

## THE CHRONICLE OF ERAYO

*“This scroll, rightfully and truly, documents the events that occurred in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Minotaur, in the region near Cillamar City.*

*It all started on a cold solstice eve,  
just as the stars were aligned, and the year was dying.*

*In the birth of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Minotaur,  
the story of the Prodigies of Erayo begins.”*

*- As written down by Urukesh the Wanderer,  
during the Desperate days of Cillamar.*

### *1<sup>st</sup> of Deepwinter<sup>1</sup>*

The village of Erayo has lain barren for months. No crops, no children. Before that, only plague and draught. Before that, misfortune and suffering. Surely, the region is cursed.

The left-over refugees of this blighted place gather outside an ancient tomb, huddling in their shirtsleeves.

The stories tell of a door that opens upon solstice night, as the gleaming beams of the moon land upon it. A door into the hills, and into riches foretold.

The men and women present, wretched as they may be, have sworn to survive. No option left but to push under, into the passages in the hills. Those who live may yet find solace and mirth in Silverton, to the north. The rest will merely make this tomb their own<sup>2</sup>.

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1 This chronicle is mostly compiled from the post-session notes I wrote into our group chat after each game. The dates listed are based on D.W. Ramos-Tavener's *Gongfarmer's Almanac*, from *Gongfarmer's Almanac* #5/2015. These events take place in the Year of the Second Minotaur, arbitrarily named by yours truly. The campaign itself is mostly pre-made modules, more or less tweaked, and seat-of-the-pants Judging for the downtime and narrative bits.

2 My first drive into Judging DCC. I ran *Portal Under the Stars*, from the 4<sup>th</sup> printing rulebook, for 6 players, with 5 characters each. 22/30 made it out, and into history.

Thirty villagers enter, a mere score and few exit. All scarred, but stronger for the endeavour they strained through.

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### *2<sup>nd</sup> of Deepwinter*

As the bedraggled group pulls back towards their barren village, young Fallensus falls down. He was a known smuggler, a man of a few scruples. A man none would mourn, as it were.

Without reason, he writhes and coils, his living muscles twisting like wet rats inside his failing skin. His cold eye sockets fill with unholy light as the brand of Cthulhu appears upon his pained brow, as if carved by an unseen claw.

All are shocked as he rises, with a burning passion in his eyes.

Fallensus is dead. All hail F'ensus, the Witness of Cthulhu<sup>3</sup>!

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3 The group lacked a cleric at this point, and I wanted to see how that class works. With the player's permission, I made one of his 0-levels die and gave him new stats (10 on all except for the 18 in PER) and a new faith.

This was but the first time gods looked at the Prodigies. But not the last.

The confused delvers made their way back to their desolate village, gathered supplies, and repaired a vehicle for themselves by magical means: a spell was cast to repair what was broken and lost<sup>4</sup>.

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### 3<sup>rd</sup> of Deepwinter

Setting forth in the cold winter weather, they traveled towards the town of Silverton<sup>5</sup>, to exchange their freshly stolen earnings for equipment and supplies for further escapades.

The group spends a week in Silverton, restocking and learning. Their roots cut, they yearn for adventure and coin to plunder.

Whilst there, they heard rumors<sup>6</sup> of a town plagued by an infernal black hound, far in the northern wilderness<sup>7</sup>. They also found out that a nearby silver mine is infested by goblins run amok<sup>8</sup>.

Additionally, Nimed the Woodcutter embraced the faith, and joined the cult of Nimlurun, the God of Filth and Disease as a cleric. He proselytized in Silverton and spent the week in meditation in the sewer-temple of Nimlurun. For his efforts he gained a follower: Bolvar Briggs, a straggling dockworker, joined the cause of Nimlurun<sup>9</sup>.

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4 What better way to drive the party forward, but a desolate town in the dead of winter. They spellburned a bunch to fix a wagon to leave.

5 The name of the town is cadged from an old module. To run this campaign I borrowed a bunch of them from a friend. Silverton is from *DCC #1: Idylls of the Rat King*. I've ran a bunch of the pre-actual-DCC modules, and it's a chore to translate them: would not recommend (but read on...).

6 This is "mostly" a sandbox world: the characters roll on a rumour table (based on their downtime actions) and the group decides what to push towards.

7 This would be *DCC #66.5: Doom of the Savage Kings*.

8 The aforementioned *DCC #1: Idylls of the Rat King*.

9 Because of disapproval caused by casting *Food of the Gods* for the needy, Nimed had to go searching for a follower for Nimlurun. Chance gave him Bolvar, the dockworker. In an inland mining town. Granted, I was learning the ropes for the system, and I suppose this explains Bolvar's desperation to join a cult. Rules for my version of Nimlurun can be found at [Nimlurun, God of Disease and Filth](#).

Seadia the Miller, now then Evoker, made contact with the Ordo Arcana, a secretive organization of wizards. Paying a hefty price in blood, they were promised knowledge in exchange of fealty by this fabled group<sup>10</sup>.

As they drank their pain away some of, the group found out about travellers from a primitive tribe, recently descended from the Trolltooth Mountains, looking for heroes of legend<sup>11</sup>.

In Silverton, Tinareth the wizard swore fealty to their patron Bobugbubilz, next to a fetid pond of frogs. Her dealings earned her a new spell, while also indebting her to the Lord of Amphibians.

Nerelon the Dwarf went on a bender with her brethren, learning that the goblins in the nearby silver mine smell like vermin, and that there is a one armed dwarven shield-smith in Silverton. There was also talk of a Guild of Dwarves being in the works among the dwarven miners in the region."

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### 11<sup>th</sup> of Deepwinter

After resting for a week, the group realised that their old lives were but a dream. They decided to push towards the nearby silver mines, where horrid goblins held their stead.

As they pushed forth, they met little resistance beyond goblins<sup>12</sup>. Rooms seemed empty, and there was no real mine to speak of.

The intrepid adventurers persisted, and after days of searching found the apertures inwards,

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10 Ordo Arcana is also borrowed from an old module, I forget which one. They're a strange magical order at this point, and far further. Seadia made it to 1<sup>st</sup> level as a wizard, and was played actively three times: the funnel, the first actual session, and the last session of the season. Also, she's mostly responsible for what happened to Cillamar City, and why it's like this now (read more at [Cillamar City, then and now](#)).

11 *DCC #79: Frozen in Time*. Another rumour roll.

12 Third session in, and I'm seriously reconsidering running games from modules. The only way to go on was to find secret doors, and that's no fun. This is a big reason why I wrote [The Doors](#).

only to realise that the dead walked beyond those openings.

As they searched, opened, and gleaned, eventually the path was revealed! But not before young Teelen fell to a deadman's hand, only to be brought back by the filthy touch of Nimed, the brave Nimlurunite.

With his filth-strewn hand, he brought the youth back among the living, only to gain the disdain and ridicule from the man he'd saved. The seeds of conflict were strewn among the villagers.

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### *2<sup>nd</sup> of the Minotaur*

The party pressed on deeper into the goblin infested mines<sup>13</sup>. Many more near death experiences occurred, until finally a blind goblin's wild swings made blood spill for real: F'ensus the Cleric of Cthulhu was truly felled, and despite the best efforts of the party, called back to his master in cold R'lyeh.

As they battled forth, the group found an old note, hidden in the wall of a goblin war room. The note spoke of a great, unholy evil, hidden below the mine, and of an attempt to quell the advance of that threat.

Finally, after felling goblins, zombies and dire rats, the party decided to return to their camp to rest. A day has passed, and at the next dawn the party continues to plumb the hidden depths of the abandoned silver mine.

Bolvar Briggs, the follower Nimed gained while searching for the truth of Nimlurun, found great purpose with his god, rising up as a cleric of Nimlurun.

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### *3<sup>rd</sup> of the Minotaur*

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13 By this point, I'd decided that the old-school tone of *#1 Idylls of the Rat King* was very distinctly not what I wanted to run. I broke the dungeon into stuff I liked, and the rest was freehand and only mostly planned.

Pressing on, the brave party faced more rats, goblins and worse! It became apparent that the goblin tribe infesting the tunnels was infected with a were-rat curse, turning into slavering beasts at the blink of an eye.

Trudging through the barren hallways, Urukesh, one of the group's elves proved useful, discovering many hidden doors, leading to great treasures. Magical items and raw silver ore<sup>14</sup> were discovered in the hidden recesses of the dungeon.

The were-rat chieftain of the goblins on this level was cleaved in twain by a mighty blow from Teelen's newly discovered silver blade<sup>15</sup>. The party also found a way down deeper into the bowels of the dungeon.

The dungeon level emptied, the party set out with the goal of carrying out the loot, filling the wagon with 1800 pounds of raw silver ore, which Oath noticed to be marked with the sigil of the Soulgrave Mining Guild. Orphan Annie's visceral Ropework-ritual proved critical in this endeavour, the animated bloody rope dragging out a crate of silver on it's own.

With wealth and riches on the mind of all members, the caravan prepared to return to civilization, intrigued by hints about the true nature of the mine's previous owners and the curse that lies below<sup>16</sup>.

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### *4<sup>th</sup> of the Minotaur*

The group took stock of the situation, and after a long argument, decided to return to Silverton to change some of the marked silver and other resources into immediate supplies and food.

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14 This silver ore was a source of great consternation among the group: there was literally a ton of it, worth a whole bunch, but all of it was marked with the sigils of a nearby miner's guild. Getting it out of the dungeon and liquidating the stuff became a major theme of later sessions.

15 A critical hit, the silver blade dealing double damage to the poor creature. He didn't even get the chance to finish his monologue.

16 And probably stays there. The party never returned to the mine. Another reason why I don't really prep stuff for sessions all that extensively, you never know what the players will do.

Oath the Smuggler sold off some of the silver and other treasure, filling the party's coffers with much needed gold. The party also made important connection to Master Hârn, the one-armed dwarven blacksmith, trading some of the silver successfully for store credit and useful advice: Cillamar City, to the north, seemed like the best location to sell off the rest of the booty looted from the goblin-infested mines.

Before setting off due north the party made quite a reputation in town due to Lushy Logborn's bragging, gaining unwanted attention from the locals: everyone at that bonfire party is sure to remember the overladen wagon of the Prodigies of Erayo, and the quick wit of the group's dwarven mediator!

Magic items were identified in a spectacular ritual<sup>17</sup>, people equipped and re-equipped themselves to prepare for the long journey ahead.

During the trip to Cillamar City Orphan Annie connected with Narrimunth the Spawnmother of Rats<sup>18</sup>, trading a quest for a boost to her failing health<sup>19</sup>. After a considerable amount of negotiation, some of the adventurers agreed to join her in the task of clearing a well in the slums from the mysterious taint it has been stricken with<sup>20</sup>.

As the party reached Cillamar, Oath the Smuggler was ready to set her plan to sell the marked silver into motion, after spending painstaking hours crafting forged documents

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17 I allow casting most spells as rituals, as long as resources are burned to do so, and the player elaborates on their occult workings. This ritual was particularly successful, and resulted in me *ad hoc* including the head of the Rod of Power as part of their hoard from the previous delves. It was originally just the bronze rod of rulership from the end of *Portal under the Stars*, but became so much more.

18 A statue of Narrimunth was found somewhere in the silver mines, and I figured that it was a good way to introduce a new patron to the world. Rules have been posted on KitN previously: [Narrimunth, Spawnmother of Rats](#).

19 Annie's player does a spectacular job of playing a power-hungry young sorceress. She's mostly alive because of this quest, having started with a solid 4 in her Stamina score.

20 A heavily modified dungeon based on the old *Well of the Worm* adventure, from #29 *Adventure Begins*.

marking herself as a representative of the Soulgrave<sup>21</sup> Mining Guild.

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### *1<sup>st</sup> of Arrowfall*

After observing the Silversmiths' Guild for three days, Oath felt like she had exhausted this avenue of investigation<sup>22</sup>.

She learned that the main guild hall receives frequent shipments from various mining guilds and even individual miners. Ore is transported into a smelting yard and dues are paid based on contract, quality and amount.

Smaller amounts (more or less what a single person can easily carry) are handled through petty cash by the Smeltmaster and this process appears to be fairly informal. It appears that some of the mining guilds pay their employees directly in raw ore, at least this would easily explain the amount of sacks, pouches and bucketfuls of silver ore ending up dumped in the chutes of the smelting yard.

Larger shipments (similar to what the party had) are carted into the yard, and payments and contracts are handled somewhere in the offices of the guildhall. From what Oath could tell, no large sums of gold are exchanged in these situations: the representative of the mining guild tends to come out of the meeting without additional sacks of gold or other valuables. She suspects that either the Silversmiths' Guild acknowledges deliveries by writ (and the deliverymen are paid by the mining guild) or that the silver is traded to platinum coins or other valuables more easily carried and guarded.

She also found out that the significant people running the Silversmiths' Guild are Allard the Smeltmaster, who is responsible for the day to day operation of the smeltery and silver sales;

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21 Again, a name pinched from some old module or other. It should be noted that most of these places bear little similarity to the descriptions in the adventures themselves.

22 This portion was played out in group chat: as it consisted mostly of "dull" investigation, we deemed that our actual table time was better spent adventuring.

and Ishvigol the Pale, a richly dressed lady of assumable noble descent, who handles the larger shipments and more important business inside the guild offices. It would seem like the two are at odds, clearly not getting along all that well because of personal backgrounds.

Meanwhile, part of the party was entering the well of the worm in the cordoned off slum districts, brave adventurers following Annie into the slimy darkness. In the pits they discovered foul zombies controlled by enormous, leech-like worms.

After fighting their way through the damp and disgusting cavern, they came upon the laboratory-shrine of the mad Solom Gravelstone, a dwarf sworn to vengeance against the City of Cillamar after his clan was deposed and destroyed in a politically-ordained ethnic cleansing.

They fought against the dwarf and his hulking, legless ogre-zombie creation, destroying the worm-queen in the process. Sadly, More'viel the Thief met her end as the enormous fist of the ogre-thing crushed her form against the wall of the chamber.

After prevailing against what seemed like insurmountable odds, the party emerged from the sewers, claiming their monetary reward from the city watch<sup>23</sup>. Annie also received her boon from Narrimunth, becoming healthier and bolstered by the power of the Spawnmother.

Meanwhile, Nogood<sup>24</sup> spent most of a day searching for the Office of Records and Ordnances, and eventually discovered it in a quiet and forgotten corner of the Guild Ward. The building is constructed on what seems to be the ruins of an old tower: the ground floor is still mostly intact, and made of the old greenstone the party is becoming familiar with in the City.

<sup>23</sup> Also, a goody-two-shoes would-be-paladin in the group ends up giving the worm-eggs and the dwarf priest's journal to the City Watch. This will be relevant in the last days of Cillamar.

<sup>24</sup> Yes, we have an adventurer called "Nogood Namevalue". The player has regretted the choice since, but I've forbidden him from changing it. He picked it, now he has to play it.

Entering the office, she is greeted with non-committal bureaucrats, who allow her access to the Hall of Common Records only after well placed honeyed words, and a small bribe<sup>25</sup>.

After coordinating with Oath, she spends a couple of days studying the records, and learns the following things about the City's civic system:

The tithe to the City Watch is known as the Larder, because it was originally spent on buying hardtack and lard for the brave men who guarded the gates. Nogood surmises that nowadays it's mostly spent on drink and whores, but things change.

The Larder of the City Watch is paid every fortnight by business owners in the Slum Ward and the Guild Ward, except on years marked by rising animal constellations, in which case the payment is bi-weekly. We are currently in the year of the Second Minotaur.

The size of the Larder depends on the denoted commerce done by the business, determined in pressed silver, and is balanced on the overall percentage of commerce conducted by inbound market caravans, except on market holidays, on which everyone pays a pre-approved tithe amount.

Failure to pay the Larder results in the business being declared Castaway by the City Watch. Castaway businesses don't benefit from the services of the City Watch. Nogood got the impression that Castaway businesses tend to find themselves in need of them very quickly.

Universal taxes are collected twice yearly, on the 5th of the Clover (Summer Tax) and the 11th of the Woman (Winter Tax). Additional taxation may occur based on varied premises not detailed in the Hall of Common Records.

<sup>25</sup> Again, more stuff played out in group chat: the party's solution to liquidating the huge pile of silver ore, and other loot items, was to buy property and start a shop for themselves. Hence the search through city ordnances. I'll admit to getting a little too much into painting out the horrid bureaucracy of Cillamar, but what can I say: I was bored.

Taxed amounts are determined in pressed silver based on the bookkeeping and tax collector's general estimate of the business or personage in question.

Various guilds hold eminence contracts on specific goods in the City, but these contracts only concern businesses primarily dealing in said goods, and only begin to matter once the net revenue of a business exceeds specific limit-values, set in pressed silver. The limit values are specific to guilds and goods, and are not available in the Hall of Common Records.

Most shops operating in the Slum Ward are not guild affiliated, whilst most commerce in the Guild Ward happens under guild charters, purchasable from the specific guilds, and indicating permission to deal in their chosen business.

Nogood ends up entirely sure that in addition to the very prolific amounts of written code with the merchants and guilds there is an unwritten system, operating mostly based on favours and promises between specific individuals. Unfortunately, both the written and the unwritten code is a little much for her current social standing and experience.

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### *3<sup>rd</sup> of Arrowfall*

After establishing the shop in the Slum Ward, the party was swept away by a local event, a Ward wide block party celebrating their part in clearing the Ward of the Curse of the Worms.

As the party was reaching its height, the celebrants were attacked by strange, short creatures, carrying icepick knives and sporting red caps. They slaughtered the slum dwellers, as a mountain of ice flew above, traveling towards the southeast<sup>26</sup>.

A cleric of Loptir beseeched the party for help, as all of the children in the Ward seemed cursed with frostbite, cold and comatose. After

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<sup>26</sup> The 2013 Holiday Module, *the Old Gods Return*. This was our Christmas party game, we ended up getting pretty drunk.

insulting the priest and making a spectacle of the situation, the party agreed to help.

They were lent horses to follow the flying ice-mound, and found it several miles outside of the city. Annie spent her blessing from Loptir to change into a living flame to fly up to the ice to release rope-ladders down for the rest of the party.

After many fights with evil Tontuu and Joulboks, the party descended the ancient hyperborean<sup>27</sup> ziggurat encased in the ice, to face Tjaptar, the ancient northern god. He had been stealing the souls of children to grow his power again, in order to return to godhood.

In a rare act of self sacrifice from a nihilist, Lushy pushed herself to the limit, turning into living flame as the power of Loptir intended. She crashed the crown of horns on the ancient godlings head, blowing it to oblivion and freeing the childrens' souls trapped within.

Unfortunately, this caused the flying iceberg to start collapsing around the intrepid adventurers. The frenzied flight to the upper reaches left Teelen dead, as a piece of rock pierced their skull fatally. Helping each other, the party managed to cling to the slowly descending magic rubble, and everyone else was spared from the cold fall.

In the aftermath of the hectic chase of the icy ziggurat, the party returned to town. They were greeted by the happy faces of children, now free from the curse of the coldrot, and slowly returning to life and health.

Also, Teela found favour within the Cillamar Historical Society, discovering new things about the hyperborean history of the region. The severed head of a hyperborean creature sealed the deal, and Teela is now well liked within the secretive group of academics.

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<sup>27</sup> Ancient hyperboreans started to appear in the campaign after this; I even wrote up some rules for them eventually, they can be found at [Sanctum Secorum companion #32](#). The concept has evolved considerably since then, as stories tend to do.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> of Arrowfall

Most of the group quaffed the strange drinks gifted by the priest of Loptir<sup>28</sup>, gaining new skills and abilities in the process. Teela experienced a vision of a living hyperborean, trapped in a stasis circle up in the cold north<sup>29</sup>.

The party then decided on travelling to the village of Hirot<sup>30</sup>, to discover the curse of the secluded northern settlement. On the way they met faerie lights, and a drunken woodsman, who joined Xixthur the Seer as a follower<sup>31</sup>.

When they reached the outskirts of the village, they met a mob, leading a woman to sacrifice to the hound at the nearby cairns. The mob was led by the Jarl of Hirot and his thegns.

Cleverly, Oath saved the woman after the villagers had left, which led to a wild chase through the cold forest. With the hound-demon on their heels, the party entered the village, after Annie's powerful magic missile merely dissipated the magical beast. The party now knew that the demon hound cannot be felled by sword or magic alone.

Next day in the village, the party sought the advice of the village witch, promising Bolvar's hand in marriage to the foul crone in exchange for a powerful artifact to aid them in combat against the hound.

The party also visited the church of the town, only to learn that Father Beacom is a resigned, bigoted individual, unable to help his flock overcome this time of crisis.

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28 Rules for Loptir's Firewater can be found at [Loptir's Firewater](#).

29 I'm a little sad that this adventure hook never got realised. The party was preparing for a caravan trip to the far north just before the fall of Cillamar at the end of the season.

30 DCC #66.5: *Doom of the Savage Kings*.

31 One player rolled lots of extremes here: the same elf disappeared to the Fae Realms and begot himself a son (this will become apparent later), and charmed a rough woodsman to join him as a follower. All from random encounter rolls in the wilderness. Additional description on how I run random encounters can be found on KitN, in [Random Encounters, in a Weird World](#).

The story ended in a cliffhanger, as Oath the thief hid in the chapel, awaiting a chance to discover what holy relic is hidden below the altar. Could it aid the party in their fight against the demonic hound of Hirot, or were they simply baiting the ire of the desperate villagers?

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#### 8<sup>th</sup> of the Wolf

In the two weeks since the party left for Hirot, the shop<sup>32</sup> has gotten rid of most of its stock. Unfortunately a couple of items were stolen during the first week, but most of the items in the shop were sold to happy customers.

During the second week of operation though, something changed in the shop. Small accidents seemed to happen with alarming frequency, food items turned rotten, ropes snapped and items were misplaced, only to be found in the unlikeliest of places. It started as annoyance, but seemed to increase in frequency and volume as time passed<sup>33</sup>.

Oath successfully stole the head of Justicia's blessed warhammer from the town chapel. After this the party visited the town smith to fit the warhammer head with a shaft. The smith grudgingly agreed, although he did warn the party that he wouldn't protect their crime if he was asked. He promised the shaft be fitted by the next day.

The party also visited the Three Rats, a flophouse on the seedy part of town, to confirm rumours that some young ruffians had disappeared right before the hound's attacks started. After an intense confrontation with the local gang leader Master Jenks and his goons they confirmed these rumours, although they learned little else.

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32 At this point, the party had left a few of their number to run the shop in Cillamar. Each week, we cut back there, figured out which items sold, and what else happened. Let it not be said that you can certainly do anything at my table, even change a dungeoncrawl adventure into a fantasy retail simulator...

33 I rolled "Gremlins." as a random event for the shop.

The party's night-excursion was cut short by screams and howls, as the hound of Hirot made the villagers pay for missing a sacrifice on the previous night. A townswoman was ripped to shreds, but a more troubling victim was the smith, clawed to death while working his forge after sundown. The party recovered the relic warhammer, which the smith had just managed to finish before his death<sup>34</sup>. Its bloodlust temporarily sated, the hound disappeared into the night.

The next day the party prepared an excursion into the tomb of Ulfheonar Wolfsbane, a great warrior king of legend. After battling snake-ghouls, appeasing a water spirit through sheer good instinct and stepping through time to cancel a lethal mistake<sup>35</sup> the party finally recovered the Wolf-Spear of Ulfheonar, along with a magical drinking horn.

Exiting the tomb via a collapsed wall in the side of the mound, the party avoided Iraco the huntsmaster and his hunters, sent to the tomb by the jarl.

Returning to town the party discovered that Oath's theft had been discovered: the town was rife with tension, as the priest of Justicia had demanded the newcomers be apprehended and brought to mob justice as the likely culprits of the crime.

The party rests for an uneasy night, resolving to travel to the northern fens early in the morning, hopefully to discover the lair of the hound and bring an end to its reign of terror and blood. They also know that tomorrow is the next time the lots are drawn in the village, to see who is to be sacrificed to the hound come nightfall.

Meanwhile, in the shop in the Slum Ward, the shopkeepers discovered that their shop is infested

with gremlins. The irritating faeries are at best a nuisance, but at their worst can threaten the lives of particularly belligerent individuals. The party has to do something to solve the situation eventually.

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### *10<sup>th</sup> of the Wolf*

The party stole away in the night, to avoid confrontation with the jarl's men in the morning. They traveled towards the fen in the highlands near Trolltooth Mountains, to put an end to the Hound of Hirot.

After wandering the swamp for most of the day, the group discovered a horrid, miasmatic sinkhole at the center. Black fumes billowed out from this deep crevasse, and the terrain seemed set against their efforts.

Climbing down precariously, the adventurers searched the cave for treasure, finding a few valuable and magical trinkets. Then they waited for the horrid hound to emerge from the ungodly black pool at the center. Tension mounted, and nerves grated against the rough darkness surrounding the party.

As dusk fell, the hound rose, charging Lushy through the air. Larger and more fearsome than the last time, the creature bit deep wounds on its opponent. Then, in a fit of magical eagerness, Annie blew the monster to bits with a magic missile spell, forcing it to retreat back into its dimension in a gaseous form. This was a major setback for the party, and Annie's itchy spell-finger was thoroughly admonished by the tired party.

The party had to spend a night and a day waiting in the miasmatic hellhole, biding their time for another chance to fight their demonic foe.

In the night, Lushy and Bolvar found comfort in each other<sup>36</sup>. Annie was besieged by a strange

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34 This poetic turn of events unnerved the players considerably, although it was entirely due to dice: I rolled the targets for the hound's attack, and the smith simply happened to suffer the brunt of the assault.

35 This is the first time the King of Elfland was invoked to turn back time. This time the spell saved the party from the collapsing room at the end of the dungeon; a good 80% of the characters would have died otherwise under the stone rubble.

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36 This was possibly the biggest point of emergent storytelling in the campaign: Lushy seduced Bolvar, mostly due to the humility effect suffered by the priest from a disapproval roll. As a result, the Nimlurun-worshipping pair had sex, next to



calling, almost sleepwalking into the acidic pond twice, only saved by her friends.

As the hound emerged again, the party was ready. They executed their plan with pinpoint accuracy, forcing the flying hound down on the ground, pinning it with the Spear of Ulftheonar, and binding it with the Web of the Mad Witch. Finally, Lushy brought down the spear, ending the wicked unlife of the Hound of Hirot.

The party started back towards the village, with the hound's corpse in tow. They encountered the huntsmen of the jarl on the way, who insisted on escorting them back to the village.

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#### *14<sup>th</sup> of the Wolf*

At the village, the people had gathered to wait to hear the judgement of the jarl. As the party presented their kill to the jarl and the villagers, a great hush came over the crowd.

The jarl spoke quietly to the priest of Justicia, who fled the scene, red-faced. Then the jarl congratulated the party curtly, and left, with Sylle Ru in tow. Then a great cheer went through the gathered villagers, and a great celebration began!

In the midst of the party, Bolvar returned to the hut of the Mad Widow, to make good of his promise to marry her. As he knocked on the door he found the Mad Widow greatly changed: she had turned into a beautiful, voluptuous maiden. Her husband, a man-shaped entity of darkness and flame, had returned from the nether realm to claim her again. As a parting gift, the widow gave Bolvar a kiss and an artifact in the form of a magical chain shirt<sup>37</sup>.

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a dimensional hell-portal. I couldn't let this sort of a situation pass as a GM: I rolled what happened, allotting options for no pregnancy, normal pregnancy, a "Rosemary's baby" -situation, and an Avatar of Nimlurun. Of course, I rolled the latter, and much of the rest of the campaign was dictated by this pregnancy and relationship.

37 Funnily enough, Bolvar's player was actually a little disappointed that the marriage fell through. But he had another thing coming, obviously.

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#### *1<sup>st</sup> of the Rider*<sup>38</sup>

The group left the village of Hirot, traveling into the mountains, towards the village of the mountain men<sup>39</sup>.

On the way over, they were nearly pushed to their deaths by a spooked warhorse, trampling towards them on a narrow ledge-path. Annie's sleep spell quelled the beast, and it was later discovered that the knight who previously owned the creature was killed by the wyverns in the area<sup>40</sup>.

Reaching the tribe, the party was greeted as prophesied saviours. The tribe's matriarch explained that they needed help with the demons of the Ghost Ice, a great glacier that had been spewing green smoke for the duration of the winter.

Braving the sheer cliff face, the party entered a strange tube and discovering odd rooms made of unknown materials. They found art, a yeti and a kitchen full of odd utensils.

Eventually they came into a master bedroom, gaining what seemed like the master-sigil of this strange abode. Preparing to enter another room full of odd lights and a moving metal man, they paused for a moment, as the earth rumbled and the world paused. Foul magic was afoot!

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#### *6<sup>th</sup> of the Rider*

After a strange disturbance in the flux removed some party members from the gleaming-white cave and replaced them with others, the group continued examining the cavern's wonders<sup>41</sup>.

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38 An astute reader will notice that the dates of this and the previous entry are oddly apt for the unfolding events: let me assure you, that this is entirely coincidental, but happens oddly often at our table.

39 For DCC #79: *Frozen in Time*.

40 Another random encounter detailed in [Random Encounters in a Weird World](#).

41 Due to life-related reasons, the party for this session consisted mostly of different players and characters than the previous week. Non-plussed, I applied some eldritch-future

In what was clearly a treasure vault, the adventurers battled a strange metal man. The vault's arcane protections were failing, and some of the items were left bare, whilst others were behind flickering force fields of azure magic. The party aptly collected most of the loot in the room, only leaving behind items that were still protected by the magical forcefields.

Then the party continued downwards, through the room with the great lizard and the mediocre art, arriving in a menagerie. Strange beings were held in similar arcane stasis fields as the massive lizard above. As the party searched the room, they were beset by monsters as explosions and quakes wracked the complex.

Dispatching their assailants with ease, the group continued to the final room, in which an arcane circle was found. As the group fumbled with the strange control platform, suddenly there was a massive explosion, and all the lights went out.

Smaller rumbles followed, but in the light of the sudden red gleam of panels set in the floor it was clear that it was time to get out!

In a frantic rush towards the icy chasm in one of the upper chambers, the group managed to save a redshirted stranger and a walrus-man from the northern reaches<sup>42</sup>. They had been freed as their stasis fields in the menagerie failed.

Above, the group was greeted with the roar of the great lizard-king, also freed from his time-bound jail. The group retreated speedily towards the chasm, protected by bears Xixthur, summoned in our aid. Clever investigation of one of the strange contraptions discovered from the treasure vault finally spelled the doom of the lizard-beast, as Tinareth the Mage figured out the mechanics of the Blaster Rifle, and blew

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magic, and teleported in the relevant characters. Never let real life get in the way of a good story.

42 Yes, the redshirt survived this time His occupation is "redshirt" and he's mostly useless, trapped in a world he never made. The walrus-man also survived, but sadly never made it to name level: otherwise I'd've had to cook up rules for him as well...

the lizard to the next world as it was ripping through the door behind the group<sup>43</sup>.

As the rest of the party prepared to climb out through the long, narrow chasm, Xixthur took a brave detour, to return to the treasure chamber to pick up one of the left-over items, as he rightly deduced that the protections of the vault had failed as well.

In a brave effort, Lushy climbed up the ravine with a rope, and the rest of the group made their way after her. In the nick of time Xixthur made it out of the collapsing structure as well, bearing a mysterious box of ingenious design<sup>44</sup>. As the group arrived atop the Ghost Ice glacier, the tip of the ice collapsed, taking the ice-demon's strange lair with it.

Returning to the village, the delvers were greeted as heroes, and rewarded with their prize, as well as the wisdom of the north<sup>45</sup>.

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### *8<sup>th</sup> of the Rider*

The party set out back from the Trolltooth Mountains, a few barbarians richer<sup>46</sup>. The previous night's party had left the group hungover, but all were content to be traveling back to civilization.

On the way back, the group was attacked by a horrid troll! The beast nearly destroyed the group of packmules, and it took Granny bending the rules of time in the adventurers' advantage to survive the encounter<sup>47</sup>!

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43 Seemed only fair to let them use the rifle, after the investigation roll was a natural 20. Inspiration has to be rewarded, and shooting a t-rex in the mouth with a laser gun is peak storytelling in my book, especially in a fantasy campaign.

44 The brave elf managed to pick up the universal translator, which was fair enough for the risk.

45 I usually make new classes available based on player action. Completing this adventure meant that characters could be leveled as barbarians, rules for which are on KitN at [The Barbarian, from the North](#).

46 A couple of characters simply re-classed into barbarians here.

47 I rolled a troll as a random encounter, and it started by eating the party's mules, before turning its attentions towards the delvers. This was the second instance of Granny Weirdtree invoking the King of Elfland to turn back time,

In Hirot, Bolvar made a few enemies from a group of severe cultists of Justicia<sup>48</sup>.

The party traveled back to Cillamar, and on the way over it became apparent to Lushy that she had become pregnant from the tryst with Bolvar in the pit of the demon hound of Hirot. Visiting the temple of Nimlurun in Cillamar, the couple was aghast as Lushy's baby was proclaimed to be a Clean Child: an avatar of Nimlurun.

Annie revealed to the party that she had found a piece of the Rod of Power in the strange dungeon in the Ghost Ice; she also told everyone that Oath had another piece, and warned the group of imminent attention from extraplanar watchers<sup>49</sup>. The Rod of Power is an ancient artifact, used in the antediluvian past to command masses of men and demi-humans, and to rule them with iron conviction. Its pieces seem to have a mind of their own, wanting to be found and brought together: naturally, gods and demons are all interested in controlling the ruler of the Rod.

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#### *7<sup>th</sup> of the Bear*

The party focused on licking their wounds and various downtime activities. Also, the gremlins were finally banished from the shop by priests of Amun Tor<sup>50</sup>, for a hefty fee.

Bolvar and Teela were infected with disturbing dreams concerning a princess of the Sea People, trapped in a magical sphere. Hurriedly, the

group set out to travel to the city of Porthmeor, on the shores of the West Sea<sup>51</sup>.

On the way to Wildsgate, the group heard various stories concerning treasures in the Wilds<sup>52</sup>, in a mountain region called the Spires. Their welcome in Wildsgate was less than amicable, but the group made a note to maybe return there some day, to explore more of the northern wildlands.

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#### *7<sup>th</sup> of the Alites*

Halfway through their journey, the group arrived in Magnusheim<sup>53</sup>, a rich city nestled in the Wildsgate mountains. After a well earned night of rest, the adventurers were surprised by a great group of people, gathered to see the execution of a local dissident.

Things quickly turned strange, as a mad prophet's head was revealed to ominously bear the face of the Baron Magnussen.

Out of the blue, a great winged beast fell upon the crowd, picking up the Baron's daughter, and the executioner, who was revealed to bear a solid silver skull upon his desiccated shoulders!

The beast carried the daughter and the laughing apparition away, disappearing somewhere below the keep. The crowds were sure that this was the result of a curse set upon the Magnussen line in ages past.

Answering the call of the pleading Baron, the promise of riches lured the group into the dungeon! After a short rest, the Crypt of the Magnussen family awaited our brave reavers!

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and gave us the concept of "Granny's Mule". It's a bit like Schroedinger's Cat, only with a pinch of time travel.

48 All cults have their extremists, and Justicia's are rowdy flagellants and inquisitors, serving their own sort of justice. The rules for Justicia's cult can be found on KitN at [Justicia, Goddess of Justice and Mercy](#).

49 The Rod of Power plotline started from *Portal under the Stars*, as an *ad hoc* invention. It's never finished during the first season of the campaign, but I have plans for it yet. At this point I've successfully seeded a good bit of paranoia among the players, and it only gets better.

50 Details for Amun Tor's cult on KitN at [Amun Tor, God of Mysteries and Riddles](#).

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51 Both characters rolled the same adventure from the rumour mill, informing the group about *DCC #75 The Sea Queen Escapes*. Porthmeor as a name is pinched from

52 The old #28 *Into the Wilds*.

53 From *DCC #71 The 13<sup>th</sup> Skull*.

The brave party entered the Magnussen family crypt, and after being assaulted by shadows, demons and animated weaponry, they sheepishly activated the Tome of Planes. Found in a gleaming copper room, the artifact transported them to the 417th level of Hell, where they finally found the baron's missing daughter!

After a brief but vicious battle, Granny's magic charmed the devil they faced, and the party quickly returned to the surface with their charge in tow<sup>54</sup>.

However, the mysterious silver skull and its mount was never discovered, as the group fled from the dungeon as soon as they found the goal of their foray<sup>55</sup>-

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#### 9<sup>th</sup> of the Alites

As the group traveled south to Porthmeor, they faced no opposition. Apparently, the situation in Magnusheim was solved.

Before the adventurers reached Porthmeor, they met with the Congress of Nimlurun, on its way towards Cillamar City<sup>56</sup>.

Nimed communed with the Leper of Nimlurun<sup>57</sup>, learning that:

*"There is a war coming." (hoarse whisper)*

As the group reached Porthmeor, they did some reconnaissance. They quickly learned where to find the haunt of the evil wizard imprisoning the Princess of the Sea People.

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54 *Charm person* with spellburn is pretty forceful. The barbed devil nary stood a chance, and guaranteed the group's safe passage back to town.

55 They got the lady McGuffin, but I was left figuring out how the world reacts to whatever is boiling below Magnusheim. I solved it with a one-shot with a friend, who played the seasoned guard captain: in a 24-style montage session he managed to kill the Silver Skull with help from his henchmen, and fled to the south on the best horse in town.

56 The party left Lushy in Cillamar, along with several additional characters. The Clean Child was coming and Nimlurun's faithful flocked to him.

57 Also known as the Filthpope.

Entering the watery vault, after much heroism and many near death situations, the party found the Horn of Tudines, the only way to reach their lost charge beneath the sea<sup>58</sup>.

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#### 13<sup>th</sup> of the Alites

The group returned to Porthmeor, to recuperate and prepare.

After many follies, they were ready to embark off to sea, in order to bring up the vault of the wizard. With their unreliable crew, they fortunately made it to the open sea<sup>59</sup>.

Blowing the Horn of Tudines, they brought up the Island-That-is-a-Turtle. As sleet rained down upon their unsafe vessel, the brave adventurers climbed inside the creature, his slow heartbeat following them all the way.

After unpredictable obstacles, the adventurers were face to face with a dying jellyfish. Inside its hood were all the treasures they'd come here to find: the key to the Sea Princess' prison and, to their dismay, another piece of the Rod of Power..

Bravely pushing forth, after the curse of the deep had exchanged their minds, and as the water was rising, the adventurers made their choice!

Bolvar (in the body of Tinareth) sold his soul to save the group. He grabbed the piece of the Rod of Power and the Crimson Key, and promised to switch faiths if their senses were

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58 The group also looted the lampreyman eggs here: in a stroke of luck, multiple characters had waterproof sacks they'd carried since the funnel (we roll 0-level equipment out of the extended list found on KitN at [Equipment, improved](#)). This becomes important later, as the eggs were sold off to a delicatessen in Porthmeor as "sea-sturgeon caviar".

59 This session was a bit of a disaster. Despite being a charming dockworker-cleric, Bolvar fumbled the roll to find a seaworthy ship: the group had to make do with the Wet Otter, a barely floating mess, captained by a drunken lout who kept on about having "relations" with manatees. The group paid the first mate in advance, and the wily man absconded with the group's gold. The ship was eventually guided out of port by Young Bob, a twelve-year-old cabin boy, the only person on the boat who knew how to sail the damn thing (from watching the first mate work).

restored, and the party was safely delivered from the cavernous tunnels inside the turtle.

Justicia answered his plea, and as the party fled, Bolvar had the newly found piece of the Rod of Power fused into his fist by the Goddess of Mercy!

There is a war coming, and we were divided, on both sides of the conflict<sup>60</sup>.

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### *2<sup>nd</sup> of the Point*

The crew took stock of the situation at sea, after the island-turtle sank beneath the waves. The Wet Otter was repaired, and the ship's captain saved by Bolvar, who'd taken the tenets of Justicia to heart: the drunken man fell into the waves in the winter storm, and Bolvar had to dive in after him to save the lout.

Then the crew gave the magical key to Rudder-Bob, the young helmsman of the ship<sup>61</sup>.

Falling into a trance, the boy pushed the ship to its limits. After a day of hard sailing, the ship arrived at an uneasy shore: a volcanic atoll, lined with pitch and asphalt.

The party embarked, and faced many troubles inside the vault set in stone. After searching the dungeon twice for clues and treasure, the party opened the door to Queen Cealheewhalool's prison chamber. Inside, they discovered the Queen and her handmaidens in a bubble of water, which soon burst after the prison's magic was finally expended.

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60 My players always surprise me, and to that end I never really design over-arching plots for my campaigns. Here we have a pair of characters becoming parents to a divine avatar of disease, and to make things better, ending up on the opposite sides of a holy war between two deities, and dividing up the rest of the party with them. I could not have written this stuff up, and if I would have, it wouldn't have worked.

61 There's a pun here that I'll ruin by explaining it. "Nuori-Bob" is Finnish for Young-Bob; with a single letter switch it becomes "Ruori-Bob", which means Rudder-Bob. Considering that I planned none of these NPCs beforehand I was pretty smug about the wordplay.

First pleading the party for help, the mermaids quickly turned on the suspicious adventurers, transforming into horrid monsters from the deep. The Queen's visage took on the forms of shark and octopus, while the handmaidens turned into grouper-like monstrosities with maws full of needle sharp teeth.

Mad with hunger, the creatures attacked the party. The Queen also mocked the adventurer's for falling into her guile: she was indeed imprisoned in the Earth Prison by the great wizard Shadankin, but for good reason. She is the Imperatrix of the Deep, responsible for the subjugation and genocide of the merpeople of the Kingdom of Ru, deep beneath the waves of the West Sea.

With her spells, she turned Tinareth to a bloody mess<sup>62</sup>, but before she could do more damage, the combined might of Nimed and Bolvar pushed her to flee from their holy magic.

With Tarascus hot on her heels, the party could only try in vain to stop her: in the end, the Sea Queen escaped, swearing vengeance<sup>63</sup>!

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### *5<sup>th</sup> of the Point*

As the crew returned to Porthmeor, they found the city in turmoil. The city guard had enacted martial law, and the citizen militia was patrolling the streets<sup>64</sup>!

Apparently, one of the noble families was blaming another family for poisoning their leaders with some sort of a spell that caused

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62 The first instance of a character being served the hot dish that is magic missile. She got better as they turned her body, but lost a good bit of Strength in the process: I use a variant damage system, and coming back from the dead after being pulped to oblivion has severe consequences; see notes on turning bodies on KitN at [Judge's Checksheet](#).

63 The party has not embarked on a sea-journey since, afraid of the revenge of the "Sharktopus-Lady".

64 Remember those lampreyman eggs the group sold earlier? Apparently they gestate just as well inside the warm gullet of a fat noble. Who knew? My players are exemplary at dropping story hooks into my lap. This time they gave seed to my first foray into writing adventures: we inducted a new player to the group, so I designed an urban funnel with lampreyman chest-bursters, Thieves' guild looters, and chaotic city ordnances.

small lamprey-like creatures to burst out of people's chests. There were open hostilities in the streets, and added to this the sea was spewing forth fully grown lampreymen searching for their lost young. And the Thieves' Guild was openly robbing travelers in the Lanes.

As the group disembarked from the Wet Otter, they were introduced to their protectors: a group of citizen militia, charged with protecting them in the city<sup>65</sup>.

Quickly, things went from bad to worse as lampreymen were everywhere in the port! Teela the Scion of Hyperborea and Baen the Ogre Slayer<sup>66</sup> bravely saved Rudder-Bob (formerly known as Young-Bob) from the clutches of an evil lamprey-creature<sup>67</sup>, and the party continued to the tavern to collect their things.

Many militiamen gave their lives to ensure the party's success, and after a harrowing journey through the riot-stricken city, the party finally made it to the Merchant Gate in Freemarket. Through some bribes and clever subterfuge, they secured passage out of the city. The remaining militia members decided to hitch a ride with the group, rather than face the draconian punishment set before them for abandoning their posts and the various other smaller infractions they'd committed during the journey.

The party then collected themselves to travel towards Cillamar City, and the coming storm.

## *6<sup>th</sup> of the Point*

As the group set out to travel back to Cillamar, Nimed received a vision from Nimlurun: he must hurry to return to the city right away!

Following the message from his god, Nimed led the party to a mound with stone cairns on top. The dolmen gate there transported the group to the cold boreal north, to a mountain dungeon built by an ancient race of centipede-like alien creatures<sup>68</sup>.

In the dungeon the group found the body of the legendary Ivrian the Unkind, a devout champion of Nimlurun. She had been using the magic and technology of the ancient race to create an imperishable body, so that she may continue in the service of Nimlurun even after her mortal coil rots away.

Ivrian had failed, her soul imprisoned in a throne of black stone. She ordered Nimed to collect the starstone, to transport her consciousness to the imperishable body she had prepared.

Through many trials, the party finally claimed the starstone as their own. Here, Nimed was put between a rock and hard place, as a curse from his god had rendered him humble and obedient for the day<sup>69</sup>.

After combating a powerful demon, the party fell to squabbling as interests were crossed. In the end, Nerelon the dwarf smashed Nimed's head in with a hammer, and walked out with the starstone in tow<sup>70</sup>.

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65 This was mechanically pretty interesting: the four 0-levels wielded by the new player were officially charged to protect the leveled adventurers. It led to some pretty interesting situations, with both sides trying to keep each other alive, and the 0-levels taking ridiculous risks.

66 I charge my players with coming up with their own titles, obviously.

67 This was actually a wonderful battle montage, with tears, close-ups and emotion! The party ended up drafting Young-Bob to go with them, albeit a little reluctantly. I just couldn't resist a good tear-jerker. If memory serves, I did reward them with some replenished Luck points. At least I should have.

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68 This is another Goodman Games dungeon module, I think, but I can't figure out which one. If you recognize it, please drop me a line at [knightsinthenorth@gmail.com](mailto:knightsinthenorth@gmail.com). I remember modifying it quite a bit to begin with.

69 To be fair, the later events would have played out very differently, had Nimed not been under the curse of humility caused by a disapproval roll. His player was absolutely ruthless in the service of his god, and played all of his characters to the hilt. Which I of course enjoy, as a Judge.-

70 The first show of player-vs-player conflict for the campaign. I think everyone was a little taken back, but it was only a prelude for later events. Soon, things get really good... Also, everyone is an adult, and play with style. None of this ever leaked into real-life interactions.

Nimed was saved by Nogood and Oath, who fed him a healing potion and took him back to the caravan.

After the altercation, the group used the ancient gatestone they discovered in the dungeon to return to Cillamar.

Next, there would be WAR.

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### 14<sup>th</sup> of the Point<sup>71</sup>

As the caravan of the Prodigies returned to Cillamar through magical means, it quickly became apparent that the great city was under martial law.

The guilds and the nobles had shut off their quarters to the smallfolk, and the City Watch bolstered by the well-equipped knights of the Noble Guard were guarding all of the gates deeper into the city, as well as the gates leading out. Apparently the nobles were worried that the conflict might spread into the surrounding countryside.

In the previous weeks as the Prodigies were away, pilgrims and zealots of both Nimlurun and Justicia had trailed into the city, filling the Slum Quarter with tension. Small riots and casual violence were everywhere. The party took shelter in their established shop.

Shortly after the return to the city three factions formed among the Prodigies. Bolvar entered Justicia's temple, and invited everyone willing to follow him. Nimed headed to the nimlurunites, welcoming all to the pustulous embrace of his god. And Oath and Tarascus immediately started preparing to leave the city, somehow<sup>72</sup>.

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71 The following is an account of the last session of this season. Six players were present, with the seventh taking part through chat as he had a terrible case of the flu. It was mostly glorious chaos, but very memorable in the end. At this point there are 23 characters in the group, along with a number of followers, so there was a lot to figure out.

72 The handwritten, official party journal lists the "three" factions as: "*the pro-nimlurunites, the justici'ites, the get-the-fuck-outta-here-ites... and the City-Watch-ites?*".

It was known that the Clean Child would be born soon after the Prodigies returned. After the birth there would be a fourteen day grace period before the conflict would be resolved in a great battle between the gods, as per the ancient tenets of divine law. The Clean Child aged a year in a day, and at 14 he would be of age. The tenets of Justicia forbid the killing of children, so the battle would be take place once he became of age.

What follows is a full and correct account of the actions of each of the members of the Prodigies before the great battle at Wormwood Square<sup>73</sup>.

Bolvar Briggs, the cleric of Justicia went to the temple of his Goddess, and offered himself to be the weapon against the Clean Child. A boon granted by Justicia was transformed to a single chance to change the child into a normal boy, stripping him of his divine heritage. This required a complex ritual: two weeks of harrowing tests, cleansing and prayer.

After long preparations, Lushy Logborn gave birth to the Clean Child, on a dais of logs, with snow surrounding her, as was the custom of her family. The Filthpope, known as the Leper of Nimlurun acted as midwife, and presented the child to the proud mother, who then presented him to the gathered nimlurunites. Her two weeks before the battle were spent rearing the child into adulthood, and preparing him for the battle to come. The son was named Ruff the Clean.

Nimed the Zealot returned to his god. He was present at the birth of the Clean Child, and successfully led a group of cultists in a campaign against the militia of Justicia. He gained reputation and rank during the two weeks before the battle, becoming an important leader in the church of the god of disease and filth.

Elwynn the halfling joined Tarascus the Barbarian in planning an escape from the city. Her clever search of the graveyard rewarded

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73 For the most part, all of this was free narration, interspersed with guiding skill checks and other rolls. I just set the stage, and the players made their choices.

the group with a path under the city wall, through the forbidden crypt passages found under the Wrong Place: a crematorium platform, which was never to be used for burials.

I, Urukesh, offered my services to the ritual efforts at Justicia's temple, using my magical might and gathered artifacts to assist in the battle on the side of mercy. My reading of the Wintercrest Manuscript revealed the fated place of the Battle of Wormwood Square<sup>74</sup>.

Bane the Barbarian and his elven follower Mariusz joined the effort to scout and prepare Justicia's forces for the battle, and walked through the city unnoticed for two weeks, gathering important information for the goddess of mercy.

Arwoor the Elf disappeared into the streets shortly after the party returned to the city. Soon, reports of brutal slasher murders began to abound on the grapevine. Rumour has it that Arwoor gave into the dark cravings of the Black Fang Dagger, becoming the Slasher of Cillamar, a notorious serial killer<sup>75</sup>.

Teela, the Scion of Hyperborea, managed to get into the Guild Ward, and joined in the defense of the Cillamar Historical Society along with her walrusman follower Rongor. They vowed to keep the relics safe through the time of troubles ahead.

Annie the Ratmage, assisted by Naat the halfling, worked hard to spread the curse of the wererat in order to create an honour guard for the Clean Child in the name of Narrimunth. At the same time, she prepared to leave the city unnoticed, like a rat fleeing a leaking ship.

After a short attempt to aid the City Watch or work with the Thieves' Guild to save the city, Nogood Namevalue joined Granny Weirdtree

<sup>74</sup> Urukesh had the crystal ball from *Portal under the Stars*, along with the Wintercrest Manuscript: a collection of divinations he'd made from the tablets in the scrying chamber there. Too bad he couldn't foretell the end of Cillamar, soon to come.

<sup>75</sup> Found in the *Well of the Worm*, waaayyy back. The player just told me that "Yeah, I take the dagger and give into it." And a legend was born, instantly.

in beseeching the King of Elfland for aid. The King graciously promised to help, in trade for great riches, magics or other boons to his name. Granny and Nogood built a portal out of twigs and sticks, into the attic of the shop in the Slum Ward.

Tarascus the Farming Barbarian spent his time preparing the escape from the city through unseen paths.

Oath the Smuggler<sup>76</sup> and her aide Mara schemed to filch the riches of the group. After fruitlessly attempting to contact the City Watch with bribes, and the Thieves' Guild with plots, they turned their gaze inwards, to the center of the city. Why go out into the countryside when they could recede into the deeper Wards for safety?

Flynn the Dwarf joined the militia of Justicia out of habit. The life of a militiaman is a rough one, but it was all he knew.

Seadia the Apprentice Wizard was contacted by the Ordo Arcana: in return for a series of strange favours, the order of mages would reward her with great power. She took to completing these tasks with vigour: spoke to the birds, hid alabaster rock into odd spots in the city, burned a soul... In the end, this ritual meant much for the future of the city as a whole.

Nuwyr the Halfling joined the efforts to leave the city through hidden paths, along with Tarascus and Elwynn."

Nerelon the Dwarf joined Justicia's side, researching the starstone gained from the ancient dungeon in the boreal north. In the end, the stone became Justicia's greatest weapon against Nimlurun, as it was tuned to take the soul of a god. The Stone made it possible for Bolvar to permanently trap part of Nimlurun's essence into it, if he was successful in his one chance to save the child.

<sup>76</sup> Oath and Nimed were played by the same player. Both were absolutely ruthless, and absolutely awesome for my as a Judge.



Hadrathia the Eager joined the City Watch, in order to gain fame and fortune without a god as a burden. She eventually rose to the rank of General of the Worm Company, as it became evident that the City Watch was planning to use the worm eggs they'd confiscated from the Prodigies months ago to make a company of zombies to quell the battle<sup>77</sup>.

After unsuccessfully attempting to leave the city through a gate with Jim the Redshirt and Kane the Woodsman, Xixthur the Wizard was surprised by his past deeds: his child from the Fae Realm came to meet his father<sup>78</sup>. Xixthur promptly named the kid Rickshaw, and set him to help with the gate into the Elflands Granny was building. The rest of the group named the kid "The Annoying Little Shit", but he ultimately he proved a useful aid in building the portal to the Elflands.

Tinareth the Weak Wizard focused all her efforts on her god, working tirelessly on a ritual to Bobugbubiliz that would let her change into a lizard and escape the city<sup>79</sup>.

During the two weeks leading up to the great Battle of Wormwood Square, Lushy taught her avatar son to not trust the masses, how to survive in wintertime, and how to be a Logborn. Additionally, she teaches the child about love, sex and compassion; and to only trust himself. She trains the child in the use of the spear, and makes sure he understands how to take care of his own. And finally, she makes sure that Ruff knows that his mother loves him very much. Nimed visited the child as well, and taught him to enjoy the things others deem to be disgusting.

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### 3<sup>rd</sup> of the Point

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77 Again something the party had caused: the City Watch had access to the zombie-worm eggs from *Well of the Worm*, and knew how to use them

78 Remember that random encounter romp in the wilderness around the 4<sup>th</sup> of Arrowfall (see footnote 31)? This is me, tying up loose ends. This event eventually gave root to the satyr race, which is up on KitN at [The satyrs are here!](#).

79 She literally had a Strength score of 2 at this point, after suffering the magic missile blast from the Sharktopus Lady.

What follows next is an accurate account of the day of the Battle of Wormwell Market."

Tarascus, Elwynn and Nuwyr leave the city with the families of the Gravediggers<sup>80</sup>, through the passages at the Wrong Place. After mazelike crypts, they come across a cave full of spiders, with a ramp outside. After desperate heroics and a near-death battle, the whole group makes it out into the countryside east of Cillamar City.

On the morning of the day of the battle, the group spots a large lizard making it towards the city wall. After this, Tinareth is nowhere to be found.

Oath and Mara attempt multiple times to enter the Guild Ward, eventually getting themselves arrested. Through wily tricks Oath manages to free the pair, and they disappear into the Noble Quarter along with a lion's share of the party's loot<sup>81</sup>.

Granny Weirdtree, Nogood Namevalue, Xixthur the Seer, Jim the Redshirt, Kane the Woodsman and Rickshaw the Kid manage to open the portal of the King of Elfland. They walk in, disappearing from known memory and legend.

At the battleground, the two sides are amassed. Wormwood Market is full, and silent.

Nimlurun's horde is lead by the Clean Child known as Ruff Logborn, his mother Lushy, Annie the Ratmage and Nimed the Zealot in close proximity.

At the center of the battleground is a long riot-line formed by armed and armoured worm-zombies, lead at the center by Hadrathia the Worm-General.

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80 All of the gravediggers in my world are related. This becomes an interesting fact during the second season of the game, as a player rolls a 0-level gravedigger, and survives the funnel.

81 Oath actually took most of the party's wealth with her. Somewhere in the vicinity of 3000 gp, mostly in gems and jewelry. The group is still a little sore about it.

At Justicia's side, Bolvar stands as the leader, supported by Flynn, Baen and Marius, Seadia and Nerelon.

I, Urukesh, observe the battle through the crystal ball, from my saferoom in a comfortable tavern somewhere in the Slum District.

In a grand opening move, the scrum begins as the Clean Child charges towards Hadrathia. Naked, purple eyes gleaming and wielding a spear the Child is a fearsome sight to behold.

As the charge begins, Nimed sacrifices himself to increase the avatar's power through a ritual prepared in secret<sup>82</sup>. The Clean Child grows in size and age, becoming an immense hulking giant, a man grown out of legend. There is a scream as the Leper is cast out from his position as pope of Nimlurun: Nimed takes his place as the Cringed One, the new ruler of the grand cult of Nimlurun.

The Clean Child cuts down Hadrathia in a single blow.

Bolvar responds by casting the starstone towards the Child. Through sheer willpower the rock rings true, and the power of Nimlurun recedes from Ruff, who is immediately crowded by the worm-zombie legion at the center of the battlefield<sup>83</sup>.

As the fight rages on, both Bolvar and Lushy rush towards their fallen child from opposite sides of the battlefield. In a great act of sacrifice, Bolvar uses the Horn of Kings<sup>84</sup> to bring Ruff back to life, and Lushy saves the fallen Hadrathia from perishing with a healing potion.

The battlefield is a heaving mass of living, unliving and diseased bodies when the Ordo Arcana contacts Seadia: the ritual is soon to be complete, and as a courtesy the order of mages is willing to transport Seadia and some others out of the way of the great magic about to happen.

Lushy, Bolvar, Ruff, Hadrathia, Flynn, Bane and Marius, Seadia and Nerelon are all transported to the countryside through a teleportation spell<sup>85</sup>.

Then, there is a crack and a flash, and the city is covered in a great dome of magical energy: the ritual Seadia was unwittingly working on closes off Cillamar City from the surrounding countryside. The wars of gods are better kept away from the world of men.

The only ways in and out of the city are the sewers which lead into the Underdark, and the tip of the tower at the center of the city. Otherwise, it is now a closed system of despair and chaos<sup>86</sup>.

In the ensuing chaos, the nimlurunites wrest the battle from Justicia's followers. The God of Disease and Filth now rules the Slum Ward, under the glimmering dome of crystalline magic."

I must admit that I, Urukesh, were aghast at this turn of events<sup>87</sup>.

The Slasher of Cillamar, Arwoor, continues his reign of terror, reveling in the chaos of the slums.

Oath and Mara are stuck in the Noble Quarter, with diminishing funds and little in a way of escape from the locked city<sup>88</sup>.

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82 In a ballsy move, Nimed's player hadn't even told me of this plan. Once it became apparent that he was going to burn down his character in a blaze of divine spell burn, I wholeheartedly agreed. And even made Nimed the next Filthpope in the process!

83 In a bout of narrative problem solving, the group had primed the starstone to leech out the divine essence of Nimlurun, imprisoning a piece of the deity within. I want to once more point out that I never planned any of this to happen.

84 Found from the tomb in *DCC #66.5: Doom of the Savage Kings*.

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85 I actually rolled for how many people the Ordo Arcana would be willing to transport, and it was just enough to get everyone. The dice determined the ending, as much as player actions...

86 See footnote 10 for a link to further details about the City.

87 Last we heard of our chronicler, he was choking on popcorn in a rented room somewhere in the Slum Ward. How this missive made it out of the City, no one knows.

88 Oath has a piece of the Rod of Power, so she'll likely reappear in some role or other at a later date.

Annie and Naat receive a boon from Narrimunth, becoming great dire rats. They disappear into the Underdark, through the rancid sewers.

Teela, Rongor and Young-Bob became the guardians of the hyperborean relics at the Historical Society. Maybe their magic is the way to dissipate the magical shield holding the city hostage<sup>89</sup>?

And that is the true Chronicle of the Prodigies of Erayo.

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<sup>89</sup> I'm actually slowly working on the City of Cillamar as a sort of urban megadungeon, for when the party eventually returns to the scene of their deeds.