their lives however we can. We are their guardians... their leaders... how can you betray them like this?”

She looked back at the benches full of the horrible devices. The black stone was the same as the bricks that made up the wondrous bridges of the city. “You pervert the will of the Artificer by twisting his gifts. The gods will not stand for this!”

Marchus grunted with distain. “There are far stronger forces at work in the Skies than the gods, my dear.” His eyes grew dark again. “The gods are but husks, as trapped in this world as are you and I.”

Lauris’ chest swelled with resolve. “I serve the Lady of the Winds, whose divine currents bring life to all islands. Great are her works in this world!”

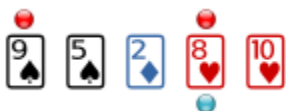
Marchus looked at her darkly. “You serve but one aspect of a fractured goddess. Great works yes... but what of the Aspect of the Vortex? The shard of the Lady’s essence that wipes clean the surface of entire islands

according to her whim? No... the gods are all beset by madness, my dear. Tis only a matter of time before this world succumbs to the void. I just help it along however I can.”

Lauris couldn’t believe what she was hearing. As repulsive as he was, Marchus was an honored steam priest and head of the Artificer temple. He personally wielded the divine miracles of the mechanical god. To corrupt divine power like this was a sacrilege beyond imagining.

Her fists clenched against the ropes behind her back. “I won’t let you do this. The goddess will stop you. I will stop you!”

World – Round 4, Turn 2



Use 8H with Impact Token – Locale, Mysterious / Develop / Power
[Extreme Impact]

Interpretation: Marchus uses the mysterious altar to force Lauris to tap into the power of the Vortex.

Marchus looked at the young priestess for a long moment, his expression unchanging. “No...” he began, eyes darkening to wells of pure blackness. “...you will help me.”

As if on cue, a swirling green fire blazed to life on the altar along the far wall. Wicked green light flickered

across the room, bathing everything in an otherworldly glow. Even the shadows seemed to grow darker, bending and twisting towards the strange flame as it grew in intensity. Lauris' eyes were pulled toward the altar, unable to look away.

As the flames twisted and writhed, an amorphous face could be seen within. Two flickering black eyes and a wide, wicked mouth that seemed to draw all light into its inky void.

"This is the one," Marchus said loudly, turning to address the flames on the altar. "Her connection to the goddess is strong. She speaks through fury of the storm. The Vortex will heed her call!"

"Good." The voice from the altar was dark and distant, like the echo of far-away screams. "Bring her closer." A wave of dread washed over Lauris. Never before had she felt a presence of such overwhelming evil.

Lauris wanted to scream. She wanted to run. Every fiber of her being screamed for her to flee the dark power as quickly as possible, yet she could not move. All she could do was stare into the mesmerizing flame. Slowly, through a power not her own, she approached the altar.

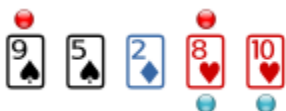
Lauris stared helplessly into the swirling green flame. The flame, with its horrible eyes devoid of all light, stared back.

"Do you know who I am?" it demanded darkly as the priestess fell helplessly to her knees in front of the altar.

Lauris' mouth opened slightly, but no sound emerged. The figure in the flames appeared to grin.

"I am the true power in the Skies, the sower of madness and harbinger of its destruction. I am the Lord of Misrule, who twists the power of your so-called gods and will one day bring about the end of your world." The flames blazed brightly with infernal green light. "And I am your master now."

Hero – Round 4, Turn 2



Use TH – Lauris, Storm Priestess
[Low Impact]

Lauris leaned in toward the altar, the green light consuming her vision. In the swirling flames, she could see glimpses of fire and destruction. The very bridges that held the city together were being torn brick from brick. Entire islands, filled with people, plummeted from the Skies amidst the horrified screams of their inhabitants. At the center of it all, a swirling Vortex of hatred and divine wrath surrounded her.

Lauris' eyes darkened to pitch black voids as the power of the flames took hold. Tears ran down her face.

Goddess forgive me.

Hero Status:

Lauris - Incapacitated

World – Round 4, Turn 3



Use 5S – Thing, Concrete / Transform / Liberty **[Moderate Impact]**

Interpretation: Back at the holding cells, guards arrive with irons to turn the prisoners over to the Bridgeways authorities.

Dumont gazed through the iron bars at the four elven prisoners. Pirates, the lot of them, and the ones behind the horrible glowmadness outbreak. At least that's the story he would tell the Bridgeways authorities when he turned them over later that day. For some reason, Marchus insisted on keeping up the charade a bit longer. It would only be a matter of time before they could launch the final attack that would convert all of Bridgeways to the glow.

Two armed guards with iron manacles walked up beside the older man. Iron was an expensive luxury in the Skies, but the merchant lord's position always ensured the temple had the very best. Dumont grinned. Soon, none of that would matter at all.

"On your feet!" the voider demanded, looking at the prisoners with disdain.

One of the guards unlocked the cell door with a heavy key and threw it open while the other one followed him inside.

“Please, test me,” Dumont taunted, his eyes burning with the madness of the void. “I’d simply love to add a few Blight Walkers to my collection.”

Hero – Round 4, Turn 3



Use 9S with 5S – Quinn, Daring Acrobat
[Moderate Impact]

Robere glared defiantly at the guards as they burst into the cell. Behind him, his crew rose to their feet and stood ready. They outnumbered the guards two to one, though their hands were bound behind their backs. If only he still had his sword...

“Let’s make this simple,” Dumont said, walking into the doorway. “I assure you, you won’t like the hard way.” The voider grinned menacingly as the guards moved forward with the heavy iron manacles in hand.

“Now!”

Dumont barely had time to look up in surprise before an opal-tinted blur swung from the ceiling and hit him squarely in the face. He stumbled backward out of the cell and tumbled into the narrow tunnel, reeling from the impact.

Robere immediately threw himself at the nearest guard, catching the surprised goon in the chest with a shoulder check before driving him forcefully into the stone wall.

There was a loud crack of ribs as the air left the guard's lungs and he fell to the floor, gasping for air. A series of swift leg kicks from Robere's crew sent the second guard crashing down as well.

Quinn rolled quickly to her feet in the hallway and leaped on top of Dumont before he could recover. Grabbing him by the tunic, she pressed her hidden blade up against his throat.

"That's too bad," she said with look of mock pity on her drakin features. "It looks like it's going to be the hard way after all. Now talk. Where's Lauris, and where's the exit?"

World – Round 4, Turn 4



Use 2D – Thing, Concrete / Work hard / A path
[Low Impact]

Interpretation: Another cell door blocks the heroes' escape.

As Dumont's vision slowly came back into focus, he peered up into the stern face of the drakin perched on his chest. Behind her, the elven prisoners emerged from the cell, locking the incapacitated guards inside. The cold steel of the drakin's knife pressed against his throat, but still the voider grinned.

"You better be ready to kill me, bar wench," he sneered. "Because if you don't, I promise you will live to regret it."

“I don’t have time for your threats,” Quinn said, tightening her grip on the man’s collar. “I won’t hesitate to kill scum like you. Now where have you taken Lauris?”

“Why? Where do you think you’re going?” Dumont smiled wickedly. “The cellblock door is locked from the outside. They’ll never let you through without me.”

He chuckled uncontrollably at the helpless prisoners around him.

Hero – Round 4, Turn 4



Use 5S with 9S – Robere, Master of Misdirection
[Moderate Impact]

Dumont’s laughter halted abruptly as Robere’s boot slammed into the side of his head. His body went limp.

“We’ll figure it out,” Robere said to the unconscious voider.

Quinn looked up at him in shock. Robere shrugged. The bastard deserved death for what he did to the people at the tavern, but Quinn didn’t need to bear the burden of the execution. Chances were slim the insane mage would have helped, even if threatened with his life.

“Cut these ropes and let’s get out of here,” Robere said.

Quinn jumped to her feet and quickly freed the elven captain and his crew from their bonds. “And how do you propose we do that?”

Robere glanced down at the unconscious void priest. Maybe the mad man was going to help them escape after all. “Follow me and play along,” he said, scooping up the older man’s body.

Together with his crew, Robere dragged the unconscious void priest past the rows of cells and to the heavy cellblock door that separated the dungeons from the rest of the underground tunnel network. The door was thick and very sturdy, with a small hatch at about shoulder level that could be slid open from the outside.

Robere cleared his throat and banged loudly on the door. “Bring more rope!” he shouted, doing his best to mimic the void priest’s voice. “The blasted drakin’s too small for the manacles!”

He leaned Dumon’t limp body up against the door and positioned him in front of the hatch, looking down the cellblock. It was a crude trick, not enough to stand up to any scrutiny. But maybe it would be enough.

Moments later, the hatch slid open and a guard on the other side peered through the opening. All he saw was the back of Dumont’s head. There was a pause.

Robere banged on the door again. “Hurry, damn you!”

The hatch slid quickly shut and there was a sound of rustling from the other side followed by the loud click of the lock turning over.

The door to the cellblock swung open and a guard came rushing through with a coil of rope in his hand. He didn't make it two steps before he froze in his tracks, suddenly finding himself surrounded by four burley elf sailors wearing very stern expressions. Looking down, he saw the unconscious body of Dumont sprawled unceremoniously on the floor.

"Right this way, please" Quinn said wryly, holding open the door to a nearby cell.

The guard's shoulders slumped as he wordlessly marched into the cell and the door slammed behind him.

World – Round 4, Turn 5



**Use TH – Being, Aggressive / Neglect / The spiritual
Activate Disadvantage – Quinn, Small and Frail
[Extreme Impact]**

Interpretation: This sounds like Marchus since he's completely corrupting the power of the Artificer. He should have an indirect impact on this scene, though, since we know he's currently busy converting Lauris into the service of the Lord of Misrule.

*How is Marchus indirectly challenging the heroes
(Complex): Ambush / Technology*

Interpretation: He has twisted the Artificer's power to create a deadly sentry golem.

What is this golem like (Description): Frighteningly / Warm

Interpretation: It's a horrible mechanical amalgamation that belches steam from an inner furnace.

Robere lead the way out of the cellblock with Quinn and his crew close behind. Beyond the cellblock door was a wide, circular room carved from the stone of the island. Several passages and tunnels lead away from the hub to different parts of the underground complex. The ceiling was higher than normal, with thick pillars of wood used to support the weight of the rock.

Torches along the walls of the chamber illuminated a horrible mechanical construct in its center with flickering light. It was an eight-foot-tall mass of iron and chattering cogs, shaped by mad genius and given life by foul forces from beyond the world. With a horrible cacophony of grinding metal and hissing steam, the construct turned to face the escaping heroes.

The monstrosity was roughly humanoid in shape, with a featureless face made from crudely formed metal plates and horrible green flames blazing from the eye sockets. Its arms and legs were formed from twisted scrap with the ends sharpened into jagged blades. Blasts of steam erupted from its mechanical joints as it moved, taking a lumbering step towards them.

Hero – Round 4, Turn 5



Use 2D – Robere, Skyship Captain **[Low Impact]**

Robere froze with fear. Even if he had his sword, trying to fight a mechanical abomination like this would only end in certain death. He looked behind him at the frightened faces of the drakin and his crew. There was only one option.

“Everyone run!”

Robere darted to the left, running around the side of the room, while the rest of his crew scattered in every direction. The ground shook as the mechanical monstrosity charged toward them, picking up speed.

Quinn leaped to the side, rolling to her feet behind a wooden pillar as the metallic beast charged past. Her eyes frantically searched the darkened chamber, trying desperately to find a way out of the room in the flickering torchlight.

“Look out!” Robere shouted from across the room, but it was too late. With a screech of rending metal, the monster swung its twisted arm toward the pillar, slamming into the wood and shattering it as if it was made of glass.

Wicked claws tore across Quinn’s back, ripping through flesh and sending her flying across the room. The tiny

drakin spun through the air and crashed into the hard stone wall amidst a hail of splinters, then fell motionless to the floor.

Robere slid to a halt in the exit tunnel. “Quinn!”

He looked frantically around for his crew. “Dashers! Get her out of here! She’s one of us now! Leave no one behind!”

Robere grabbed one of the torches from the wall and strode boldly toward the mechanical monster. “Hey, junk heap!” He yelled, waving the torching wildly. “Why don’t you pick on someone your own size!”

Slowly, the mechanical golem turned to face the elf, its eyes blazing with supernatural green fire. As it rose to its full height and flexed a metal-clawed hand, Robere immediately questioned the wisdom of his tactic. He took a reflexive step backward.

Suddenly, one his crew appeared beside Robere, brandishing a smashed piece of debris as a club. Another threw an old bucket across the room, hitting the golem in the chest. Behind the construct, Robere saw the last member moving along the back wall, making his way toward Quinn’s mangled body. Robere grinned. He and his crew had been in situations like this before. At least they were all willing to die together.

“Let him have it!” Robere shouted, flinging the torch at towering construct. The rest of the elves picked up whatever was nearby and hurled it. The golem bellowed with rage as a hail of debris pelted it from all angles. The

last crewman dashed behind the confused monstrosity and scooped up Quinn's limp body.

"Now let's get out of here!" Robere yelled, flinging one last piece of shattered wood before turning and sprinting for the exit. The rest of his crew were only steps behind.

Hero Status:

Quinn – Seriously Injured

Round 5

Unknown Underground Complex, Bridgeways

The mysterious dungeons are an Impromptu Location. Some challenge list entries were filled in during the last round; the remaining will be generated by Mythic.

1. <generated by Mythic>
2. Locked doors or dead ends
3. <generated by Mythic>
4. <generated by Mythic>
5. Dungeon cells, chains, and manacles
6. <generated by Mythic>
7. <generated by Mythic>
8. Mysterious ritual site to the Lord of Misrule
9. Strange devices, black stone cubes
10. Steam-powered sentry golem

The Hero Player has the advantage now and receives 1 Impact Token.

Robere lead the way down the twisting, labyrinth-like tunnels of the underground complex. Behind them, the horrible metallic sounds of the iron golem echoed through the stone halls and gradually faded. They were just lucky the thing was too large to pursue them through the narrow passageways.

“In here,” Robere said, panting from the run as he ducked into a nearby room. The crew rushed into the chamber and closed the door behind them. Robere held up a torch to check out their surroundings. The stone

chamber contained some old wooden crates and a few moldy barrels, but was otherwise thankfully abandoned.

“How is she?” Robere asked, motioning to Quinn as his crew laid her gently down on the stone floor.

“Not great, Captain,” one of the other elves replied. All four gathered around the wounded drakin. “She’s alive, but maybe not for long. She’s going to need some help.”

Robere nodded somberly. “Good work back there. Let’s see if we can bandage her up for now. Our escape won’t go unnoticed with all the noise we just made. Catch your breath; we move again in five minutes.”

Robere removed his cloak and tossed it to the crew. They immediately began tearing off strips of fabric to use as bandages. Robere knelt over the wounded drakin and gently rolled her over. He moved her delicate opal wings aside to examine the wounds on her back. The golem’s claws had torn a pair of massive gashes through her flesh, which were bleeding badly.

“Hang in there, kid,” the captain said quietly as his crew moved in to apply the bandages. “We’ll get you out of here.”

World – Round 5, Turn 1



Use 6S with 6C – Thing, Concrete / Betray / The physical

[High Impact]

Interpretation: Mechanical hunter/tracker constructs comb the tunnels for signs of the escaped prisoners.

What do these constructs look like (Description):

Deliberately / Simple

Several minutes had passed and the crew were still huddled in the side room after their harrowing encounter with the prison golem. Quinn was stabilized and breathing steadily while Robere dug through the crates looking for anything that could be used as a weapon.

Suddenly the gathered crew heard rhythmic footfalls and the clack of mechanical gears coming from the hallway. All eyes turned to the door as the noises grew louder, then stopped abruptly just on the other side. No one breathed.

Slowly, the door handle creaked and began to turn. Then the door flung open with a metallic thud as something slammed into it from the outside.

Standing into the doorway was another one of Marchus' corrupted inventions. The construct was small, no more than three feet high, with two reverse jointed legs supporting a jumble of cobbled-together metal components. A collection of twisted appendages extended from the mass, somehow making it look like a misshapen mechanical bird with a core of green flame at its center.

The contraption whirred and clacked as a clockwork arm bearing a crude bronze horn extended from the jumble of parts. The gathered elves barely had time to react

before steam blasted from the horn and an ear-splitting sound filled the narrow hallways, alerting everyone to their position.

Hero – Round 5, Turn 1



Use 6C – Robere, Character Assumption [Low Impact]

As a trained Ironwood Swordsman, Robere also has some proficiency in hand-to-hand combat.

The gathered elves reflexively covered their ears against the deafening blast as a cloud of steam poured from the horn and into the room and hallway. It would only be a matter of moments before the area was swarming with guards.

“Let’s move!” Robere yelled at his crew, though he couldn’t even hear his own voice over the blaring steam horn. Motioning frantically with one arm, the captain scooped up Quinn with the other and charged toward the open doorway.

Robere lunged toward the construct blocking the doorway, extending his leg in a forward kick. The bottom of his boot slammed into the central chunk of machinery, sending the contraption crashing into the opposite wall of the hallway and into a heap on the ground. Still spewing steam from the blaring horn, the automaton failed wildly as it attempted to right itself.

“Let’s go!” Robere yelled at his crew. The other elves followed him into the hazy hallway. Robere squinted through the clouds of steam. He still had no idea where they were or how to find the exit, but anywhere was better than here. With little hesitation and even less choice, the crew picked a direction and ran.

World – Round 5, Turn 2



Use AD – Being, Aggressive / Imprison / Legal matters

[Low Impact]

Interpretation: The crew runs into some guards escorting another prisoner down to the dungeon cells.

Robere and the crew charged blindly through the twisting passages of the underground complex. Behind them, the automation’s steam whistle continued to blare its alarm. Moving at a run, they took whatever tunnel or side passage presented itself, simply trying to put as much distances between themselves and the source of the alarm as possible.

Rounding a corner, the fleeing heroes emerged into a wider tunnel lined with torches. The tunnel was unusually straight considering the labyrinthine nature of the complex and had several wooden doors set into its stone walls. A pair of armed guards escorting a bound prisoner stopped in surprise as the crew burst into the central tunnel.

“Stop right there!” one of them shouted, scrambling to draw his sword.

Hero – Round 5, Turn 2



Use AD with 4D – Ally in Diamonds: Mikael, Wind Priest of the Rain
[Moderate Impact]

Robere slid to a stop in the wide tunnel as the two guards drew their blades and advanced towards them. He cursed under his breath. He felt naked without his ironwood sword. It was possible they could overpower the guards with a bit of luck, but they would be defenseless against their steel blades.

“Don’t move!” one of the guards command, advancing slowly toward the fleeing heroes with sword at the ready. “Everyone on the ground!”

Robere glanced back at his crew. As usual, they appeared ready to charge at his command. This time, though, the captain wasn’t sure it was worth risking their lives against the waiting blades of the guards. He slowly held out his hand as if to surrender.

Behind the guards, the bound prisoner lowered his head and whispered a short prayer. Almost immediately, a dense cloud bank poured into the tunnel from all directions, quickly filling the entire hallway with impenetrable fog.

For a brief moment, no one made a sound as the heavy fog swirled around them, completely obscuring all vision.

“What the...” one of the guards said with confusion.

“Dashers! GO!!” Robere yelled, charging blindly forward to where the guard had just been. He hoped there wasn’t the tip of a sword waiting for him. Several steps later, a dark form appeared in the fog and Robere slammed into it, sending both himself and the confused guard tumbling to the ground.

Acting on instinct and feel alone, the elf captain grabbed the other man across the chest as they fell and grappled him to the ground, delivering several strong blows to the body and head. He heard the sharp sound of steel on stone as the guard dropped his sword. Robere continued to strike blindly, struggling for control of the melee.

Around him, the sounds of frenzied footfalls and hand-to-hand combat echoed through the dense mist as his crew charged in after him. After several long moments, the sounds of struggle died down. Robere still grasped the guard beneath him, though the man had stopped struggling.

As quickly as it had appeared, the thick fog dissipated, leaving the elven crew breathing heavily over the incapacitated guards. In the center of the hall, the bound prisoner stood exactly where he had been before.

“Mikael?” Robere panted, looking at the stern-faced wind priest with confusion. He’d met the man at the Isle of Chimes after the glowmadness outbreak. He was the one

who had saved the orc barkeep's life after they'd brought him there. "What are you doing here?"

"Checking up on you," the man replied smugly. "I went to the docks to check on things when Lauris didn't return. I should have known she'd find a way to get herself into trouble."

Robere grabbed the fallen guard's sword from the ground and rose to his feet. It was heavier than his ironwood sword, and the balance was all off. But it would do. "It doesn't look like you're doing much better yourself," he chided, motioning to the priest's bound hands.

Mikael grinned at the elf as he looked down at the incapacitated guards. "I'm doing just fine. You're welcome, by the way."

"Likewise," Robere scoffed, cutting the ropes that bound Mikael's hands.

The priest massaged his bruised wrists as he looked around the area. His eyes fell on Quinn, laying in a pile near the side tunnel. "Quinn. She's hurt."

Robere nodded. "Pretty bad. She needs help. Any idea how to get out of here?"

"More or less," Mikael replied. "It's not too far down this main tunnel." He motioned to the wounded drakin. "First, we should get her someplace safe so I can tend to her wounds. The way out won't be easy."

“We’ll do our best,” Robere said, standing by his crew. “But they’ve got pretty much every guard and mechanical contraption in this place looking for us.”

Mikael looked around the darkened tunnel, his eyes narrowing with concern. “Where’s Lauris?”

Robere paused. “They took her,” he said somberly. “We don’t know where.”

World – Round 5, Turn 3



Use 3H – Thing, Concrete / Develop / Business
[Low Impact]

Interpretation: A side room contains stockpiles of food that Marchus is keeping out of the markets in order to greatly inflate the price.

“We’ll worry about her later,” Mikael said, looking nervously around the hallway. “Let’s get Quinn to one of these rooms. Her wounds will not wait.”

Robere nodded as he knelt and scooped up Quinn in his arms. Blood had already saturated the makeshift bandages wrapped around the wounds on her back. Mikael’s help wouldn’t come a moment too soon.

“Help me with these guards,” he said to his crew. “Let’s get them out of sight.”

The other elves grabbed the unconscious guards and dragged them toward one of the nearby doors. Mikael

strode quickly ahead and held the door open while Robere and the others rushed inside. The room beyond was dark, illuminated only by the torch one of the crew brought in from the hallway. More guards would surely come looking, but maybe this hiding spot would buy them a bit of time.

“Lay her down here,” Mikael said, clearing some old bags from the top of a shipping crate. Robere obliged and gently placed the wounded drakin on top of the container.

As he stood back and looked around the darkened room, he noticed letters painted on the sides of several crates. “DD”, the *Daring Dasher*. This was his cargo!

Robere squinted in the dim light as the room around him came into focus. The deep chamber was packed full of cargo crates, barrels, and heavy sacks from many different cargo ships. Food of all types practically spilled from the loaded containers, easily enough to feed thousands.

“By the gods,” Robere breathed as he took it all in. “He’s starving them. He’s starving the whole island.”

Hero – Round 5, Turn 3



Use 4D with AD and Impact Token – Mikael, Wind Priest of the Rain
[High Impact]

We'll let Mikael continue to use diamonds while he's with the heroes. This follows the Sidekick rules, but he can access diamonds at a level higher than Low Impact.

A deep frown settled on Mikael's face as he looked over the massive stockpile of food that surrounded them. Jamos, his mentor and head wind priest, had long suspected Marchus of dark dealings, but Mikael had never believed it. Today, however, evidence was mounting to implicate the mad dwarf in not just one, but several schemes to overthrow the entire island.

He shook his head to bring himself back to the task at hand. On the makeshift table in front of him, Quinn lay on the verge on consciousness, bleeding badly from her wounds. He had known the tiny drakin for years. She had spent a lot of time around the Isle of Chimes with Lauris as the two grew up. Despite his frequent disagreements with Lauris over matters of doctrine, it pained him greatly to see her close friend in a condition like this.

He would do everything he could to save her.

Mikael rolled his patient over, carefully removing the makeshift bandages while the elves gathered around to watch by the flickering torchlight. He swallowed hard as the last of the wrappings came free. The wounds were deep and jagged.

With a deep breath, Mikael closed his eyes and recited a familiar prayer to the Lady of the Winds. Of all the Aspects of the goddess, the Aspect of Rain was most known to answer prayers for healing. He had asked the

goddess many times in the past to mend a broken bone or heal an infected cut, but never anything as traumatic as this.

Pouring his full concentration into the prayer, Mikael extended his hands over Quinn's body and focused intently on his conduit to the Lady's divine power. Slowly, drops of water began to form on his hands, dripping gradually onto the patient below. As his prayer continued, more and more droplets fell, until a steady stream of healing rain poured from the priest's outstretched hands and washed over Quinn's wounds.

The wounds reacted to the divine downpour, slowly shrinking and eventually vanishing as torn flesh pulled together and damaged tissue regenerated at the touch of the healing water. As the last of the gashes sealed shut, the rain faded and Quinn's eyes shot open.

Everyone watched expectantly as the drakin rolled into a sitting position on the edge of the crate and stretched the tightness in her back. She blinked a few times, taking in her surroundings.

Her gaze fell on Robere and she paused. "You came back for me..." she said softly, looking at the elf captain with shining violet eyes.

Robere nodded. "Of course. You're part of the crew."

Quinn smiled at him. Her head turned, looking at the rest of the elves and finally Mikael. "And Mikkie's here! That means..." She reached behind her back, feeling the

thick ridges of the healed wounds just below her wings.
“Just like new. Thanks, Mikkie!”

Mikael looked sternly at the drakin and crossed his arms. “Don’t call me Mikkie, small fry.” The faintest hint of a smile pulled at the edges of his mouth.

Quinn simply grinned.

Hero Status:
Quinn - Active

World – Round 5, Turn 4



Use 4D – Locale, Incidental / Adversity / Allies
[Moderate Impact]

Interpretation: Quinn realizes that Lauris is still missing in Marchus’ insidious complex.

“Did we make it out?” Quinn asked hopefully, hopping off the crate. A quick look at her surroundings told her the answer was probably no.

“No, but we’re not far.” Robere replied. “We found the main corridor.”

“And what about Lauris?”

Everyone was silent.

Quinn’s eyes widened. “We *have* to go back for Lauris,” she said emphatically, looking from one face to another.

Slowly, everyone huddled in the dark store room nodded in agreement. They couldn't just leave her here to face whatever torment Marchus had in store. It looked like they would have to brave the dangers of the complex once again.

Hero – Round 5, Turn 4



Use 3H – Robere, Freedom Fighter
[Low Impact]

Robere's hand went instinctively to the guard's blade at his side. He had no idea where in the twisting tunnels the young priestess may be, but with all of them together and a few weapons, they might just stand a fighting chance of finding her.

"Alright," he said with renewed resolve, looking at the weary faces of those around him. "This won't be easy, but we've handled worse before. This crew has run its fair share of rescue missions back on Heartland, smuggling wildling slaves past the Oakthorn. This place can't be any more dangerous than that."

He hoped he was right.

"Dashers, tear the room apart and find anything that can be used as a weapon. Quinn, you sneak into the hallway and see if you can scout us a safe path. Mikael, have that fog trick of yours ready... we just might need it again."

The others nodded resolutely.

“And I’ll lead the way in case we run into trouble.” He drew the steel blade from the scabbard at his side. “Wherever Lauris is, she needs our help. We’re not leaving anyone behind.”

World – Round 5, Turn 5



Use 6C with 6S – Marchus’ corrupted inventions **[Extreme Impact]**

Interpretation: The mad dwarf straps Lauris into a horrible device meant to siphon power from the Lady of the Winds into the black cubes.

I know this is only supposed to be High Impact, but the scene I have in mind is definitely “Extreme”. For compensation, the Hero player will get an additional Impact Token to use in the next round.

The world around Lauris passed by like a dream. She was awake, or what passed for it, but had no control of her own body.

For what seemed like hours, she had knelt motionless before the strange altar, staring helplessly into the green flame while whatever horrible force lived on the other side dug through her thoughts and memories. It was searching for something, probing the deepest reaches of her consciousness for the divine spark that connected her to the Lady of the Winds.

It seemed that at last, it had found it.

Now they were taking her somewhere. She saw the dark stone of the tunnels passing by. Strange faces appeared, spoke, and vanished again. The world was a blur. She felt like an observer, watching from behind lifeless eyes as her body plodded along at the whims of the dark presence.

She saw strange machinery. They were in a chamber filled with devices. Dark figures lifted her by the arms and strapped her into some sort of metal harness at its center. The entire room was bathed in the horrible light of the green fire. Around her, forms moved with dark purpose, but she couldn't focus on any of them.

Suddenly Marchus' vile face appeared in the center of her vision. He spoke, but his voice sounded distant, like echoes in a deep cavern.

"—Vortex," the echoes came. His words tumbled over one another and blended together. "—call —the Vortex." He stared intensely at her with cold eyes. Behind him, flashes of green light filled the hazy room as the machinery began to activate.

In her head, Lauris could feel the dark presence probing again at the divine spark that connected her to the Lady of the Winds. The evil being had somehow attached itself, and was redirecting the power of the goddess through her and into the equipment. Dark prayers echoed through her head. Prayers of chaos and destruction. Prayers not her own.

And the Lady responded.

Like a bolt of lightning, the power of the goddess shot through her. But instead of the familiar presence of the Storm, the Vortex replied instead. The aspect of the goddess' madness shrieked through Lauris' head, filling her mind with visions of endless destruction. Her own mouth opened in a primal scream as the divine torrents surged through her body and into the foul machinery.

Behind her, amidst a tangled mass of twisted tubes and metal, one of Marchus' cubic stone weapons began to glow with power.

Hero – Round 5, Turn 5



Use 6S – Lauris, Character Assumption **[Low Impact]**

Relying on sheer will power, Lauris does everything she can to hold on.

Uncontrolled screams tore through Lauris' throat as visions of the Vortex's wrath filled her head. Never before had she seen the full extent of the Lady's fury like this. Surely the gods must be mad for a life-giving deity like the Lady of the Winds to have a face of such unbridled hatred. Now that fury was in the hands of Marchus and his dark patron.

Her body convulsed, held in place by the metal restraints as the Vortex's power surged through her. Amidst the

cacophony of machinery and the deafening sound of her own screams, Lauris held on to what little bit of herself she could manage to find. There, tucked away in the very deepest and most protected pocket of her mind, was a tiny globe of peace. Inside it, memories of her family, her friends, her home. Her life on Bridgeways.

As the visions of destruction threatened to overwhelm her, she found shelter in a singular thought. She couldn't let the Godshifter destroy everything that she loved. Whatever the struggle and whatever the cost... she just couldn't.

Round 6

Unknown Underground Complex, Bridgeways

Pretty much all the challenge list entries have been filled in at this point. To keep things interesting and to adapt to the evolving situation in Marchus' dungeon, I've changed some of the entries and turned it into more of a Known Location with a few spots open for Mythic to mix things up.

1. <generated by Mythic>
2. Guards, doing something unrelated
3. Evidence of Marchus' schemes
4. <generated by Mythic>
5. Guards, hunting for the heroes
6. Marchus' corrupted inventions
7. <generated by Mythic>
8. Mysterious ritual site to the Lord of Misrule
9. <generated by Mythic>
10. Strange devices, black stone cubes

The Hero Player has the advantage and receives 2 Impact Tokens, including the bonus token for the Extreme Impact scene that closed the last Round.

Quinn cracked open the storeroom door and peered out into the main corridor of Marchus' underground complex. The scene on the other side was just as she'd feared. With missing prisoners on the loose and several guards unaccounted for, it seemed that the security detail had stepped it up to high alert.

“Lot of guards out there,” she whispered over her shoulder to the rest of the group huddled behind her.

“Any way past them?” Roebre asked, leaning over her to get a better look through the narrow slit.

Quinn felt an unexpected flush wash over her as the elf captain leaned near. She paused for a moment, surprised by the sensation, and stole a quick glance up at him before peering back through the slit again. “Maybe...” she began.

“We could make a run for the exit,” Mikael suggested. “And come back with help from the militia.”

Quinn shook her head. “Marchus owns the militia... and maybe a lot more.” She thought back to the uniformed militiamen and merchants that had ambushed them at the docks. No telling how much of the city was already under the dwarf’s greasy thumb.

Robere nodded in agreement. “I think we’re alone on this one. No different than usual.”

Quinn turned back to the door and carefully watched the movements of the guards in the hallway. One of the last remaining groups was talking angrily among themselves and pointing at a side tunnel. Moments later they marched off down the passage and out of sight.

“Get ready,” Quinn said, looking back at the others. “We may have a chance if we hurry.”

She looked back at Robere and paused a moment before throwing him a wink. “Try to keep up.”

World – Round 6, Turn 1



Use 3C – Evidence of Marchus’ schemes **[Low Impact]**

Moments after the last guard disappeared from view, the door to the storeroom slowly opened and Quinn led the others quietly out into the main corridor. She squinted in the dim light, peering both directions for signs of more guards, but there were none. At least for now.

“Which way?” Mikael asked in a whisper.

Robere and Quinn both looked at each other as if the other had the answer. Lauris could be anywhere in the mess of twisting tunnels.

Just then, a tremor swept through the hallway accompanied by a horrible, distant scream. Bits of dust fell from the ceiling and the entire complex shook as if from an earthquake. Around them, the torches dimmed and flickered, lighting the tunnel with an unnatural green tint.

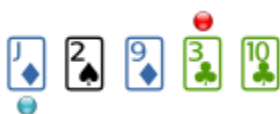
The heroes stood motionless, unsure what to do. After nearly a minute, the shaking subsided and the torchlight slowly brightened and returned to normal. The echoing

screams faded away down the stone tunnels and vanished.

Robere's eyes grew wide as the dust settled around them. "What was THAT?"

Everyone looked around with confusion. Slowly the realization hit Quinn. Her mouth opened with horror. "That was... Lauris!"

Hero – Round 6, Turn 1



Use JD with 9D – Quinn, Streetwise
[Moderate Impact]

Robere looked at her with disbelief. "Lauris?! What in the gods' sky did that to her?" His grip tightened on his blade.

Quinn's mouth was still agape. "I have no idea... but she's in trouble. We have to find her!"

"How?" Mikael cut in. "There have to be a hundred bloody tunnels in this place."

Quinn took a deep breath and tried to calm her nerves. She and Lauris had been through a lot together. She'd pulled the hot-headed priestess out of some sticky situations before. Now her friend needed her more than ever.

“Okay, think...” Quinn said to herself, doing her best to calm down. She looked around the dim tunnel for anything that might give her a clue as to where they were.

They were still on Bridgeways, that much was certain. On one of the larger isles, judging by the size of the complex. That narrowed it down somewhat. If only she had some clue as to what was above them, she might be able to navigate a bit better. She knew the streets of the city like the back of her clawed hand.

“What’s above us...” she said to herself. Violet eyes scanned the ceiling, searching bare stone for anything that might help. Then she saw it. A small chunk of angular black brick protruding from the arched ceiling of the tunnel.

She inhaled sharply. “The black bricks...”

“The what?” Robere asked, confused.

“The black bricks,” Quinn said again, pointing to the small bit of material poking through the ceiling. “They’re considered holy relics of the Artificer. Stories say the dwarven god forged all of Bridgeways from the stuff.”

Robere looked up at the small bit of innocuous black stone poking out of the ceiling. It would have been easy to miss if Quinn hadn’t pointed it out. “And?”

Quinn continued. “And... the bricks are only found two places on the island. On the bridges that connect the isles together...”

Mikael's eyes lit up. "And at the temple of the Artificer itself."

Quinn nodded. "The Blackstone Halls. The temple is on the same island as the Crossroads and the Journey's End. That's why we get so many dwarven customers when the pilgrim ships arrive. We're under the Blackstone Halls!"

Robere was still trying to piece all of it together. "So the head steam priest, who is really possessed by some sort of dark force, hollowed out an evil villain lair right below his own temple?"

Quinn nodded again. "That means..." she trailed off, mentally reconstructing a map of the city streets in her head. "If we're under the temple... then that's the edge of the island." She pointed off down one of the passages. "No point going that way."

She spun in a small circle. "And that's toward the Crossroads markets." She turned again, arm extended like a compass. "And that's the Journey's End... or whatever's left of it."

Robere's gaze followed her arm through all three directions. "So how do we find Lauris?"

Quinn's mind raced. "If Marchus was making a racket like *that* under the Journey's End, I would have heard about it by now."

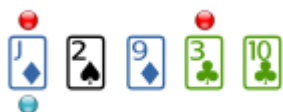
"So towards the Crossroads, then?"

Quinn nodded slowly. “My guess is he’s paid off some of the merchants to keep quiet about whatever device just made that horrible racket. He may even have another exit hidden under the merchant stalls somewhere.”

Robere flashed her an impressed smile before looking back at the others. “You heard the lady. Let’s move out. There’s no time to lose!” Sword in hand, he jogged off in the direction she had pointed.

Quinn followed the captain into the darkened tunnels towards the market plaza with the rest of the crew close behind. Lauris’ horrible screams still echoed in her head. She only hoped they weren’t too late.

World – Round 6, Turn 2



Use JD with TC – Strange devices, black cubes
[Extreme Impact]

Lauris slumped forward against the iron restraints that held her upright at the center of the massive device. Short, labored breaths struggled to fill her lungs as tremors continued to wrack her body. The power of the Vortex being channeled through her had pushed her body and mind to the point of breaking. Around her, the mass of machinery whirled and flashed as it spun down and finally came to a stop.

Marchus stepped forward, leaning on his cane as he gazed coldly into the priestess' pained face. She was still conscious. "Interesting..."

Dumont walked up beside him. A bandage covered the side of his head where he'd been kicked. "Why are we wasting time with these experiments?" he said with disdain. "The Lightbringer's power is more than enough to overtake the island. No one can resist the pull of the glow!"

"A means to an end," Marchus said simply, not bothering to look at the other man.

Dumont scoffed. "Your master wants destruction; I provide destruction." A grin crossed his face. "That, and so much more. The glow reveals the true nature of our world to those it consumes."

Marchus looked at the void priest with cold, emotionless eyes. "You have no idea."

Dumont raised an eyebrow. The so-called 'Godshifter' always talked in riddles about his true objective on the island. He still wasn't sure what exactly that was. No matter. The glow was its own purpose, and they were only days away from a conversion on an unprecedented scale. Soon, the entire population of Bridgeways would know Lightbringer's mad embrace.

"Let me charge more of the cubes with void energy," Dumont said firmly. "We should waste no more time with distractions."

A dark-clad figure approached the pair with a stone cube in hand. The center glowed bright white with the barely-contained fury of the Vortex. Marchus reached out and took the device, holding it up to his face and gazing into the swirling energies at its core.

“Distractions?” Marchus began, still staring into the swirling nexus of concentrated power. “No. We are closer now to our objective than ever before.”

Dumont scowled at the dwarf. “And what objective, exactly, is that?”

“The Phantom Isle.” Marchus said simply. His cold gaze shifted to the void priest. “You want to know the true nature of the Skies? When the Phantom Isle returns, you will discover the fate of your world. You will see what lies beyond the glow...” His eyes darkened again to wells of pitch blackness. “... and you will curse day you decided to help me bring it here.”

Taking the cube, Marchus turned and walked slowly out of the chamber. The rhythmic thud of his cane echoed down the hall as Dumont stood silent among the foul machinery.

Hero – Round 6, Turn 2



Use 9D with JD – Quinn, Streetwise
[Moderate Impact]

Robere held up a hand as the crew approached another intersection of the twisting tunnels deep in Marchus' complex. They had been traveling for several minutes with no signs of any guards. Everyone came quietly to a stop and hugged the wall of the tunnel while Robere peered around into the new passage.

"Looks clear," he said quietly, motioning for the others to continue forward. They proceeded at a jog.

"Where'd everyone go?" Quinn asked, running just behind the captain. Minutes before, the passages had been swarming with guards.

Robere shrugged. "Maybe they were expecting us to head for the surface instead of go deeper. Are we still on track?"

Quinn glanced up at the ceiling and frowned. If only she could see through solid rock. "I think so," she said. "We're probably under the market by now."

Mikael jogged up behind them. "Any idea where Lauris might be?"

"Anything big enough to make that sound we heard..." Quinn said between breaths. "... would have to be buried

pretty deep to avoid attracting attention on the surface.” She panted again. “Most islands are deepest at the center.”

The group slowed again as they approached another intersection. Robere pressed his back against the tunnel wall and leaned his head out to get a better look. “Empty again. Nice to have a bit of luck for a change. Which way?” He looked back at Quinn.

Quinn closed her eyes, picturing the layout of the market in her head. The winding streets between merchant stalls were difficult enough to navigate when you *could* see where you were going.

“Right... I think.” she said, somewhat uncertainly.

Robere peered down the path to the right. Sure enough, the tunnel slanted ever so slightly downward. Looked like she was right again. He looked back at the drakin and smiled. The worried look on her face told him she didn’t share his confidence.

Kneeling next to Quinn, Robere put a reassuring hand on her shoulder. “You’re doing great,” he said. “We’d be completely lost down here without you.”

Quinn looked back at him with shining violet eyes.

Robere held her gaze. “Don’t worry. We’ll find her.”

World – Round 6, Turn 3



Use 2S – Guards, doing something unrelated

[Low Impact]

What are these guards doing? (Complex): Assist / Portals Interpretation: The guards are carrying something heavy from one place to another.

Is it related to the situation with Lauris? (Likely): YES

Are they bringing a stretcher to haul the priestess back to her cell? (50/50): YES

Is Lauris already on the stretcher? (Unlikely): VERY NO

Just then, a noise from the side tunnel made them both jump. The unmistakable sound of a door opening came from the hall to the left.

“Stay back,” Robere whispered, turning away from Quinn and moving quietly to the left side of the tunnel to get a better look. Carefully, he poked his head around the corner, then immediately jerked it back out of view. He swore under his breath. Two armed guards had emerged from a doorway only a dozen yards down the hall. They were carrying a stretcher between them.

“Hurry up, will ya?” one of the guards said. “If another prisoner goes missing, we’ll be the next ones in that infernal machine.”

The other guard scoffed. “Trust me, she’s not going anywhere.”

The door closed with a slam and Robere heard the sound of footfalls growing louder. The guards were coming their

way, and it would only be a few seconds before they were in the intersection.

Hero – Round 6, Turn 3



Use 2S – Robere, Master of Misdirection **[Low Impact]**

Robere tried to steady his breathing as the guards' footsteps grew louder from the side passage. His mind raced. They would be at the intersection any moment. He had a sword. Maybe he could overpower them with a surprise attack.

They had mentioned a prisoner, though. A prisoner and a machine. If they could somehow follow them, the guards would probably lead them straight to Lauris. He glanced back at the others waiting in the tunnel. In a few seconds the guards would see them and they wouldn't have much of a choice.

With his options quickly running out, Robere knelt down and picked up a handful of small stones from the tunnel floor, then hurled them down the hallway to the right. The stones clattered down the empty hallway in front of the guards.

"What was that?" one of the guards said. The footsteps stopped.

Robere turned around and frantically motioned for everyone to move back down the hall from the way they came. Quinn and the others hurriedly stood and scurried down tunnel away from the intersection. They rounded a curve in the dark passage and vanished from view.

“Probably some more falling rubble,” the other guard said. “That machine shook the hell out of this place earlier.”

“Yeah,” the first guard said. “I don’t envy that wind priestess. Do you think she survived?” The footfalls resumed.

Robere pressed himself tightly into the shadows of the tunnel wall as the guards emerged into the intersection less than an arm’s length away. Carrying the stretcher between them, they walked quickly past and down the tunnel to the right.

Robere breathed a silent sigh of relief. Turning back to Quinn and the others, he held a single finger up to his lips, then motioned for them all to follow.

World – Round 6, Turn 4



**Use 9D – Being, Aggressive / Harm / Illusions
[High Impact]**

*Interpretation: Realizing Marchus has cut him out,
Dumont moves forward with plans of his own.*

Dumont's fist slammed into the side of the machinery with a horrible metallic clang. How dare he! The void bombs had always been the objective. To see an entire city converted to glowmadness in a single attack... The voider smiled wildly at the thought of what mad elation such an offering would surely bring to the Lightbringer. It must come to pass.

His gaze turned ruefully to Lauris. The young priestess hung limply in the restraints at the center of the machine. She had never been part of the plan.

"Cut her down," he barked at the dark-robed figures lurking near the edges of the room. "Prepare the machine for another operation. If Marchus won't finish what we've started, I will do it myself!"

Several of the assistants looked at one another, reluctant to follow the mad priest's commands.

"Do it, damn you!" Dumont screamed wildly. His body heaved with rage. "Do it or I'll burn your eyes out, break your minds in half, and throw you screaming into the depths of the void! The Lightbringer WILL have his offering!"

Reluctantly, several of the technicians stepped forward and began unfastening the restraints that held Lauris in place at the center of the machine. As the last buckle came loose, Lauris collapsed forward into a pile on the ground.

The technicians looked nervously at the prisoner. “What do we do with—”

“Kill her!” Dumont shrieked. “I don’t care. Just get her out of my sight!” He stomped over to the center of the machine and began strapping himself in. “Prepare another cube to receive the Lightbringer’s power!”

At the edge of the room, two shocked guards stood in the doorway, holding a stretcher between them. It was obviously not a good time to be walking in.

Dumont looked up from fumbling with the buckles, streaks of gray hair falling wildly in his face. “Are you deaf?!” he shouted at the new arrivals. “Kill the priestess! Throw her body off the island! I won’t have any more *distractions*!”

The guards looked at each other nervously before dropping the stretcher and moving toward Lauris with swords drawn.

Hero – Round 6, Turn 4



Use TC with 3C – Robere, Ironwood Swordsman
[Moderate Impact]

The heroes froze in mid-stride as Dumont’s shouts filled the tunnel. Ahead of them, the guards they had been following disappeared into a side room. Horrible green

light spilled from the open door and into the tunnel. Dumont's orders left no doubt. Lauris was in that room.

"This is it!" Robere said loudly, drawing the steel blade from his side. "Dashers, with me! Find Lauris and protect her! Quinn, Mikael, you stay here."

"Like hell!" Quinn shouted in reply, pulling out her hidden blade. "We're coming, Lauris!"

The gathered heroes charged down the remainder of the hallway and burst into the green-tinted room with weapons at the ready. Beyond the doorway, they saw the circular chamber filled with Marchus' horrible machines. At its center, the two guards stood over Lauris' crumpled form. Dumont was nearby, half-strapped into the infernal contraption.

As they burst in, Dumont looked up at them with crazy, rage filled eyes. Strangely, he started laughing.

"How *perfect*!" he screamed maniacally. "Your minds will make a fitting tribute to the Lightbringer's madness! Kill them!" he shrieked at the guards and technicians surrounding him. "Kill them all!"

Robere quickly sized up the situation. There were the two guards, armed and armored, plus maybe a half dozen dark-robed technicians who were picking up tools to use as improvised weapons. And of course Dumont. The priest's void magic would be devastating in such confined quarters.

Behind Robere stood five others, but only he and Quinn were armed with real weapons. The other elves had broken off bits of the storage crates to use as clubs. Mikael hung near the back of the group, unarmed.

“You’ll pay for what you’ve done to this city,” Robere said, pointing the tip of his blade at the mad void priest. He looked down at the crumpled form lying on the floor. “And especially for what you’ve done to her.”

Dumont simply laughed as the guards closed in around the heroes to strike.

World – Round 6, Turn 5



Use TC with JD – Strange devices, black cubes
[Extreme Impact]

For a moment, the only sound in the cramped chamber was the sound Dumont’s deranged laughter mixed with the incessant mechanical clack of gears. The guards and dark-robed technicians closed in on the heroes, surrounding them on all sides. Robere and the other elves formed a protective arc around Quinn and Mikael, weapons at the ready.

“You’re outnumbered, Captain,” Dumont taunted from the mechanical harness. “And this time Marchus isn’t here to call me off.”

Robere kept his sword aimed at the approaching guards. "I've let you live one too many times, Dumont. I should have killed you when I first met you in the tavern."

Dumont chuckled madly. "Where's the fun in that? Maybe I'll keep you alive after all... so you can witness Lightbringer's magnificence as the entire city succumbs to the glow!"

Robere's hand tightened on his blade. "At the end of this, Dumont, you're going to wish you killed me too. Dashers, GO!"

With a mighty yell, Robere lunged at one of the guards, striking steel against steel with a deafening crash. The elven crew immediately leapt into the fray, throwing themselves at the robed assistants with a flurry of attacks. With little room to maneuver, the combat quickly turned into an all-out melee as both sides were swept into the battle.

Amidst the rising din, Dumont continued his mad laughter. "Good!" he yelled wildly. "Such magnificent rage! The Lightbringer's gift begins now, with your fury! You will all succumb to the pull of the glow!"

The older man's eyes filled with void energy as the machinery around him activated with a horrible cacophony of grinding parts. The tubes connecting Dumont to the apparatus flared with orange light and the very walls of the chamber began to shake.

“Send your power, God of Light and Madness!” Dumont yelled above the rising noise. “Let all of the Skies know your fury!”

Dumont’s head rolled backwards against the restraints. Beams of concentrated void glow blazed from his eyes and mouth as Lightbringer’s horrible power began to flow through him. Behind him, one of the black stone cubes blazed to life as the torrents of maddening energy poured in from the machine.

Slowly, Dumont’s laughter turned into mad shrieks as the cube filled to bursting. The void bomb trembled with barely-contained power. It would be only a matter of moments before it detonated.

Hero – Round 6, Turn 5



Use 3C with TC and 2 Impact Tokens

Robere, Ironwood Swordsman

Quinn, Daring Acrobat

[Extreme Impact]

Robere parried a high slash from one of the guards as he took a defensive step backwards. His crew fought at his side as best they could as the melee swirled around them. The components of Marchus’ foul device screamed and flashed with power while the entire room shook violently.

"I don't like the look of this!" Robere shouted above the rising noise.

With the nimble skills of an acrobat, Quinn dodged through the fray. She ducked under a swung wrench wielded by one of the technicians and tucked into a roll that carried her between the surprised goon's legs. Leaping and spinning past combatants, she finally freed herself from the melee.

Her eyes frantically searched the room amidst strobes of green light. Then she saw Lauris. Her friend was lying in a heap near the base of the horrible machine. Quinn rushed to her side and slid to her knees next to her.

"Lauris!" Quinn yelled, grabbing Lauris' face and shaking it.

Slowly, Lauris' eyes cracked open. She struggled to speak. "Q-Quinn?"

Quinn's eyes began to tear up. "Thank the gods you're okay. Can you move? We're getting you out of here."

"The... Vortex..." Lauris said feebly.

Quinn blinked. "The what?"

A sudden concussive blast shattered Quinn's train of thought as part of Marchus' machine exploded in a shower of sparks. Dumont was pushing the thing past full capacity. The mad voider laughed and shrieked with elation as he pumped more and more glow energy into the machinery.

Robere blocked another strike, then pushed the guard's blade off his own, throwing the man several feet back. "We have to get out of here!" he shouted, both to his crew and their enemies.

All the combatants stopped in mid-fight, suddenly realizing the critical condition of the device that surrounded them. One by one, the guards and technicians lowered their weapons and began to inch their way toward the exit.

"Leaving so soon?!" Dumont yelled madly, his eyes overwhelmed with the glow. "But I have something so *marvelous* to show you!"

A hose broke loose from the machine, spewing steam into the chamber. A rapidly spinning gear nearby suddenly seized and locked up.

"I see it all now! The glow pierces everything! I can see all within the Skies... and *beyond!*" Void glow blazed from Dumont's eyes, nearly consuming his entire body.

Then the glow suddenly darkened, fading to beams of pure blackness tinted blood red. "I see it all... I see... OH GODS!" Dumont's body flailed and struggled against the bonds that held him in the machine. "No... NO!!" he shrieked. "I see EVERYTHING! I see—"

Robere rushed forward, plunging his sword deep through Dumont's chest. The crazed voider was pinned to the destabilizing machine. "Keep looking."

The black cube at the center of the machine began to tremble and shake violently. Small cracks formed on the exterior of the stone, slowly inching their way toward the center as more and more concentrated void energy leaked out.

Robere knelt down and picked up Lauris in his arms. Then all of them: Robere, Quinn, the elven crew, Mikael, and the former dungeon guards, turned and ran out of the room and into the shaking halls of the underground complex. The very stone of the tunnels threatened to cave in around them as the tremors intensified. Dumont's screams of terror chased them through the tunnels as they sprinted through the dark passages to safety.

The resulting explosion was heard, and felt, across all of Bridgeways.

Interlude 2

The Isle of Chimes, Bridgeways

Lauris stood at the edge of the Isle of Chimes, as she often did, looking out over the city of connected bridges below. This was usually a place she'd come for a moment of quiet reflection, or to get away from Mikael and his constant bickering about chores.

Today, though, even the beautiful windchimes that gave the temple isle its name seemed dull and distant. Far below, where once there was a grand fountain at the center of a busy market plaza, there was now only a smoking crater. It sat like a scar on the face of the island, still belching green-tinted smoke into the sky. Dark forces truly had come to Bridgeways.

"I thought I'd find you here." It was Jamos, her adopted father and head wind priest of the temple.

Lauris turned and smiled weakly at the man, who walked up to stand beside her.

"There was nothing more you could have done," the man said simply. "How could any of us have known Marchus would betray us like this."

"You knew," Lauris said, still looking out over the city.

His expression remained constant. "I had my suspicions. If I had known the true depth of his schemes, I never would have sent you into all of this."

Jamos looked out over the ruined market plaza and sighed. "At least it's over now."

Lauris remained silent for a long moment. She hadn't told anyone about the green flame from Marchus' study. How it peered into her mind and tapped into her connection to the Lady of the Winds. She hadn't told them about the horrible visions of destruction she'd seen. Destruction that was now in the hands of Marchus and his dark patron.

"Tell me about the Vortex," she said suddenly.

Jamos looked at the young woman with surprise. "The Vortex? You know about the Vortex. She is one of the five Aspects of the goddess. You pray at her effigy almost every day."

Lauris nodded. She knew about the Aspects of the Lady of the Wind. The deity famously had five faces. The Aspect of the Breeze carried ship and seed across the void. The Aspect of Rain brought clouds and life-giving water. The Aspect of Storms was the Lady's might and justice. The Aspect of the Calm brought peace to those in suffering. And the Aspect of the Vortex was the Lady's wrath, bringing prophesized destruction to entire islands.

"I saw the fury of the Vortex," Lauris said, looking to the older priest for guidance.

A look of concern crossed Jamos' face. "A vision of destruction? How did it manifest? What did you see?"

Lauris paused for a long moment. The cold wind blew bits of dark hair across her face. "It was me."

#

"I guess you'll be leaving, then?" Quinn looked across the table at Robere. The elf captain was busily gulping down a bowl of hot mushroom stew. Since word of Marchus' vast surplus had reached them, the temple had broken into some of the protected food stores.

Robere looked up from the bowl and met Quinn's intense violet gaze. He swallowed the last bit of stew.

"I suppose we will."

The drakin's shoulders slumped as her heart suddenly raced. "I have to say," she began. "... for all you've done for us... for me..."

"How long do you need?" Robere cut in.

Quinn looked surprised. "What?"

"How long do you need to gather your things?" he asked again, still holding Quinn's gaze. "You're part of the crew, right?"

Quinn was stunned. "I..."

The door to the small temple dining room opened suddenly, causing the two seated at the table to look up.

In walked a stern-faced Jamos with Lauris at his side. She looked weary and somehow ashamed.

Robere's eyes darted between the two faces. "This doesn't look good," he said with growing worry. The two sat down at the table with him and Quinn.

Jamos wasted no time. "Marchus may have in his possession an even greater weapon than the void bomb you saw in the tavern."

Robere scoffed at the aging priest. "How? That explosion took out Marchus' machine plus half of his underground complex. I don't think we'll be hearing from him for a while."

"Before that," Jamos said. "He used the machine to..." he trailed off, looking at his adopted daughter with concern. Lauris lowered her eyes to the table.

"He used the machine charge one of those cubes with the power of the Vortex."

"The Vortex?" Quinn piped in. "Lauris mentioned that when we were saving her. Isn't that the *bad* Aspect?"

Jamos' brow furrowed. "In a sense. All Aspects of the goddess are part of one whole, and we revere them equally. The Vortex represents the goddess' wrath. And her..."

"Her madness," Lauris spoke for the first time. All eyes turned to her. "Marchus is a Godshifter. He can twist the power of the gods and redirect it for his own dark

purposes. With that machine, he reached into my mind and..." she paused, looking for the right words. "...took the power of the Lady of the Winds. He forced me to call the Aspect of the Vortex so he could channel and contain its power. I don't think even the gods know that it's happening."

Jamos nodded darkly. "But they're starting to suspect. Marchus' corruption is becoming too great to hide any longer."

"So, what could he do with this cube," Robere asked. "This vortex bomb?"

"Destroy an island," Lauris replied with grim certainty. "He's going to use it to shatter a bridge, and drop an entire island off Bridgeways."

Everyone at the table was silent for a long moment. Landfall was one of the most horrifying realities of life in the Skies. There were few worse fates than to have the very chunk of rock you lived on come unstuck and plummet into the void.

"Where?" Quinn asked. "Why?"

Lauris sighed. "I don't know for certain. He mentioned something about the Phantom Isle."

Quinn's eyes lit up. "The Phantom Isle? I know that story!"

Everyone looked at her expectantly.

The drakin leaned in close, her eyes shining with the mirth of a storyteller. “Hundreds of years ago, on these very isles, a pious sorcerer sought to open a portal to the heavens. He built a tall tower on his lonely island, filled with implements both arcane and divine. The sorcerer claimed we were trapped! And that beyond the veil of the glow lay the endless expanses of heaven, our eternal reward kept just out of reach.

“Many called him mad. Said he was wasting his life on a useless tower and an insane dream. Yet still the sorcerer kept building, until one day his tower was complete. At the very top, he built a magnificent stairway leading to a portal made of smooth, black stone bricks. The very same black stone that holds the isles of Bridgeways together.”

“I’m starting to get a bad feeling about all this black stone,” Robere cut in.

Quinn smiled knowingly at him, then continued. “Well, when the portal was finally activated and the sorcerer prepared to take his first step into the great beyond, disaster struck! Instead of a gateway to heaven, the sorcerer had opened a portal to hell! Demonic hordes poured through his gateway, killing the sorcerer and threatening to wipe out all of Bridgeways!”

She paused for effect. “So the gods intervened, severing the bridge to the sorcerer’s tower and banishing his entire island, with the demonic hordes upon it, to the depths of the void. Some say the tower even phased into hell itself. Where the isle had once been, the gods

created a new island and placed upon it a divine ward, so that the Phantom Isle may never return.”

Quinn leaned back, looking at the faces around her as they considered her words.

“That’s quite a story,” Robere said after a moment.

“Maybe it’s not just a story.” A look of worry was creeping onto Lauris’ face. “In my visions, when I saw the Vortex around me... it could have been on Windgate Isle.”

Quinn’s eyes narrowed in thought. “Windgate... it *is* connected to the city by only a single bridge. Not much on it, though. Mostly just houses and that old monument.”

The realization hit them all at once.

“You don’t think...” Quinn began.

Lauris’ face paled. “The Windgate Monument. It’s the divine ward that prevents the Phantom Isle from returning. Marchus plans to destroy it and the rest of the isle along with it. He’s going to bring back the demonic invasion!”

A look of disbelief crossed Quinn’s face. “But there’s hundreds of people living on that island.”

The heroes exchanged a look of tense determination.

“Well, what are we waiting for?” Robere said, standing from the table. “We’ve got an island to save.”

Round 7

Windgate Isle, Bridgeways

Windgate Isle is an Impromptu Location. I've filled in a few of the Conflict List entries, the rest will be generated by Mythic.

1. Townsfolk living on the isle
2. <generated by Mythic>
3. <generated by Mythic>
4. Lookouts, hired by Marchus
5. <generated by Mythic>
6. <generated by Mythic>
7. <generated by Mythic>
8. Marchus' corrupted inventions
9. <generated by Mythic>
10. The Windgate Monument

As the action picks up toward the finale, both players receive 1 Impact Token.

"How much of this old tale do we actually think is true?" Robere asked cautiously.

The three heroes walked through the streets of Bridgeways, heading toward the bridge that would lead them to Windgate Isle. A strange silence had settled over the city, with most people remaining indoors after the explosion. So far, they hadn't run into any trouble.

"Well it *is* just a story," Quinn replied.

“A lot of things line up, though,” Lauris added. “I definitely think it’s worth checking out.”

They continued in silence for a while, passing by homes and businesses as they moved through the city.

“And the demons?” Robere asked.

Quinn looked up at the handsome captain walking next to her. It looked like the man was actually worried. She smiled slightly at him. “Probably just made up. I know *I’ve* never seen a demon.”

“Well, be on the lookout,” Robere said with exaggerated confidence. He rested his hand on the ironwood sword at his side.

Lauris said nothing. Visions of the horrible green flame flashed through her mind. The dark presence from Marchus’ altar was like nothing she’d ever felt before. Such evil could only have come from a demonic being. A being of *immense* power.

“It’s just up ahead,” Quinn said, pointing up the cobblestone street. Beyond the tops of the buildings in front of them, a dark bridge arced into the sky.

“Alright,” Robere said with an edge of uneasiness in his voice. “Let’s check it out.”

World – Round 7, Turn 1



Use 7C with 7S – Local, Incidental / Imitate / The Innocent

[High Impact]

Let's ask some questions of Mythic to get started.

Is Marchus already on the island? (50/50): YES

Why hasn't he already destroyed the bridge? (Complex):

Activity / Advice

He needs to commune with the Lord of Misrule in order to overcome the wards on the Windgate Monument.

Is he doing this out in the open? (50/50): VERY YES

He's taken over the monument square with his guards and mechanical golems.

I assume he will have locked down the bridge as well?

(Very Likely): YES

Interpretation: Marchus' goons have closed off the bridge for a seemingly innocent reason.

As the heroes approached the edge of the island, the streets became more and more crowded with people. Everyone seemed to be walking the same direction they were, heading toward the edge of the island and the base of the bridge. The sound of music drifted down the streets ahead of them, mixed with the voices of many people.

Following the crowds, the heroes rounded a curve in the avenue and emerged into an open plaza at the edge of the island. A majestic bridge of black stone arched through the air over the endless expanse of the void, leading to another island in the distance. In front of the

bridge stood a wooden stage, lined with tall banners and packed with dwarves in religious attire.

An elderly dwarven priest with a graying beard addressed the crowd gathered below with outstretched arms. “And so today we ask the Artificer’s blessing for all those who perished in yesterday’s horrible attack.” He made a pious gesture over the crowd. “May their souls find rest among the gods of the Skies.”

Another priest behind him struck a cog-shaped gong, filling the crowded streets with an echoing, atonal ringing. The robed dwarves immediately began leading the assembled masses in a prayer.

“What’s this about?” Quinn whispered as the three walked up to the rear of the crowd.

Lauris looked out over the ceremony. At the center of the stage, placed prominently on a raised dais, was a smoothly polished, black stone brick, inlaid with the symbol of the artificer in gleaming iron.

She frowned. “It looks like the Journey of the Forger. Once a year, the dwarven temple takes the First Stone to the major bridges of the city to ask the Artificer’s blessing. It symbolizes the Artificer’s journey as he forged Bridgeways from the shattered stone of the Sundering and connected it all with the black stone bridges.”

Quinn strained to see through the crowd. “The festival’s still months away, though, isn’t it?”

Lauris nodded, narrowing her eyes. “It’s Marchus. He must already be on the island. He knows no one can use the bridge while the ceremony is in progress. He probably organized all of this to make sure we couldn’t follow him. He’s still the head steam priest, after all.”

“Great,” Robere said dismally as the prayer ceremony continued around them. “Then how are we supposed to get past all this mess?”

Hero – Round 7, Turn 1



Use 5H with Impact Token – Lauris, Storm Priestess: Fly [Moderate Impact]

Lauris stared past the crowded religious ceremony, out into the void and to Windgate Isle beyond. The bridge between the two islands wasn’t all that long, just a few thousand feet across. As she stared at the currently inaccessible bridge, some birds flew past in the expanse that separated the two land masses.

“I know another way,” she said suddenly, a gleam of mischief in her cool blue eyes.

Quinn gazed up at the priestess with worry. She knew that look. “No. Nope. Not gonna happen.” She shook her head vehemently. “Not after last time.”

“Oh come on,” Lauris said with a smile.

“I almost died!” Quinn said loudly. Several of citizens in the crowd stopped their prayers, looking at Quinn disapprovingly.

Quinn continued in whisper. “I fell for like... two minutes.”

Lauris kept smiling. “It wasn’t that long. Besides, the winds caught you and you were fine.”

Quinn’s eyes were wide. “Eventually!”

“You ladies want to let me know what’s going on?” Robere asked, somewhat confused by the exchange.

Quinn looked up at him. “Lauris can fly.”

“The divine winds of the goddess carry me where she wills,” Lauris corrected.

Quinn ignored her. “She can fly. And despite these,” she flexed the small, dragon-like wings on her back, “I can *not* fly. And I prefer not to try.”

Robere grinned at the flustered drakin. “Take a ride on the winds of the goddess, huh? I don’t know... sounds like fun to me.”

Quinn sighed. She already knew where this was going.

#

Several streets down from the busy ceremony, off the main path, behind some tall buildings, on a strip of land that was probably someone’s backyard, the three heroes

stood at the rocky edge of the island and stared out into the endless, glowing expanse of the void. Cold winds blew through the infinite sky, tugging at their hair and clothing.

“So how does this work again?” Robere asked, peering over the ledge and down into the dizzying depths of the void below. He was suddenly more concerned about the idea now than he was before.

Lauris looked at the huge mass of land floating out in the sky some half a mile distant. “We lock hands, I say a prayer to the Lady of the Winds, and then we jump.”

Robere was silent. Quinn shot him an I-told-you-so look.

“And then, if the goddess wills it, the winds will carry us to the other side. To Windgate Isle.”

Robere’s eyes widened. “If?!”

Lauris flashed him a quick smile. “Don’t worry. The goddess favors me.” She quickly grabbed his hand as well as Quinn’s. “Ready?”

Both Robere and Quinn opened their mouths to protest, but Lauris didn’t give them the chance. Closing her eyes, and with a quick hop, she threw herself into a swan dive off the side of the island, pulling the other two with her into the waiting void.

Freezing wind rushed past the three heroes as they plummeted off the side of the island. The endless sky swirled around them as they twisted and tumbled into

the glowing abyss. Robere managed to go almost ten seconds before starting to scream.

“It’s not working!” Quinn screamed, her arms and legs flailing wildly in the buffeting air stream. She struggled to maintain her grip on the priestess’ hand as they fell.

Lauris kept her eyes closed, focusing on her connection to the goddess. The faintest smile tugged at the edges of her mouth.

Moments later, a massive gust of wind caught them from below, slowing their descent and holding them steady on a cushion of rushing air. Lauris slowly opened her eyes, then tilted her head upward, focusing on the dark mass of land above.

The rushing wind intensified, forming a column of swirling air beneath them. Cushioning them in its embrace, the wind moved at Lauris’ command. The priestess smiled. The goddess always answered.

“This is the fun part,” she yelled above the raging winds. “Hold on tight!” With a mighty blast of freezing air, the column surged upward, sending them rising back toward the islands above. Lauris pushed the column faster, leveling out into controlled flight. At the priestess’ command, the three soared upward through the sky toward Windgate Isle, riding the stream of air like leaves on the wind.

World – Round 7, Turn 2



Use 3D – Thing, Abstract / Befriend / Dispute
[Low Impact]

Interpretation: Some townsfolk spot the heroes and start to panic.

With a rush of cushioning air, Lauris descended from above and gently landed on the edge of Windgate Isle. Dark hair and white robes swirled around her as the winds quickly dissipated, dropping Robere and Quinn to the ground in a heap next to her.

Quinn laid the side of her face against the earth and dug her claws into the soft soil of the isle, sighing with relief.

Robere stood, obviously frazzled, and began brushing himself off. “Can’t you do that without throwing us all into the void?”

Lauris smiled at them both. “The Lady demands uncompromising faith from those she blesses.”

Robere checked his sword. “I’ll stick to my ship, thanks. The only thing it demands is routine maintenance.”

He bent over to help Quinn to her feet. “You alright?”

Quinn smiled feebly at him, grabbing tightly onto his hand with both of hers. “Just great.” He pulled her to her feet.

The three looked around to get their bearings on the new isle. They had landed on a grassy patch of land at the very edge of the island. A row of houses with narrow alleyways separated them from the residential streets beyond. The monument plaza was not far beyond that.

“Hey! You’re not supposed to be out of doors!” The shout came from one of the houses.

Turning toward the sound, heroes saw a young boy, maybe six years old, standing in the back doorway of his home. He was pointing at them a deep scowl on his face. Moments later, the boy’s mother appeared behind him.

“Come back inside!” she scolded, grabbing the boy by the shoulders. “If they see us outside—” she froze when she laid eyes on the three figures standing in her back yard. A look a fear came over her face.

“What’s going on?” The boy’s father appeared in the doorway as well.

“There’s people in the yard!” the woman yelled. “They’ll attract the patrols... we’ll all be killed!”

Hero – Round 7, Turn 2



Use 3D – Quinn, Streetwise
[Low Impact]

“Whoa, whoa, whoa,” Quinn said, stepping forward

toward the frightened family with arms extended. “No one’s killing anyone.” She flashed them her most charming smile. “We’re actually here to help you.”

The man narrowed his eyes, stepping protectively in front of his wife and son. “Who are you and what are you doing behind our house?”

“I’m Quinn,” she said cheerfully, giving a flourished bow before motioning behind her. “And this is Lauris and Robere. We’re looking for a dwarf. Big and round, walks with a cane, unwashed beard, potentially surrounded by green, demonic fire. Ring any bells?”

The man looked at the opal drakin with suspicion. “A dwarf from the temple came to the monument plaza earlier today to lead us in prayer.”

The woman spoke up. “But then his followers turned on us! They had such horrible machines!”

Placing a hand on his wife’s shoulder, the man continued. “We were told to return to our homes and stay inside. Those who didn’t were...” he trailed off. Tears welled up in his wife’s eyes.

Quinn’s eyes widened at the news. “That sound like our guy, alright. Where is he now?”

The man looked both pained and frustrated. “I don’t know. We’re being kept prisoner in our homes! The last we saw, he was setting up some sort of altar in the monument plaza.”

Quinn looked over her shoulder and nodded at Robere and Lauris. The other two walked up to stand beside her. She turned back to the family.

“Thanks, you’ve been a big help. We’ll take care of it from here.” She looked down at the boy hiding behind his mother’s leg and smiled. “You better get back inside, little man. Keep your head down and stay out of sight.” She winked at the boy. “No more peaking.”

The boy nodded slowly at the dragon-woman before being pulled back inside by his parents. The door to the house closed quietly behind the family as Quinn, Robere, and Lauris slipped into a nearby alleyway between buildings.

“We’ll take care of it?” Robere repeated, peering out into the vacant residential streets for any signs of patrols. “You make it sound so easy.” An uneasy stillness hung over the small community as the heroes darted from building to building, making their way toward the monument plaza.

For once, Quinn’s eyes carried a bit of the ferocity her kind was known for. “I’m sure it won’t be easy. But if that bastard destroys this entire island and everyone on it, I’ll kill him myself.”

World – Round 7, Turn 3



Use 5H – Locale, Deliberate / Punish / Suffering [Moderate Impact]

Interpretation: Marchus has taken over the monument plaza and is preparing to destroy the wards by sacrificing some captive prisoners.

*What does the Monument look like? (Description):
Deliberately / Creepy*

Several streets away, in the center of a quaint market plaza, the Windgate Monument stood on a bit of grassy earth surrounded by cobblestone. The monument itself was made of weathered stone, cracked and moss-covered from years of exposure, but was generally well cared for. It had been a feature on the small island for as long as anyone could remember and its distinctive design had actually given the island its name.

Rising almost two stories above the usually-crowded streets was an arched gateway carved from weathered stone. Sculpted demonic figures coiled around the edges of the gateway, climbing over the bricks as if they were emerging from some unknown hell on the other side. At the center of the gateway, a statue depicting the Aspect of the Calm extended its stone arms towards the gate, symbolically blocking the carved demons from coming through. Though the citizens of Windgate Isle generally attributed the disturbing sculpture to some long-forgotten gothic architect, today its true demonic origins were more apparent than ever.

Horrible mechanical golems stomped across the empty plaza, belching dark smoke into the sky from the infernal green flames that burned at their cores. Guards, armed with twisted blades, watched over a dozen bound prisoners kept on their knees before a stone altar near the monument. Around them, dark-robed cultists scurried about in preparation for a profane ritual that was meant to destroy both the monument itself and the rest of the island along with it.

At the center of it all stood Marchus, eyes black and vacant as pits. With hands extended over the altar, he channeled a distant and horrible power, speaking in a dark voice not his own.

“As it was at the time of the Sundering, so now shall your blood fuel the unmaking of this world.” He picked up a wicked ceremonial knife from the altar and held it up before the terrified prisoners.

“With your sacrifice, the wards protecting this island will fall. The gateway will be removed at last, and the Phantom Isle shall return!”

Behind the horrible scene, sitting at the apex of the Windgate archway some twenty feet above the streets, a black stone cube pulsed with the barely contained power of the Vortex. A weapon with the power to destroy an entire island, now just moments away from detonation.

Hero – Round 7, Turn 3



Use 7C – Lauris, Attractive Presence

Activate Disadvantage – Lauris, Hot Headed
[Low Impact]

At the edge of the small plaza, the three heroes crouched in the shadows between two buildings as they took in the horrible scene.

“Wow, he moves fast!” Quinn whispered, looking at the foul altar and machinery already set up in the plaza.

“There’s a lot of guards,” Robere said. “And more of those iron golems.” He looked over at Quinn. “How about we avoid those this time.”

Quinn smiled slightly at him. “No arguments from me; I enjoy living. What’s our plan?”

Lauris stood behind the other two, staring out into the plaza with smoldering blue eyes. There was the vortex cube sitting atop the monument. Her visions had already shown her what the weapon was capable of. If Marchus detonated it here, it could reduce the entire island to rubble, potentially ripping it away from Bridgeways entirely. Its power had come from her, and now it was up to her to stop it.

“We’re going to stop him,” Lauris said, darkly. The other two looked up at her.

“Right,” Quinn said, already not liking the look in Lauris’ eyes. “But how? There’s a ton of guards out there. Not to mention those iron golems. You saw the scars on my back, right?”

“Leave that to me,” the priestess said, stepping past the other two toward the plaza.

“Lauris, wait!” Quinn begged, grabbing the back of her holy vestments as she passed. The hot-headed priestess had done some brash things in the past, but this pretty much topped them all in terms of sheer insanity.

Lauris looked down into her friend’s pleading eyes. “I can’t wait anymore, Quinn,” she said with cool resolution. “I can’t be responsible for what he does with the power of the Vortex... the power he took from me.”

She placed her hand on top of Quinn’s, where her clawed hand was still grasping her robes. “I’m sorry.”

With that, she tuned and strode boldly into the plaza toward the altar. Behind her, Robere and Quinn exchanged a worried glance. Walking into the middle of a demonic ritual led by a powerful Godshifter and his corrupt followers was nothing short of suicide.

As the two locked eyes behind the departing priestess, they knew what had to be done. Saying nothing, they both stood and jogged to catch up.

“Marchus!” The shout rang out across the courtyard. All eyes turned to watch as a solitary figure emerged from the buildings at the edge of the plaza. Lightning flickered

behind Lauris' steely gaze as Quinn and Robere jogged up beside her.

"Your evil has caused nothing but suffering on Bridgeways!" Lauris shouted, taking a defiant stance in the middle of the open plaza. "By my hand as the Lady's justice, your reign of terror ends today!"

World – Round 7, Turn 4



Use 7S with 7C – Marchus' Loyal Followers
[High Impact]

Marchus stood motionless at the top of the stone altar, still holding the sacrificial knife in front of him. His expression remained cold and unchanging.

"You were foolish to come here, acolyte," he said in the dark, far-away voice Lauris had come to associate with the evil presence behind the flame. "You cannot stop the Isle's inevitable return."

"I can stop *you*!" Lauris shouted, her chest heaving with increasing fury as dark storm clouds began to materialize around her.

Marchus' voice was cold and matter-of-fact. "No, you cannot. And now your blood will mix with theirs to destroy the wards and herald the Isle's return. With the protection of your goddess removed, the power of the Vortex will destroy this island and the Phantom Isle will

return in its place. You have done well, young acolyte, but now it is time to die.” His head turned slightly to the guards and automations surrounding the altar. “Kill them.”

With the shrill sound of drawing steel, a dozen of Marchus’ guards moved to surround the three heroes. Behind them, two twisted iron monstrosities turned to advance, shaking the cobblestone street beneath them with each step.

Hero – Round 7, Turn 4



Use QS with 7S – Robere, Master of Misdirection **[Moderate Impact]**

“Now what?” Robere asked dismally, drawing his sword as the guards and mechanical automations closed in around them.

“Now we fight,” Lauris stated with defiance. “We can’t let him complete that ritual.” The wind had already begun to pick up in the courtyard, with the distant rumble of thunder threatening a coming storm.

“I was afraid you were going to say that,” Robere said. He stepped into a defensive posture with the three of them back-to-back against the guards and cultists approaching from all angles.

The winds continued to pick up as more dark storm clouds rolled in overhead. Lightning crackled around Lauris' hands as she stared defiantly at Marchus on top of the altar. "You take care of these guys," she said to Robere. "I'm going after Marchus."

Robere kept his sword trained on the approaching guards. They were very close now, closing in on all sides, ready to strike at any moment. Why did everyone always think he could just 'take care' of things? He wouldn't stand a chance against their numbers in a stand-up fight, but thankfully he still had one trick up his sleeve.

"We're only going to get one shot at this," the elf captain said, glancing over his shoulder at the other two. "Hold your breaths and be ready to run."

Quinn and Lauris didn't argue, and the three all took in deep breaths just as the surrounding guards moved in to strike.

As their blades descended, Robere closed his eyes and tensed his core as hard as possible. With a loud pop, a dense cloud of sticky dust exploded from Robere's body, filling the area with a blanket of choking spores. The soldiers immediately recoiled as the spores filled their lungs, staggering backwards in coughing fits. Robere didn't like to advertise his plant heritage ability. Some even found it distasteful. But at times like these, it paid to be part plant.

"Go! Now!" Robere yelled, lunging toward the coughing guards and delivering a series of brutal strikes with his

ironwood sword. He pushed the dazed swordsmen back with wild swings, sending several of the soldiers spinning to the ground beneath his blade.

Lauris and Quinn wasted no time, sprinting through the opening in the soldiers' ranks and into the clear, gasping for air.

Quinn immediately turned back toward Robere and pulled the small dagger from the wrap around her leg. She wasn't about to let the captain go down fighting if she had anything to say about it. With barely a second thought, she rushed to his side, leaping onto the back of one of the dazed soldiers.

Lauris, meanwhile, turned her gaze to the altar and the horrible ritual taking place upon it. Marcus stood behind the wicked stone structure, ceremonial knife in hand, as two captive prisoners were being dragged roughly up to the sacrificial dais.

As the storm intensified in the market plaza, Lauris walked purposefully toward the altar, lightning arcing from her hands. If there was ever a time to stop the mad Godshifter and his demonic schemes, it was now.

"This is it, Marchus!" the priestess shouted, the growing storm whipping her dark hair around her face. "The goddess will tolerate your blasphemy no longer. Your unholy schemes end now!"

A bolt of lightning flashed across the sky behind Lauris as she approached the altar. She was the hand of the

goddess. And today, she would bring the fury of the Lady's divine justice to Marchus and his followers.

World – Round 7, Turn 5



Use QS with Impact Token – The Windgate Monument **[Extreme Impact]**

Form the top of the altar, Marchus gazed out over the developing conflict in the plaza with a vacant expression. His guards dragged a squirming prisoner up by his side, throwing the terrified man down onto the hard stone block and holding him motionless, chest up to the sky. The obese dwarf held the wicked knife above his helpless victim as he stared into the furious eyes of the storm priestess approaching below.

“You are too late, acolyte,” he spoke in the deep, far away tone. “With this sacrifice, I evoke the presence from beyond this world. Send your infernal power, Lord of Misrule, to shatter the wards that keep the Phantom Isle in exile beyond the glow. With the power of the Vortex I provide, destroy this false island and return the Phantom Isle to its rightful place in the Skies!”

With a powerful downward thrust, Marchus plunged the ceremonial dagger deep into the heart of the helpless prisoner. The prisoner's body convulsed, held in place by the faceless guards, as blood erupted from his chest and spilled over the edges of the altar. The green flames

surrounding the altar flared with power, burning white-hot and bathing the entire courtyard in a wicked glow. Crimson streams of blood spread like wildfire across the stone altar, moving with unholy speed as they converged on the statue of the Aspect of Calm.

Like crimson rivers, the streams of blood-red energy covered the holy statue, causing cracks and fissures to open all across the stone surface. Brilliant void glow blazed from between the cracks as the red energy completely consumed the statue. The very ground itself shook as the statue finally ruptured, shattering into a thousand pieces that blasted across the courtyard like shrapnel.

As the statue disintegrated, the tendrils of red energy began to snake their way up the stone archway of the Windgate Monument, making their way to the Vortex cube at its apex.

Behind the altar, Marchus smiled for the first time ever, a horrible, unconscionable smile. “It is done!” he shouted, lifting the bloody dagger in triumph. “The wards have fallen, and now the false isle will be destroyed! Run while you can, pathetic mortals! Soon the Phantom Isle will return, and with it the legions of Hell itself! The Heart will be reclaimed at last!”

Hero – Round 7, Turn 5



Use 7S with QS – Quinn, Daring Acrobat
[Moderate Impact]

Lauris watched in horror as the divine statue of Lady of the Winds shattered into a thousand pieces before her very eyes. A sinking feeling gripped her stomach as the ground she stood upon sank a good ten feet with the monument's destruction. The isle had become unanchored from the sky and soon the Vortex cube would destroy it with its stolen divine energy, sending the entire island plummeting into the depths of the void.

Around the priestess, the storm still grew, bringing a howling wind across the plaza. But now Lauris' attention had turned from the Godshifter to the Vortex cube at the top of the monument. Tendrils of crimson energy, fueled by the blood of the sacrifice, snaked their way around the archway and made their way ever closer to the unstable Vortex cube at its pinnacle. It would be only a matter of moments before the streams of energy reached the weapon and it detonated with the full fury of the Vortex.

"Quinn!" Lauris shouted above the storm, eyes desperately searching for the diminutive drakin among the fray. "The Vortex cube! You have to get it now!"

Quinn ducked under a sword swing from the soldier she was fighting and looked back at Lauris and the altar.

Streams of horrible red energy were making their way ominously toward the Vortex cube at the top of the monument. It didn't take a priest to know what that meant.

"I got it!" Quinn yelled, quickly dodging another downward swing from the soldier in front of her before turning and sprinting toward the rapidly disintegrating monument saturated with blood-red energy.

Dropping her head and shoulders, Quinn pushed her legs as fast as they would carry her, running past the remaining guards and flying into a leap that carried her past a towering iron golem and onto the side of the stone archway. Her claws dug into the stone of the monument, grabbing hold of the bricks and pulling her upward across the carved, demonic faces.

The iron automation tracked her in her climb, swinging a massive, twisted metal claw that barely missed the nimble drakin as she climbing ever closer to the top of the archway. Finally cresting the top, Quinn pulled herself up on the two-story-tall archway and stood face-to-face with the rapidly destabilizing Vortex cube.

"Down here!" Lauris yelled, looking up at her friend balanced precariously on top of the monument with a towering automation approaching just a few feet below her.

The blazing light in the center of the cube danced off Quinn's face as she reached down to pick up the weapon from the top of the monument. The device was

surprisingly light, but vibrated with the unstable energies of a goddess' wrath barely contained within.

With all her strength, Quinn flung the cube down toward Lauris, just as the twisted iron claw of the automation crashed through the stone archway beneath her, sending her crashing back down to the cobblestone streets amidst a rain of shattered stone.

Lauris watched in horror as Quinn fell beneath the golem's mighty swing, but her eyes were fixed on the Vortex cube flying toward her. Reaching deep into her reserves of faith, the priestess conjured a whirlwind of air in front of her. At her command, the powerful cyclone rose to intercept the weapon, catching it in a cushion of air just before it hit the ground.

Lauris closed her eyes and with the last of her power, channeled all her divine will into the cyclone. With an explosive burst of wind, the cyclone blasted the cube upward, sending the weapon rocketing away from the island on a gust of concentrated wind.

The weapon shot through the air above the buildings of the isle below, vibrating with crimson energy as it flew high into the sky past the edges of the island and out into the waiting void.

Then, with the full force of the captive Vortex, the weapon detonated, sending an earth-shattering shockwave ripping across the island chain below.

Round 8

The Phantom Isle, Bridgeways

The Phantom Isle is an Impromptu Location. All Challenge List entries will be generated by Mythic.

For the exciting conclusion, the Hero Player receives 1 Impact Token.

Robere struggled to remain on his feet as the entire island beneath him tilted from the force of the explosion in the nearby void. Moments later, the shockwave ripped through the buildings of the plaza, filling the air with a hail of shattered glass and wooden splinters as it tore across the surface of the island. The concussive wave caught the elf in the chest like a charging animal, lifting him off his feet and sending him, and everyone else in the plaza, tumbling to the ground amidst the rain of flying debris.

Robere's ears were ringing as he struggled to regain his footing, but the ground beneath him tilted and swayed as the entire island bobbed up and down like a ship on a stormy sky.

The sky overhead darkened, blocking out much of the glow as a massive, swirling storm cloud spread out from the point of detonation. Hurricane force winds suddenly tore across the plaza, sending some of the shops and other buildings at the edge of the courtyard crashing to the ground. Lightning flashed from within the terrifying vortex as the storm grew and surged outward.

Staying low to the ground Robere grabbed onto the base of a nearby sign post and held on for dear life. The raging winds tossed his body around like a rag doll as the storm consumed the island. He waited for that sinking feeling, the feeling of impending Landfall as the fragile island plummeted out of the sky, but it never came. Maybe, somehow, Lauris and Quinn had prevented the total destruction of the island by moving the weapon far enough away before it detonated.

As quickly as it appeared, the divine storm receded and finally faded, leaving only a remnant of swirling dark clouds in the sky above Windgate Isle. A light rain fell upon the ruined island from above, chilling the air and blanketing the ground with a light mist.

Robere stood, brushing some of the debris from his coat as he looked around the plaza. The island looked like it had been hit by a hurricane. Many buildings lay in ruins and others were gone entirely. Around the plaza and elsewhere, survivors cautiously emerged from their homes to gaze up at the sky with fear and wonder.

“Quinn! Lauris!” Robere’s shouts rang out across the eerily silent, mist-filled plaza. Rubble and debris choked the courtyard as he moved to search for them. The Windgate Monument at its center was completely destroyed.

“Over here!” It was Quinn’s voice.

Robere ran toward the sound, finding the drakin trapped beneath the heavy iron arm of one of Marchus’ twisted

golems. Stone rubble from the monument surrounded her, pinning her beneath the destroyed construct.

“Hang on,” Robere said, pushing chunks of rubble aside as he made his way to his trapped companion. “Are you hurt?”

“I don’t think so,” Quinn said, struggling to free herself as Robere removed the last of the rubble. She looked down at the heavy iron limb trapping her. “Man, I hate these guys.”

With a grunt, Robere grabbed the mass of twisted iron and pulled it up just enough for Quinn to wriggle free before dropping it back down with a crash.

Quinn stood and brushed herself off, throwing a look at the lifeless scrap heap next to her. She was a bit bruised from the fall, but otherwise okay. Rain soaked the two of them as she looked up at Robere.

“You know, if you keep saving me, I’m going to have to find a way to repay you.”

The elf captain smiled back at her. “We’d all be dead right now if not for your daring heroics. Are you sure you’re just a waitress?”

“I thought I was part of a salvage crew now,” Quinn replied, grinning slyly at him.

Robere laughed. “Anyone who can move like you do—” The words were cut off as Quinn suddenly leapt forward

and wrapped her arms around his neck, kissing him firmly on the mouth.

Robere froze for a long moment as Quinn finished the embrace, finally stepping back down to the rubble-strewn ground in front of him.

“Thanks... for everything,” she said simply, with a slight smile. “Now let’s go find Lauris.”

World – Round 8, Turn 1



Use 6H – Being, Passive / Break / Masses **[Moderate Impact]**

Interpretation: Lauris is devastated by her part in the island’s destruction and her failure to stop Marchus.

Lauris Windfound knelt in the middle of the ruined plaza, shoulders slumped forward as the freezing rain poured down around her. In the distance, she could hear the frightened cries of the citizens who called the once-peaceful island their home. All the destruction, it was just like she’d seen in her vision. And here she was, at its center.

Her breaths came in shuddering gasps as she looked down at her own hands. She had caused this. The power of the Vortex had come from her. The Lady’s wrath, summoned by her own twisted prayers. Marchus had played her for her whole part in this, and she had been completely unable to stop it.

“Lauris!” Quinn’s shout came from behind her. Two sets of footfalls rapidly approached at a run, splashing loudly in the puddles forming on the ground.

“Lauris!” Quinn yelled again, sliding to a stop next to the shocked priestess. “Are you okay? Talk to me.”

Lauris looked up slowly into Quinn’s violet eyes. Tears mixed with the frigid rain on her cheeks. “I did this...” she stammered between shaking breaths. “This is all my fault.”

“No, it’s not!” Quinn insisted, wrapping her friend in a warming embrace. “You did everything you could. Heck, you probably saved the island!”

Lauris shook her head. “No... no, I didn’t. Just look around us.” She motioned to the destroyed, rubble-strewn plaza. “I couldn’t resist Marchus before when he took the power of the Vortex from me, and I couldn’t stop him today.”

She looked down at her trembling hands as the rain continued to fall through her fingers. “All of this... it’s all my fault.”

Hero – Round 8, Turn 1



Use 2H – Robere, Freedom Fighter [Low Impact]

Robere knelt beside Lauris, placing a strong hand on her shoulder. “You did *not* do this,” he said, looking deeply into the priestess’ pained eyes. “This is the work of a deranged man, an *evil* man.”

“But the Vortex...” Lauris began.

“The Vortex didn’t do this,” Robere interrupted, motioning to the destruction around them. “Marchus did this. And it would have been a lot worse if you hadn’t launched that cube away from the city at the last minute. A lot of people on this island owe you their lives.”

Lauris was silent.

“True evil lies in the hearts of men, not in the tools they use.” He paused. “Or the people they use.”

Lauris looked up at him, deep regret still welling up in her blue eyes. Robere continued.

“When I was on Heartland and I first learned about the Fleshforge... about how the wildling race was created only to be our slaves... I was devastated. I couldn’t believe that such evil could come from my own people... my own home. I felt responsible for the wildlings’ fate, as if I had somehow personally put every single one of

them in chains. That's why I joined the Boughbreakers, out of guilt. It took me years to come to terms with the fact that I wasn't responsible for their plight... and that I could actually help by freeing the ones I could."

He paused, looking between Quinn and Lauris with determination in his eyes. "That's what separates us from the others in the world. We fight. We fight against the evil that has taken root in the Skies. And none of us would be standing here, facing off against a Godshifter and his demonic allies if we didn't believe that."

Lauris stared down at the wet ground as she considered the elf captain's words. In a puddle near her knees, she caught a glimpse of her own reflection, distorted by ripples from the falling rain. She was cold, wet, and miserable... but she was still here. A bolt of lightning flashed through the sky behind her image, causing the faintest hint of a smile to return to her face. Maybe the goddess wasn't done with her quite yet.

World – Round 8, Turn 2



Use JC with TS – Locale, Mysterious / Overthrow / Fears

[Extreme Impact]

Interpretation: Marchus completes the ritual to bring back the Phantom Isle, merging it with Windgate Isle.

Marchus stood at the crest of the black bridge, flanked by the remaining few of his guards and cultists who had

followed him out of the market plaza at the ritual's conclusion. He looked up into the sky above the decimated Windgate Isle at the swirling dark clouds that still lingered. The Vortex cube had detonated several hundred feet above the island, leaving the isle still unfortunately attached and anchored to Bridgeways.

Beside him, on a stone slab carried by two of the dark robed cultists, a green flame flared to life.

"The ritual is complete," came the distant voice behind the flame. "Why has the Phantom Isle not returned?"

Marchus kept staring emotionlessly at the ruined island below and the dark clouds swirling over it. "The Vortex cube was diverted, my master. The false island was not destroyed."

"What!?" the flame flared with power, bathing all gathered around it in a horrible, green glow. "How is that possible?"

"The acolyte," Marchus said darkly, searching the ruined buildings below for any sign of the troublesome heroes. "She continues to overstep her bounds."

"Well deal with it!" the distant voice boomed. "The legions of Hell are waiting just beyond the veil. With an army this size, we will reclaim the Heart and end these centuries of pointless subterfuge. All they need is a gateway."

Marchus moistened his greasy lips. "And they shall have it." He surveyed the damaged isle below. It drifted

unsteadily in the air currents, having come partially unstuck from the forces that held it aloft. “The detonation may not have destroyed the false isle, but it has still displaced it. With the monument wards gone, the Phantom Isle is free to return.”

“Into the same space of the existing isle?” the Lord of Misrule asked from beyond the flame. “What if the tower is damaged?”

Marchus narrowed his eyes. “It will not be.”

There was a moment of silence on the bridge.

“Very well,” the green flame stated ominously. “But remember, Marchus, this is the largest breach in the Soulshield to happen in five hundred years. If you squander this opportunity, death will be a merciful release you will not be granted.”

Marchus’ face remained as cold and unchanging as ever as he stared out over the ruined isle below, leaning heavily on his cane. “Yes, my master.”

#

Down in the market plaza, the three heroes ran across the rubble-strewn courtyard toward the line of buildings at its edge. A cold rain continued to fall from the swirling clouds that lingered from the Vortex explosion, somewhat concealing them as they moved. Robere kicked open the door to one of the half-destroyed shops at the plaza’s edge and the three of them ran inside.

“What now?” Quinn asked, shivering slightly from the rain.

“Now we go after Marchus,” Lauris replied firmly.

Robere frowned. “Where do you think he went? I lost track of him after the detonation.”

Lauris didn’t get a chance to answer as the building around them suddenly began to shake. A horrible green glow poured in through the shattered windows of the small shop, casting twisted, shifting shadows on the floor. The three heroes looked at each other with concern as they all rushed to the windows to get a better look.

Outside, towering over the plaza like a shimmering monolith, was the semi-transparent image of a massive, gothic tower. It rose hundreds of feet into the air over the buildings below, dwarfing the tiny shops and destroyed homes of the ruined island. Translucent green flames danced over its ghostly surface, bathing the entire island in its unholy light.

“The Phantom Isle...” Quinn said, mouth open in awe and horror as the phantasmal image grew more and more solid. “He’s bringing it back right on top of Windgate.”

With the sound of a hundred cannon blasts and a blinding flash of light, the Phantom Isle completed its journey across planes and snapped into reality at the edge of Windgate Isle. Another tremor rocked the small island, almost knocking the heroes off their feet as the

parasitic landmass fused with it, clinging to the edge of the island like some sort of demonic, conjoined twin.

Rising from the chunk of blackened stone, the sorcerer's long-lost tower stretched into the sky above Windgate Isle, it's once grand and gothic architecture now twisted and warped by the infernal touch of Hell.

The Phantom Isle had returned.

Hero – Round 8, Turn 2



Use TS with 8S – Quinn, Daring Acrobat
[Moderate Impact]

For a moment, no one said a word. All the heroes could do was stare up at the massive, demonic tower. It rose above the buildings on the far side of the plaza, still smoking from the flames that had surrounded it.

Finally, Quinn spoke. “I don’t know where Marchus is, but I think I know where he’s going.”

Robere stood beside her, a look of worry on his face. “This is the part where the demons show up, right?”

Quinn nodded grimly at him. “A whole army of them, according to the story.”

Lauris looked out across the drenched plaza to the smoldering tower beyond. “Well I don’t see any demons right now. We may still have a chance to stop this.”

Robere nodded, checking the sword at his side. "If we hurry, we may be able to beat Marchus to whatever horrible scheme he has waiting inside. We have the element of surprise; with any luck, he thinks we're dead."

Robere paused, looking at the determined faces of the ladies next to him. "If we don't make it back, I want you to know—"

Quinn punched him in the arm. "Don't go getting all mushy on us, captain. We'll be fine. The goddess favors us, or something like that." She smiled at him. "Besides, you owe me one."

"Owes you one what?" Lauris asked, looking between the other two with mounting curiosity.

"Nothing," Robere said quickly, clearing his throat. "Let's move. Marchus is probably already on his way to the tower."

The others nodded at him and the three quickly jogged out into the ruined plaza, making their way through the rubble to the other side. Past a few rows of destroyed houses, they came upon a massive slab of blackened stone, still smoldering where it had fused with the rock of Windgate Isle. Upon it, the wicked-looking sorcerer's tower stretched up into the sky.

"I really don't like the look of this," Robere said, stepping up onto the charred stone. The rock beneath his feet was still warm.

“We’ll need a way inside,” Lauris said as the three approached. The blackened structure was sealed up tight, without so much as a window along its entire height. A drawbridge of blackened iron blocked off the only visible entrance at ground level.

“I think I can help with that,” Quinn said, looking up at the iron gate. At the top, there was a small gap between the end of the drawbridge and the surrounding brick. A gap just large enough for a slender drakin to fit through.

“Wish me luck,” she said, doing her best to hide her nervousness as she quickly scaled the charred wall of the tower. Tucking her wings close behind her, the small drakin squeezed through the darkened gap at the top of the drawbridge door and dropped down on the other side. Moments later, a loud click was heard from inside the tower as the drawbridge released, slamming down on the hard stone outside with an echoing boom.

Quinn stood, grinning, in the open gateway as the others followed her inside.

World – Round 8, Turn 3



Use 2H – Thing, Mysterious / Desert / Inside
[Low Impact]

Interpretation: The inside of the tower is mysteriously deserted, except for a strange gateway at the top.

What is the inside of the tower like? (Description): Oddly / Valuable

Light spilled into the room at the base of the tower as the heroes stood in the open doorway. Before them were the remains of an opulent receiving room, untouched for centuries. An ornate marble floor, now covered with soot, spread out before them to what looked like a small chapel, complete with iron pews. Along the walls were sculptures of angelic beings, cast from solid iron. Even the magnificent chandelier that hung from the ceiling was made of iron.

Robere's eyes widened. He had never seen this much iron in one place before in his life. Such a treasure would fetch a king's ransom in the markets of the Skies. "Wow," he breathed, taking a step forward into the room. "They must really like to live it up in hell."

Quinn and Lauris were also stunned by what they saw, walking slowly into the magnificent room with awe. Quinn walked up and grabbed a solid iron goblet from the top of the marble altar. It bore engravings of angelic creatures descending with grace upon the world below.

"The architect didn't think he was going to hell," she said with a hint of sadness, unable to take her eyes off the beautiful iron carvings. "He thought the gateway would lead him to heaven."

Lauris shook her head to clear it. "We have to keep moving," she said, snapping them all out of their trance. "Marchus will be here any minute. If we're going to stop him, we have to get to the gateway."

“Right!” Robere said, drawing his sword as if the demonic hordes would arrive at any minute. “Which way?”

Reluctantly placing the iron goblet back down, Quinn’s eyes scanned the room, landing on a staircase that led upward along the tower’s interior wall. “He built a tower to the heavens,” she said, pointing at the stairs. “So we go up.”

Wasting no more time, the heroes ascended the stairs, spiraling upward along the side of the tower. At each floor, they found more lavish rooms, decorated with the finest silks, marble, and, of course, pure iron. Each floor memorialized the architect’s journey as he built a tower to what he believed was his great reward. Aside from the statues of angelic beings, the entire tower seemed to be abandoned.

“Something’s not right,” Lauris said as they passed another vacant floor. “I thought the Phantom Isle was supposed to be packed full of demons waiting to devour the world.”

“Don’t jinx it!” Quinn snapped at her as they continued to climb. “After the last few days, I’ll take what I can get.”

Robere held up a hand as they approached the next level up. Bright void glow spilled down into the winding stairway from the opening above, indicating they had finally reached the roof.

“Wait here,” he whispered, peering up through the opening.

At the top of the tower was a wide-open platform that looked out over the island below. Thick stone spikes curved up from the sides of the tower, reaching toward the sky like the claws of some horrible beast. There, in the middle of the platform, was an arched gateway made of obsidian bricks. It looked like the portal from the Windgate Monument, but somehow even more sinister.

In front of the inactive portal was a huge, demonic creature. It stood nearly twelve feet tall, with broad, muscular shoulders and wicked claws jutting from its massive hands. Thick, russet fur covered most of its body with sharp, bone-like spines bursting from the skin. The demon paced back and forth in front of the obsidian portal, grunting with frustration, its footfalls literally shaking the stone of the tower beneath it.

Hero – Round 8, Turn 3



Use 8S with TS – Robere, Master of Misdirection
Activate Disadvantage – Lauris, Hot Headed
[Moderate Impact]

Robere quickly pulled his head back down into the stairway and swore under his breath.

“There’s a demon up there, isn’t there,” Quinn whispered, looking upward with worry.

Robere nodded.

“And the gateway?” Lauris asked.

Robere nodded again. “It’s up there, but it looks like it’s inactive. Something must have happened when the Isle merged on top of the island.”

“That’s great!” Lauris said excitedly.

Robere frantically put a finger to his lips to quiet the priestess. “Yeah, but we have to deal with the massive demon guarding it first.”

“Leave that to me,” Lauris said with a grin, lightning flickering behind her eyes once more.

“I don’t think you understand,” Robere said. “That thing is huge. It could rip any one of us to shreds in less than a minute.”

“Then we won’t let it,” Lauris said confidently, already standing to walk up the stairs.

Robere sighed as he tightened his grip on the sword in his hand. He looked over to Quinn crouched on the stairs next to him. “Is she always like this?”

Quinn grinned at him and nodded. “Pretty much.”

With a quick smile to Quinn, Robere jumped to his feet and ran up the rest of the stairs, passing the defiant priestess and emerging onto the glow-soaked platform at the top of the tower.

“Hey, ugly!” Robere shouted at the demon, keeping his sword trained on the monstrosity as he moved farther away from the stairs.

The massive, demonic beast spun around to face the elf with a surprised grunt.

“Where’s all your friends?!” Robere taunted, staring into the demon’s horrible, spike filled face. “Or is it just you... because you’re so *ugly*!”

Flames of rage blazed in the demon’s eyes as it rose to its full height, towering over the elf below. Robere’s heart sank as the massive, muscle-bound monstrosity rose to over twice his height, bearing its two-foot-long claws. An earth-shattering bellow shook the tower as the demonic creature beat its own chest and then lowered its head to charge.

Taking a cautious step backward, Robere did the only thing he could do. He ran. The stone of the platform shook beneath the charging demon as Robere dashed across the top of the tower as fast as his legs would carry him. The creature’s horrible roars filled his ears as it closed in on him from behind.

Suddenly, a loud crack of thunder rang out through the sky and streaks of brilliant blue lighting engulfed the charging demon. The creature shrieked with pain and rage as it crashed to the ground and slid across the stone platform toward Robere. Reaching the edge of the tower, Robere spun around and winced as the flailing monstrosity tumbled toward him. Lightning continued

to cover its body as it slid to a stop only a few feet short of Robere and the tower's edge.

The captain breathed a sigh of relief as he looked past the smoke rising from the demon's body to see Lauris standing at the top of the stairs, eyes ablaze with the fury of the storm.

World – Round 8, Turn 4



Use 8S – Being, Aggressive / Control / Nature
[High Impact]

Interpretation: Marchus directly confronts the heroes on top of the sorcerer's tower.

Dark storm clouds surrounded the top of the demonic tower as Lauris, Quinn, and Robere stood before the massive obsidian gateway.

“This is it,” Lauris said, the wind whipping her hair and robes around her. “The gateway to hell. We have to destroy it before Marchus manages to activate it again.”

“How?” Robere asked, looking up at the towering stone structure. The bricks were like nothing he'd seen before, as if they were made of smoothly polished, reflective obsidian.

Lauris was silent for a long moment. “The Vortex,” she said at last. “I will call upon the Lady's wrath to wipe the Phantom Isle clean, and us with it. The gateway must be destroyed.”

“I think you’ve done quite enough.” The familiar voice came from behind them. The three heroes spun around to see Marchus standing there at the top of the stairs, his prodigious girth occupying the entire stairwell.

“Marchus,” Lauris said darkly, venom dripping from her voice as she turned to face the Godshifter. A bolt of lightning arced through the sky behind her as the winds began to pick up. Robere and Quinn instinctively got out of the way.

“You have quite outworn your usefulness,” Marchus said coldly, green flames blazing to life in his meaty hands. His eyes darkened again to black pits. “Now the time has come for you to die, young acolyte.”

Hero – Round 8, Turn 4



Use 6H with 2H and Impact Token – Lauris, Wind Priestess of the Storm
[High Impact]

Lauris shook her head defiantly as the swirling storm grew around her. Arcs of blue lightning danced around her body. “No Marchus,” she said, extending a lightning-shrouded hand towards the vile dwarf. “Today it is you who will die for your transgressions. The goddess will tolerate your evil no longer.”

With the sound of a thunderclap, brilliant blue lightning burst from Lauris’ hands, just as searing green flame

erupted from Marchus' with the sound of distant screams. The two streams of energy collided in front of the obsidian gateway in a blinding nexus of light that crackled and sparked with searing energy.

"You stand no chance against me, child," Marchus said evenly, extending his hands toward the priestess as the green flame cast dark shadows across his bloated face. "I serve a power far greater than your pathetic goddess, and far more powerful than you could ever imagine!" The stream of green flame intensified, pushing its way closer to Lauris.

Lauris' face contorted with effort as she strained to control the conduit of the goddess' power. The Lady's divine lightning surged through her extended hands, bathing her face with its brilliant blue light as it clashed with Marchus' flames. As hard as she tried, she was still losing ground in the divine conflict. Once again, it seemed she was helpless to overcome the power of the Godshifter.

Slowly, a wicked smile spread across Marchus' face. The heat of the flames intensified again as he channeled yet more power toward the helpless priestess. The torrent of green flame pressed the storm priestess back, inching its way towards her hands as it threatened to overtake her. "There is no shame in your death, acolyte," the Godshifter said above the crackle of colliding energy between them. "You have served your part well. It is you that has made the Isle's return possible."

“No!” Lauris yelled, straining against the torrent of unholy power. “I will have no part in your evil schemes, Marchus.” Bolts of lightning ignited behind her icy blue eyes. “I am the Lady’s justice!” The streams of lighting intensified from her hands, pushing the green flames back. “I am the Lady’s wrath!” The wind picked up, forming a mighty cyclone of storm clouds around her. “And your reign of evil ends now!”

With a deafening crack of thunder, a shockwave of pure divine power erupted from Lauris’ body, slamming into Marchus and knocking the Godshifter off his feet. The green flames faded from his hands as the stunned dwarf tumbled to the ground and rolled to a stop near the tower’s edge.

Lauris approached the defeated Godshifter menacingly, the full might of the Lady’s fury still swirling around her. She extended a crackling hand of lightning toward the cowering dwarf. “And now, Marchus, you will face divine justice for all that you have done. Now, you will die by the goddess’ hand.”

World – Round 8, Turn 5



Use TS with JD – The Portal to Hell [Extreme Impact]

Interpretation: With the last of his strength, Marchus restores the portal to hell and ushers in the demonic invasion.

Marchus cowered at the edge of tower, holding up a hand to shield himself from the raging windstorm that surrounded Lauris as she approached. The storm priestess, at the peak of her power, was a terrifying sight to behold.

“You have done well,” Marchus said above the winds. “Both the Storm and the Vortex answer your call. You have bested me.” The obese dwarf gazed past Lauris to the obsidian gateway at the center of the tower. “But I cannot fail.”

With the last of his reserved power, Marchus thrust his hand forward, sending a bolt of green flame shooting past the priestess and toward the towering gateway behind her. The bolt collided with the dark stone, spreading racing fire along the surface of the archway. As soon as the unholy fire touched the dark stone of the far side, the portal flared to life with a blinding eruption of void glow.

“No!” Lauris yelled, watching in horror as the portal to hell rippled with energy and finally stabilized. Robere and Quinn stood before the towering gateway unable to take their eyes off the hellish scene beyond.

Past the shimmering membrane of the gateway appeared a vast, scorched landscape. An army of demons, in all horrible shapes and sizes, filled the ground and skies of the hellish domain. In the distance, past a sea of ash, an immense, black iron citadel stood horrifically against the blood red sky.

One by one, the creatures of the demonic horde turned to face the now-glowing portal, staring through it as if looking directly at the heroes on the other side. Seeing their goal suddenly within reach, the horde began to charge feverishly towards waiting gateway. Thousands upon thousands of the demonic creatures descended toward the portal, desperate to bring destruction to the world of the Skies beyond.

Hero – Round 8, Turn 5



**Use JC – *The Daring Dasher*, Secret Modifications
[Extreme Impact]**

Robere watched in stunned horror as the legions of hell charged toward the portal before him. Horrible creatures, unlike any he had ever imagined, filled the world beyond the gateway. In only a few seconds, the demons would breach the gateway and pour over them like a wave of infernal destruction. There was no escape this time... for him, for Bridgeways, or for the rest of the Skies.

Robere felt Quinn grab his hand. He looked down at the drakin beside him, an expression of fear and sadness filled her face as she stared into the approaching oblivion. Robere tightened his grip on her hand. Lauris rushed up beside them, staring into the portal with disbelief. It seemed the Godshifter had won. The portal to hell was open. He had doomed them all.

“Captain!”

The three heroes spun at once to face the source of the unexpected cry. There, emerging from the storm clouds that surrounded the top of the demonic tower, was a most unexpected sight. The wooden bow of the *Daring Dasher* split through the storm, turning broadside as it flew up next to the tower. On the deck, three elven crewmen stood at the ready.

“Captain, are you okay?!”

Robere’s jaw literally dropped.

“We came when we saw the Vortex explosion,” one of the crew shouted. “Looks like you could use some—”

“The cannons!” Robere yelled, grabbing the two ladies next to him and frantically running toward the ship. “Fire the damn cannons!”

The crew wasted no time following his order. They ducked quickly below deck and swung open the trap doors that concealed the sky sloop’s hidden arsenal. Two cannons poked out the side of the modified ship, aimed directly at the obsidian portal.

“Now!” Robere yelled, diving to the ground just short of the ship with Quinn and Lauris clutched protectively beneath him.

With a deafening explosion and massive blast of smoke, the twin cannons fired, sending two heavy cannonballs

whizzing over the heroes' heads and crashing into the side of the stone archway.

The first of the demons were just reaching the breach when the heavy shells tore through the obsidian bricks, shattering them into a thousand pieces. The portal itself flared with concentrated void glow as the archway threatened to collapse around it. Horrible demonic screams came from the other side as a multitude of misshapen arms and claws reached through the destabilizing portal. The arms flailed wildly as the demonic horde clamored to get through.

Finally, with the soul-shaking sound of a far-away scream, the obsidian gateway collapsed and the portal within it winked out of existence, leaving only a smoldering pile of obsidian rubble. The demonic gateway on the top of the Phantom Isle was no more.

Epilogue

The Isle of Chimes, Bridgeways

Lauris stood at the edge of the Isle of Chimes, as she often did, looking out over the city of connected bridges below. A lot had changed on the island chain she called her home in the past few days. Half of the Crossroads market plaza had been destroyed, Windgate Isle lay in ruins, and a forgotten isle thought lost to legend had returned, complete with demonic tower.

The people of the city would be talking about it all for weeks. But as only she and a few others knew, it could have been much, much worse.

“What do you think it was?” the elder wind priest asked, standing next to his adopted daughter at the edge of the lookout. “The green flame you described...”

Lauris’ gaze remained distant. “I don’t know. It was powerful, that’s for sure. An evil presence like I’ve never felt before. Somehow, it was able to corrupt the powers of the gods themselves.”

Jamos frowned. “Do you think that’s what happened to Marchus?”

Lauris paused. The memory of that dark presence reaching into her mind returned to her. She could still hear its dark prayers echoing in her head. If that’s what had happened to Marchus...

She shuddered. “Maybe.”

Jamos tilted his head back, as if listening to the cool winds that blew past the wind-swept temple isle. “It’s still out there, you know,” he said with a hint of worry in his voice. “It will find another person to control. Another Godshifter.”

Lauris nodded. Deep down, she knew the dark presence wouldn’t stop until it saw the whole world in flames. Bridgeways was safe for now, but it would only be a matter of time before the presence started its dark schemes again on another isle.

Jamos sighed, finally looking over at his daughter with a hint of sadness on his face. “You know what you must do.”

Lauris nodded again, wind whipping dark hair across her face as she stared defiantly out over the void. She was the Lady’s justice... the Lady’s wrath. And now, she was an acolyte no more.

The Daring Dasher, The Void

“I feel like I need some shore leave from my shore leave,” Robere said dryly, peering out over the bow of his ship with the wheel in his hand. Behind him, the island chain of Bridgeways was rapidly becoming a small, dark blur, vanishing into the glow. It was good to be back in the open skies with the familiar creaking of his skyship beneath him.

Quinn walked up beside him, eyes wide with excitement, though she was doing her best to contain it. “That’s what you get for coming into the Journey’s End,” she said cheerfully. “By the way, I tried to tell them I quit, but they were too busy cleaning up the massive mess we left.”

Robere chuckled. “I’m glad you decided to come. You obviously have a lot more in you than just bussing tables.”

Quinn grinned at him. “Is that the only reason?”

Robere blushed. “Maybe not.” He paused, glancing down at her. “I think I still owe you one.”

Quinn beamed up at him, mirth shining in her violet eyes. “One what?”

“Where are we headed, captain?” One of the elven crew interrupted, coming to his rescue.

“Wherever the winds take us,” Robere replied looking over his shoulder. “Why don’t you ask the new navigator.”

Lauris stood in the middle of the ship, arms outstretched to the sides as white and blue vestments billowed around her body. A sudden rush of wind caught the *Dasher’s* sails with a snap, propelling the ship forward into the wide-open sky. A world of danger and adventure awaited them, and somewhere, hiding in the depths of the Skies, the Lord of Misrule plotted its foul revenge.

The End

Appendix 1: World vs. Hero

World vs Hero is a two-player storytelling game written by John Fiore and published by Word Mill Publishing. In this game, a World Player and a Hero Player take turns writing exciting scenes to challenge one another creatively while telling amazing tales of daring heroes in fantastic worlds. The Hero Player creates a cast of daring heroes, while the World Player controls the villains and adversaries of the world, creating dangerous situations and challenges for the heroes to overcome.

Play proceeds by the two players exchanging written (or spoken) scenes. The World Player describes a threat or some challenge that impedes the heroes' goals, then the Hero Player writes a scene where the heroes either overcome the threat or are impacted by its consequences. This proceeds back and forth so that each player gets 5 turns per rounds, for a total of 8 rounds in the game.

The real kicker is that both the World Player and the Hero Player are limited by the types of scenes they can write, and the impact those scenes can have on the developing story. A random set of playing cards called a Tableau is drawn at the beginning of each round. The cards present in this Tableau limit the types of scenes both players can write, and in fact the types of content they *must* incorporate into those scenes.

Heroes

At the beginning of the game, the Hero Player defines several heroes (usually 2-3) to serve as the protagonists for the adventure. These heroes have a number of suit abilities with ranks that total a pre-determined amount (usually 5, but sometimes more). These suit abilities describe what the heroes are capable of and the special powers and abilities they possess.

The suit of the ability should match the general type of the power or maneuver according to the following guidelines:

- Spades – dexterity, speed, nimbleness, talent
- Hearts – wisdom, spirit, insight, often magic
- Diamonds – intelligence, cleverness, ingenuity
- Clubs – strength, beauty, physical alteration

The rank of the ability determines the maximum Impact that ability can be used at. An ability with a rank of 2, for example, cannot be used at higher than Moderate Impact. The particular abilities the Hero Player can use in a given scene is determined by the cards available in the Tableau.

Conflict Lists

Where the Hero Player has heroic abilities, the World Player has Conflict Lists. The World Player creates a list of potential threats and conflicts for every physical location (or sometimes Round) in the game. There are always 10 entries in a conflict list. Before a round begins, the World Player populates the Conflict List with

the types of challenges he or she believes might be present to challenge the heroes in the coming round. The severity of the threats should increase as the number increases, with the most severe threats being assigned the highest numbers in the list.

The Tableau

The tableau is a set of 5 cards that determines the types of narratives the World Player and the Hero Player can create each turn. Each player must use each card exactly once in a round.

For the World Player, the rank of the card determines the subject of the threat (from the Conflict List table or from Mythic) as well as the maximum impact. Higher ranks mean higher possible impact. The World Player may increase the impact by using paired cards.

- A-3: Low Impact
- 4-7: Moderate Impact
- 8-10: High Impact
- Extreme Impact through paired cards

For example, if the World Player uses a card with a rank of 5, the scene must include the subject matter for entry 5 of that round's Conflict List and will be of Moderate Impact. The player can include other subject matter if he or she chooses, but the scene must center around the topic from the Conflict List.

For the Hero player, the suit of the card determines which hero suit abilities can be used and at what impact. The Hero player may increase the impact of the scene by

using cards of the same suit, up to the maximum rank of that hero's suit ability. Additionally, Aces can be used to bring an Ally into the scene to help the heroes.

- 1 suited: Low Impact
- 2 suited: Moderate Impact
- 3 suited: High Impact
- 4+ suited: Extreme Impact
- Face card of suit: Extreme Impact for FX ability

Normally a new tableau is drawn at the beginning of each round so everyone is surprised, but here I've done it all at once since I'm not using a real deck.

Round 1: 9H 6D AS 7H 4C
Round 2: AC 7D 4S 2C 3S
Round 3: **KH** 5C 5D 8C 4H
Round 4: 9S 5S 2D 8H TH
Round 5: 3H 4D 6C AD 6S
Round 6: **JD** 2S 9D 3C TC
Round 7: 7C 5H 3D **QS** 7S
Round 8: 2H 6H TS 8S **JC**

Mythic GM Emulator

Mythic is a brilliant system for playing solo RPGs. The Mythic RPG and GM Emulator are written by Tom Pigeon and published by Word Mill Publishing. Mythic allows you to play pretty much any tabletop RPG without a GM, or play it completely solo, by providing a set of rules and tables that can answer questions.

In this game log, I play the role of both the World Player and the Hero Player, effectively turning WvH into a single

player writing game. The only thing that separates this from just writing a book, is that I as the writer am surprised by what happens next. In order to accomplish this sense of surprise, I make use of Mythic GM Emulator.

From time to time (or perhaps rather frequently, you may see me asking questions in italicized text. Mythic is really good at answering yes/no questions, but it can also answer complex questions if you're willing to do a bit of interpretation.

In order to keep myself guessing, many of the Challenge List entries that the World Player uses are generated by Mythic. The Mythic system provides a series of words that describes what the scene might focus on, and then it's up to me to interpret that in the context of the ongoing story. Whenever you see a World Player scene that starts with something like “**Locale, Deliberate / Move / Dispute**”, this is Mythic providing a random seed to start the scene.

Yes, sometimes it doesn't make sense and I'm forced to re-roll, but 90% of the time there's a perfectly reasonable way to interpret the result and it often moves the adventure in a cool new direction.

Appendix 2: Sundered Skies

Sundered Skies is a game setting and plot point campaign for the Savage Worlds game system. Sundered Skies is written by Dave Blewer and published by Triple Ace Games. I imagine that most people reading this are familiar with the Sundered Skies world. If you are not, the sections that follow will bring you up to speed on the major components of the setting that relate to this story.

The Skies

Millennia ago, a horrible event called The Sundering shattered the world. Now all that remains are an unknown number of islands floating in an endless sky. There is no ground, no sun, no day or night. There is only the endless expanse of the void. Skyships, crewed by brave souls, venture between the known islands, bringing trade and hunt for relics from the lost world.

No one knows how or why the islands float in the sky like they do. No one even fully understands the workings of skyships. Everyone is just doing their best to survive in the harsh world of the Skies. Food and water are often scarce, as are natural fundamentals such as iron.

Glowmadness

The void between islands emits a constant, orange-ish light known as void glow. Long-term exposure to the glow has been known to cause madness, mutation, and ultimately a horrific death. The glow is a fact of life in

the Skies. It comes from everywhere at once, and it never stops. All aspects of life in the Skies revolve around managing and avoiding the ceaseless, maddening glow.

The first symptom of glowmadness is a heightened temper. The person may then become unusually aggressive, even attacking others with little provocation. Those displaying these symptoms are usually quarantined in a dark chamber until the madness passes. If exposure persists past this phase, or the glow is especially concentrated, the glowmadness progresses into full on mutation.

Those who fully succumb to the glow have their bodies horribly mutated in a manner befitting their species. But one thing is constant, the melting of the eyes. Once a person has reached the final stages of glowmadness, there is no cure. Their minds are forever lost to madness, and they will live out the rest of their usually short lives in a blind rage, attacking anything that moves.

Needless to say, glowmadness is feared above all else in the Sundered Skies.

The Gods

The gods of the Skies are very real and very present in the world. Rather than reside in some far-off celestial realm, the gods live on the island of the Skies amongst their followers. That being said, it is far from a common event to actually meet a god in person. They are usually

reclusive and quite secretive, appearing before only a few of their most devout followers.

Four deities play an important role in this story.

The Lady of the Winds

This goddess touches the lives of every islander in the Skies, for the winds blow constantly through the endless void. A benevolent if somewhat capricious deity, the Lady of the Winds famously has five separate faces.

- The Aspect of Breeze
- The Aspect of Rain
- The Aspect of Calm
- The Aspect of Storms
- The Aspect of the Vortex

Followers of the Lady are known as wind priests and many revere (and embody) one of the deity's aspects above the others. Temples to the Lady of the Winds are always found on exposed, wind-swept isles. Wind priests themselves are valued members of a community and are often called on to bring rain for crops, calm storms, and propel skyships quickly across the void.

The Artificer

The patron god of the dwarves, the Artificer is often credited with the preservation of life after the Sundering. A deity of invention, imagination, and knowledge, the Artificer has created such wonders in the world as the magnificent bridges of Bridgeways and even the technology that allows skyships to fly.

Followers of the Artificer are called steam priests, and they are known for their magnificent, steam-powered inventions. Their temples are often found deep in factories or other industrial districts. Following in the footsteps of their patron deity, steam priests strive to improve the lives of everyone in the Skies with their great inventions and steam-powered automations.

The Lightbringer

Once known as Oceanus, god of the oceans, the deity now called Lightbringer went mad shortly after the Sundering. Bereft of his element, for there are no seas in the shattered world, Oceaneus slowly went insane. Ages ago, his madness started a hundred years' war known as the War of Fools that almost brought about the end of all life in the fragile Skies.

Now, Lightbringer is worshiped only by the most mad and deranged among the Skies. His followers are known as void priests, or simply voiders, due to their belief that their god lives in the void glow itself. They strive to spread glowmadness to as many as they can, believing that the mad touch of their deity will bring true enlightening through unbridled madness.

The Lord of Misrule

Not really a deity at all, the Lord of Misrule is a mysterious, demonic force that has remained hidden in the Skies for millennia. No one, not even the gods themselves, knows the true nature of this dark presence. One thing is for sure: it is an evil being of immense power with abilities that rival those of a god.

The Lord of Misrule chooses its own followers, usually no more than one or two at a time. These cursed souls are known as Godshifters, and their dark patron blesses them with corrupt miracles stolen from the true gods of the Skies. A single Godshifter, operating in solitude, can cause untold destruction on an island-wide scale.

Heartland and the Elves

The isle of Heartland is by far the largest known island in the Skies. Home to the elves and the mysterious Willow Court, few outsiders know what really takes place beyond its grasping green shores. The elves are secretive and strangely militaristic, having one of the only standing armies in the Skies. Elven missionaries bring seeds of The Wild, the elven deity, to other islands, slowly terraforming them into replicas of Heartland.

The elves themselves all show strong evidence of their plant heritage, having leaves, vines, bark, or even flowers as part of their anatomy. A race of small, animal-like creatures known as wildlings are literally grown to serve the elves as slaves. Those elves that resist the militaristic and slave-owning nature of their people are known as Boughbreakers, a sect of elves and others on the outside that work to free the wildlings and bring an end to the tyranny of the Willow Court.

Beyond the Glow

Warning! Spoilers ahead. If you plan on playing a campaign in the Sundered Skies, stop here. If you don't care, or are part of my game group, feel free to read on.

Beyond the edges of the endless sky lies a horrible truth. The entire world of the Sundered Skies exists in a fragile, glowing bubble trapped in hell. After the events of the Sundering that destroyed the former world, demonic forces pulled the remains of the dying world into hell. The gods did what they could, constructing a shield to keep the demonic forces at bay. Known as the Soulshield, this mystic barrier at the edge of the Skies is the only thing keeping the demons out.

Everyone in the Skies, the gods included, are effectively trapped within the confines of the Soulshield. For mortals, the Skies seem vast and nearly endless. For the gods, it seems maddeningly small and confined. Slowly, due in part to demonic forces like the Lord of Misrule, the gods themselves are going insane.

The forces of hell, both beyond the Skies and within it, work tirelessly to bring about the end of the gods' mighty barrier. If the Soulshield were to fall, an unimaginable legion of demons would swarm into the Skies, destroying all in their path in their search for the long-lost Heart of their demon king.

Led by the mysterious Lord of Misrule, dark forces are at work within the Skies that seek to weaken the Soulshield from within and spread the terror of their demonic masters however possible. If the Lord of Misrule were to succeed, it would mean the end of all life in the Skies, both mortal and divine.

