

Trial by FIRE



A Tribe  Cycle



Dream Pod 9

A Tribe 8 Cycle

Trial by FIRE

The horizon goes dark before us as we chase the Sun's fading light. We are in the darkest night of our destiny, clambering in the blindness, moving hastily in a direction that holds no hope or answers. We have forgotten that the night will pass and so we fear the limitless void that surrounds us, screaming into its dark embrace like a child afraid of that which cannot be seen.

- From the Visions of Veruka the Wraith

Trial By Fire is a complete cycle for Tribe 8. The four Quests lay out a new pathway for the Fallen and for Agnes, the Child Fatima. Moving from the courts of Sheban law into the twisted lands of the Z'bri, the fate of the Eighth Tribe will be forever marked by the Player Characters' actions.

Playing a vital role in the unfolding of events, the Player Characters must face their worst nightmares taken form, the excesses of abused power, the horror of a Fallen-Z'bri conspiracy and a death that will forever change the world they thought they knew.

Trial By Fire includes:

- Four complete quests and many hooks to involve Players
- New groups and allegiances working behind the scenes
- A new prophecy for the Fallen
- The coming of age of Agnes, the Child Fatima

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Children of Prophecy



Part Three

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Prelude

Sister of One, have you no fun
Sister of Two, how do you do
Sister of Three, please let me be
Sister of Four, open the door
Sister of Five, keep me alive
Sister of Six, show me your tricks
Seventh and Eighth
For you it's too late!

— Agnite Nursery Rhyme



Last Dance

Altara Ven, Member of the Eighth Tribe:

The Tribes will wait no longer. We see it in the growing ranks of the Watchers and the increasing cruelty of the Shebans. They no longer allow us to travel the streets of Vimary, forcing us to skulk in the shadows and hide in shame from their ever-present gaze. High Judge Cylix and his minions increasingly exert their influence over the Grand Council. There is also an unsettling quiet amongst the Tribal Elders of the Nation, as though they're biding their time for the right moment to strike. Even the Z'bri seem to be awaiting their cue.

I fear that a time of reckoning is drawing near — a time when we will be tried sorely for our beliefs and ideals. We must be ever more cautious and protective of each other, for we have no allies other than ourselves. The Herites may have been right in some of their ways, I grant them that. The Fatimas are our enemies and are a danger that rivals the beasts; can the Seven Deaths be so blinded by their fear of what we represent? Perhaps they give us too much credit.

In Hom, our Tribe is reeling from recent wounds still festering. Dahlia's grand jest has made a mockery of our faith. How could we have been so naïve? We must be careful in our plans for the future, or we could destroy any hopes of being recognized as the true Dreamers we are. The Jackers and Children of Lilith carry on with the honor and courage they displayed during Lilith's crusades. Now they fight the Z'bri, not out of obeisance to some puppet, but for true liberation.

The Doomsayers speak of portents that carry little in the way of bliss. Can their visions, in all their darkness, possibly hold any truth? Can things decay to such a point that we will be caught in the whirlpool that threatens to suck us under?

I cannot place my belief in that. I won't. We haven't fought so hard for all that we've created to be destroyed through ignorance and hate. We are the Fallen, chosen of the Goddess, bearers of Destiny. We are the Children of Prophecy. . . aren't we?

We Stand Apart

High Judge Cylix Seth'on, from the records of the Grand Council:

In the wake of the events regarding Jonah the Betrayer and the heresy of Lilith, the False Fatima, I ask the wise members of the Grand Council before me, what further crimes need be done before we recognize the Outcasts for the true threat that they are? When will we open our eyes and make a stand for what we believe in as a Nation? Will we simply let the blasphemers spit on our faces and step on our traditions with their rebellious and anarchistic ways? Will we let our ancestors and all those who died in the Liberation be forgotten and insulted by a generation who hold no respect or honor for their sacrifice?

These questions must be resolved, and resolved quickly at that. We cannot stand witness to another act of defiance by the soulless, because if we do, then we are ignoring our responsibilities. We are forgetting our place and purpose, to create a Nation that we can be proud of — a Nation that exists in harmony, with the Fatimas as our mentors and guides. I envision a Nation in which we can live with the assurance that we have done the right thing. So I leave you with this: allow me to do the right thing. Let us erase the Fallen blight from our midst so that we may live in prosperity and unity under one banner and under one law.



Constellations

From the visions of Veruka the Wraith:

The horizon goes dark before us as we chase the Sun's fading light. We are in the darkest night of our destiny, clambering in the blindness, moving hastily in a direction that holds no hope or answers. We have forgotten that the night will pass and so we fear the limitless void that surrounds us, screaming into its dark embrace like a child afraid of that which cannot be seen.

The stars reflect down upon us now, the brightest of which will guide the Sun back to its rightful place in the sky. We must seek this bright star, and remind it of its duty to bring the light of day back to Vimary. For if it lingers too long in its idle ways, it may soon lose its strength and fall from the curtain of night, leaving us in eternal darkness. A darkness in which all memories will fade and no hope will remain.

A Mother's Tears

Eva's Lamentation:

Mother of Mothers, heed my supplication.

I fear the worst from the edicts that have been set in motion. My Sister Fates are firm in their stance, but the consequences are shadowed and veiled, even to the Crone's farseeing eyes. We know already that the balance is in jeopardy, that we are slowly failing in the task we were set forth to accomplish. Our beliefs that our past faults would not return to haunt us were foolish and naïve.

Already we see the shift of chaos as more and more of our children fall away from our traditions and teachings. Not even Tera Sheba and Joan can keep the Fallen mass from swelling like a pestilent sore. We see it amongst the Dancers as well, for are they not as distant from us as any Fallen?

Poor Agnes, my guidance goes unheeded and She strays further and further from us with each passing day. She has yet to learn the grace of what it is to be a Fatima. She has been seen consorting with the Fallen, tempting fate with games that may permanently mar Her heart and soul. Why can She not see that the Fallen are toys that are best be left untouched? Dahlia does nothing to dissuade the Child's foolish behavior, and so it has become our duty to take measures to ensure the worst does not happen. . . but the lesson is severe indeed and I question its wisdom.

Magdalen has said that the Child has no love for us because She has never truly known who we are — that Agnes was born a stranger even to Her own self. The dangers are great and the chance of losing Agnes forever is almost too much for me to bear. Still, Baba Yaga has seen Agnes' destiny, and assures me that the Child will endure, but does it need to happen like this?

In our struggle to bring Her back, we may lose any hope of ever having Her stand by our side.

I pray, Mother, that you keep the Child safe and guarded, that you protect Her where I cannot; for She knows not the dangers and trials that lie ahead.



Chapter One: Spark of Innocence

These sorrows,
Carry upon my soul
These memories,
Of things as yet untold
These secrets,
Struggling to unfold
Shall carry forth,
Upon my Daughter's mold

— Marian Prayer



Introduction to Trial by Fire

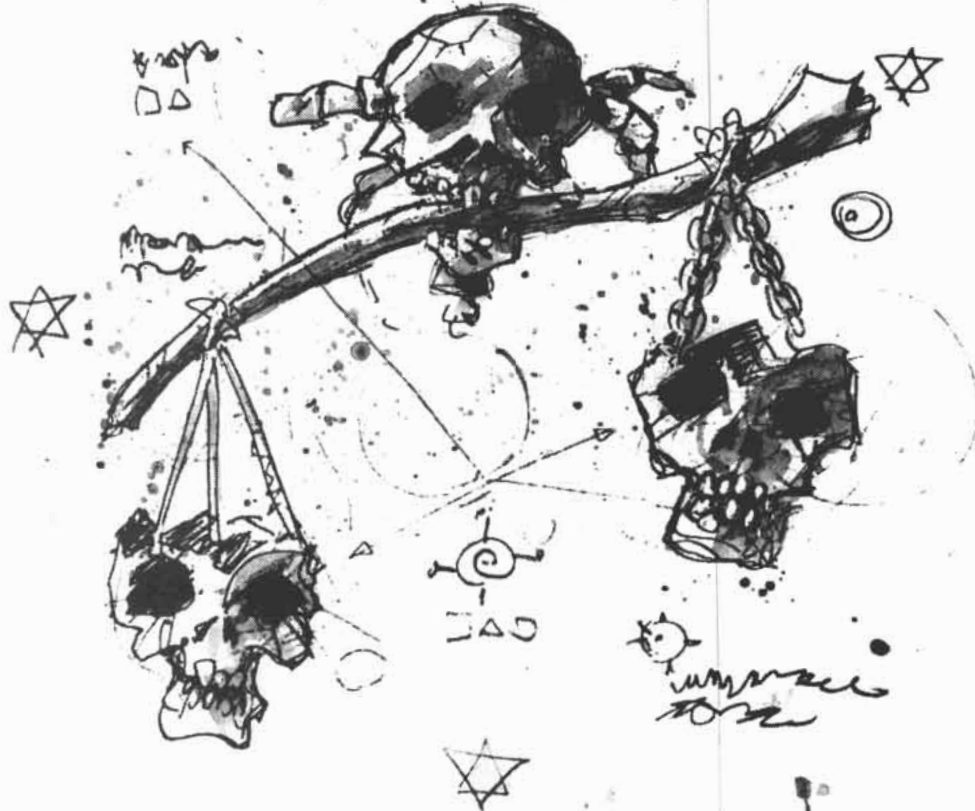
Trial by Fire is the third part of the Children of Prophecy Cycle for **Tribe 8**, and deals with a Tribal Inquisition sparked by a conspiracy between the Fates and the Baron of the H'l Kar. These events conclude the Children of Prophecy story arc that began with **Enemy of My Enemy** and continued with **Children of Lilith**. While having played **Enemy of My Enemy** is not vital to **Trial by Fire**, **Children of Lilith** should be familiar to the Players, or at the very least the Weaver. The Nation of Vimary and the world of **Tribe 8** are ever evolving and **Trial by Fire** carries on that evolution.

If you intend to play in **Trial by Fire**, read no further. The following information is for the Weaver only.

Trial by Fire is a rite of passage for the Fallen. The Fallen are caught up in a conspiracy that places them at the sharp edge of the Nation's wrath. Agnes, the Child Fatima, is placed in extreme danger by the Fates and, when the plan goes wrong, the Fallen are blamed. An Inquisition unlike any other forces the Fallen to seek their identity and unite as a single people, finally showing the Nation and the Fatimas themselves that they truly are the Children of Prophecy.

There are four Quests in **Trial by Fire**, the first and last somewhat more defined than the second and third. This framework allows the story to be used to explore the world of **Tribe 8**. There are many opportunities here for the Weaver to implement her own sub-plots and storylines, although the overriding effect the Inquisition has on the Fallen cannot be ignored. The tragedies and ultimate successes of the Fallen have a long and lasting effect on all the residents of Vimary.

The Weaver can adapt the scenes in each act to suit her own play style, making **Trial by Fire** her own creation. Many NPCs can be modified, or replaced with existing characters in an ongoing cycle, although a few major NPCs (such as those in the Cabal of Deliverance) are integral to the story. While the dynamics of Vimary will change, and take on new shape and form as **Trial by Fire** progresses, the Player Characters can have a direct effect on the setting by taking an active role in all of the challenges ahead.



Secret of the Fates

The **Trial by Fire** is set in motion long before the Fallen are actually involved. Agnes continues to grow away from Her Sisters and ignores the responsibilities of Her birthright. The Fates decide that Agnes must be instructed in Her own divinity, and hatch a plot to bring Agnes over to their way of thinking.

Baba Yaga, many years ago, banished a man named Kolrig, a member of Her Tribe, for withholding information on a secret Marian Artifact. Kolrig, once a Yagan Mordred, came across a hidden valley in the Duskfall Forest. There, he discovered a part of himself that he never knew existed, for Kolrig was actually an "unawakened" Marian. His instincts told him that Baba Yaga would use the Marian Artifact for Her own devices, not respecting the memory of Her Sister, and so he kept the knowledge from Her. Baba Yaga, of course, found out about Kolrig's secret and banished him for his insolence. The Fatima of Death kept the information on the Marian Artifact to Herself until the time was right.

She slowly planted seeds of desire in Agnes by sending the Child Fatima visions of Mary and the Artifact. She planned to let the Child loose when the time was right. After the Lilith affair, Baba Yaga convened with Magdalen and told Her to make a deal with the Baron. She knew the Marian Artifact would spiritually weaken Agnes so that She could be placed in the Baron's custody. The Fates hoped that through exposure to the Z'bri, Agnes would gain an appreciation of the carefully maintained balance between the Seed and the Goddess. It was a dangerous proposition, but Magdalen was fully supportive of it as Baba Yaga assured Her that Agnes' destiny lay along that path. Eva, on the other hand, voiced Her concerns, but was not ready to vote against Her Sister Fates. If Agnes' lesson was to involve the Z'bri, then so be it, although Eva's guilt over the deceit grew by the minute. Baba Yaga assured the worried Mother that Agnes would return to them, although even the Old Crone could not be certain in what capacity.

Meanwhile, Kolrig was more than displeased with his Fatima's response to the uncovering of his secret and soon joined with several other Fallen who had been directly wronged by their Fatimas. The Herite Cell called themselves the Cabal of Deliverance and began to plot ways to gain the power of the Seven Deaths for their own uses. Unknowingly, they played right into the hands of the Melanis society known as the Covenant. Joined together by John the Revealer, the Cabal of Deliverance realized that the Marian Artifact that Kolrig called the Tear of Forgiveness could be used to lure Agnes into a position of vulnerability. If they could recover it before the Fatimas, their coup — their quest for godlike power — was certain to succeed. . . all with a little Melanis aid, of course. The conspiracy of the Fates would coincidentally provide the perfect cover for the Cabal and the Covenant alike.

Trial by Fire sees the Fallen placed in the middle of a power struggle that takes an unexpected turn, as the Fates, the Baron, the Cabal of Deliverance and the Covenant all set their plans in motion. The resulting Inquisition of the Fallen Heresy — blamed for Agnes' capture — has Tera Sheba used as a pawn by Her Sisters, resulting in a rift between Joan and Tera Sheba on their views of the Fallen.

The Fallen rise above the flames and present themselves as united, blessed by the Goddess and Joshua's Prophecy.

Contents

Trial by Fire begins with a narrative that sets the stage for upcoming events. The narrative shows the different perspectives of several focal individuals in Virmary. The prelude offers Weavers a number of opportunities to introduce their Players into the story. The hooks found therein can easily be adapted to individual PCs, generating interest in the opening Quest of **Trial by Fire**.

Trial by Fire consists of four Quests, starting with *Spark of Innocence*. This Quest entangles the Fallen in a Tribal/Z'bri conspiracy that results in the capture of the Child Fatima by a secret and hidden sect of House Melanis — the Covenant. The Fallen return to Hom to report the news of Agnes' abduction, while the Tribal Grand Council convenes on the topic of the Fallen Heresy.

Quest Two, *Fanning the Flames* has the Fallen feel the wrath of the Tribes as the Fates instruct Tera Sheba to deal with the Outcasts in whatever manner She deems necessary. The resulting battle causes Hom to be set aflame as the Fallen struggle to survive. The Fallen Elders, realizing that Hom is a lost cause, give the order to evacuate the island, since it no longer has the ability to protect its residents. The Fallen abandon Hom and search for answers elsewhere.

Burnt Offerings, the third Quest of **Trial by Fire**, has the Fallen groping for survival as the Inquisition roots them out of their many and varied hiding places. The Fallen continue to investigate, hoping to uncover the true reasons behind the Inquisition, supported by an underground network of allies. The Elders of Hom mount a final plea to the Nation for mercy, but are betrayed by their oppressors and are sent to stand trial. A subsequent rescue of the Fallen Elders ends with the tragic loss of two prominent members of the Eighth Tribe at the hands of the Inquisition. *The Proclamation of Veruka* gives the Children of Prophecy the guidance and direction they need to right the trespasses that have been made against them.

The final Quest, *Raising the Torch* has Joan's Sisterhood side with the Fallen, against the Nation's wishes, and join them in their attempt to rescue Agnes. The Crusaders enter the H'I Kar and root out the Covenant Stronghold with a vengeance. Agnes is liberated, but the lesson She was intended to learn has a lasting effect on Her. The Fallen return to Vimary, their triumph demonstrating that they truly are the children of Joshua's prophecy. They rise above the hatred of the Nation and set the foundation for the Eighth Tribe's eventual redemption.

Format

The Quests are presented in a consistent format to assist Weavers in running the campaign. There is a short narrative at the beginning of each Quest to set the mood. The characters in these narratives help the Weaver get a sense of perspective, illustrating the various viewpoints of those involved.

Following the narrative at the beginning of each Quest is a Quest Overview. These Overviews aid the Weaver with a general layout of what occurs within each Quest and an overall sequence of events. Quest One has a unique Weaver's Introduction that describes the cells that begin the story with the PCs.

The Quests are broken into Acts, which are further divided into Scenes, in the order that the events take place. The Acts cover a varied amount of time, some describing only a few short hours of game-time, while others span entire months in the world. Each Act opens with a Backstory, which connects the events of the preceding Act with those of the current one. The Scenes give point by point instructions on how the Weaver can construct the story and deliver it to the Players. While some scenes are plot oriented, others are very open to character motivations and sub-plots. The focus on either is clearly stated where necessary. The scenes flow from one to another, moving the timeline of **Trial by Fire** along until its inevitable conclusion. There are also many vital characters to the scenes included in the Weaver's Section for added detail.

Embers of Deliverance wraps up the events of this stage in the cycle by detailing the consequences of **Trial by Fire**. The lasting effects on the Nation of Vimary, the Tribes, the Z'bri Houses and the Eighth Tribe are all clearly presented, allowing the Weaver to confidently carry on her Cycle after all the Quests are completed.

Weaver's Resources introduces the major plot milestones which occur during the Trial, as well as the details of the major factions of **Trial by Fire**, such as the Cabal of Deliverance, the Covenant and the Inquisition. Major characters are also given write-ups, including game statistics, at the end of the section.

Children of Lilith: Synopsis

Children of Lilith precedes **Trial by Fire**, and the events of that book should be familiar to the Weaver. While having played Children of Lilith is not vital to running and using **Trial by Fire**, it is assumed that the storyline has developed along similar lines. If the Weaver has not developed her **Tribe 8** cycle to the end of Lilith's reign, then she can do so by simply following the synopsis presented here.

The first Cycle Supplement, Children of Lilith, began with a prelude, *Enemy of My Enemy*. There, a Joshuan was found and knowledge of his village, Magog, set the stage for Lilith's arrival. At the beginning of Children of Lilith, the Fallen journey to Magog and witness the birth of a Fatima, Lilith the Liberator, Daughter of Joshua. They return to Vimary where the Fallen form a faction around the new Fatima, called the Children of Lilith, whose first and most loyal supporter is Ardatli Maque. Lilith leads the Fallen, who are fractured by Her presence — some support Her, while others feel She oppresses the freedom of the Eighth Tribe. All are unaware that Lilith is in fact a puppet and construct of Dahlia, who wishes to teach the Fallen a harsh lesson. The Tribes revolt against the "False Fatima," but Lilith defends the Eighth Tribe with an intensity that shows that Joshua may actually be within Her.

Dahlia realizes that Lilith is growing beyond Her control, although She does nothing to stop it. The Fatima of Change continues to play Her games. The Pillars finally stand to put an end to Lilith and Her devout faction, resulting in a face-off of Fatimas. Dahlia removes Her power from Lilith, shocking the Eighth Tribe as they realize that Lilith's reign has been a farce. However, Lilith is infused with the belief of Her followers and claims the Force of Her Father, Joshua. She strikes out at Tera Sheba, but Joan takes the wound that was meant for Her judgmental Sister. Tera Sheba takes up Her ax of justice and slays Lilith. Joan, wounded and wracked with guilt, takes Lilith's dying form to the Watchtower where She holds vigil, awaiting a sign from the Goddess to guide Her to Her true purpose.

The Fallen, shattered by Dahlia's trickery and Tera Sheba's judgment of the False Fatima, continue to look for the signs and omens that will guide them to their destiny.

Weaving Trial by Fire

The events of **Trial by Fire** take place over the span of most of a year, from spring to fall. The first Quest, *Spark of Innocence*, begins with the unlocking of winter's cold grasp on Vimary, as flowers bloom and the land is planted with the seeds of life. The first Quest is short in comparison to the events that follow it, taking about a week in total.

The second Quest, *Fanning the Flames*, takes place during the spring, as the siege of Hom carries on. *Fanning the Flames* can take as long as the Weaver wishes, being very open in narrative and plot. There is ample room for the Weaver to run various plot lines, although the state of the Nation does add a degree of danger to any actions that the Fallen may attempt. The locales and seeds from previous books, especially Vimary and the Rulebook, can be used to their fullest. This is intentional, as **Trial by Fire** is a Cycle Supplement that progresses the storyline on a large scale. The Weaver's personal stories and characters are meant to be slotted into the cycle at opportune times, not buried by the weight of the over-arching plot. *Fanning the Flames* is meant to take place over a relatively long period of time as the summer passes by and the Inquisition carries out its hateful task. The Quest ends with the Fallen Elders seeking an audience with the Grand Council, an event that takes place at the end of summer.

The rescue in Quest Three, *Burnt Offerings*, occurs at the end of summer or early fall, although the later in the year, the better. The threat of a harsh winter lays heavily on everyone's mind. The Trial of Heresy is very short in relation to the Inquisition, and is the cue upon which **Trial by Fire** tightens its timeline and reenters into a more streamlined narrative.

Quest Four, *Raising the Torch*, is comprised of a Crusade into the H'l Kar, which happens sometime in the fall. The success of the Fallen is vital to ensuring the Eighth Tribe's survival in the fast-approaching winter. The conclusion of **Trial by Fire** takes place once the Fallen return to Vimary, where they must prepare for winter on the devastated island of Hom. With a lack of supplies and warm shelters in the aftermath of the Inquisition, the weeks quickly pass by.

Detail

The scenes presented in the various Quests are highly detailed, with a large number of NPC actions already scripted. This is intended as an aid for Weavers, but is not necessary for the successful run of **Trial by Fire** in a campaign or one-shot setting. The story, here, is ultimately up to the Weaver to create. If you disagree with anything that occurs, or wish to change the details provided, feel free to do so. There are a few events that must take place over the course of this milestone to ensure that any future events mesh with the over-arching plotline of **Tribe 8**, should that be a concern of the group in question; please see the Weaver's Section, p. 98 for details.

Themes

As the concluding chapter of the **Children of Prophecy** Cycle, **Trial by Fire** introduces the Eighth Tribe's coming of age. Historically, many cultures have marked a child's transition from juvenility to adulthood with overwhelming and bloody rituals. The Eighth Tribe's rite of passage is no less scarring; by its end, the Fallen have been reduced to a fraction of their former numbers, and none can claim to have survived without injury or loss. Their transition to adulthood is ultimately successful, however, and is brought into focus in the final Quest, when the Fallen take the reigns from the doddering Tribes and rescue the lost Fatima.

The Fallen's coming of age has a parallel in the growth of the child Fatima, Agnes. Like the Fallen, She has long been manipulated by Her older Sisters, the Fates, and wishes to assert Her independence. Furthermore, Agnes has yet to demonstrate to Her Sisters that she is ready for any great responsibility, which is very similar to the situation between the Fallen and their Tribal detractors. Agnes, like the Eighth Tribe, emerges from **Trial by Fire** with a stronger sense of identity, and the will to take a firmer hand in Her own destiny.



 Atmosphere

Trial by Fire, if it can be said to have a single, pervasive atmosphere, is a story of transformation. As such, each of the story's parts requires a unique treatment that differentiates it from those preceding and following, while providing a thread of connection between them. The primary tools to use to effect strong changes in atmosphere are the NPCs and the concept of symbolism.

As with any rite of passage, the story begins with childhood and immaturity. Symbolized, of course, by Agnes' appearance in Quest One, the immaturity of the Fallen is also evinced by the doomed Cell, The Broken Word, which clearly should never have been allowed to undertake such a dangerous journey. The first Quest should definitely carry an atmosphere of childish naivete and fear. The Weaver is encouraged to start off on a positive note, as the excited NPC adventurers make haste to their destination without thought to the dangers that may await them. When things start to go wrong, the prevalent reactions among NPCs should be disbelief and panic, to eventually be replaced by a final despondent recognition of their own infantile helplessness.

The story continues with the Fallen reeling in the confusion of their adolescent state. Inner turmoil cripples them while the Shadow Watch and Inquisition loom, much like a troubled teen's depiction of her authoritarian parents, and fair-weather friends desert or betray them. The Weaver can again use NPCs to illustrate the physical and emotional vulnerability of the Fallen people as a whole, as opposed to the strength of their organized and ruthless opponents.

The brutality inflicted upon the Fallen by the Tribes eventually becomes a catalyst for change. Although certain representatives have always advocated united action, this is the point when the Fallen finally begin to act together to save themselves. Sincere, loyal and resolute NPCs can be brought in to get the Players involved in the overall spirit of mutual survival. The trials endured may well cement bonds between characters that will endure for life.

The final stage in the transformation begins when the Fallen move beyond the base concerns of security and survival. The rescue of Agnes showcases their willingness to act on the part of others, a virtue that has been found profoundly lacking in the Seven Tribes throughout the Inquisition. Fallen NPCs should be brave and selfless, while Tribal NPCs will feel compelled to express their admiration. The visible change that has come over Agnes by the time the PCs bring Her back from the H'I Kar is resonant with their own growth as a nation. It is a time of triumph for the Eighth Tribe, and the Weaver should leave the Players feeling that they have just participated in a turning point of **Tribe 8's** history.

 Quest Prelude

There are several options presented and detailed below for the Weaver to draw the PCs into the Cycle. While these are not, by any means, the only ways to hook the PCs, they do offer various ideas on seamlessly weaving the Quests into an ongoing cycle. The Weaver is encouraged to adapt the following hooks to better suit the needs of her Players.

Deliverers' Deviance: The Cabal of Deliverance should ideally be introduced long before the **Trial by Fire** Quests are set in motion. The Cabal members spend most of their time in and around Hom. Only once the Cabal learns of Agnes' plans via the Covenant do some of their members disappear behind the scenes. Hence, John the Revealer and the other members who are not encountered until late in the story, as it is written, may be quite familiar and even friendly with the PCs before it begins. Once a relationship is created, the Cabal can be used as often as the Weaver wishes, leading into **Trial by Fire**.

At some point, once the Cabal realizes that their dreams are on the verge of coming to fruition, Kolrig begins speaking to the PCs about the Valley of the Shrine, and the Marian Artifact within that led to his banishment. The PCs, if they don't volunteer to explore the Valley, may be asked to accompany the Cabal on its Quest. The Cabal knows that Agnes has to be dealt with, so they accept any aid they can get.

Brave Daughter: Ardatli Maque still carries on her forays into the Duskfall Forest and the borders of the H'I Kar. The Children of Lilith who are working in Duskfall are visited by the brave leader, and the PCs may be invited to come along. Ardatli has connections with Hannibal of the Cabal of Deliverance and he states that his Cell also has reasons for traveling to the north. The PCs, if they don't know the Cabal members, can be introduced to them at this time, or better yet, they may already know Hannibal and the others and receive word that the Cabal will be accompanying Ardatli on her quest. Rumor has it that they also have word of a powerful artifact within the depths of the forest.

River Rapids: PCs with the Dreaming skill (or Doomsayer characters) may listen to the visions they receive from the Goddess. The PCs have dreams of both the Tear of Forgiveness and Joshua's Prophecy. The omens signify that the Artifact is tied to the Destiny of the Eighth tribe, leading the Dreamers to investigate its history. Kolrig is pleased to learn of others who feel that the Tear is a key to the future and draws the PCs into joining him and his Cell on a Quest to find it.

Winding Roads: Rumors of a secret valley within the Duskfall forest may be enough for adventurous PCs. A map of the Valley of the Shrine, along with lore of a lost Marian Artifact, can entice the PCs to travel to the north. If the PCs are already in the Duskfall Forest on other business, Ardatli and the Cabal are encountered on their own Quests. This "friends in the forest" coincidence is easily implemented if the PCs are not very driven or don't have many allies who would ask for their help in Hom. Once the PCs are immersed in the dangers of the Duskfall forest, joining forces with other cells can be presented as a very good idea.

An Unkept Secret: PCs with backgrounds that offer them hidden knowledge (such as Sheban Lorekeepers, Yagan Mordreds, Magdalite Diplomats, Joanite Hermit Blades or Keepers — and the rare instance of awakened Marians) have heard of the Tear of Forgiveness and the Valley of the Shrine. These PCs can have a personal interest in the Marian Artifact that brings the entire Cell into the Quests of Trial by Fire.



Quest One: Spark of Innocence

I bow my head in worship, and bend my knee in prayer. Send your blessings down upon us, Forgiver, and pardon us for our sins. For the sin of aggression and the sin of denial, for the sin of defiance and the sin of blind obedience, for the sins of the mothers and the sins of the children. Send your blessings down upon us, and on the Child who rose from your grace. Give Her your love and Purify Her soul, for Her trials will be many and Her fate uncertain. Send us your blessings, that we might honor your name.

— Prayer for the Child, Freydis Wild'on



Weaver's Introduction

The beginning of the story finds the PCs accompanying several other cells of Fallen in a quest that uncovers a shadowy pact. Depending on the Hook used the PCs may be involved for differing reasons, but the result is the same — the Valley of the Shrine, the resting place of Mary's *Tear of Forgiveness*, is rediscovered after close to a generation of being forgotten.

During the journey to the Valley of the Shrine, the PCs have ample opportunity to become acquainted with the other Fallen that join them on the quest. Their importance to the story is detailed here, while the role of the cells and individuals within the plot itself are dealt with in the bodies of the respective acts themselves.

The Liberty Circle: the lead Cell of the expedition, led by Ardatli Maque of the Children of Lilith (*Children of Lilith* p. 85). The Cell consists exclusively of Children of Lilith. The second character who plays an important role in the story is Lucas, a Fallen Evan. The other members of the Cell are Kallisti, Varna and Laban. The Liberty Circle's primary concern, besides meeting up with questing Children of Lilith, is to see that the Marian Artifact which they have heard rumor of does not fall into the hands of the Fatimas. They are quite talkative throughout the journey and are friendly to all the PCs.

The Cabal of Deliverance: a Herite Cell that has decided to take extreme measures to reach their goals, they are largely responsible for the entire mission, although this will not necessarily be evident to the Players. Present at the start of the story are Kolrig, Sarah and Hannibal. For further details on the Cabal of Deliverance, see the *Weaver's Resources* chapter, p. 99. Kolrig interacts the most with the PCs during the journey and states that his Cell is there to help the Liberty Circle save the Marian Artifact and prevent it from entering Fatimal control. They do not, under any circumstances, reveal their true intentions of usurping Fatimal power. (The Weaver should note that John the Revealer is in the Duskfall forest, awaiting a dream message from Kolrig.)

Erin's Destroyers: a Jacker Cell led by Erin Swordbreaker. She is an abrasive person who has a volatile relationship with the members of her Cell. They argue constantly, as though they were enemies, but observant PCs may notice a tight bond between them. Accompanying Erin are Kerik, Gina Gorand, Mountain, The Black Cherub, Freida and Monette. Erin's Destroyers speak very little with those outside their Cell and pay only cursory attention to any orders or discussions taking place. Their only mission is to destroy any opposition to the Quest, whether it be from Z'bri, Squats, Tribals or the unknown. The Weaver should portray them as being a powerful and frightening bunch who hold an air of disdain for anyone who tries to spark conversation with them. For further details on Erin's Destroyers, see *Weaver's Resources*, p. 100.

The Broken Word: a mixed Cell led by a Sheban Doomsayer named Darius, they are anything but adventurous; however, they do mean well. Vikas is the most noteworthy character amongst them and is dealt with in detail later. The remaining members include Abel, an Agnite Jacker; Lars, a Dahlian Herite; and Mae, a Joanite Lightbringer. The members of the Broken Word each feel as though they have been deceived and tricked by the Fatimas and seek the "truth" behind the lies. They hope to discover more of the forbidden legends of Mary at the rumored Shrine. See *Weaver's Resources*, p. 100.

Sala: a Yagan Jacker, he travels for his own reasons and does not attach himself to the cells mentioned above. The Weaver can use him as an NPC that either becomes strongly tied to the PC Cell, or as a loner that follows his own agenda. See p. 107 for a full writeup.

Aside from the cells mentioned above, the group will meet up with about a dozen Children of Lilith who carry on their duties of fighting Chained within the Duskfall forest. They will follow Ardatli's command once they meet the quest group and travel with them the rest of the way.

Quest Overview

In *Spark of Innocence* the Fallen embark on a quest to recover a Marian Artifact called the *Tear of Forgiveness*. With the first act the group arrives at the *Valley of the Shrine* and investigates a forgotten Marian Shrine. The PCs find the Tear and attempt to take it with them to Hom, so that the Guides and Elders can explore its history and potential. The plan, however, fails even before it really begins.

Agnes, who has been manipulated into searching out the Tear of Forgiveness by the Fates, arrives as the Fallen prepare to leave the Valley of the Shrine. It is all part of a scheme that the Fates implement to teach their younger, rebellious Sister a lesson. The Fates secretly arrange for Z'bri under the Baron to capture Agnes. They intend for Her to be weakened by Her contact with the Marian Artifact, and be held in the Baron's custody to learn of the Z'bri's true evil. The Baron agrees with the Fatimal agenda, since he feels the Pact of the Dome needs further strengthening in order to stabilize his rule. The Z'bri assigned to the mission have their own goals, however, and use the situation to their advantage.

The Fallen soon find themselves blamed for the entire affair, as a Cadre of Joanites draw false assumptions. The Fallen fight to survive the battle in the Valley, and return to Hom to warn the others of imminent Tribal vengeance.

Spark of Innocence is the catalyst that ignites the **Trial by Fire**.

Quest One, Act One: Valley of the Shrine

It was hard to imagine such a tranquil sanctuary amidst the bleakness of the forest around us. It was like a gift from the Goddess, and I knew that we had found the place that would unlock the mysteries of Mary. More importantly, however, I knew that our time was fast at hand. If the Tear of Forgiveness still remained here, as it did all those years ago when I first discovered it, then all the secrets of the Fatimas would soon be revealed. Its existence alone was enough to cause an upheaval in the fragile Nation, but we would not rest there. No, for Mary's Tear would be the weapon that would place us, the Fallen, in the rightful position we so deserved — as leaders of our own destiny.

— Kolrig, of the Cabal of Deliverance



Backstory

The Cell arrives at the Valley of the Shrine, located on the northern peninsula of the Duskfall Forest, after a few days journey. They know of a Marian Artifact that is somewhere in the valley, and soon discover a lost shrine. While this occurs, Chainers, led by Eth'ian of Melanis, are on their way to the valley to await Agnes' arrival. Agnes, the Child Fatima, brings some of Her Favorites to the valley to retrieve the Marian Artifact. The Fates hope that the Artifact will allow Agnes to be taken by the waiting Z'bri, and that she will grow from Her forthcoming harrowing experience.

The Cells should be together by this time and meet with the Children of Lilith that work out of the Duskfall forest. This makes for a rather sizable number of Fallen, but with the forest's native hazards there is relative safety in numbers.

Scene 1 - Forbidden Fruit

The Valley of the Shrine is a beautiful, vibrant place with an aura of unearthly calm. A large waterfall dominates the northern edge of the valley, running off into a series of streams and pools that head eastward, towards a lake several clicks away. The waterfall cascades down a rocky slope, bordered on both sides by thick layers of moss and bushes. Flowers grow along the stream, creating a fragrance that wafts on the cool air. The Duskfall encroaches upon the western and southern edges, the unkempt, wild flora seemingly respecting the valley's borders. The Players feel that there is a magical touch to the valley as they investigate, overwhelmed by its otherworldliness.

It is obvious, after a short search, that a shrine exists hidden behind the waterfall. Kolrig of the Cabal of Deliverance knows the exact location of the shrine, but will pretend to be just as excited by its discovery as everyone else. The entrance is of finely chiseled stone, carved into the cliff face, lending support to the suggestion that it is a Marian creation. The floor inside consists mainly of gravel loosely strewn about and is largely overgrown with moss, however, there still seems to be a certain level of maintenance, even to an untrained eye. This is due to the dream-like qualities of the Artifact that lies within. The Players can take any precautions they wish, but there is no danger present at this time.

Shrine of the Forgiver

The shrine is rather simple in design, consisting of the short entrance that leads to a circular chamber carved into the cliff-face. This is the main prayer hall and the location of the Tear of Forgiveness. The chamber has the history of Mary and Her tribe inscribed upon its walls — a wealth of knowledge previously undiscovered. Anyone so inclined can research the lost Fatima, Mary. The Weaver should feel free to grant some information about Mary and Her Tribe, using the opportunity to develop the Players' knowledge of Tribal history (**T8 Companion** pp. 13-21). The Broken Word is very interested in these markings. The writing on the walls also depicts the Tear of Forgiveness, allowing the PCs to learn the Artifact's name.

The rest of the chamber is rather sparse in the way of features, save for the pillars that help support the ceiling, and the central dais that holds the Artifact. A small, foot-wide moat runs around an octagonal dais, which rises shoulder height from the floor. The top of the dais holds a wreath of tightly woven ivy. The leaves are not dry or cracked, as they are nourished by the Tear of Forgiveness which lies upon them. The Tear itself gives off a warm glow that generates a sense of calm. Any anxieties that the PCs may be experiencing seem lulled while in the Tear's presence.

Ardatli organizes those under her command to search the shrine thoroughly. Erin's Destroyers stay a fair distance from the Tear and maintain a post outside the Shrine once all is determined to be safe (much to their chagrin). The Broken Word is enamored by the Tear and get overly close to the Artifact, examining it like a jewel. Of course, the most interested is the Cabal of Deliverance. Kolrig seems to glow with ambition as he gazes at the Tear. Hannibal adopts a serious demeanor, making sure no one physically touches the Tear or surrounding paraphernalia. Sarah approaches the Tear transfixed, thoughts of the power it will bring swimming through her mind. The PCs have their own interests and may examine the Shrine, the dais or the Artifact for any details.

Test of the Faithful

The moat is quite harmless and is a symbol of the River of Dream. The water itself is siphoned from the waterfall and enters as droplets from above, descending gently to rest in the tiny moat. The dais represents the original eight Fatimas and the wreath is an element of Mary's symbol. The wreath is the only way to safely transport the Tear, and is easily lifted from the dais. Should one of the PCs decide to touch the Tear of Forgiveness, Sala will scream out a warning. If the PCs don't touch the Tear, one of the members of the Broken Word does (the Weaver should use someone besides Vikas).

Regardless of who actually physically touches the Tear, the following effect overcomes the character and sends a ripple through the River of Dream. The victim is assaulted by the River of Dream and is stuck by an uncontrollable amount of pure Dream essence. They must make a PSY roll vs. 8, the MoF being the number of rounds the character is stricken by the torrent of energy. The effects take place instantly upon touching the Tear, so that it does not fall from the wreath. Using any devices to try to prod the Tear off of the wreath result in a similar effect. The only safe way to transport the Tear is simply to use the wreath. Carrying the wreath with the Tear upon it has no adverse effects on a character.

During the confusion created by the effects of the Tear's powers, several Fallen leave the Shrine for a breath of air and a chance to clear their heads. Kolrig slips out of the Shrine and makes his way to the forest's edge. Kolrig should leave the valley unhindered. He is in fact on his way to send a dream message to John the Revealer, in order to rendezvous with him and the Melanis.

While Kolrig makes good his escape and initiates the Cabal's plans, Ardatli becomes infuriated at whoever touched the Tear. She orders someone, likely a Doomsayer, to gather the Artifact and prepare to leave the valley. She fears that the disturbance in the River of Dream caused by the Tear will draw the attention of a Fatima or a powerful Z'bri. Unfortunately for her, she's right. The Broken Word delays the group's departure as they waste time getting imprints of the inscriptions on the walls of the Shrine.

Agnes, who is already on Her way to the valley, feels the pull of the Marian Artifact only minutes away. She uses a powerful display of Eminence and looks into the River of Dream. She sees through the eyes of the person who touched the Tear and becomes infuriated that others have found Her new toy before She could. She gathers Her Favorites around Her and dives into a stream nearby — a stream that joins the waterfall and subsequently leads to the Valley of the Shrine.

Scene 2 - Sticks and Stones

The Fallen, under Ardatli's strict command, make preparations to leave the valley with the Tear in their possession. Erin's Destroyers seem perturbed at the lack of obstacles so far. They gripe about how their boredom has them agitated and of their hopes to encounter some Chained during the journey home. It's the most talkative the Cell has been to this point.

The Broken Word is concerned with the well being of the Fallen who touched the Tear, whether it was one of them, or a PC. Vikas states that he received a vision himself, but this is untrue. He simply wants to make himself feel important during all the commotion.

Just before the Fallen are ready to leave, Agnes arrives. She rises from one of the pools at the base of the waterfall, Her hands raised above Her and Her head lolled back. Her eyes flash with anger and menace and She scans the entourage for the holder of the Tear. Around Her, Agnites armed with long, serrated blades also rise from the waves. In their Fatima's presence, they hold an aura of spite and malice. Dripping with water, Agnes opens Her mouth and wails into the air, Her voice echoing in the valley. The Agnites step from the stream with shoulders hunched and eyes focused on all before them. More than four dozen Agnites confront the Fallen, each wielding a weapon and wearing tattered armor. Their faces are painted with colorful, jagged lines, as are other exposed areas of skin, including their arms and legs.

Notable amongst the Agnites is Billy Wick, one of Agnes' Favorites. He stands in front of the others and looks back at Agnes for a moment. Agnes then steps forward and begins to speak.

Battle Cry

"You have taken something that belongs to me. I was your friend, but now I see that you are selfish and mean." She then stares at whomever holds the Tear. "You shouldn't have taken that. . . but you did, and now you have to die!" With that, the Agnites scream out in wicked, childish laughter and start to attack the Fallen.

Should the PCs act before Agnes has a chance to state Her purpose, She yells out a similar threat during the battle. Agnes continues to rant, pouting and sulkily, about how She has been wronged by the Fallen. Agnes attempts to make Her way straight to the Tear of Forgiveness. Those who try to confront Her directly had best think twice. She bats aside any resistance in annoyance, using all the Eminences and Aspects at Her disposal. Agnes Herself does not actually kill anyone, but the side effects of Her attention allow the Agnites around Her to make the best of the situation.

The Agnites attack in unorthodox patterns, and do not follow any traditional tactics or practices. They use vast amounts of Synthesis, further hindering the Fallen defenses with Capriciousness and Inspiration. Several Agnites, including Billy Wick, have the Aspects of Wonder and Naivete. Stones rise from the ground to strike the Fallen, and weapons seem to fight of their own accord. It is difficult for the Fallen to make organized attacks and defenses in the face of such chaos. Communication amongst the Fallen is confused as words are understood with more literal meanings. Hence, a call by someone to "Watch my back," or "Feint against their attacks" will be met with a puzzled look ("Faint?"). This is true for any complex tactics and orders. The Weaver should have fun with this, even as both sides suffer losses. Fighting Agnites should be anything but mundane. This is represented by all Tactics and Leadership rolls at -2 for the remainder of the scene.

Child's Play

The Children of Lilith defend themselves well against the Agnites and do not purposefully kill any of them. They maintain a defensive stance and pull their blows against the Tribal children whenever possible. They are torn as to what to do in the present conflict with a Fatima, in light of their loss of Lilith. The Destroyers, on the other hand, have no such qualms. Erin and her Cell use the fight to inflict as much damage as possible on the Tribal children, maiming and slaying as they go. They receive a couple major injuries during the fight and perhaps a casualty. They revel in the madness around them. The Broken Word is torn as to what to do, seeing the Children of Lilith using restraint on one end and the Destroyers' lack thereof on the other. The Broken Word suffer most of their losses at this time, their indecision allowing the Agnites to tear them to ribbons. Vikas is the only one smart enough to attach himself to a capable and defensive Child of Lilith or PC.

It may occur to a PC that the Tear of Forgiveness may weaken Agnes. If someone fails to point this out, Sarah or Sala does. Sarah wants this to happen, because it furthers her Cell's goals, and Sala sees the fate of the Fallen in a moment of clarity that only a Yagan can have. He intuitively knows that it must be done, but is not fully aware of the repercussions.

At some point, either Agnes reaches for the Tear, or the Fallen give it to Her. The battle plays out so that it climaxes with Agnes receiving the Tear. Once Agnes touches it, a spiritual wave ripples through the air and She screams in agony. All eyes are drawn to the Child Fatima's tortured cry. Light bursts from the Tear of Forgiveness and streams outwards from Her, the Tear itself exploding into countless drops expanding across a single plane above the heads of the combatants. The Tears hang in the air, suspended, and then strike back at Agnes, entering Her body through Her eyes. Agnes is lifted up from the ground by unseen hands and then dropped, dreamlike, to the ground below, Her scream echoing in the air.



Quest One: Act Two: Darkness Descends

Our time was near, and I felt elated as the signs that told of my destiny were at hand. Ever since my banishment, I had awaited this one opportunity to take back what was rightfully mine. . . that part of me that Agnes stole without remorse. To Her, I was just another Barren slave, but She will soon see that, although She may have long forgotten me, I have devoted my life to Her in ways She cannot even begin to imagine.

— Sarah of the Cabal of Deliverance

Backstory

The battle between the Agnites and the Fallen takes an unexpected turn as Kolrig of the Cabal of Deliverance, who left earlier in Act One, goes to notify the waiting Z'bri of the Covenant that an opportunity has arisen for Agnes' capture. Kolrig sends out a call through the River of Dream to contact John the Revealer (who has been with the Z'bri for a short time leading up to this day) and is directed to the location of the Melanis Chainers.

The Melanis meet up with Kolrig, who approaches them cautiously and with visible hesitation. Despite the grand goals that the Cabal hopes to achieve, the ex-Yagan feels the pressure of challenging a Fatima. Eth'ian of Melanis listens to Kolrig's words and decides that the opportunity is right to try to capture the arriving Agnes. He then organizes his ranks to close in on the Valley of the Shrine from the southwest.

By the time they begin their approach, the Fallen are engaged in combat with Agnes and Her followers. Eth'ian of Melanis is ostensibly under the Baron's orders to bind and return Agnes to the H'l Kar, having been assured that She will be weakened spiritually. He is, of course, secretly in league with Deacon Vytor, and intends to use the opportunity to take Agnes for the ultimate benefit of himself and the Covenant. He has with him only those who have greater allegiance to him than to the Baron, ensuring that the plan to capture Agnes does not fail.

Deacon Vytor (Vimary p. 122), meanwhile, is maintaining himself at the Baron's Palace to keep any questioners, and the inevitable searchers for Eth'ian, distracted and misinformed, allowing time for the Covenant's plans to proceed unhindered. Eth'ian is taking a great risk in disobeying the Baron's orders, both to his standing as a powerful Z'bri noble and in his quest to cross the fold, but feels that the possible rewards far outweigh any negative repercussions that may arise.

As far as the Cabal members are concerned, Kolrig and John the Revealer maintain a safe distance from the battle and are not seen. They wait for Hannibal and Sarah to leave the Valley of the Shrine, ideally shortly after the Z'bri attack. Hannibal fights bravely against the Agnites as well as the Chained and Serfs (once they arrive) but does not engage the Melanis themselves. He acts courageously and with honor for the majority of the upcoming scenes. Sarah fights the Agnites with a crazed fervor, showing absolutely no mercy toward the children of her former Tribe. Both Hannibal and Sarah escape the battle, either where mentioned or when convenient.

Scene 1 - Kidnapped

The Agnites continue to attack the PCs and the remaining Fallen as the Melanis Atmosphere starts to seep into the air. The characters feel an encroaching heaviness, one that clashes and swirls with Agnes' power of Dream. As soon as Agnes comes into contact with the Tear of Forgiveness, succumbing to its power, the Melanis arrive at the edge of the forest looking into the valley. Any PCs who investigate the approaching Atmosphere and are close to the forest's edge need to resist the Atmosphere first. The Cabal members are assumed to avoid being affected by the Atmosphere, having had previous contact with the Covenant. The Weaver should play up the fear factor, as Fallen forget the specifics of why they are in combat with the Agnites and where they are. Erin's Destroyers fight the Agnites with great pleasure and are responsible for the greatest numbers of dead among the Tribal Children.

Broken Dolls

Agnes lies in the center of the valley, a brilliant aura surrounding Her. The Agnites who were fighting so vigorously become dazed and scream in pain as their connection to their Fatima becomes increasingly muted. Anyone with Synthesis or Dreaming skills feels a massive tear in the fabric of reality as the River of Dream crashes into the physical realm, stemming from Agnes and flowing outwards. Those closest to Agnes feel this quite strongly and PSY rolls vs. 3 must be made in order to properly concentrate. Failure results in using the MoF as a negative modifier for 1d6 rounds.

The Melanis Atmosphere continues to permeate the air, forcing the PCs to make resistance rolls to keep from being affected. The Agnites suffer the effects automatically, each of them losing the memory of why Agnes took them to the Valley of the Shrine. Ardatli Maque and Lucas resist the Atmosphere, while Vikas fails miserably. His distorted recollection of events becomes important in the next Act. The Atmosphere influences the other characters to varying degrees. The Z'bri do not disguise their presence, so everyone sees them coming once they enter the valley; a frightening force intent on one thing, reaching Agnes.

The first wave is made up of Gek'roh (see **Weaver's Assistant** p. 41 for statistics), a ferocious mass of insane beasts intent on the death of all before them. Warrior Serfs, armed with bone weapons, claws and mutated appendages, follow shortly after. Eth'ian uses his best serfs for this attack, and the fighters are rather large, with liberal mutations. (see p. 110 for details) The PCs need to deal with a challenging number of Chained and serfs, about two to three serfs per character, over the course of the battle. The Chained, however, do not concentrate on specific people; rather they charge from one person to the next, rending and goring as they go. This keeps the Fallen confused, making it harder for them to form a defensive group and keeping them from ascertaining the over-all situation.

Fear the Reaper

Non-combatative PCs may support those engaged in the melee or attempt to disengage from the heat of the battle. The Weaver should not punish any PCs that seek cover and safety. While the south and west sides of the valley are closed off by Z'bri, the east by the Agnites and the north by the waterfall, escape is not impossible, especially to within the Shrine itself. The nature of the confrontation should feel something like a setup, but the very real need for survival takes priority.

PCs adept at arms have a chance to shine. The Weaver should scale the opposition to be challenging without completely maiming the entire PC Cell. While injuries are likely (as is death) in this sort of situation, having the PCs witness the deaths of their (NPC) friends and companions is more dramatic. Erin's Destroyers all perish during the Z'bri attack, as they are the main combatants amongst the Fallen. The Broken Word suffers many fatalities, the sole survivor being Vikas.

The Agnites are cut off from Dream (including the Agnites in Playground and the rest of Vimary), suffering from lost Equilibrium immediately after Agnes takes the Tear of Forgiveness. Any Fallen that attack the Agnites have an easy time, encountering minimal resistance after this point. The Chained and Serfs massacre the defenseless Agnites, ripping the screaming children apart in their frenzied attacks. This provides an interesting dilemma, as the PCs decide whether to defend those that just attacked them, or fend for themselves and let the Agnites get slaughtered.

The Children of Lilith and the Jackers try to re-assemble the Fallen to make a unified defense, but the speed of the Z'bri onslaught hinders this from successfully happening. The Melanis cut off the Children of Lilith with liberal uses of Animation on the surrounding landscape. The trees and roots come alive and start to grab them, dragging the Children into the dark folds of the forest. Any PCs near the edge of the valley have to make Dodge rolls to keep from being snagged by the grasping foliage. The danger of the animated woods makes instant escape an unlikely possibility.

The PCs may decide to retreat to the Shrine behind the waterfall. It is the one place the Melanis cannot affect with their Atmosphere; however, the Serfs do not hesitate to enter the shrine and close off anyone seeking solace therein. (Refer to the description of the Shrine in the previous Act to help run any melee that occurs inside the Shrine.)

Viper's Sting

At some point Hannibal aids one of the PCs, saving her from what would otherwise be certain death. He is carried off by Serfs who have specific orders to bring Hannibal to Kolrig (who awaits with John the Revealer) several clicks away. This is the perfect opportunity to paint Hannibal in a positive light as the PC may believe that he died saving her (making his allegiance with the Melanis a rather unpleasant surprise later in the story).

Eth'ian (Vimary, p. 123) calls forward the Melanis Chainers when he sees that most of the resistance is currently busy with the Chained and Serfs. Eth'ian, along with two Melanis Iv'chet, Rath'cal and Is'delim, cut a swathe through the ranks of the resisting Fallen and defenseless Agnites. They make their way to Agnes, who is on the ground, paralyzed. Eth'ian's Chainers surround Agnes and begin a well-rehearsed ritual. It is a powerful Chaining ritual that is intended to bind Agnes and keep Her from connecting to the River of Dream. The Ritual itself is rather useless, because the Tear of Forgiveness (not the Melanis) is the force keeping Agnes in a vulnerable state. The PCs may believe that the dark rites performed by the Chainers actually bind the Fatima. The ritual reeks of evil and exudes Atmospheric taint, forcing anyone in the direct vicinity to make Willpower rolls vs. 4 or be gripped by fear.

The PCs may want to fight their way to Agnes to prevent the Melanis from capturing Her, but the sheer number of Serfs and Gek'roh should keep them from getting there on time. Sala screams out a warning against getting too close to the ritual, stating that the Sundering will destroy anyone who gets too close. Any PCs who somehow manage to get near Agnes see that She is in a trance and is completely unaware of what is being done to Her. Anyone foolish enough to touch Agnes while She is being bound is to be dealt the worst punishment the Weaver can dream up, including but not limited to being chained with some horrible inanimate object and being forced to deal with life thereafter.

Poison Kiss

When the Melanis complete their ritual, many Agnites recover slightly from the lost Equilibrium (although they won't truly recover from being cut off from Agnes until the end of **Trial by Fire**). The ones who do snap back to reality find themselves surrounded by Fallen and Z'bri, all seemingly concentrating on killing them. The Agnites fight for their very lives, but are unable to use their Eminences or Aspects. Billy Wick, who recovers quickly, starts to run up the hill of the Valley of the Shrine, screaming for help. If any PCs try to go after him, they will be in a poor position in the next scene when the Joanites arrive.

Vikas gives in to his cowardice at this point and attempts to get to the base of the waterfall in the hopes of getting to the Shrine. He only defends himself in his flight, dodging any and all blows that come his way. He is of no assistance to anyone, even if they call for his aid. Despite his lack of courage, the Weaver should make sure that Vikas is not directly responsible for anyone's death and does not die himself. The PCs may realize he is simply not of fighting stature and should have likely stayed in Horn.

Sala tries to group with the PCs, aiding them in a joint defense. Sarah, the last remaining Cabal member left in the valley (Kolrig left earlier and Hannibal was carried off), begins to rage and concentrates all of her attacks against the Agnites. She is feeling the strain of being the first Cabal member to have the chance of gaining some Fatimal power, and her delusions have gotten the better of her. She sees herself as punishing the Agnite children for spurning her and is exacting her revenge. She makes her way to the forest's edge well after she has spilled her fair share of blood, and then escapes the battle to join up with Kolrig, Hannibal and John the Revealer.

Sarah will be encountered later in Quest Four, but the PCs may assume she dies. The PCs may well notice the Cabal members missing later on, and think them all to have perished at some point in the attack. This false impression can be used to bond the PCs to the remaining Cabal members in Horn later on in the story.

Meanwhile, a Joanite Cadre manned at a Duskfall Tower, just north of the Valley of the Shrine, has heard the sounds of the battle and is on its way to investigate.

Scene 2 - Here Comes the Cavalry

A quarter-hour's ride north of the Valley of the Shrine lies a Joanite Duskfall Tower. One of the Blade Outriders, while patrolling the area south of the tower, heard sounds of battle and promptly rode back to warn the Templar Captain of possible danger. The tower is commanded by a Templar named Gerard Morth'on, a rather brutish man who has spent far too many years away from civil folk in more settled areas of Vimary. He is unshaven and rough, but despite his appearance is a leader who demands respect from those under him. The six Blades and two Blade Outriders (scouts) who man the tower with Gerard have served together for close to a decade. They are a tight-knit unit who instinctively complement each other without need for discourse. This makes them a formidable force to deal with.

The Joanites from the Duskfall Tower soon arrive on horseback and witness the battle from above the waterfall on the north side of the valley. In the scene below a massive number of Agnites are dead or dying at the hands of the Fallen, while Melanis Chainers capture the Fatima Agnes. Gerard immediately assesses the carnage and orders both of his Outriders to take different paths to Bazaar to warn the Grand Council of Agnes' plight. The Outriders ride off on their duty, and do not stop until they reach Bazaar. He then calls his six Blades to charge into the valley to rescue Agnes.

Ardatli Maque notices the Joanite presence and screams out to get the attention of the Fallen. She is one of a handful of Children of Lilith, including Lucas, still remaining; the rest have been pulled into the animated forest. The Children of Lilith missing in the forest are separated from the rest of the Fallen for the remainder of the Quest and are not encountered again until Quest Four.

Ardatli tries to reorganize the Fallen including Lucas, Sala, Vikas and the PCs, in an attempt to reach the Joanites so she can tell them what has happened - and hopefully aid them in rescuing Agnes from the circle of Melanis Chainers. Unfortunately, Billy Wick, who was heading up the north side of the valley earlier on, runs screaming towards Gerard and tells him that the Fallen gave Agnes an evil Z'bri Artifact that weakened Her. He continues to rant about how the Fallen are in league with the Z'bri and have killed all of his best friends. Billy Wick tries to piece together the events as best he can, but he has suffered from the Melanis Atmosphere as well. His incorrect recollection of events may just seal the fate of the Fallen.

For the Honor and the Glory

Gerard, upon hearing Billy's cry for help, once again scans the valley below and gives orders to his Blades to kill any Fallen and Z'bri that prevent them from getting to Agnes. From his perspective, it seems that the group Ardatli is trying to muster is setting themselves to defend against his cadre. The Joanites lower their spears and charge the Fallen.

Meanwhile, Eth'ian of Melanis wraps Agnes in dark cloaks made from the living flesh of skinned humans and carries Her swiftly from the Valley of the Shrine, heading for the lake that lies to the east. The Joanites try to beat back the Fallen, believing them to be a rear defense for the Z'bri.

The Chained continue to ravage the field of battle, but the Serfs escape if allowed. Any attempts to sway the opinion of Gerard, or his Cadre, fall on deaf ears. Gerard is not interested in pleas from the Fallen. His main goal is to defeat the "rear guard of the Melanis" (the Fallen) and then set his cadre to rescue Agnes from the beasts themselves.

The Agnites that are still alive (there should be only a half-dozen or so, including Billy Wick) run and scream in chaotic patterns, some even turning on their own tribe-mates in their confusion. Agnites that interact with the PCs at any point from here onwards seem crazed and detached. They are largely incoherent, making no sense when they speak or act.

The PCs are likely very tired, suffering their own wounds and defending those who are injured. Many Fallen are also under the effects of the Melanis Atmosphere, and need to be directed in their actions for everyone else to survive. The Joanites from the tower, on the other hand, are fresh and rested, having only just arrived. Gerard orders them to fight as a walled unit, charging lone Fallen down under their horses' hooves and the tips of their spears.

Aftermath

Ardatl Maque yells for a retreat, realizing that facing a full complement of mounted Blades is utter suicide. The remaining Agnites make things worse, as they join the Joanites in counter-attacking any Fallen that stray towards them, not fully realizing what they are doing or why. The Joanites are extremely well organized, and use their Eminence of Fury, while Gerard strikes out with the Aspect of Battle. Any Fallen who find themselves trapped in the Shrine had better find the fastest way out, for their safe haven has become a deathtrap.

Any remaining members of Erin's Destroyers and the Broken Word Cell can be used to help the PCs escape at this point. When the PCs flee, a running melee takes place. The Joanite horses are hindered by the tangled woods, allowing the PCs to make good their flight. The Joanites regroup, however, and stalk the PCs throughout the coming night. The PCs may want to chase down the two Joanite Outriders who are on their way to warn Bazaar. If they encounter one of the Outriders and stop her from sending word, the other Outrider makes it to the Grand Council.

If the PCs try to follow the Melanis and rescue Agnes immediately, Ardatl Maque tries to dissuade them. She wishes to return to Hom to tell the Fallen Elders all that has transpired. The Fallen group have suffered a massive loss in numbers as well as numerous injuries. If the PCs insist, Sala will also speak out and state that they are not only on their own, but that the Joanites are in devoted pursuit. If the PCs search for Agnes despite the warnings, Lucas is the only one to accompany them. The Melanis have also left Gek'roh to roam the forest in the aftermath of the battle, some of which will track down the PCs (if they choose this course of action). The Melanis make sure to cover their tracks and soon disappear into the H'l Kar. A resourceful Cell that manages to get that far would be foolish to continue into the Z'bri lands. Lucas recommends returning to Hom once the H'l Kar is seen. They can then catch up to the others in Scene Three, below.

Ardatl attempts to get everyone to move as quickly as possible, without rest. Several Fallen, including Vikas, complain about the forced travels in the hopes of setting up a camp when Griffentowne is seen on the horizon. If the PCs try to make camp, before it is set up, the Joanites are heard approximately ten minutes away. This is incentive to get the group moving through the night, but if they do stop in the hopes of confronting or ambushing Gerard and his cadre, it should prove to be very difficult, but not impossible.

Gerard has spent far too long in the hostile Duskfall forest to fall for novices' schemes. If the PCs come up with a viable and intelligent plan to ambush the Joanites, the cadre fights to escape only; afterwards, they slowly follow the PCs until they enter Tribal lands. It is best for the group to move with all haste. The threat of a confrontation should be more prevalent than actual conflict itself.

Scene 3 - Fools of a Fool's Fool

During the night, as the Joanites continue to stalk the PCs, the Fallen walk into the midst of a Dahlian Caravan. The PCs enter a Caravan camouflaged in Illusion, and the Dahlians are very aware of both the PCs and the Joanites that have stumbled into their home. The Dahlian Caravan is led by a Little Trickster named Quip (see p. 106). She is an eccentric with a very keen interest in the Fallen, especially after hearing of the whole Lilith jest. She sees it as her role to help carry on the precedent set forth by Dahlia and intends to have a bit of fun with the Fallen.

The Fallen discuss the strange turn of recent events as they walk. Vikas constantly blabbers about the details of the attack in an attempt to make sense of the preceding day. Sala remains silent throughout the journey and Lucas tries to rationalize the events with the help of the PCs. Ardatl maintains a reserved distance from the group.

Of course, any conversations that take place are overheard by the Dahlians in the woods nearby. While the PCs are within the area of the Caravan, they actually get no closer to Hom. The Dahlians use Motion to make the Fallen wander the same path over again with different illusory scenery every time. The PCs can resist believing the Illusion, but this is made vs. a Threshold of 8, since the power of the entire Caravan assists the jest and they are acting in the favor of their Fatima.

Anyone who makes the resistance roll notices that she isn't actually moving through the woods, but rather walking in large circles. The Dahlians make all attempts to re-influence those who seem to break through the illusions or suspect its presence. A PC who warns the others that a trick of some sort is afoot may be seen as suffering from hallucinations due to wounds, or the effects of the Z'bri Atmosphere. Unless they make a rational and lucid statement as to why they feel something is changing the surroundings, Ardatli becomes angry and asks the PC to stop demoralizing the group.

Quip uses the time that the Fallen are under the illusion to gather as much information as possible. She becomes intrigued with any mention of the Melanis capturing Agnes or of the Joanites mistaking the Fallen for Z'bri allies. The fact that many of the Children of Lilith who originally accompanied the group are missing also piques her curiosity. Any names of Fallen, Agnites, Joanites or Z'bri are noted by Quip, for she intends to gain favor from Dahlia after this stroke of good fortune. Once Quip feels that she has as much information that she can get from the Fallen, or the group breaks out from the illusion's influence, she gives the word for the Caravan to have some fun with the Fallen.

First, a small number of Dahlians disguise themselves as the PCs and lead the Joanites out of the Caravan, heading back toward the Duskfall Tower. The Joanites decide that the Fallen are "doubling back" and race to cut them off. Of course, this alleviates any further complications for the group with the Joanites; however, the Dahlians still need to be dealt with.

Quip then starts to hound the PCs with harmless Illusions. Examples include:

A series of torches are seen approaching them at a rapid pace, then disappear moments before the carriers arrive. A man is seen sitting against a tree, watching them, but he doesn't speak, and is really a tree-root changed with Metamorphosis. A swarm of flies molests the characters, stinging and biting them before turning into the sweat that clings to their skin. The seasons change from one to the next in a matter of minutes.

These are just a few examples of the minor annoyances Quip has her Caravan set upon the group of travelers. She soon becomes bored with this, and after a certain amount of time (whenever the Weaver feels it necessary) uses the Aspect of Puppet Show on each PC. The Weaver should run a series of short scenes describing horrific and nightmarish realities customized for each PC. Seeding elements of the story that have yet to take place is also an excellent way for the Weaver to foreshadow coming events. Be subtle, however, when it comes to revealing major points in the plot.

Here are some possibilities of what a PC may go through if she succumbs to the Puppet Show. Again, the Weaver should make these as personal as possible.

Doomsayers see a raven picking at burnt flesh. Upon closer inspection, it is the PC that is the burnt corpse. **Jackers** watch all of the PC's friends surround her and draw their weapons. A Z'bri holds fleshy tendons that connect to the spines of her friends and it gives a tug as though using them as marionettes. The friends all raise their weapons and close in to murder the PC. **Lightbringers** are shown the Fallen riot through the streets of Hom, burning everything in sight and attacking anyone that stands in their path. **Herites** view the Seven Deaths surround the Herite and pour their love back into her soul. As the Herite lies reeling on the ground, the Baron watches from a distance and smiles a perverse smile.

While the characters suffer these nightmares, the Dahlians further the horror by jumping through the darkness and threatening the Fallen with illusory arrows, phantom pushes from behind (aided by Motion), sounds that chase them and finally they surround the group with a deathly silence. When the Dahlians finally mask the sounds of the forest, they make their way from the group and leave the surviving Fallen alone and cold on the fringes of the Duskfall forest. The PCs find themselves just east of Griffentowne.

The sun cracks the horizon and the group is finally left to their own resources to find the way safely back to Hom. The route they decide on from here is entirely dependent on the PCs' familiarity with the land and any connections that they may have with the Tribals.

The Weaver should make it fairly simple for the PCs to make it safely back to Hom at this point, as the group has been through a lot. If the Weaver has various personal sub-plots, they can be easily planted here, since the time for the Grand Council to make a stance on the reported news takes approximately a week.

1. Quest One: Spark of Innocence

Quest One, Act Three: Return to Hom

So the next thing you know, Agnes tells the Z'bri She'll help 'em kill all these Fallen if She can have the Joshuan Artifact. Well, when Vikas hears about this, he's madder'n a Gek'roh. He runs right through the middle of the fighting, cuts down about twenty serfs, then dives up right between the Z'bri Lord and the Fatima! But what happens next is the most amazing thing of all — Vikas takes hold of the Artifact and suddenly a thousand lightning bolts shoot out from it and into Agnes and the Z'bri. Then this powerful voice speaks out of Vikas' mouth, saying that only the Fallen are worthy of the Legacy of Joshua. It's true! I was just talking to a guy who saw it!

— from a conversation overheard at Junks

Backstory

The survivors from the Valley of the Shrine are tired, hungry and weary from the harassment of the preceding days, but enjoy no rest upon their return. Whatever organization the Fallen may once have had quickly disappears into mass hysteria when the PCs deliver their description of events. Rumors and gossip filter throughout Hom, until the entire story becomes completely convoluted. The Elders summon the PCs to discuss the matter and decide to call a rant to set things straight. The rant gets out of control and forces the PCs to flee, as the residents of Hom grow unruly and start pointing fingers. The Guides visit the PCs later and aid them in finding clues to the chaos.



Scene 1 - Homecoming

The PCs, along with the other survivors from the Valley of the Shrine, receive a bittersweet welcome upon their return to Hom. On the one hand, their friends and loved ones rush out with open arms to greet them, happy for their safe return; yet the wails of the many Fallen orphaned or widowed by the quest erases any cause for celebration.

In particular, many ask after Erin's Destroyers, whose members were probably not counted among the friends of the PCs. The grieving families left behind by the ill-fated Cell are not content with vague dismissals and demand to know what happened to their loved ones. They look accusingly at the survivors, openly wondering how these "weaklings" could have returned, while the mighty Destroyers perished, some even going so far as to accuse the PCs of treachery!

Ardatli Maque explains carefully to those who knew the Liberty Circle that she saw the forest open up and devour Kallisti, Varna and Laban. Lucas tearfully backs her up on this fact. Vikas gathers together the families of his former cellmates to tell them how much he misses his friends, who were killed by the "evil" Fatima Agnes.

Vikas then begins to relate the story of his own great heroic efforts at the Shrine. His wife and three small children, as well as several onlookers, are enraptured by his vivid description and active gestures, but the PCs should not be able to confirm Vikas' part in any of the actual fighting. (In fact, Vikas took to hiding immediately after the Melanis arrived.) To really get under the PCs' skin, Vikas takes the credit for something the PCs did, without even mentioning their names.

The Rumor Mill

The PCs may choose to debunk Vikas' wild interpretation, or simply let their own versions be heard. Either way, they are quickly interrupted by Hal Ninva. He urges all witnesses to go immediately to the Sepulcher, so that Veruka and the Elders may determine the impact that the events at the Shrine will have upon the Eighth Tribe. Vikas immediately complies, which should prompt the PCs to follow suit in order that the facts be preserved.

Assembled to hear the PCs' story are Veruka the Wraith, Kara the Hunter, Hal Ninva, Deus, Altara Ven and Kymber Reva. Veruka begins the proceedings by simply asking the witnesses to describe their experiences, in their own words, from the time they left Hom until their return. Remember that the other survivors, Ardatli Maque, Lucas, Vikas and Sala, are also present, and that their words have equal weight to those of the PCs.

Let the PCs tell the story, but have Ardatli or Lucas correct them if they remember something incorrectly. Vikas supplies some erroneous information early on, which is refuted by the others, causing him to sit silently with a confused look about him. Sala speaks only when prompted, and even then makes his answers direct and succinct. His stony countenance and hollow gaze speak volumes to Veruka, however, and the PCs may notice the old witch bestow an approving nod upon the young Jacker.

After listening to the PCs' tale the Elders interrogate the PCs at length, using their collective abilities to extract information that may have been overlooked. Take this opportunity to remind the Players of all significant events to date. Try to use the Elders' questions to jog the PCs' memories, but let the other witnesses fill in the details where necessary. Each Elder has her own area of interest, detailed below. Included are some important questions that the Elders require answers for.

The Weaver can elaborate on these; the Elders definitely follow up wherever they believe they have not yet heard the whole story. Also, use Vikas' confused state to goad the PCs into correcting him. His partially correct answers may trigger their recollection of the truth. Use as many or as few of the questions you deem necessary to convey the impression of a serious interrogation.

1. Quest One: Spark of Innocence



Veruka the Wraith (**Rulebook** p. 104):

Veruka knows that her own fate is linked to the events that took place at the Shrine, and hence pays close attention to details that may seem less important to others. Questions she will pose include:

- Q: Where did the PCs first learn of the Shrine?
- Q: What happened to the missing Fallen?
- Q: Who was killed for certain?

Kara the Hunter (**Vimary** p. 103):

Kara is most interested in clarifying what the Joanites saw and why they acted the way they did.

- Q: When did the PCs first realise there were Joanites in the vicinity?
- Q: Did the Joanites see Fallen killing Agnites?
- Q: Were there any Fallen conversing or otherwise associating with the Z'bri?

Hal Ninva (**Rulebook** p.101):

Hal tries to pick the leader of the PCs' Cell and draw her into a conversation. He wonders about the fate of the missing Children of Lilith, and guesses (correctly) that the illusions and nightmares that afflicted them before leaving Duskfall indicate some Dahlian involvement, although he overestimates the extent of the Trickster's role. He feels a bit distressed after the whole Lilith fiasco and wants to reaffirm the Lightbringers as leaders of the Fallen, despite the mistakes made with Lilith.

- Q: How did the forest devour the Children of Lilith?
- Q: Did anyone escape after being so grappled?
- Q: Do the PCs feel that the Animation of the forest could have been an Illusion, causing the Children to become lost?

Deus (**Rulebook** p. 106):

Deus is looking after the safety of those returned. He is well aware that Tribal retribution may be at hand, and that some among the Fallen will blame the PCs. He fears an outbreak of violence amongst the Fallen, and wants to make sure that such a thing is avoided. He also wants to rein in those who would stage a pre-emptive strike against the Tribes, asserting that the Fallen must make every effort to maintain their innocence. His questions tend to be more about the survivors' feelings than their history. Encourage the Players to open up to both emotion and speculation.

- Q: Have the PCs had cause to feel threatened by anyone since their arrival in Hom?
- Q: Have the PCs done anything to help the surviving family members of those who perished?
- Q: How do the PCs feel about the Agnites? The Z'bri? The Joanites?

Altara Ven (**Rulebook** p. 107):

Altara was once an Agnite, and is curious about the fate of her former Fatima.

Q: Did Agnes say why She was attacking?

Q: Did the PCs give the Tear of Forgiveness to Her or did She just take it?

Q: What happened when She touched it?

Q: Was the Artifact tainted by the Z'bri?

Q: Did Agnes try to escape from her Z'bri captors?

Q: Where did the Z'bri take Her?

Kymber Reva (**Rulebook** p. 105):

Kymber is very concerned by the Joanite attack and hopes to clear the Fallen's name before things get farther out of hand. She recently lost the love of her life (see **Children of Lilith** for details) and is sadly sympathetic toward anyone who also lost a loved one.

Q: Did the PCs support each other during the crisis?

Q: What are the plans of the PC Cell from here?

Q: Will the PCs be willing to investigate further into the reasons behind the attack?

Kymber Reva proposes a rant in which the Fallen can all be alerted to take caution in all dealings with Tribals and attempt to disseminate the truth. The other Elders agree, although with widely differing motives. The witnesses are allowed to go about their business, but are expected to make an appearance at the rant, which will be held at sunset in the Cage.

Ardatli Maque and Evangel Black tell the PCs that they feel another Joanite attack on Hom is imminent. They suggest that the Fallen prepare themselves and go seek out Mek. Anyone who accompanies them sees anger in the huge Jacker's eyes while they repeat the story. Mek sends several Jackers to join Ardatli in the making of weaponry at Lilith's forge while Evangel starts speaking to Fallen cells at Junks.

The PCs have little time to relax before the rant, because scores of curious Fallen dog their steps. Once again, Vikas is in his glory, recounting his completely inaccurate take on events. In fact, no matter where they go in Hom, Vikas' stories have spread, growing more fantastic with each retelling. The Weaver should instill within the PCs a sense that the truth will not survive the rumors. The masses prefer Vikas' fantastical account to the PCs' mundane facts. Choose the PC who is most frustrated by all this sensationalism, and play out the following encounter.

A woman suddenly appears to the PC from within an unlikely location nearby (from out of a cupboard, or from within a large basket or water jar, for example). The woman introduces herself as Mhumia, and asks the PC to tell her the truth. She asks if anyone from her Cell, the Cabal of Deliverance, came back alive. Of course, the PC never saw any Cabal members killed. If Mhumia is told this, she stares solemnly at the ground and replies, "Hannibal wasn't the type to leave a fight before it was finished."

Mhumia knows full well that the rest of her Cell are with the Covenant, and wants nothing more than to confirm that Agnes has truly been captured by her compatriots. She pretends to be truly grief-stricken and plays the part as only an ex-Dahlian can. She even "admits" that she never really liked Sarah, and now she "feels so guilty." If the PC tries to comfort her, she turns it into a game of seduction. If the PC is so inclined, Mhumia turns out to be a fantastic and passionate lover. She will disappear shortly afterwards without a word.



Scene 2 - Broken Words

Hey! Shut up! You guys don't understand. No! We can't just leave Her out there. It's not fair. . . I said shut up, Jimmy! Yeah, I know. . . I hate Agnes too for killing all those Fallen at the Shrine, and for banishing me too, but now look what's happening - the kids in Playground are going all wacko and creepy. My question is, if the Agnites don't have a Fatima anymore, doesn't that make them Fallen? So shouldn't we help them?

— Coralee, Fallen Agnite

The rant takes place at the Cage. By now all of Hom has been alerted, and conflicting rumors have developed around Vikas' original exaggerations; such that the crowd has split into two camps. One, championed mostly by Herites, claims that Vikas and his followers actually slew the youngest Fatima, then used the liberated Fatimal artifacts to mount a deadly raid on the H'l Kar. The other camp, which has more favor with the Jackers, states that Agnes fought alongside the Fallen at first, but betrayed them in exchange for an artifact of Joshua held by a Z'bri Lord. According to this group, Vikas and his entourage boldly fought their way to the artifact, using it to slay the Z'bri and make good their escape. The factions push their arguments both vocally and physically, until a brawl very nearly breaks out when Kymber Reva takes the stage.

It takes Kymber quite a while to calm the chaotic mass before her so that she can speak. When she finally does, it is not to utter the triumphant oratory that most of those present are expecting. Instead, she explains that the purpose of this Rant is to prepare the Fallen for an increase in Tribal aggression. She then introduces Ardatli, the PCs, Lucas, Sala, and finally Vikas, to speak about what took place at the Valley of the Shrine.

By now, the Players should have their stories straight. Members of the "Vikas" factions challenge them on anything that sounds inconsistent with his tales. The other survivors back them up, although the Children of Lilith, Ardatli and Lucas are jeered so loudly by the Herites that they cannot be heard. Vikas, uncharacteristically, keeps his mouth shut, looking somewhat sheepish while the crowd accuses him of lying. (He honestly doesn't remember saying any of those things.)

When the truth about Agnes' capture becomes apparent — which could take a long time if the audience is particularly disruptive — discussion turns toward both the esoteric and the immediate. The more philosophical Fallen begin to theorize on the fate of Agnes and Her Tribe, and whether what has happened is a good thing. More practical minds start fielding ideas to aid in the defense of Hom, for the inevitable Tribal attack.

Portents

As usual, the Fallen Outlooks have differing opinions on what the next course of action for the Eighth Tribe should be. Each argument has at least one important Fallen spokesperson behind it, as well as a mass of shouting supporters.

Jackers: Mek states that if a Tribal attack is imminent, they should fortify the South Tier Bridge and the Fallen Bridge, as well as Hom proper and Haven. Kara the Hunter agrees that the Fallen are going to need to get together and work on this now, before the Tribals have time to stop it.

Herites: Kyrt suggests that spies be sent into Bazaar to find out what the Tribes are intending. They also want to know how the Z'bri came to learn of Agnes' presence. They suspect a Fatimal traitor. Some more extreme Fallen, including Troy Fenys, suggest sabotage raids against the Joanites to weaken their attack capabilities.

Doomsayers & Guides: Den-Hades claims that the answer lies in the River of Dream and that the key is the Artifact. The Doomsayers must enter into visionquests to see what the effects of Agnes' capture are on Dream.

Lightbringers: Hal Ninva implores the Fallen to pool their resources for the coming hardships. He stresses that every detail in this affair has a hidden reason, and that it is the Fallen's responsibility to seek out those reasons. Deus also points out that their main concern is to present a unified front towards the Nation and to avoid infighting at all costs. Evangel Black states that High Judge Cylix is likely to take the events and spin them to his benefit.

Children of Lilith: Ardatli Maque informs the assembly that the Children of Lilith are already using Lilith's forge to make weapons for what they see as an inevitable conflict. Lucas also points out that the Z'bri are still a part of the picture, and that the Fallen should be aware that the turmoil Agnes' capture will cause in the Nation could provide the Baron with just the opportunity he needs.

Fallen Agnites: Although not an Outlook, and certainly not chained to a single idea, former Children of Agnes are quite vocal at the rant, and must be mentioned. (See the narrative at the beginning of this scene for an example of a Fallen Agnite perspective.)

Not everyone at the rant has something to offer, however. Many of the Fallen who speak are only doing so to voice their fears. With the threat of Tribal vengeance becoming ever more tangible, one of the Outcasts nervously suggests that they could hand over the people who were involved, and maybe the Tribals would leave the rest alone. Many people agree, but even more are shocked that a Fallen would even think of turning another Fallen in to the Tribes. Soon enough, the Fallen are at each other's throats, casting blame on each other for their misfortunes. As the situation begins to boil into a riot, Hal Ninva finds a prominent position from which to try to take control of the crowd. Altara Ven helps to secret the survivors of the valley attack out of the Cage, while Deus simply holds his head in his hands. Evangel Black follows the PCs and aids them throughout the coming scenes, as she fears the worst is yet to come.

Scene 3 - Mark of the Dreamers

After escaping the rant, the PCs should be exhausted, tense and maybe just a little bit paranoid. Indeed, some of them may still be badly injured or suffering under the Melanis Atmosphere. Altara Ven offers to take them to see a Cell called The Marked Ones for a spiritual cleansing. The Marked Ones are a trio of Doomsayers, as is apparent from their Fallen markings, but their most striking similarity is in an unnerving one — the right eye of each is milky white.

Rhondive, the leader of the Cell, elaborates that they were all marked at birth for their destiny among the Fallen. She offers healing to her guests by way of Life Eminence, while the other two Doomsayers, Balthak and Zeema, prepare the Ritual of Cleansing.

The ritual itself is quite frightening. First, the patient is disrobed and strapped to a long table with leather thongs. Starting at the subject's feet, the ritualists begin to brush on a sticky ointment made of hot pitch and poisonous berries, all the while chanting a forceful litany in unison. Although the mixture works an agonizing effect upon the skin, it does not cause any permanent harm. What it does when applied to an individual afflicted by Z'bri Atmosphere or taint, is much more remarkable. Where the ointment is applied, a ripple appears under the victim's skin, moving hastily away from the anointed area. (Anyone looking at the Marked Ones during this process notices that they have all closed their left eyes and are observing the motion of the ripple with their blind eyes, which are rotating unnervingly in their sockets.)

They continue to apply the mixture in such a manner that the ripple is eventually "corralled" in the patient's left hand. To culminate the ritual, a burning coal is placed in the character's hand and she is forced to clench it tightly. An agonized scream erupts from within the coal while a foul odor of decay suddenly displaces that of the character's searing flesh. The character is now free of any taint, and no harm is done to her — even by the burning coal — though she is forever marked by a black circle on her left palm.

If the PCs had any energy left when they arrived in Hom, it has certainly left them by this time. Seeing the PCs' exhaustion, Rhondive points to a collection of straw mats she has rolled up in a back room, indicating that the PCs are welcome to stay the night. Vikas has already fallen asleep and is gently moved into one of the makeshift beds. If the PCs would rather stay somewhere else, they are free to go, but Rhondive's promise of a real Evan-style breakfast in the morning may influence their decision. Ardatli, Lucas and Sala all elect to stay.

Invading Dreams

No matter where they spend the night, the PCs' sleep is not peaceful. Halos and Den-Hades decide to visit them in their dreams, using their recent exposure to Agnes to glean information on the Fatima's condition. Den-Hades enters their dreams, appearing as an immensely powerful, and not necessarily benign, entity and demands impatiently that the PCs follow her. Those with the Dreaming skill recognize immediately that the Guide is directly manipulating the reality of their dream. If the PCs hesitate, characters and objects from their own dream begin to push them forward to keep pace with Den-Hades. (Den-Hades, *Rulebook* p. 100; Halos, *Rulebook* p. 82)

They eventually all arrive at the same place, a dream-reflection of the Valley of the Shrine. Halos is there, squatting like a deformed gargoyle upon a block of stone, and warns each character not to leave his side until the others arrive. The PCs occasionally catch a glimpse of one or more shadowy beings lurking around the ruined buildings. If Halos is alerted, he stands up slowly, then sits back down again when the forms scurry away. The Players should get the sense that the only barrier between their characters and real danger is the strength of will and presence of the Guides. When all the survivors are assembled, including Ardatli, Lucas, Sala, and Vikas, the visionquest begins.

The scene is familiar to the PCs — a wooded valley, a cascading waterfall, the ruined Marian structures — but it is lit only by muted blue moonlight; in fact, it appears very much as if it is being viewed from underwater. This sensation is enhanced by the characters' inability to move quickly through the viscous Dream atmosphere. The Guides, however, appear unhindered and walk briskly toward the Shrine. PCs with the Dreaming skill may make rolls to keep up, although anyone who doesn't deliberately hesitate eventually makes her way to the Shrine without incident.

Any stragglers are attacked by the ghosts of Erin's Destroyers, who seek revenge on those who left their bodies behind in the valley. The Destroyers have been decapitated and mangled, and throw their own severed heads at fleeing characters to slow them down. If the characters cannot escape on their own, Den-Hades angrily turns back and drags them away from the spirits, who scream in anguish at her approach, taking their places again in the shadows.

Dark Trials

At the Shrine, the PCs see the Tear where they originally found it, only it appears much larger, and glows with an inner light. When a PC reaches for the gem (if none volunteer, use Lucas), its surface breaks as though a pebble were thrown into it, but then, rather than settling back to its previous glassy calmness, the surface begins to turn in a wild vortex. PCs still looking at the Artifact will be drawn into the maelstrom, disappearing into the void. Any characters who attempt to avoid this fate may look away, only to find themselves being physically pushed into the Tear by Halos and Den-Hades!

The PCs are slightly disoriented when they find themselves in the same room seen in the Tear, but playing the roles of different people. Each PC finds that she has taken on the form of her own mother. Chained to a stone slab, before the assembled mothers, is a frightened child that each character instantly recognizes as herself. Each mother feels a need to perform some bizarre and grotesque "experiment" on her child. Some possible experiments are:

Inserting live insects under the child's skin and measuring the distance they travel; feeding the child its own urine and feces and noting the color of its next excrement; dismembering a favorite toy in front of the child and writing down the amputation that causes the most distress, and so on.

The Weaver may want to have NPCs use these methods, and allow the PCs to devise their own. The PCs are powerless to stop themselves from carrying out these events, but should realize that a cryptic lesson is being taught. Those with the Dreaming skill may roll vs. 7 to realize that the child is not actually being harmed. Once the experiments are complete, the child stretches and grows into a writhing adult. The naked woman on the slab is familiar — Sarah, from the Cabal of Deliverance!

The PCs all awaken at once with this flash of recognition, blankets tossed and bodies drenched.

Between Quests

After waking up from the nightmare, the PCs should be given a chance to discuss its meaning and decide on a course of action. Unless the Players are having trouble coming up with motivations for their characters, two of three weeks of game time before beginning Quest Two should suffice. Following are some of the more likely paths for the PCs to take, based on the Outlook perspectives voiced at the Rant. The Weaver should feel free to ignore or expand upon them, since this part of the cycle can be used to further develop the characters.

Doomsayer Visions

Any PCs who tap into the River of Dream seeking prophetic guidance are rewarded with powerful visions of doom. The four subjects outlined here can be used as themes for visions of the Weaver's design, or she can use the examples provided. Doomsayers abound in Hom, so the Weaver should feel free to have NPC prophets scream similar apocalyptic revelations in the streets.

Visions of War: Two children fight, while a parent looks on in a detached manner.

Visions of Death: The Fallen are going about their regular business in Hom. Everything seems mundane, but everyone is marked with a Yagan Death Mask.

Visions of Famine: The Evans have a market of food. When the PC tries to eat, maggots and insects infest the fruit and meat, making it inedible.

Visions of Pestilence: A befriended member of the Cabal appears ill and diseased. The PC is nursing her.

Herite Spies

The Herites organize an information gathering foray into Bazaar, which the PCs may take part in. This is a good opportunity for the Weaver to let the PCs make use of any contacts they may have amongst the Tribals — a luxury that will soon be taken away from them by the Inquisition. The following information reaches Hom within a week.

Rumor: "Agnites are acting strangely in Bazaar and Vimary." Weaver Background: This is caused by the muted connection they have to Agnes. Agnites become very eerie and unnerving over the following months due to their separation from their Fatima and Dream. An element of horror comes to the fore.

Rumor: "The Grand Council is in an emergency session to determine the most advantageous course of action. High Judge Cylix is now a Councilor." Weaver Background: Cylix is soliciting the Grand Council for an Inquisition to deal with the Fallen heresy.

Rumor: "The Templars are being readied to rescue Agnes." Weaver Background: Tera Sheba is angry at Joan for allowing Agnes to be captured. The Fates and Tera Sheba keep Joan from allowing Her warriors to carry out a rescue.

Rumor: "The Watch are bringing the Agnites around Vimary to safety, while a group of Evans and Joanites have been assigned to Playground to oversee the disturbed children." Weaver Background: Playground is deserted as Agnites go into hiding. The Evans and Shebans are having difficulties gathering all the Agnites into their protection.

Rumor: "The so-called Fallen betrayal of Agnes to the Z'bri is taking center stage among the Tera Shebans. Tera Sheba wants to kill all the Fallen because She thinks that they are actually slaves of the Z'bri." Weaver Background: Tera Sheba is being manipulated by the Fates to turn the attention towards the Fallen, masking their own conspiracy with the Baron.

The Fatal Perspectives

Baba Yaga, Eva, Magdalen: The Fates think Agnes is with the Baron and are fairly complacent with the events so far. The mistaken Fallen affiliation with the Z'bri has turned into a nice surprise and they support Tera Sheba's decision to start an Inquisition.

Dahlia: Upset by the knowledge of Agnes' capture, Dahlia begins to use Her contacts and spies to retrieve information. She suspects some or all of Her Sisters are involved in a conspiracy but wants to learn exactly who has taken part. She is also intrigued with the apparent lack of interest the Fates have in a rescue operation.

Agnes: She is lost in the River of Dream as She tries to understand what the Tear has done to Her. She is unaware that She has been captured by the Z'bri and is removed from the reality of the situation. She suffers from visions and memories that She can't understand or explain.

Tera Sheba: Finally the Fallen have done something that the rest of the Nation cannot ignore. She uses this opportunity to begin Her personal quest to destroy the result of a mistake She made a long time ago. She feels that, through the Fallen, Agnes can be recovered without disturbing the Pact of the Dome. She curbs Joan's ideas for a rescue operation until more information can be had.

Joan: She wants to rescue Agnes, but surprisingly finds no support from any of Her Sisters. Dahlia loosens Her ties to Joan somewhat, not wanting to be cornered into supporting something She's not sure of. Joan follows Tera Sheba's advice that the Fallen are the key to rescuing Agnes, and supports Her Sister in the formation of an Inquisition.

Possible scenes include:

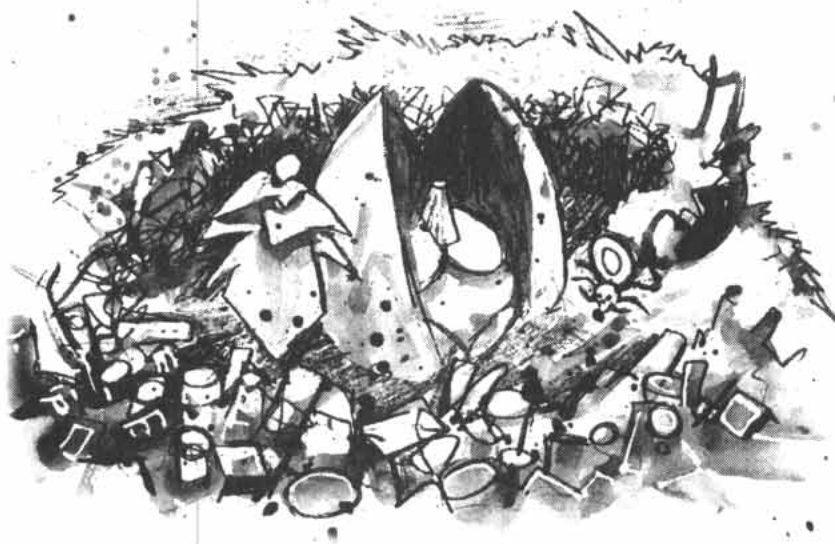
The PCs are sent to Bazaar to get a closer look at the Tribal perspectives either by Lightbringers or Herites.

Any investigation of Agnites and their strange behavior leads the PCs to Bazaar.

During the fortification of the Fallen Bridge, Joanites confront the PCs.

The PCs receive a vision of fellow survivors of the initial attack (Sala, Lucas and Vikas) in the hands of the Crucible, being tortured and interrogated. This is a prophetic vision to entice the PCs to investigate, in turn fulfilling the vision later in Quest Three.

The Weaver can also use personal sub-plots to lure PCs into a confrontation with the Watch.



Lost Child

Throughout the upcoming Quests, Agnites are encountered frequently. The loss of their Fatima has had an enormous effect on the Children. The Agnites are not Fallen, however, and still have a spiritual tie to Her — albeit one that is severely muted. The Agnites become horrific, their actions and thoughts tainted by the experiments that Agnes is subjected to. The Tribals do what they can to help the Children, but with most of their resources devoted to the Inquisition, it becomes far too difficult to properly administer any lasting aid. With this in mind, the following scenes can be used at any time to develop the terror that is the Tribe of Agnes. The Weaver is encouraged to develop more scenes to make the Agnites more personally involved.

Eye For An Eye: The PCs hear some Agnites laughing in their normal, childlike abandon. It seems as though a group of Agnites are playing marbles on a concrete floor. Upon closer inspection, it becomes obvious that the Children are not using glass and stone marbles but, rather, human eyeballs.

High Tea: An Agnite is playing "dinner party" with several animated dolls. The Child passes around a kettle and pours hot tea to each of her friends. A normal scene, except, one of the "friends" is actually a dead Agnite with his throat slit. There is blood on the butter knife that the Agnite spreads onto a piece of bread. She looks at the PCs and asks "Would you like to play?"

Gallows Tree: An Agnite is fiddling with a piece of rope. As the PCs go about their business, the Agnite makes a noose and starts walking down the street with it over his shoulder. If the PCs don't stop the Child, a short time later, they see a young Tribal infant hanging from a pole nearby with his eyes missing.

Let It Snow: There are several Agnite Children playing in a pile of flour spilled on the ground. They are making "angels" by lying on the flour with their hands and feet spread out to their sides. As the Children rise, blood is seen in the flour from flayed wounds on their backs. One of the Children then grabs a razor sharp knife and cuts more wounds into her friend's back, saying, "Now you can make your angel brighter!"

The Blood With The Flesh: Two Agnites accost the PCs and begin to whimper and moan that they are hungry. The children are completely naked and have sliced their genitals from their bodies. If the PCs don't offer any food or water, one of the Agnites bites her friend's ear off and begins eating it while the other one nibbles on her bleeding fingers.

Rivalry: There are two teams of Agnites playing "Stick Ball. The children laugh out loud as they go about their game, but it takes on a macabre sense when they start to chant, "Winners kill the losers, winners kill the losers. . ." If the PCs don't stop the game and wait to see what happens, the winners grab nails, posts and other impromptu weapons and start bashing in the heads of the Players on the losing team.

The Silent Eye: While the PCs travel through Vimary, a large group of Agnites confronts them and won't go away. If the PCs are in hiding, this makes things very difficult. The Agnites are silent and do not touch or attack the PCs; they simply stand and stare. If the PCs use force against them, the Agnites suffer whatever they are subjected to.



Chapter two: Fanning the Flames

Fallen sinners repent,
Your judgment is at hand.
The cleansing flames surround you,
A scourge upon your land.
Fallen sinners repent,
Of this we do demand,
Our Sister's word commands you,
To live eternal damned!
— Sheban Curse of the Fallen



Quest Overview

The Inquisition begins as the Crucible, headed by Cylix, manipulates the Grand Council to back his extreme measures. The Fallen are harassed by a new sub-guild called the Shadow Watch; in a skirmish between the two factions a prominent Captain is killed. The Fates discover that Agnes is not in the Baron's custody and sanction a siege of Hom, with the Captain's death as the catalyst.

The resulting siege forces the Fallen to defend Hom while the Nation wages war. The Fallen Elders struggle to make sense of the persecution and do their utmost to save the lives of the residents of Hom. The Inquisition offers to take any Fallen that surrender into their safekeeping. The Fallen are divided in action, and while some offer continuous resistance, many give themselves up in the hopes of Tribal sympathy.

The Inquisition does not stop its attack on Hom (even after some cells surrender) and, in a forceful push, defeat the Children of Lilith at Her Palace grounds and occupies Haven. The Fallen retreat to the innermost structures of Hom and make plans to escape the burning island. Many Fallen manage to escape the island and go into hiding in Vimary and the surrounding lands while the Inquisition continues its tireless efforts to ferret out the "heretics."

Quest Two, Act One: Assassination

The Fallen are thieves and liars, every last one of them, and it was up to me to bring them to justice. There is only one kind of justice for the exiles, and although we were ordered to tell the Sheban Inquisitors of all captives within our custody, a few never survived the encounters. Why let them defend themselves with our law, when our Fatimas have already condemned them? Better to let them rot!

—Shadow Watch Captain



Backstory

The Fallen go about many different tasks and try to bring some of the events of the past into perspective. Joan, under Tera Sheba's orders, forms elite cadres within the Watch to deal with the Fallen threat, collectively called the Shadow Watch. The Grand Council backs Cylix Seth'on's proposal for an Inquisition and places him at its helm. Shadow Watchers confront all Fallen they encounter, questioning their roles in Agnes' capture. They then apprehend the Fallen, regardless of any rational explanations, and take them to different Court Towers around Vimary. The interrogations are mild in relation to what is to come.

Scene 1 - Swords and Sinners

At some point, the PCs have a confrontation with the Shadow Watch. Whether the characters are lurking in Hom with the Herites, fortifying the Fallen Bridge with the Jackers, or involved in their own pursuits, the Shadow Watch are there, demanding that the Cell stop what it is doing and explain its purpose. The threat of retribution, should the PCs show any inclination to refuse, is thinly veiled. This barrage of questions begins to happen with irritating frequency, and the PCs often find Watchers forcing questions even after they have already been told suitable answers. Of course, the Elders in Hom strongly suggest that the Fallen cooperate with the Shadow Watch, to prevent further trouble. When the PCs can stand no more of this humiliation, the following encounter takes place.

While the PCs are caught up in some task, ideally somewhere in Bazaar, a detachment of the Shadow Watch corners them. The Watchers should grossly outweigh the PCs, about two highly trained Joanites per character. The Shadow Watch Captain commands them to halt and demands to know their affiliation, even though the markings of exile are probably readily apparent on the characters' skin. Whatever the PCs decide to answer, the Captain interrupts them, sneering, "Never mind, I know a soulless when I see it." The others laugh, emboldened by their advantage, and crack jokes and insults of their own. If any PC has the temerity to form a comeback remark, the Captain asks the speaker to approach her and repeat it. A hush falls over the other Watchers. If the PC does not come up with a more polite statement immediately, the Captain crashes her mailed fist into the PC's jaw.

Strength In Numbers

If the PCs meekly tolerate the Captain's bullying, she decides to take her authority one step further. She chooses the largest or toughest looking character in the group, and demands that the character lick her boots clean! If the PC decides to comply, the reward is a hard leather boot to the face and jeering laughter from the Shadow Watchers. If not, the character is charged with obstructing justice and placed under arrest, with her companions also held as accomplices.

By this point, one of two things is likely occurring: either the PCs are involved in a melee with the Shadow Watch, or they are being arrested. In either case, hidden forces act on the PCs' behalf. Sometime during the engagement, Matahar and Mhumia of the Cabal of Deliverance, who have been keeping a close eye on all the Fallen that returned from the shrine, creep into a position overlooking the area of conflict. If the PCs seem to be losing the melee, giving themselves up for arrest, or if a Watcher seems to be getting away, Matahar makes her move. Taking ample time to aim with her relic rifle, she carefully targets the Captain's head and pulls the trigger. The PCs hear an ear-shattering crack as the Captain's skull explodes, showering them with blood, brains, and bone fragments. The Watchers wildly scramble in random directions, unable to ascertain the direction that the shot came from. The PCs may either take this opportunity to escape or to press their attack against the confused Joanites.

Immediately after shooting the Captain, Matahar flees the area, with Mhumia, via the under-tunnels or other suitably concealed route. One of the PCs should find a peculiar brass tube — the metal bullet casing!

Scene 2 - Baron's Burden

The PCs may well decide to chase after the hidden assassin, although they should probably be more concerned with escaping themselves. If a Player states her intention to give chase, the Weaver should require a Notice roll vs. 5 from her to see a flutter of motion from a nearby alley. Once started, the chase is both confusing and tantalizing. Mhumia's Eminences of Motion and Freedom, combined with her intimate knowledge of the area, make her escape with Matahar a sure thing. On the other hand, the two Cabal members leave clues in their wake, attempting to lead the PCs to suspect Keeper intervention. Trinkets dropped could include broken CDs, rusted batteries and bits of electrical tape from Matahar's collection. The pair eventually escape without being recognized, allowing Mhumia to continue her interaction with the PCs later on.

If the PCs remain too long at the scene of the shooting, more Shadow Watchers and Tribals arrive. The PCs have ample opportunity to escape but should be made aware that lingering near a dead Watch Captain is asking for more trouble.

Afterwards, the PCs get a chance to discuss the day's events as they return either to Hom or carry on their original tasks elsewhere. The PCs, still deep in conversation, are jarred back to reality by a cohort of twenty Magdalites crossing their path in a determined rush. The entourage escorts a tall man whose face is shadowed beneath the cowl of his gigantic, flowing red cloak. The PCs instantly sense something wrong with the VIP, but cannot pinpoint the cause of their suspicion.

The Magdalites quickly pass by, focused only on the task of delivering their guest. The Weaver should ask curious PCs to make Etiquette rolls vs. 3 to realize that the Magdalites are likely to kill anyone who appears to follow or otherwise notice them. In addition to the considerable threat of physical violence from the Magdalite escort, those who stray too close have to contend with a spiritual hazard — the cowed figure is actually Pv'tir of Sangis, a Z'bri ambassador from the Baron in an unmarred human vessel. Pv'tir's Atmosphere is weaker than most (use a Threshold of 2 for the PSY roll to resist, rather than 3), and only affects those who stay near him for a long time. Under no circumstances do the Magdalites tolerate Fallen in their midst, so the PCs need to be extremely sneaky to get close enough to feel the Atmosphere's effect.

To Tell The Tale

Wise PCs head back to Hom with the information they have gathered, while others probably end up fleeing in the same direction after taking a beating by the Magdalites. (The PC Cell should be back in Hom for Act Two.) When the PCs return, they find that their account of the shooting is exceedingly unpopular, as both the Lightbringers and Herites agree that further Tribal actions against the Fallen are now inevitable. The PCs begin to develop a reputation as the bearers of bad news — in fact, more and more fearful Outcasts start to think that the entire conflict is the PCs' fault in the first place!

Pv'tir and his escort arrive at a secret meeting place, where he speaks to all three of the Fates directly. He divulges that the Baron does not in fact have Agnes in custody. This is news to all of the Fates, of course, and they question him further about the circumstances of Her loss. He tells them that She is believed to be in the custody of the Covenant, and that the Z'bri are investigating. He supports the likelihood that some Fallen have a place in the conspiracy, although he is uncertain how many. Pv'tir takes up temporary residence with the Magdalites in Xstasis, remaining in Vimary until the PCs meet him in Act Three.

The PCs may certainly note the correlation of this stranger's arrival in Bazaar to the siege of Hom that takes place in the next Act.

Quest Two: Act Two: Inquisition

How long are we to sit and abide this scourge, this plague of exiles plotting on our shores? They kill our warriors, mock our ways and make deals with the demons themselves! I say that it is time to rise, time to strike them down for their vile acts and dangerous blasphemy. Let the Fallen finally know the true strength of the arm of justice!

— Speech given in Council

Backstory

When word comes to him of a Shadow Watch Captain being assassinated by a group of Fallen, Cylix decides that the Inquisition needs to step up its approach. He orders that Hom be declared a part of Vimary and fall under the Nation's edicts of Universal Law. This supports the coming siege and the plans he has for the Fallen. The Fates also support this action in full, as they now suspect that the Fallen indeed have a more direct role in Agnes' capture than they first thought. The Fates realize that their answers lie somewhere within the ranks of the Fallen and want to learn of Agnes' whereabouts before the Baron does.

Scene 1 - Vindication

Within three days of the Shadow Watcher shooting, Fallen agents report a massive buildup of Joanite forces in Bazaar. Many of the Templars are recalled from their posts at the Seven Fingers to join the Watch and Shadow Watch in a siege of Hom. Unlike the failed siege brought on by the Lilith Heresy, this one is sanctioned not only by Tera Sheba but by the Fates as well.

The PCs may or may not be a part of the investigating parties that deliver this information, but the news itself should spur them into action. There are plenty of opportunities in the coming conflict for more tactically minded PCs to shine, and the Weaver should reward those who come up with sound strategies by showing considerable praise from major NPCs along with some renown amongst their peers, as well as experience. This is a time in which the Eighth Tribe loses many of its people, but those who keep hope alive during the conflict number themselves among the survivors, while those without the spirit to face their destiny are the first and most numerous of the casualties.

The Fallen, as a people, largely succumb to a state of complete panic and hopelessness, although the PCs hopefully do not fall into this lot. Doomsayers foresee the annihilation of their people; Lightbringers curse their own inability to unite the Fallen in time; Herites despair over the inevitable triumph of their sworn enemies; Jackers scream impotently about the Z'bri's hand in the Fatimal pogrom and Children of Lilith wail for the loss of the only One who could have averted the Nation's assault.

Not everyone is willing to give up without a fight, however. Mek, Evangel Black, Kara the Hunter and Ardatli Maque call on all able-bodied Fallen to help them organize Hom's defenses. (Mek, **Rulebook** p. 95) Since Lilith's unmasking, Mek has been making preparations for large scale Tribal aggression, and his core force of elite Jackers is well versed in the tactical strongpoints of Hom. Haven is not as important as Hom proper due to the smaller number of Fallen that reside there, although the forge at Lilith's Palace is an important resource that must be safeguarded.

Some of the PCs may wish to take active roles in aiding Mek and the others. Mek listens to any advice given by the PCs, as long as a certain level of protocol and seriousness is shown. He does not hesitate to put unruly and bothersome PCs in their place with a few short words and a glare of disapproval. PCs who make Tactics rolls vs. 3 see the soundness of Mek's plans and may propose additional strategies of their own. The Weaver is encouraged to make the planning as tactical or as freeform as she wishes. While strategic maps and the like can make the siege interesting, it is the concerns of the people that should be at the forefront.

Build The Resistance

Unfortunately for the Fallen, Tera Sheba leaves the tactical details of the siege in the capable hands of the Joanites, who set Lilith's Palace as a primary target. Even under Mek's formidable guidance, the Fallen are badly outclassed by the practiced ranks of the Joanites and before the Hom defenses are completely ready, the siege begins.

During the night, some cells report that the Fallen Bridge has been closed. There is also a large number of Cavalry waiting on the other side of the river bank. Torches and lanterns are seen on the South Tier Bridge, as the Joanites and Terashebans prepare their war camps and equipment. The western side of Hom and the South Tier Bridge are the primary staging centers for the Tribal assault. The actual scale of troops should be considered, and although precise number keeping is unnecessary, the PCs may feel as though the entire might of the Nation is about to come crashing down.

Stationed by the Fallen Bridge are: three Cavalry units of six warriors each; a Cadre of Templars (led by Awarnak Kil'on, *Vimary* p. 94); three Cadres of Shadow Watchers; an Inquisitor; a Judge; and several Advocates.

The South Tier Bridge has stationed: a Cavalry unit (led by Basyl Loren, *Word of the Pillars* p. 27); two Cadres of Archers (some of which are Dahlian and Evan hunters); three Cadres of Shadow Watchers; three regular Watch Cadres; a Cadre of Templars (led by a prominent Ben'on, named Taras Haraminkin); an Inquisitor's Circle; Marshal Bartholomew Medi'on; two Judges; and a dozen Advocates to oversee the administration of the entire campaign.

Aside from the active war party, there are also: Evan Nurses to see to any wounds and Cooks to feed the troops; Magdalite Ecstatics to administer drugs that induce Dream states suitable for battle; and Yagan Fleshers to see over any inevitable Death Rites. While there are no Agnites officially present, the Weaver can have the PCs witness a few during the siege behaving in odd ways (see *Lost Child, Quest One*). The Dahlian Archers present have close ties with the Joanites but act independently from the others. There are also a few talented Dahlians in disguise who are reporting on the situation for their Fatima.



Descent

By midnight, most of the siege forces are set up and prepared. Shortly after, any questions about what is to come next are answered. The division of Joanite Archers upon the South Tier Bridge unleashes several volleys of flaming arrows at the buildings of Hom. The wooden shanties nearest the shores of the island erupt like tinder in the dry summer heat, leaving scores of screaming dockside inhabitants dashing for cover among the ruined buildings nearby.

The safety of the ancient structures is quickly called into doubt when the Joanites pull out their heavy artillery. Two catapults set up on the South Tier Bridge and begin to rain boulders, flaming balls of pitch, glass and metal shards upon the roads below. The catapults work like large slings and are dangerously inaccurate, although a Dahlian Archer uses Motion to assist the loading and firing of the makeshift ammunition. Large structures such as the Cage and the Sepulcher are targeted first, but the catapult crews soon turn their attention to the walls and avenues of Hom.

Catapults: ACC-2, Parry n/a, Damage : Glass shards DM 25, Flaming Pitch DM 15 (Intensity 5-7 flame damage for 3 rounds after), Boulders DM 60 (intended for structures).

The Joanites vary the nature of their barrages according to what they see happening on the streets below them. If the Fallen take shelter within buildings, fire and stones are launched; if they are assembling a counterattack or attempting to put out the blazes, thousands of flesh-tearing fragments of glass and metal shards are used instead. There is a -2 modifier to any actions that take place near or under the bombardment of the catapults due to the difficulty of carrying out those actions under such hostile conditions. The fires also begin to rage, imposing further difficulties as the Weaver sees fit.

Ardatl Maque makes her way to Lilith's Palace (*Children of Lilith*, p. 79) in order to distribute some of the weapons stored there amongst the ranks of the Fallen. Other Children of Lilith, including Lucas, accompany her. Ardatl is willing to accept any help the PCs might offer. Mek makes sure the outer defenses are well manned, delegating tasks to anyone he can. Kara the Hunter groups any straggling and panicking Fallen together, giving them purpose in the face of what may be the end for the Eighth Tribe. Strangely, Veruka detaches from the whole affair and only speaks to Kymber Reva, Deus and the Guides during the siege. The Weaver can use any NPCs that the characters have ties with to offer some direction to confused or hesitant Players. It is best to motivate the PCs through the other characters on Hom, such as Evangel Black or Altara Ven, rather than forcing the plot to make the PCs behave in a desired way. There is a lot of freedom of action throughout the siege, therefore, the more alive the inhabitants, the easier the Weaver's task.

Double Blind

The PCs may wish to take part in a sortie against the catapults. A full force of Joanite Cavalry protects the war machines and charge down anyone attempting to approach. While the pulleys under the South Tier Bridge can be used, it is evident that escape is almost impossible once on the surface due to the large number of Joanite troops and supporting Tribals. A small force may do well, and this can be an adventure in itself.

PCs who actively survey the situation may Notice vs. 4 a number of boats making their way across the River to the southernmost bank of the mainland. The boats contain a Hunting Party of seven members who march to Haven's southern shore after disembarking. Among their number is Jules Bearskin, a giant of a man who belongs to the Guild of the Winter Wolf. The Hunting Party's mission is to destroy the forge at Lilith's Palace while the catapults and archers distract the Fallen. The Children of Lilith, foolishly, leave their posts in order to make their way to Lilith's Palace after hearing of its vulnerability.

At the same time as the Hunting Party makes its way to Lilith's Palace, the Cavalry stationed at the Fallen Bridge makes its push. Their goal is the lake on the western end of Hom. Depending on the defenses made by Mek (as well as the PCs' input) this may be either difficult or easy for the Joanites. The Winding Path is well designed for hit and run tactics; however, the Joanites are adamant about gaining a foothold on Hom early on. The Weaver can play out a skirmish if the PCs are defending that part of the island, and use that to gauge how well the Joanites accomplish their task.

Redux

If the PCs wish, they may make their way over to the Palace to help the Children of Lilith make their stand. If they do, they find Lucas assisting Ardatli Maque while they attempt to prevent the Joanites from entering Lilith's holy ground. The battle does not go well for the Fallen, however, due to the incredible expertise of the Templars and Jules' feral savagery. The Children of Lilith fight valiantly, but eventually are forced back inside the Palace, where they put up a final defense. While running the attack, the Weaver should show the unity of both sides' purpose. The Joanites have the will of their Fatima and the Nation behind them and the Children of Lilith have just as strong a belief and faith in their own lost Fatima. For the PCs belonging to any of the four orthodox Outlooks, it should be a moment of insight into the weakness of the Fallen.

Once inside the Palace, the Hunting Party overpowers the Children of Lilith, limiting them to defending the forge in the lower levels. The Joanites are well aware of the location of the forge after their last assault during the end of Lilith's reign. As the melee reaches a fevered pitch, Ardatli Maque challenges the Winter Wolf Guildsman to single combat. Jules readily accepts and flexes his muscles, calling on the Winter Wolf to aid him in his duty in a vicious howl. The PCs are likely far too preoccupied with their own battles to aid Ardatli, and any Fallen Joanites know that interfering is considered dishonorable to both members involved. A fast-paced and deadly melee begins, with Ardatli's sheer Willpower giving her an advantage over the huge Joanite. In a moment of sudden clarity, within the frenzy of battle, the PCs see Ardatli's Lilithian Greatsword fly from her hands and twirl into the air. Before anyone has a chance to react, Jules' carves his sword across her body, spraying her blood over Lilith's forge. Ardatli hangs in the air, her muscles realizing their inability to further support her body, Jules' gigantic boot crashes into her chest, sending Lilith's first Child backwards into the flames. The PCs notice the confused look upon her face turn oddly serene, split seconds before the forge erupts in fire.

The Children of Lilith immediately lose heart with the death of their leader and fight to escape the forging chamber. A PC close to Ardatli may want to reach for her sword before exiting the Palace and take it for her own, a memento to a lost friend. The Hunting Party sets upon anyone else who wishes to remain.

The Dead Cry Out

The PCs must now either escape or meet their fate at the hands of the devoted Joanites. With the impending loss of the Palace, the surviving Children of Lilith abandon Haven. Within the next hour, all remaining stragglers on Haven, including the Squat families living there, are put to the sword. Mek does not sanction a counterattack on Lilith's Palace, as forces are stretched to the limit all over Hom. Many are caught up in the very real danger of putting out the quickly spreading flames that threaten to consume everything in their path.

Ardatli Maque is honored after she recounts of her bravery spread amongst the Cells. The Children of Lilith seem lost without her and many seem to lose all hope, while others become even more infuriated, instilled with their Fatima's Rage. The Lightbringers try to help those who suffer losses throughout the siege, but are especially sympathetic to the Children of Lilith at this time.

The bombardment of Hom continues into the night, although the cover of darkness does allow the Fallen some freedom of movement. Mek and Kyrt (who begins to take a more active roll in aiding his fellows), take this opportunity to reorganize the lines of defense in preparation for the ground invasion that they feel is imminent. Mek requests aid from warriors of any Outlook to support the walls and gates of Hom.

Kymber Reva asks for the aid of any who can put out fires and move the injured to safer, less flammable areas. The PCs may also gravitate towards more personal missions, such as trying to hide reserves of food and water, or find friends and companions who are missing. Sala can help PCs in rituals and in tactical decisions, lending his wisdom and fighting prowess to weakened cells. Vikas speaks very little, surprisingly. He spends most of his time with his wife and children.

Daybreak

Mhumia (and Matahar to a much lesser extent) is also found helping in various capacities, by both comforting distressed Fallen and lending her support to fighting the fires. Mhumia seems rather unaffected by the situation, and speaks of the growing pains of the Fallen and how the sacrifice of some leads to the ultimate liberation of all. Mhumia may very well carry on any intimate relationships with a PC by spending quiet time with them during short moments of rest. Banting, of the Cabal of Deliverance, is in the Hallows ministering to the wounded and dying. He expresses his belief that the Fallen will overcome this obstacle just like those that came before, and that not even the Fatimas can stand in the way of their destiny. He implores the PCs to find Mhumia and Matahar, as he fears he may be the only one of his Cell left alive. If they find his Cell members and bring them back, the old man is moved to tears.

Deus and Altara Ven organize a messenger service to quickly relay vital information between the various defense points. Stealthy PCs may very well volunteer for this job. Unfortunately, the first news that must be dispersed is the sack of Lilith's Palace and Ardatli's tragic death. With the forge out of Fallen hands, and the food crops of Haven no longer at their disposal, many fear that they will not be able to hold out if the siege continues over several weeks, or months. Morale drops substantially, and the PCs may witness the suicide of more than one desperate Outcast who wishes to permanently reconnect with the Goddess.

As dawn breaks, the pale light reveals the true damage inflicted on the buildings of Hom. Fires burn out of control and many buildings are on the verge of collapse. Fallen struggle to put out the flames, but their low manpower, in addition to the strain of constant bombardment from above, makes the job drastically more difficult. The Joanites, on the other hand, are reinforced and prepared to maintain the siege indefinitely. The siege carries on over the following days and nights.

Scene 2 - Walking the Flames

It is apparent to all, at this point, that the Fallen cannot wait out the siege. Mek agrees that if the current rate of attrition keeps up, there will soon be nothing left to defend. If an exit point can be kept open for any length of time, he reasons, at least some of the Fallen can be evacuated, the better to carry on a guerrilla war against their persecutors. He sends out scouts to determine the weakest point in the Joanite perimeter, so that a counterattack can be mounted. He believes that this may distract from the actual escape attempt, testing to see whether it is at all feasible.

If the PCs participate in the scouting expedition, the Weaver should ask them to make Tactics rolls vs. 5 to determine the most likely point to make their sortie. Those who succeed by any margin of success may favor one of two plans of attack: to assault the South Tier Bridge via the pulleys and cables hanging below it, or to overwhelm the Cadres stationed by the lake. The Weaver should still take note of the actual MoS, as any PCs who make a MoS of 3 or more receive added information and bonuses during the attack itself. Regardless of the Player Cell's concerns or hesitation, the Jackers and Herites elect to attack one of these points, although cautious PCs may wisely decline to take part.

Indeed, the Joanites are expecting a sortie, and have purposely set up both camps to appear poorly defended and vulnerable. Their intention is to draw the Fallen into a trap, the better to ambush and destroy them with minimal losses of their own. The Joanites by the lake slacken in their posts and try to appear arrogant and cocksure in their position. The forces on the South Tier Bridge appear scattered and relatively distant from one another, prime targets for a hit and run.

Whether the Fallen attack the South Tier Bridge or the lake, they arrive only to be surprised by Joanites waiting in ambush. The assault party finds itself set on from all sides and outnumbered by at least three to one. Many Fallen are killed in the ill-fated counterattack, but again, let the PCs' prowess serve as a gauge of exactly how successfully (or poorly) the attack unfolds. If the PCs suffer multiple injuries or death, it can be assumed the same happens to other Cells that aid them. If they escape unscathed, then arrange likewise for the NPCs. Despite their successes, the Joanite forces are better equipped and receive reinforcements for their injured and dead, something that the Fallen have no capability of mimicking.

Despair

It appears that the Outcasts do not have the strength to mount another attack that will have a lasting effect on the Pillars. Still, the bombardment continues and no mercy is expected from the Nation. Not only does the oncoming despair provoke another rash of suicides, but some Fallen also become dangerously unhinged. The Weaver can be especially imaginative here, showing this psychological withering. Perhaps a deranged Outcast, imagining himself a minion of the Seed, begins to drag the wounded into his lair, where he forces them to watch as he gnaws the flesh from their fingers and toes. More typical lunatics roam the streets ranting senseless prophecies and accosting everyone in sight. Confusion reigns in Hom while these problems are put to rest by the cells with the time and energy to do so.

The Joanites use the opportunity to press the attack as the Hunting Party on Haven and the Cavalry near the lake simultaneously charge Hom proper at dusk. For the first time during the conflict, the Fallen have the advantage of strategic positioning! The PCs should have the opportunity to participate in the defense of Mek's well planned strongpoints, as well as come up with other tactical advantages to use against the attacking Joanites. These could include ambushes, booby traps, decoys and innovative uses of Synthesis. The Weaver should reward particularly detailed and unique plans with catastrophic losses for the Joanites. It should also be noted that while the Joanites attack the catapults are silenced, so the negative modifiers they cause no longer apply.

In the end, the Joanites are turned back, but the Fallen losses are still horrendous. While the catapults once again rain death from the night sky, Mek orders the battered outermost defenses to be abandoned as the Fallen retreat deeper into Hom.

Scene 3 - Ultimatum

In the Hallows, Banting and other caregivers of Hom, such as Mari-Anne Melina (*Book of Legends* p. 52) care for most of those wounded from the fighting. Because of this waiting captive audience, Hal Ninva sees it as the ideal site for a meeting of the various Cells and Outlooks. Deus and Altara's messengers quickly alert all available Fallen to make their way to the Hallows for an important announcement. In a fortunate coincidence, the catapults cease fire just as the last of everyone assembles. Those present at the meeting fall silent in anticipation — a rare experience for those who once attended the old rants at the Cage!

While Hal draws a breath to lead into his speech, an apparition suddenly appears before the audience. It is actually an illusion of Marshal Bartholomew created by a Dahlian Trickster. Bartholomew is not physically there, so any attacks against him have no effect; however, the illusion is an accurate representation and supplies Jackers a face for their inevitable vengeance.

The Marshal gives the assemblage an ultimatum, stating that any Outcasts who surrender immediately will be placed under protective custody and safely escorted from Hom, while the heaviest hand of the law will judge all those who remain. Bartholomew comes across as arrogant and condescending in his speech, as he doesn't truly care whether or not any of the Fallen actually give up. He attempts to convey a sense of authority, but jaded Fallen probably just get a bit of a laugh. The apparition disappears after warning the Fallen that they have only one hour to decide.

The next hour contains the most serious and productive planning session in the history of the Fallen. A large number of cells are ready to surrender — including Vikas and his family — preferring the possibility of enslavement, with the hope of eventual release, as opposed to the certainty of death while defending Hom. Those opposed to surrender, including Kara the Hunter and Evangel Black, discuss available options for escape, including joint rituals to aid the attempts. Some Doomsayers voice their willingness to sacrifice their lives in these rituals, lending their power in selfless acts so that others may escape. Waiting out the siege is a moot point, as building after building becomes gutted by the raging fires and the heavy smoke that grows into a suffocating killer.

Respite

Deus and Altara's messengers, who may include the PCs, interrupt the meeting with news that brings hope to many - the Hunting Party has left Haven. They were seen joining the other Tribals on the South Tier Bridge. Some Fallen are skeptical after the ambush that caught the last sortie off guard, but others believe that the Joanites have been recalled in anticipation of the Fallen's surrender. Anyone traveling to Haven to investigate finds that it has been left in absolute ruin — especially Lilith's Palace. Nothing of spiritual value remains, and all symbols, runes and Artifacts of Lilith are destroyed or missing. News of this brings great lamentation from the Children of Lilith.

As the hour draws to a close, the Fallen individually decide on all three courses of action. Some surrender to the mercies of the Shebans, some make a break for the Outlands or Vimary, while the rest remain to defend their homes or seek an alternate escape. Quick, tearful good-byes are spoken as Cells and families divide themselves along these lines. Lucas, Sala, Mhumia, Banting, Matahar, Mek and all of the Elders remain on the island, while Vikas and his family, along with many others who have small children with them, surrender to the Pillars. Cells opposed to the surrender are threatened by certain Herites, notably Troy Fenys, who state that freedom of choice is a right that must be supported by the Fallen regardless of consequence.

Meanwhile, the actual reason for the Hunting Party's abandonment of Haven is due to a massive Squat force seen advancing from the south. Should the PCs or another Cell use Haven as a possible escape route, they notice the rising smoke of distant camps on the southern horizon. The PCs hear rumors that anyone who hastily left that way has been slain by Luther Boarhead's roving war bands.

The Shebans direct the surrendering residents of Hom to the Fallen Bridge, where Inquisitors shackle them. The prisoners are treated roughly, and one of Vikas' children is reported slain by a Shadow Watcher for no apparent reason. If the PCs elect to surrender, they actually witness a Shadow Watcher run the defenseless child through with his sword, before they are completely under Sheban authority. Many other Outcasts change their minds about leaving after hearing of the injustices of the Inquisition and the complete lack of mercy being delivered by the Judges.

At the end of the hour of waiting, the renewal of the siege is signaled by a single flaming mass catapulted into the center of the Hallows, exploding the wooden structures in a fiery blaze. The remaining Fallen scramble to rescue the wounded and put out the flames before the nearby Junks is ignited. The bombardment resumes in full force.

Hal, once again, calls the Fallen for a meeting, this time with a slightly different agenda. He, Altara Ven and Kara the Hunter field ideas on how best to evacuate Hom. All remaining Fallen are encouraged to contribute their ideas on how best to make the escape of small groups feasible. The PCs should be a part of making plans for any escapes - including their own.

Hom is all but destroyed.



Quest Two, Act Three: Escape from Hom

The Fatimas' wrath was absolute. The suffering in Hom was more than I could have ever imagined, as people lost everything that they had spent so long in creating and building. It was all being destroyed by the Pillars faster than we could prevent, and many of us were quickly losing hope. The Cabal of Deliverance knew, however, that the pain that we endured was going to be turned back onto the Fatimas once we discovered the truth behind their powers. I stared blankly at the flames that crackled and burnt around me and knew that a re-birth was coming — for we were the Children of Prophecy.

— Banting of the Cabal of Deliverance.

Backstory

The siege on Hom severely weakens the Fallen both physically and mentally. The Pillars, sanctioned by the Nation, tirelessly threaten the lives of all those who failed to surrender when they were given the chance. The number of casualties and injuries rises with each passing day, as many of the combative Jackers, Herites and Children of Lilith suffer the brunt of the damage. The Jacker cells, along with those who take active roles in the defense of Hom, fall further and further back, as even they cannot hold off the Joanite and Sheban assaults.

Mek has a meeting with the Lightbringers and tells them that Hom must be evacuated or everyone will perish. Hal Ninva, Kymber Reva, Evangel Black, Altara Ven and Deus start to spread the news that Hom is to be abandoned. Several individuals remain in Hom, including Veruka the Wraith, Kymber Reva and Mek, as well as the immobile injured and elderly, albeit in hiding. Plans are conceived to facilitate the escape from Hom.

Agnes still undergoes the vile experiments and torture that the Melanis inflict upon Her daily. The Cabal of Deliverance members that are in the Covenant's hidden monastery wait for the final ritual that should — theoretically — transfer Agnes' power to Sarah. The Baron continues to investigate the Child Fatima's whereabouts, using the Flenis as his prime agents in the H'I Kar, but Deacon Vytor does more than enough to hide the truth. The Baron finally begins to suspect (falsely) that the Fates have broken the deal and secretly know where Agnes is. He sends his emissary, Pv'tir of Sangis, to meet with the Fallen who witnessed Agnes' kidnapping in order to gather more information and hopefully prove his suspicions to be truth.

The Fates, meanwhile, believe that the Fallen have among them some who know of Agnes' actual whereabouts. They further influence Tera Sheba to capture and interrogate as many Fallen as possible in the hopes that those in league with the Z'bri Covenant will be discovered, and their hidden agendas be brought to light so that Agnes can be safely returned to the Nation. Eva feels especially guilty about the current problem that they are facing, because She was the one who initially questioned the deal with the Baron but acquiesced too easily. Magdalen believes that the Baron is withholding information and that he is using the current chaos to further his own goals as always, while Baba Yaga, despite the changes in the course that fate has taken, realizes that things are occurring according to the future She perceived.

Dahlia suspects a conspiracy amongst Her Sisters, and is quite annoyed at being left out of all the fun. Dahlia knows that the Fallen Dancer, Mhumia, changed the course of the future when she failed to complete the trick that caused her exile (see p. 108). The Trickster Fatima has Her caravans searching for Mhumia and anyone that knows her personally, in the hopes that her secrets can be pried out of her.

Scene 1 - Exodus

The PCs receive word from the Lightbringers that the Fallen plan to escape from Hom. Depending on their whereabouts when this happens, those around them voice many different concerns. Hal, or whoever brought the news, answers the questions to the best of his ability, but many unknowns remain. The Fallen have to either leave Hom or continue to suffer from the attacks. Assuming that Hal is the one with the information, he states that several people and groups need to remain behind.

The injured and the elderly are placed in hiding within the many tunnels and hideouts in Hom proper. To ensure their safety, Mek remains behind along with a few capable fighters. Veruka the Wraith and Kymber Reva also stay, as Veruka is too old to travel, while Kymber is required to administrate the efforts of the Fallen and see to the wounded. The Weaver should allow the PCs to digest the magnitude of what is occurring and work on any plans or ideas that they may have. The PCs need to combine all of their resources to survive, and the remnants of several different cells approach the characters, hoping to join forces with them in the coming days. This is a prime opportunity to highlight the growing unity amongst the Fallen, as unprecedented cooperation and survival efforts start to take shape.



The Fractured Voice

There is little bickering amongst the Fallen, although it is unfortunate that this cooperation has not occurred under more peaceful conditions. The **Lightbringers** take on a lot of responsibility during the escape planning, as they organize and delegate cells to appropriate tasks. The PCs can show off here, as any and all efforts are needed at this time.

The **Doomsayers** speak of Joshua's Prophecy, and the relevance of His words now. Doomsayers receive powerful visions during the trials of the Fallen, and many begin to form new cells around powerful speakers and visionaries.

The **Herites** influence their respective cells with thoughts of freeing those Fallen already captured, as well as hindering the Inquisition from the shadows of Vimary. They are a driving force to those who have lost morale and the will to fight, rallying others to rise above the Fatimas and show themselves as the true bearers of Destiny.

The **Jackers** voice their call for a resistance against the Tribal armies, their focus on the Z'bri slightly quelled in the face of the danger posed by the Tribal Inquisition. Many Jackers and Herites combine to form mixed cells.

The **Children of Lilith**, with the loss of Ardati Maque, are broken and demoralized. They support different cells to varying degrees, and supply much needed reinforcements to battered and weary cells.

During the lulls between the Pillars' onslaughts, the Fallen implement their plans to escape. Mhumia and Banting of the Cabal of Deliverance may be quite close to the PCs by this time and they assist any efforts that are made in whatever form they can. Kara the Hunter, Evangel Black and Kyrt are three other characters that may become close to the PCs. Kara the Hunter and her Cell, the Seeds of Eden, may wish to accompany the PCs outside of Hom once their escape is made. Kara is willing to take the fight to the Tribes, but does not agree to any underhanded or dishonorable methods that the PCs may be planning. Evangel Black has a personal vendetta against Cylix and can provide dedicated resources to the PCs in the way of acting against the Inquisition's members. Kyrt on the other hand, supports most actions against the Tribals, moral or otherwise. All three characters can be excellent additions to a PC Cell.

The way out of Hom is rife with danger and, depending on where the PCs intend to go, should be modified by the Weaver so that it fits in with the general feel of her cycle. Dreaming and Synthesis are likely to play major roles in any escape attempts, so imaginative and innovative uses of Synthesis should be rewarded accordingly. There are several options available to Players in their escape. These are not meant to dictate the only possible courses of action, but rather serve as examples for the Weaver and Players alike. Note that most attempts are best made under the cover of night.

Escape Routes

The **South Tier Bridge** has many cables and pulleys that run underneath it. The Fallen have used these many times to travel to and from Bazaar, but never in the same capacity as what is required now. The towers on the north bank of the river are heavily manned by the Joanites, who are keeping a close watch on any movement to and from the entrance of the bridge. While not impossible, the South Tier Bridge is a dangerous option.

The **Fallen Bridge** is closed by Joanite Cavalry who maintain a vigilant watch on the shores of Hom. They are not expecting a push or escape attempt from this direction (something that can be used to the Fallen's advantage), but it does require some savvy and hard work to press through the Joanites stationed there.

The **River**, especially during the night, is an excellent way for Fallen to get off the island of Hom. The size of the river, as well as the lack of light that can be reasonably shone upon it in darkness, lends itself well to those fleeing over its chilly waters. The only problem is that with the limited number of boats on Hom, not everyone can escape this way, unless the ferries risk returning once they leave. Many cells make makeshift rafts, but the dangers of tipping and overloading dissuade those with a fear of water and the inability to swim. Plus, there are things lurking under the currents to keep the less courageous from treading this path.

2. Quest two: Fanning the Flames

Haven remains deserted, for the most part, and some decide to try to head south, away from Vimary for survival. Rumors of Luther Boarhead, Squat bands and roving Gek'roh cause hesitation amongst many. While seemingly the easiest of routes, some Fallen (including Kyr and Kara) state that no good can be done for the others by running away from the problem. Those wishing to simply use the island of Haven as a stepping-stone in order to circle back into Vimary are looked upon as being very brave and courageous.

Sub Terra is a secret that some Fallen know of (especially those with affiliations with Keepers and Agnites), and may divulge for the greater good of all. A Sub Terra tunnel called Coward's Mark runs from a series of four pillars just north of the Cage, leading deep underground and right into the heart of Vimary. This is the path of least resistance, as the Tribals have no official knowledge of its existence. If the PCs learn of Sub Terra, the main danger is getting lost within the dark under-tunnels or meeting up with beasts in the dank and crumbling passageways.

Before the PCs finalize their plans and leave Hom, Altara Ven and Deus approach them. Kara the Hunter may be with them as well, even if she has not joined up with the group by this time. The Lightbringer couple speak somberly and seriously to the PCs. They ask that aside from ensuring the Cell's own survival, to be sure that the group does its utmost to investigate and stop the atrocities that currently plague the Fallen. Only with decisive action can the predicament be resolved, and many questions remain to be answered. They plead that whatever the group discovers be used in the best interest of the Fallen. While their speech is moving and may instill some motivation for the PCs to do more than just get away with their necks intact, the Weaver is encouraged to tie in sub-plots and story arcs that she wishes to run for the coming months. The time spent away from Hom is intentionally open in nature and can be the perfect place for the PCs to develop themselves and for the Weaver to further layer her cycle.

Should a Player Cell insist upon remaining in Hom, the Weaver can easily continue to engage the Cell in guerrilla tactics and minor skirmishes with the attacking Joanites. The underground communications network that is run by Kymber Reva and Veruka the Wraith can also be a focus for those remaining in Hom. The time spent there is difficult, however, and Mek discourages any unnecessary stragglers, as more strain obviously will be placed on keeping the larger numbers hidden, fed and healthy. While the role of those who remain is important, the Fallen who act out of Hom, in Vimary, discovering the clues and plots behind the scenes, have a more important role in the grand scheme of things.



Scene 2 - The Unseen Wilds

We were so close to achieving our goal that I wanted to laugh with joy. We were being punished by the Fatimas, but after the final ritual in which Agnes' power would be instilled in Sarah, we would return and liberate all of our Fallen sisters. I had made so many friends during the siege of Hom and I was going to miss them all so dearly. Even those who died, did so that we all may live. There would be great days ahead for all of us, and I danced upon the flames of my old home.

— Mhumia of the Cabal of Deliverance

Backstory

A large number of Fallen escape Hom and seek refuge in the wilds of Vimary. They seek to survive the Inquisition, first and foremost, and secondly to try and make some sense of the entire affair. The entire scene takes as many months as the Weaver wishes, but the transition to the next Quest is intended to take place by late summer. As these are the most open-ended of all the scenes in **Trial by Fire**, the perspectives and resources necessary to manage the coming months are presented here for the Weaver's use. The Weaver can utilize as much or as little information from previous sources (such as the **Rulebook**, **Vimary** and **Into the Outlands**) on the many and varied locations as she wishes, allowing the Players' Cell to explore previously undiscovered areas.

The Pillars adjust their strategy, sending the Inquisition forces to ferret out hidden Cells. The siege and skirmishes continue on Hom, but with the limited number of forces still holding out some resistance there, Cylix orders the Joanites to put their energies to better use. Thoughts of the Baron's possible betrayal are at the forefront of Baba Yaga, Magdalen and Eva's minds, and they allow many of the Templars to return to their posts at the Seven Fingers in case of Z'bri mobilization. Joan grows increasingly anxious over the ruthless methods being used by the Inquisition, but fails to act against Her Sisters' words just yet. Blades and Watchers form into Inquisitor Circles under the authority of Sheban Judges and Advocates who are given Inquisitor status. The Elder Council also forms many Harvest Circles to deal with localized and specific investigations of Fallen activity.

In an attempt to survive and set their Cell's plans and goals in motion, the PCs can explore several areas. The next page describes some examples of known factions that can provide shelter or trouble for the PCs. The Weaver is encouraged to expand on those mentioned, as well as to create her own according to the specific needs of her Players.

The remaining members of the Cabal of Deliverance in Hom use the siege and subsequent escape to travel to the Covenant monastery to await the final Ritual of Deliverance (see *Quest Four*, pp. 78-93), although they can be encountered, likely as allies, during the summer months.



People

Keepers: A common choice amongst many Fallen is to look to those who suffered a similar predicament two generations earlier, the Keepers. Some Keeper factions and families accept the Fallen, while others turn them away, afraid that the full force of the Tribes will once again come crashing down. The Inquisitors harass and capture any Keepers they encounter while trying to find Fallen heretics. It should become increasingly difficult, as time goes by, for Fallen to find Keepers willing to give them shelter. Some Keepers even start handing Fallen over to Inquisitor Circles to minimize any attention drawn to their own people.

Evans: The Evans are often considered the kindest of the Tribals in their simple ways and family-based lifestyle. They are also the most numerous of the tribes and potentially offer the greatest safety in distant farms and homesteads. The Evans are largely sympathetic to the Fallen plight, but the good-natured farmers soon begin to feel the strain of local Harvest Circles and passing Inquisitor Cells. The Shebans salt the ground of any Evans harboring the Fallen, something that upsets Eva, but causes the desired effect amongst Her people. Evans secretly tell Inquisitors of those suspected of keeping Fallen, and some even use the situation to get the better of old rivals springing from long-running family and clan animosity. Shaman Storm Cry makes certain that he voices his contempt for Evan families sympathetic to the exiles.

Yagans: Seeking out the Yagans is dangerous and unwise, even if the PCs have old contacts. Baba Yaga keeps a very close eye on all activities within Her Tribe, and those Cells within Mortuary's borders do not last very long before being discovered. Yagans use spirits, and the Dreaming, to search for Fallen wherever they go.

Magdalites: Cells with Magdalite connections may seek shelter amongst past companions and lovers. The Magdalites entice the PCs into feeling safe, but are manipulating them, trying to find out what happened to Agnes. If the PCs behave in a way that threatens whomever shelters them, the Magdalites do not hesitate to turn them in to the Inquisition. If the Lovers can't gain the truth through subtle techniques, maybe the Shebans and their uncaring ways can.

Shebans: The Stiltwalkers have some members who do not agree with Cylix's cruel methods. Old contacts can be met and perhaps help with insider information into the nature of the Inquisition, its methods and current priorities. It is important to show that the Shebans, despite their recent zeal, are not all heartless, or driven solely by a thirst for misguided justice. It is also possible that a Judge or Advocate allows the PCs to escape a trap before the Joanites arrive. There should be a certain amount of moral division visibly occurring within those Tera Shebans who are not involved with the Inquisition.

Joanites: Joan's forces are so caught up in the logistics of the Inquisition that any Fallen going to them for help are digging their own graves. Even those who believe the Fallen are being punished for crimes they did not commit are hard pressed to lend any sort of aid. Most Joanites are on "active duty" and are, more often than not, directly involved with the Inquisition, save for the Templars who have returned to the Seven Fingers in the preparation of possible Z'bri action.

Dahlions: The Tricksters always make sure that they fan the fire, and they enter the mix with wicked glee, although Dahlian caravans do secretly transport Fallen. Anaky, the Little Trickster of Bazaar (*Vimary*, p. 88), does her best to aid the Fallen who take refuge there by taking on the roles of Watchers and Blades, changing the surroundings of Bazaar to benefit the Fallen. Quip, from Act One (p. 106), also makes a reappearance, but in a not-so-pleasant way. She continues to harass anyone that wanders into her Caravan and may also be met in the Outlands if the Players go there. The Dahlians draw as much information as possible from the Fallen and report any solid findings directly to Dahlia. The one thing Dahlia does not tolerate is the safe transport of Herites! Any Herites in a Cell are betrayed by the Dahlians and handed over to the Inquisition as yet another way for Dahlia to toy with the Outlook She loves to hate.

Agnites: The Agnites are anything but helpful toward the Fallen, or anyone else for that matter. For more details on what the Agnites are currently experiencing, see *Lost Child* at the end of Quest One.

Joshuans: Not to be ignored are the Lost Tribes. Many Fallen may seek out Joshuans for support and ask for vengeance for the wrongs that they suffer. The Joshuans, however, aren't collectively certain that the Fallen are the Children of Prophecy, as they claim to be. The Joshuans deal with much of their own problems and don't venture into Vimary during the Inquisition. However, there is a group of Joshuan Outrunners in the H'I Kar that are helping the Children of Lilith who were taken into the forest in Quest One. The Children of Lilith don't know who keeps repelling the Z'bri attacks, or leaving behind fresh arrows, sharpening stones, blade oils and the like, but are more than accepting of the mysterious helpers' good will. If the PC Cell actively seeks out the Children of Lilith from Quest One, any encounters should be delayed until Quest Four, after the Trial of Heresy.

Marians: The Marians are also aiding the Fallen whenever possible. They help in subtle and hidden ways, leaving fresh water, food and clothing for Fallen in the strangest of places. The Fallen should feel that there are kind spirits nearby and soon learn to trust the offerings from the Marians. In order to alleviate excess paranoia, these offerings should be safe and free of any traps or other adverse effects. The Fallen have a hard enough time as it is and the Marians, especially the Wreathed Ones, are their one true ally.

Places

Hunting Paths: The Hunting Paths were once the most dangerous place for a Fallen to be found and ironically, are one of the safest places during the Inquisition. With the Joanite resources strained in the search for the Fallen across Vimary, the patrols of the Hunting Paths have subsequently suffered. A few small Cells retreat here as the hunting is good and the water is clean. If the Hunting Paths become too popular, however, the relative safety of it diminishes within days, as the Inquisitor Circles hatefully focus on flushing out those within.

Outlands: The Outlands can be considered a dangerous venture, for not only are the Squats waiting for stragglers from the turmoil in Vimary, but the land itself is hostile to the ill prepared. Squat bands, led for the most part by Luther Boarhead (*Vimary* p. 115), track, attack and enslave any Fallen and Tribals they can. Due to the lack of Joanites patrolling the borders of Vimary, the Squats work with quite a bit of freedom. The main concern of those who leave Vimary is the fact that the Fallen cannot seem to resolve the present conflict, and continue to suffer at the hands of the Inquisition. For more information on the wilds around Vimary, see *Into the Outlands*.

Duskfall Forest: The Duskfall forest is vast and wild, an area that promises itself as a last hope for numerous Cells. The Duskfall is a risk that some are willing to take, despite the rumors of tortures and killings that continue to trickle in from Bazaar. Besides the creatures that inhabit the forest (including the Chained), the Joanite Duskfall Towers pose a sizable threat. The Nation gives the order that the Duskfall Captains are to apprehend any Fallen they see and deal with them in whatever manner they deem necessary. Taking into account the demeanor of the Joanites in the Duskfall Forest, this is not a good thing for the Fallen.

Playground: Playground is largely abandoned as the rest of the Tribes administer to the Agnites. It is a place that the Inquisition is unlikely to search, although any Fallen that are found there are dealt with in the most horrible of ways. There is no mercy granted, since the Tribes see it as a sacrilege to Agnes for Fallen to seek solace there. Playground is dangerous, as small groups of Agnites wander its myriad chambers and tunnels. The Agnites are, of course, suffering from the disconnection to Agnes and behave in disturbing ways. (See *Lost Child* at the end of Quest One for more details on this.)

Undercity: The Undercity refers to the catacombs and sunken depths beneath Bazaar, an area that the Inquisition concentrates heavily on, as numerous Cells find refuge there. It is often raided by Shadow Watchers but, because of its cramped nature and the network of countless tunnels, it is easily defensible and allows for quick retreats and counterattacks by the Fallen. This is where many of the skirmishes between the Inquisition and the Fallen take place.

Discarded Lands: This bleak and sterile area may not hold much appeal at first, but Cells with any history with the Squats or Keepers may find this much more hospitable than some of the alternatives. The Rift holds a great many nooks and crannies where a smart Cell can keep hidden for days.

2. Quest two: Fanning the Flames

Skyrealms: The Skyrealms are places of evil, where the darkest of the Z'bri play their games on the unsuspecting residents of the city below. Things haven't changed. While finding a safe place to rest for the night or in the flight from an approaching Inquisitor Circle, a Fallen Cell may find itself in the twisted husk of a Skyrealm. The Weaver can design entire sessions out of a Joh'an who captures the PCs and has his way with them, or promises them safety — as long as the Cell does what the Joh'an wishes.

The Great River: Dotted with small islands that can provide safety from the Tribes, the River does not, however, supply enough space to go around. The limits on population make things difficult as more and more escapees arrive and food and shelter becomes increasingly limited. Those who arrive first defend their plots of land against any other Cells that try to stake a claim.

Rust Wastes: Scray Storms, hostile Keepers, a lack of natural resources, foul air, roaming Chained and countless diseases all make the Rust Wastes an impossible place to survive for those not trained and ready to do so. Cells that find themselves in the Rust Wastes need to be smart and resourceful to make it for more than a few weeks, if not days, without Keeper assistance.

The Marian Shrine: The Valley of the Shrine is where the conflict originated, so a Cell may find its way back there for further clues. Baba Yaga expects this, however, as only those who went there — and survived — know of its precise location. She has a Circle of Flesher Assassins, an elite sub-guild, waiting for any Fallen that happen to arrive. The Assassins swoop down on anyone who returns to the valley and subdues them with paralyzing poisons. If captured, the PCs are handed over to the Inquisition only after the Yagans interrogate them.

Griffentowne: Griffentowne residents are very happy with the relative freedom of life that they enjoy outside of the intrigue of the rest of the Nation, and they are not about to let the Fallen take that away. Griffentowne forms its own Harvest Circle, called The Spider's Loom, to deal with any Fallen who arrive. The Circle has full authority to use any and all means to dissuade exiles from setting down roots in the peaceful surroundings of Griffentowne.



Westholm: Westholm, on the other hand, is a relatively safe place for the Fallen since their distance from the Inquisition makes any efforts against Outcasts there extremely difficult to pursue. Also, the residents of Westholm are uncertain of the exact details of the shakeup on Vimary. Most of the stories they receive are twisted renditions of the truth, so a savvy group of Fallen can create a haven for themselves, as long as they remain humble and inconspicuous. A problem with going to Westholm, however, is the fact that it is so far from the events in Vimary proper that discovering the truth and quelling the injustices of the Inquisition becomes impossible.

During the time that the Fallen explore the safest ways to survive, a series of secret signs and messages is created. In order to communicate information about the trustworthiness and availability of people and places, as well as the recent developments and findings of various investigations, the Fallen form an underground network, run by Kymber Reva and Veruka the Wraith, out of Hom. Veruka sends dream messages and visits the Fallen all over Vimary in their sleep, collecting any information that may have been gathered and suggesting possible avenues of research. Kymber Reva deals with the real world messaging, and creates a series of symbols that appear innocuous to the untrained eye. She organizes the information Veruka gives her and starts to piece together the deeper motivations behind the Inquisition. As the Fallen in hiding move about Vimary, they come to understand the markings and graffiti that tell of dangerous locales, Inquisitorial activities, safe houses, shelter, fresh food and water.

The network is utilized by the majority of Fallen. Those who ignore it, or fail to understand its purpose, find themselves dealing with hardships that they could easily avoid. The network can be as detailed as the Weaver wishes; however, it only lasts until the Shebans catch on to its code.

The Terasheban are soon able to plant misinformation by learning the secret language. These ploys result in the mass capture of Fallen Cells, the false leads turning into deadly ambushes and traps. The Fallen soon realize that the network has been subverted by the Inquisition and begin to lose all hope.

Hooks

Here are a few examples of scenarios and encounters that may occur during the weeks and months in hiding:

Be it Ever so Humble: The Cell is offered shelter in the shed of an Evan family. During the stay, the Evans do their best to keep from drawing attention to themselves. Unfortunately, a neighboring clan member discovers the PCs' presence at the farm. A warning goes up and the Evan family forces the PCs out of their home. The characters, shortly after escaping, witness the family's home set to flames and their lands salted by the Inquisitors.

We'll Take it From Here: While an Inquisitor Circle is closing in on the PCs, a group of Dahlians come to the rescue. They pose as senior members of the Shebans, and order the Inquisitor Circle away from the area, stating that the situation is under control. However, if the Cell contains a Herite, the Dahlians try to hand the poor Exile over to the Shebans without imperiling the rest. Once the Inquisitors have moved on, the Dahlians ask the PCs for a favor of their own!

Almsgiver: A Yagan with a wagon full of bloody meat comes upon the PCs. This food may lead a hungry Cell to stealing the meat for sustenance. The faithful Yagan, however, has intentionally not cured the meat and anyone eating it will succumb to *Swine Fever*. (see p. 98)

2. Quest two: Fanning the Flames

The Hand That Fed You: While the characters are sleeping or otherwise unaware of their belongings, three Agnite Children place severed heads and limbs in the PCs' bags and satchels. The Children then warn anyone nearby that Fallen are killing people and taking their parts to their Z'bri masters. This unwanted attention leads to trouble amongst the Fallen, as the evidence suggests that the Children are telling the truth.

I Knew Him Well: A group of Keepers on a foraging mission come across the PCs. They tell the PCs about certain areas that should be avoided, as well as trade with them. However, as the meeting takes place, one of the Keepers drops some unique item that once belonged to a PC's friend who has recently been captured by the Inquisition. This suspicion can lead from paranoia to an all-out conflict, depending on the Weaver's preference.

Dangerous Trade: The PCs are in the Sunken City, hiding in the waterlogged cellars of ancient buildings. They befriend a Stiltwalker who risks her position as a Sheban to secretly aid the Cell. When this comes to light, the Inquisition soon turns its attention to its own Tribal territories. The Stiltwalker asks for the PCs' help on some personal quest in return for her aid.

Gan Eden: While traveling by night through some distant woods, the Cell finds itself in a glade. The trees are pristine and large, while the foliage is abundant with life. There is a bounty of fruit and berries, but upon picking the fruit, the PCs may see small drops of blood fall to the ground. If the PCs eat the fruit of the woods, the night brings them dreams of succulent cannibalism. They wake up the next morning with dry and wrinkled skin. They carry the scent of wood and leaves, their fingernails turning a brownish hue. The PCs are being turned into the lush surroundings, something that they may become aware of quite quickly; however, WIL rolls need to be made vs. 3 to leave the woods.



Seeds of Doubt

The following scene must take place at some point before Quest Three:

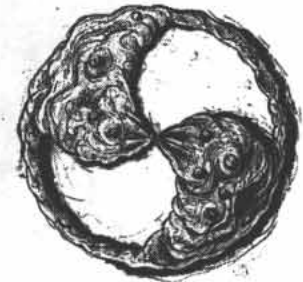
The Baron's diplomat to the Magdalites, Pv'tir of Sangis, actively searches for any Fallen who were at the Valley of the Shrine during Agnes' capture. The Sangis tracks the PCs, using all means at his disposal. It is quite possible that Pv'tir interrogates an old friend of the PCs who is under the Inquisition's control to discover their common habits. Using a Magdalite Diplomat's body, Pv'tir manages to draw out information from the prisoner that leads him to the Cell. Having the Players try to stay hidden from Pv'tir is an adventure in and of itself and can be planted within much of the other activities that the PCs experience.

In a suitable locale, the PCs hear a voice that whispers to them through the dark. Then, Pv'tir attempts to Soul Steal the PC with the lowest WIL. Should this fail, he finds a suitable host amongst someone the PCs trust. Whether the Sangis manages to possess a PC or an NPC, he enters into a conversation with the Cell, at some point. His Atmosphere is apparent, but Pv'tir has a lesser chance of affecting others — one of the reasons that he was chosen as a diplomat to the Tribes. The PSY roll to resist Pv'tir's Sangis Atmosphere is 2, rather than the normal 3.

Once he has the PCs' attention, he speaks in a slow, methodical voice that lingers lovingly on the end of each word. He introduces himself as an emissary from the H'l Kar, here on important business. If the PCs ask him what has happened to Agnes, he raises his finger, telling them to wait. Pv'tir then enlightens the PCs and tells them that the Baron does not have control of Agnes, but that a rogue group of Z'bri has taken Her. This may well be quite a shock for the PCs and whether they believe the Sangis or not is their prerogative. He continues to speak, stating that there is a secret sect of Fallen that aided the rogue Z'bri in luring Agnes to the valley and subsequently facilitated Her capture. He says that the Baron wants nothing more than to return Agnes to Her Sisters, in order that both parties may return to their current state of peace.

Pv'tir asks the PCs of any details they may remember from the Valley of the Shrine, specifically questioning the description of the Chainers and the Z'bri forces present. He also prompts them to suspect those they quested with; it is obvious that someone who survived the battle was in league with the Covenant. Pv'tir does not have all his facts straight and the Weaver can plant red herrings to keep the Players guessing.

The Weaver can also let the PCs argue the details of the encounter with Pv'tir, but remember that he is in the body of a friend or Cellmate, and that any damage to him only affects their friend. Pv'tir leaves the PCs after he feels he has had enough, and returns to his own body in Xstasis. The PCs are left with some answers, but far more questions than before, because the Fallen now actually appear guilty of the crimes of which they are accused.



Chapter three: Burnt Offerings

Sanctity is our virtue
Purification our word
Unity is our purpose
We watch and preserve.
— Inquisitor's Chant



Quest Overview

During *Burnt Offerings*, the Shebans take a harder stance against any and all captured Fallen and publicly torture and interrogate them. The Crucible uses the Inquisition to exact its vengeance on the Fallen and has no mercy when it comes to dealing with the Eighth Tribe. The Fallen Elders decide to make an effort at relieving the anguish that the Fallen suffer by forming a group to speak before the Grand Council. Before the Tribal Elders are seen, however, Cylix has the Fallen imprisoned for a Trial that will decide the fate of all the Outcasts. The siege is then lifted.

With the Fallen Elders in the custody of the Nation, the remaining Fallen congregate in the burnt remains of Hom and mount a rescue attempt. Led by Kara the Hunter, the Fallen manage to return most of the Elders to Hom, except for Kara herself and Veruka the Wraith. The Fallen that return to Hom set themselves for the slow reconstruction of Hom, as the winter is only a few short months away.

The Inquisition, angered by the loss of the most influential Fallen, gears itself for an immediate Trial of Heresy with Kara and Veruka as the defendants. The Tribals gather in unprecedented numbers to take part in a historic trial that forever changes the face of Vimary.

Quest Three, Act One: Confessions

I, Vikas, soulless miscreant and unforgivable betrayer of my Fatima, do hereby confess to having taken a part in the blasphemous act of delivering the Holy Child, Agnes, into the hands of Her enemies the Z'bri. Furthermore I testify that the foul deed was orchestrated by those heretics, calling themselves Elders, who lead the Fallen in all of their evil practices. Let it also be known that all Fallen, including myself, follow these Elders willingly and knowingly, with the intent to bring ruin to both the Fatimas and the Nation so that we may gain favor with our Z'bri masters.

— Excerpt from a signed statement

Backstory

By this time, the PCs have been in hiding for quite a few weeks and may well be on the verge of cracking under the stress. Hopefully, they have been in contact with other Fallen Cells and have gathered a certain level of information about the Inquisition, the Shadow Watch, the Z'bri and the Tribal perspectives. They should also be in contact with the Fallen network, as the Lightbringers plan on making a last ditch effort to try to peacefully stop the Inquisition.



3. Quest Three: Burnt Offerings

Scene 1 - Lions' Den

At some point during their many cat and mouse games with the Shadow Watch, it comes to the PCs' attention that both Lucas and Sala have been captured. If the PCs have become close to either of these characters, the Weaver may choose to play out the actual separation and capture. A moral dilemma could easily be devised in which the PCs must choose to save either one of their own Cell or the NPC from an ambush by Shadow Watchers.

With Vikas already in the Shadow Watch's care and Ardatli Maque slain at Lilith's forge, the PCs should realize that, of all those who returned from the Valley of the Shrine, only their Cell now remains at large. This fact has not gone unnoticed by Cylix, who has had the Shadow Watch secretly questioning Fallen prisoners to find out who exactly witnessed Agnes' capture. From this point forward, the Shadow Watchers are actively seeking out the PCs — by name and by description.

Having the PCs overhear a conversation between a Shadow Watch Cadre and a person who is sheltering the Cell can be a chilling reminder of the precariousness of their position, and the Weaver should be sure to play out at least one such scenario. The Watchers are sure to insinuate that they already know that the person is harboring Fallen; the householder may well believe that her neighbors are the informants.

Fearing the Watch's wrath, she may lead the Watchers to the PCs' hiding place, or the Watchers may push her aside and search for themselves. By this time, the PCs should have taken the hint and made themselves scarce. The PCs may want to exact revenge and mount plots against their betrayers or the Shadow Watchers.

While the PCs are on the run, news filters through the Fallen network that the Lightbringers are staging a meeting in which they will discuss sending a diplomatic party to the Grand Council. Depending on how the siege has progressed, this meeting may take place in Hom or elsewhere on the island.

Parlay

The gathering does indeed take place, and PCs who attend get to voice their concerns and opinions, or offer themselves as envoys. It becomes apparent to all that Veruka the Wraith has foreseen that the future of the Fallen hinges on the success of this venture, and, though fearful, the majority of the assembly backs her on this point.

The diplomatic party consists of Veruka, Kymber Reva, Deus, Hal Ninva and a handful of other prominent Lightbringers. (Kara the Hunter and Evangel Black are not among them.) The delegation's purpose is to state the innocence of the Fallen and to offer their help in retrieving Agnes.

Any PCs who volunteer as diplomats are graciously refused because their direct connection to the Agnes incident would undoubtedly compromise the proceedings. Veruka also hints that the PC Cell's destiny lies elsewhere. Observant PCs may notice (Human Perception vs. 4) a renewed vigor surging through the Wraith as she speaks to them; that she is taking such an active and direct hand in Fallen politics is also somewhat uncharacteristic of her as of late.

After the meeting, the party proceeds toward Bazaar as the rest of the Fallen scatter to their various hiding places. PCs who follow the diplomats see them surrender to a Shadow Watch unit and thence be taken under heavy Joanite supervision, up towards the Council Ruins.

With the Fallen Elders safely in the custody of the Shadow Watch and the backbone of the Fallen resistance apparently broken, High Judge Cylix orders an end to the siege on Hom. Growing distrust between Tera Sheba and the Baron also necessitates the transfer of many troops from Hom to the Seven Fingers.

Scene 2 - Sinners All

The remaining Fallen have an easier time traveling to and from Hom, although a garrison of Joanites remains on the South Tier bridge to monitor their movements. With the Tribes focused on the upcoming Trial of the Elders, Hom is no longer seen as a threat. PCs with appropriate contacts discover that Veruka's diplomatic party was never given audience with the Council, but was instead taken directly to a high security prison block below the Red Goal where they await judgment.

In the interim, Cylix sets the stage for a public demonstration of the guilt of the Fallen. All of the Fallen taken in by the Shadow Watch, including those who voluntarily surrendered, are forced to undergo rigorous questioning at the hands of the merciless Sheban Inquisitors. By use of torture and threat, the agents of the Crucible discover that most Outcasts admit to being party to a conspiracy with the Z'bri, even if they actually believe no such thing. Cylix intends to use this weakness to create a public outcry for the extermination of all Fallen.

A large area is cleared away near the Council Ruins, where public confessions take place. Three tall wooden posts are erected a short distance from each other in the new gathering place, the purpose of which becomes quite clear on the following day. Captured Fallen are tied or sometimes nailed to the posts, which are also adorned with signed confessions of heinous deeds against the Nation. (Never mind that many of the confessors can neither read nor write.) The unfortunate recipients of Sheban justice are then whipped, beaten with cudgels, burned with hot wax, or otherwise subjected to extreme agony until they confess to signing the documents, which are then read aloud by a Judge. Needless to say, many victims confess before even being tied to the post.

This staging of confessions becomes a daily practice, with three new defendants interrogated at each gathering. Angry people from all Tribes come to jeer at the Fallen and add to their humiliation and suffering. PC Cells may decide to stage a rescue, particularly if their friends are involved. There are few places more dangerous to the Fallen than the Justice Circle, however, and the bloodthirsty mobs should keep all but the most determined operations from succeeding. Still, the scene which follows may give dutiful PCs the opportunity they need.

Heresy's Lash

After at least a week of preliminary spectacles involving various minor Fallen, Cylix has the three known witnesses of Agnes' capture brought to the Circle. That these Outcasts are any different than their predecessors is not apparent at first, but the crowd that shows up is particularly large and unruly. Lucas is nailed to the center post, while Sala and Vikas are placed on his right and left respectively, tied by ropes. Vikas screams, cries and blubbers a hasty confession as the Inquisitors tie him to the post, but his words are lost in the excited noise of the mob before him. The torture begins.

The lash brings out the worst in Vikas, and he begins to implicate friends and strangers alike in a desperate bid for mercy. When none is forthcoming, a pain-induced state of ecstatic madness begins to overcome him. The wild trance causes his eyes to roll back and his body to jerk like a marionette. His Eminences of Recognition and Conflict begin to take over, and his confessions take a deadly turn. Confusion sets in as Vikas begins to recount not his own sins, but those of the crowd. These are not general accusations against the Tribes, but specific revelations of crimes committed by members of the audience; things which no one should be able to know. He is so accurate in the details of his accounts that none can mistake his targets, and no one accused can doubt that he tells the truth about *all* whom he accuses. An uproar is heard when Vikas reveals that High Judge Cylix was responsible for the rape of Evangel Black! (**Vimary** pp. 102-103)

Meanwhile, a second Inquisitor begins to work on Sala. This Sheban was unwittingly affected by the Atmosphere of P'v'tir of Sangis when the Z'bri ambassador passed by his offices some time ago and he has chosen this moment to manifest his lingering taint. The tortures he devises for his victim are grotesque beyond belief, and the crowd that has gathered around becomes visibly sickened. The Weaver is encouraged to use elements from the experiments the PCs performed in their visionquest with the Guides (p. 34) in *Quest One*, as well as slow crushing of the bones, flaying of skin, vivisection and organ removal. Through it all, Sala remains silent, enduring the pain with an acceptance of mortal frailty that only a former Yagan could have. A third Inquisitor, carrying a burning brand, makes his way toward Lucas.

3. Quest Three: Burnt Offerings

Fates Resolve

By now, the PCs are hopefully determined enough to face any odds to stop this barbarism from continuing. Fortunately for them, the normally vicious mob surrounding the prisoners is now lost in doubt about its own morality, and is moving from the Justice Circle with a mix of revulsion, fear and guilt. The opportunity for a rescue attempt is fleeting, though, and the characters should realize that the victims are unlikely to survive the experience without the benefit of immediate action. The Joanite guards are in a state of confusion, but can beat off a direct confrontation; the PCs are better off simply defending themselves as they pull down the prisoners.

Some of the Joanites would rather let the prisoners escape than witness any more of the Sheban excesses. Still, escaping with three badly wounded companions is difficult enough. If the escapees make it out alive, they need to recover for quite some time afterwards and are unlikely to take part in any of the action that follows. If the PCs fail in their attempted rescue or do not mount one, Lucas, Vikas and Sala die of infection within the night. Guilt-ridden dreams should haunt any PCs who declined to act at all when they had the opportunity.

Homecoming

Back in Hom, the Fallen are gathering once again. When the PCs arrive, they find their adopted homeland still aflame, with not enough manpower available to extinguish the roaring blazes. (If the PCs are not interested in returning to Hom, have the Guides, or perhaps the ghosts of Lucas, Vikas and Sala, visit their nightmares with baleful omens for those who desert their comrades.) Doomsayers abound in the ruined colony, proclaiming that Hom will continue to burn until the wrongs done against the Fallen are righted.

The PCs should get the chance to search for old friends amidst the rubble. Some are alive while others were not so lucky. It is apparent, though, that many Outcasts have been resourceful enough to survive the seemingly unending stream of misfortune that has been their lot. These Fallen are no longer the fractured byproducts of the Tribal system, but a steadfast group of survivors who are ready to band together for the first time.

All Outlooks are finally united in their belief that the individual can no longer be sacrificed for the benefit of the group, and have a distinct empathy for the plight of anyone who has a story of Tribal brutality or treachery. The Weaver can use these sad tales to fill in any gaps in the PCs knowledge and give them an overview of events that they did not take part in.

Unification

Mek and Kara the Hunter are busy forming Cells to deal with the consequences of the siege. Many are put to work against the flames, but the task seems truly insurmountable. A discussion begins regarding what should be done about the captured diplomatic party. Many vote that a rescue attempt be mounted. If the PCs were able to rescue Lucas, Sala and Vikas, the Fallen's hopes in this regard become much brighter, and praise is heaped upon them by Kara the Hunter.

Kara expresses her intent to lead a rescue operation before the Elders are put on trial. She invites the PCs and several other Fallen to form a temporary Circle with her for this purpose. Mek and his Jackers intend to remain in Hom to deal with the resulting countermeasures that will undoubtedly follow from such a rescue. The PCs should be allowed to play a large role in the planning of the rescue operation; they have probably gained a great deal of respect by now in the eyes of their fellow Fallen.

Quest Three, Act Two: Rescue

There is a reckoning coming, dear Kara — one in which your role will be paramount. Listen to the voice of your soul. The destiny of the Fallen will be revealed through the faults of those who do not understand. Your destiny will be the key to that revelation. Joan is calling for you, Kara. She knows what must be done and you alone have the power of the Goddess to show Her. You are the hammer that will break the chains that shackle Her. You are Kara the Hunter, Favored of Joan.

— Veruka the Wraith

Backstory

The Fallen, at this time, have pooled their knowledge and hopefully uncovered many of the truths surrounding the Inquisition and the plight of the Outcasts. The desperate exiles make a decision, however, that changes things for the worse. Trusting in their ability to represent themselves to the Nation and the Grand Council, the Elders of Hom form a diplomatic group that fails in its task. The Shebans ignore the Fallen Elders and rather imprison them without audience. The Fallen hear of this betrayal and, under Kara's leadership, decide to form a rescue operation as a final act of hope and defiance.

The Elders, meanwhile, are separated and imprisoned in different Cells in the Red Goal at the Council Ruins. High Judge Cylix has ordered his most trusted members of the Crucible, the power behind the Inquisition, to demoralize and break the Fallen Elders. The Grand Council awaits Cylix's word on the status of their prisoners, but he uses his channels, including the Black Owls, to delay any news. (Black Owls, *Children of Lilith* p. 84)

Faust Verkin is unhappy with Cylix's control over the Inquisition and is appalled when he hears of the treatment given to the Fallen. Faust visits Veruka the Wraith, his ex-wife by exile, and has a lengthy discussion with her. Veruka shows Faust the truth behind her words and the reason she denied Baba Yaga's death rite so many years ago. Faust realizes the importance of Veruka's fate and they undergo a visionquest together. Faust awakens with a sense of the wisdom that was previously denied him and agrees to assist Veruka for one last time. Their plans are revealed shortly thereafter.



3. Quest Three: Burnt Offerings

Scene 1 - Fate Steps In

The PCs are gathered with Mek, Evangel Black and Kara the Hunter in Hom. This is the first time that the Fallen have acted jointly without the Elders' advice and rule, and destiny truly lies within their hands. Mek states that he needs some Fallen to help him secure an escape route and form a possible support group for the rescue team. He plans to remain in Hom to oversee the defense plans and attend to the injured. The PCs can follow Mek in the duties he has assigned, but Kara does request their assistance in the rescue proper. The PCs have shown themselves to be competent — or they wouldn't have survived so long — and hopefully have displayed some heroics or otherwise performed impressively to date.

Kara gathers those involved in the planning of a rescue and listens to any and all ideas. She believes that the Elders are being held in the Red Goal, which is unfortunately in the heart of Tribal territory. Some PCs may have knowledge or background that could assist them here. The importance of the location means that any characters with some solid history in Bazaar will have at least cursory knowledge of the area. As the PCs talk about the possibilities, an unexpected visitor arrives. Faust Verkin (*Vimary* p. 129) steps from the shadows. The aged Yagan Councilor holds out his hands as a sign that he bears no ill will, although it is obvious that he is old and doesn't really pose much of a physical threat to the assembled Fallen. Kara the Hunter stays the hand of a vengeful PC, should the need occur. Should Kara fail to keep a PC from attacking the defenseless and vulnerable Councilor, the Fallen will have to do without the information he was going to give them. If a PC doesn't take the initiative, Kara asks Faust his purpose in coming to Hom.

Faust says that despite Cylix's machinations, he has met with Veruka the Wraith. He quells any concerns that arise by saying that she is alive, but in poor condition, as are the others. He recites these lines from Joshua's Prophecy: "They will be sorely tested. By their enemies and allies. They will free the dagger that killed me and guide it to cut through the land like fire. But it will be born of blood and sacrifice." Faust may look towards Kara the Hunter with sympathy in his eyes before turning back to the rest of the group. A PC may notice this (Etiquette vs. 4), but Kara does not.

The Winding Path

Faust continues to say that Veruka has shown him the door that leads to the salvation of the Eighth Tribe. While he still worships Baba Yaga as his Fatima, it seems that the Fallen are quite a bit more than the wretches the Tribes would like to believe. He now sees this as well. He alludes to Baba Yaga having a hand in current affairs, but does not directly affirm any speculations. Faust pulls out a parchment that has been folded a number of times. He lays it out on the ground before him and steps back, allowing a PC or other Fallen to grab it. He tells them that the key to rescuing the Fallen Elders lies on those pages, pages that reveal the existence of a series of secret tunnels beneath the Council Ruins. The tunnels are not guarded, as most are broken and on the verge of collapse. It is the simplest, least confrontational way to proceed.

The PCs can have a good look at the map and see that Faust speaks the truth — at least on paper. Evangel Black glances at the pages and then asks what assurances they have that it isn't a trick. Faust tells her that he will remain in Mek's custody until his wife has been freed. Until that time, his life is in their hands. His absence from the Grand Council cripples the Inquisition and the Nation, at least for a little while. Cylix, however, does have quite an impressive bed of authority, something that should ensure the Fallen do not become complacent in their planning and wait too long before acting.

Kara then studies the map and trusts its navigation, but still wishes to devise priorities for the mission. The Players can plan as much as they like, but it is important that the mission get underway as soon as possible. Faust supports this, as he knows that torture and beatings are commonplace amongst the power hungry Shadow Watchers and Inquisitors. Whatever plans are devised will be put to the test, whether the map is trusted by the PCs or not.

Mek wishes to scout the tunnels mentioned on the map and leads a preliminary group of hardy warriors to accomplish this task. The PCs can be a part of this group if they wish, getting into the action from the beginning. The Weaver can use the information on the tunnels below to run scouting actions. The scouting group, to spice things up, can clear a den of Skullers or a family of squatters from the tunnel entrance if the Weaver wishes to add extra action to the scene.

Scene 2 - The Duty of Death

The rescue mission starts in the very early morning and takes place before any of the Elders are put on trial, regardless of when the group actually leaves Hom. The entrance to the tunnels can be accessed by any of the Sub-Terra lines if the PCs are familiar with them. The most direct route is via the Envy Line toward the Main Nexus (see **Vimary** pp. 72-73).

The entranceway is through a collapsed building that is overgrown with moss and fungi. Water drips from the ceilings and collects in pools that hold unknown diseases. Spores hang in the air, choking the lungs of unhealthy characters (Health vs. 3 or succumb to coughing fits). The base of the building drives downwards, deeper into the darkness. A partially destroyed wall reveals the beginnings of the hidden tunnels. Through it, a series of old sewage systems crisscross under Vimary. The PCs can make Navigation rolls, Lore or even available Eminences to keep them on track. If they use the map, they receive +1 to any attempts. While the specific twists and turns of the tunnels are unimportant, the discoveries along the way are quite noteworthy.

At some time, the PCs come across a group of Agnites. They are almost feral in their nature and seem to follow a hierarchy outside of their norm. They have lost the ability to properly speak and will snort and snatch at the group, but not cause any real harm. The images are meant to be disturbing and lend weight to the fact that the Children have largely been forgotten — the true victims of the entire affair. Kara states that nothing can be done for now, and that priority must be given to the rescue of the Elders. An argument develops if any of the PCs suggest delaying the operation to take the children back to Hom.

Pages of the Past

Regardless of the actions taken with the Agnites, Kara and those with her carry on. During the analysis of an ambiguous direction on the map, the Weaver should have the PCs make Notice rolls vs. 4. Any Marians in the group, or those with Fate, Wisdom, Recognition or Mystery get a +2 bonus to the roll. A small set of stairs is seen to lead to a door jammed with debris. The markings on the door are ancient and the lock seems to be untouched. Further investigation reveals a room filled with dampened books from before the Fall. While most of the pages are ruined, several texts may be found locked in a metal bin. Within is a textbook that speaks in old tongue of several cities surrounding Vimary. One lies to the north, down river and another to the west, but quite a bit farther away. The information can be translated after many months and possible Keeper aid. The Weaver can use the Ancient Text to seed hooks to Capal and other areas of the Outlands. Much of the H'I Kar is also detailed, although the changes since the text was written are obviously quite extreme. The knowledge that such a book exists can lead to many future quests when the Keepers and Tribals learn of the Fallen find.

Kara acknowledges the prize of the text, but stresses the urgency of the group's mission, as the Red Goal must be reached before sun-up. The group plods on through the darkness of the under-tunnels. As long as the map is followed, the hidden entrance to the bowels of the Red Goal is found. Alternately, the PCs may find their own way there, but it should be noted that the tunnels are confusing and almost Dahlian in nature, seemingly senseless in design, not to mention infernally hot. (Some of the ancient furnace rooms in the Red Goal have been reactivated to allow jailers to survive during the upcoming cold season.)

The Fallen may wonder what the Ancients were thinking when the place was built. The ceilings are ready to collapse and trickles of dust and debris can be used to heighten the Players' tension. The Weaver can play out the tunnel exploration for as long as she wishes, but the story returns to its main focus once the first Joanite Guard is seen.

3. Quest Three: Burnt Offerings

 Into the Breach

Attending the Fallen Elders is a Cadre of Shadow Watchers. They are spread out over several hallways and prisoner cells, so taking them out in small groups should make things easier. However, sound echoes easily in the catacombs and once a melee is entered (unless more subtle tactics are used), Joanite reinforcements arrive, while at least one escapes to give a warning to the other Cadres stationed upstairs. Other than the Cadre, there are two Sheban Inquisitors present, interrogating a Fallen Elder of the Weaver's choosing (but not Veruka). The Weaver should let the PCs tackle the problem of breaking out the Elders as they see fit. They may want to enact sweet revenge on the Shebans, which should be allowed. The Fallen have a right to punish their persecutors; no matter what they dish out, the Shebans have done far worse.

Kara notices that Veruka is not present and tries to find her. She orders the PCs to secure the injured Elders and make ready the escape before the reinforcements arrive. Hal Ninva does his best to organize the Fallen to work efficiently, but he has received a fair share of the torture and needs assistance of his own. The other Elders are thankful for the PCs heroic efforts and do whatever they can to help.

Once everyone is freed and accounted for, someone notices that Kara has not yet returned. Any PCs that follow her path see another set of cells one level up from their current position. Joanites can be heard descending the stairs from above. A quick search offers the PCs a glimpse of Kara sitting stunned on the floor of Veruka's cell, which is a short distance beyond the stairway. Veruka whispers to the Hunter and gently strokes her head. Kara is obviously in tears at Veruka's private words. (See the narrative at the start of the Act for a portion of what Veruka says to Kara).

Before the PCs can approach, an swarm of Joanites enters the hall from a stairway between them and Veruka's cell. The PCs can yell for Kara, but she simply closes her eyes and rests her head in Veruka's arms. Veruka looks to the PCs and raises her left hand, seemingly giving them her blessing. The reaction of the PCs can vary greatly at this time, but screams from their friends below plead for them to return and escape into the tunnels.

 Against All Odds

The Joanites fight against incredible odds should the PCs remain in the battle, but nothing stops the Fallen from going down in a blaze of glory. If the PCs retreat, the Joanites follow only until the under tunnels are met. They do not risk an ambush, but secure the hidden entrance by collapsing the adjoining tunnels so that they can be of no further use.

The PCs escape with the majority of the Elders, intent on a swift return to Hom. The journey back can be played out in full, but the group should arrive relatively safely with no pursuit from Joanites or other Tribal factions. The Nation prepares for more important events — the Trial of Heresy.

Upon returning to Hom, any injured are seen to. Shortly after, Mek reports no retaliation from Tribal forces, something that bothers him in the extreme. Kymber Reva takes control of the situation in a non-intrusive manner. She meets with Faust and thanks him for his aid. She sadly reports that Veruka did not make it out, in reply to which Faust simply covers his eyes for a moment and whispers her name in a Yagan sign of respect for the dead. This action is not meant to anger the Fallen, and Faust whispers that, often, sacrifice leads to a new beginning.

The Elders release Faust, as he was largely responsible for the preliminary success of the rescue. Kymber Reva hugs her old friend for perhaps the last time, before Mek and Evangel Black escort him to the Fallen Bridge. The Yagan subsequently returns to Vimary.

Hal Ninva and others who are worse for wear are seen to as well. Physical and mental healing begins, but the Inquisition is still wearing down the Fallen to a point of despair, despite the successful rescue. Mek and the Elders do not sanction another rescue, as the risks are considered too great. Any Cells that plan on doing exactly that are frowned upon.

Quest Three, Act Three: Trial by Fire

I have maintained my honor and my beliefs despite all the pain and anguish you have caused me and my people. I have more in the way of virtue than you can ever have, Bartholomew, for I will never act against the truth as you do. Justice is what you use to disguise your cowardice and incompetence, for all that lies within your robes is a small and broken man. We don't fear you, 'Marshal of Lies'. . . we pity you. You and all that you feign to represent.

— Kara the Hunter, during the Trial of Heresy

Backstory

Kara the Hunter and Veruka the Wraith stay in the custody of the Inquisition after a partially successful rescue mission that returns many of the captured Fallen to Hom. Cylix Seth'on, realizing that the Fallen's actions could cause a lack of support for his ambitions, orders a Trial of Heresy to take place for Kara and Veruka at the soonest opportunity. He doesn't want to delay his moment of glory any longer and intends for the trial to be a major stepping stone in his bid for control over the Nation.

Captured PCs and Fallen that did not escape or get rescued in the previous Act are forced to bear witness to the coming trial as captives, under heavy Shadow Watch supervision. The Fallen on Hom receive word from Jen Luther'on (or another Joanite who does not support the Sheban Inquisition and has ties with the PCs) that the Trial of Heresy is in immediate preparation. Mek and Evangel Black organize a group to infiltrate the proceedings in order to see the Trial and the effect it will have on the Fallen. The PCs are intended to be a part of this group, as their absence will greatly decrease the dramatic strength of Kara's and Veruka's final words.

The Joanites, meanwhile, have begun to lose faith in the Sheban commands that continue to go against everything the Joanites believe. Many Joanites are questioning the honor of past actions, including the siege as a whole. The Templars, led by Valerie Ben'on and Shera Uhan'on, are using this moral dilemma as a light with which to ignite thoughts of Joanite liberty. (Shera is detailed in the *Rulebook* p. 56; Valerie in *Vimary* p. 92)

The citizens of the Nation congregate en masse at the Justice Circle, the location of the Trial of Heresy. The large number of Tribals present makes security a logistical nightmare, and the Watch soon breaks down into taking a more hands-off stance. It seems as though almost all of Vimary is present for the historic occasion.

It should be noted that Act Three of this Quest is fairly passive in nature. It leads the Fallen onto the path they must tread in order to show the Nation their worthiness. Two important characters set the stage for the future of the Eighth Tribe, something that will linger and change the course of Vimary forever. This is intentional and can be seen as a milestone in the PCs' lives, as they take part in these events firsthand.



3. Quest Three: Burnt Offerings

Scene 1 - The Worm In The Bud

Word arrives in Hom that Kara the Hunter and Veruka the Wraith are going to stand trial as representatives of all the Fallen. The messenger of this ill news can be Jen Luther'on, or another Joanite who questions the recent Sheban attitudes. Assuming that Jen brings the news, she also provides several other key pieces of information.

Jen states that she has been working subtly to make sure that all the Fallen that were captured are given humane treatment as well as adequate food and water. While she is aware of the torture and interrogations that took place, she stresses that she is still loyal to her Fatima and could not risk her position by helping overtly. Evangel Black is appeased by Jen's fair warning and allows her to stay safely in Hom for the duration of her visit. If Faust Verkin is still in Hom, Jen is surprised to see him, but now realizes how the Fallen managed to rescue the Elders. She courteously bows to the venerable Yagan and continues to address the gathered Fallen.

The PCs should be present during Jen's visit; if they are elsewhere, word comes to them that the Fallen Elders wish for their presence. Jen speaks in a somber and slightly guilt-ridden voice while she explains the situation in Vimary. As all those present listen to the Watch Captain, an overriding sense of fatigue is obvious. The Fallen have had no chance to rest for several months and the effects are written on the weary faces of all their friends and allies, as well as the Watch Captain herself.

Jen states that Bazaar is overwhelmed with the unprecedented number of Tribals who have traveled there for the trials. While the number of people to be tried has shrunk somewhat, due to the rescue of the Elders, the fervor has not died down. While this may make it appear impossible for the Fallen on Hom to do anything, Jen sees a more realistic perspective. Because of the sheer number of Tribal spectators, the Fallen should be able to infiltrate the crowds and witness the trial that will dictate their future.

Spider's Web

Several Fallen present, including Kyrt, voice that the risks are too great; it would only take a mistake by one or two small groups to put everyone else in danger. Evangel Black strongly disagrees. She claims that the Tribals will be focused on the Trial. She also points out that Kara and Veruka deserve to have witnesses present, so that the truth of their words will be known to the Fallen, rather than the inevitable hearsay and propaganda they would get from the Tribals afterward. A cacophony of words erupts as the Fallen weigh the opinions of both leaders.

Kymber Reva silences the crowd, stating that she and Veruka spoke of many things during the last few months of the Inquisition. She indicates that a turning point is imminent for the Eighth Tribe and that only by seeing the truth of Joshua's Prophecy will a path be shown. Veruka is the closest to that truth, and her words, coupled with Kara's purity and devotion, will guide the decisions to come. Altara Ven and several other known Lightbringers then speak up and agree with Evangel Black and Kymber's stance. Deus keeps a reserved calm. Hal Ninva states that Kara and Veruka are the epitome of what a Fallen should be and it can be considered a good thing that they, and not some cowardly brigands, were the ones chosen to stand trial for the Eighth Tribe. He acknowledges Evangel's plans in an authoritative way, making it seem as though, now, with his sanction, the infiltration can be made.

It would be well for the PCs to speak up and voice their opinions also, for by now they should have acquired a reputation of working for the greater good of the Fallen. Everyone listens closely to what they have to say and takes their words and opinions to heart. The PCs hopefully have at least a few contacts that they can trust from their time in hiding during Quest Two, but if not, Jen gives them advice in how best to watch the trial without being noticed.

During the planning, Mek proposes that everyone work in small groups, or individually where possible. The PC Cell can be assumed to be small enough to safely blend into the Tribal crowds, but if the Cell is large (more than six to eight people), then two smaller groups can be formed. Mek can accompany the PCs if the Weaver wishes. Altara Ven, Evangel Black and Kyrt all accompany those Fallen intending to go to Bazaar.

To Wait, To Watch, To Wonder

The Weaver should subtly hint to the PCs, by the manner in which the NPCs speak, that going to the trial and seeing what transpires is one of the most important points in the history of the Eighth Tribe. Those PCs close to Kara may want to feel a part of her coming ordeal, while others may have received Veruka's cryptic aid at several different points during their time in Hom. Whatever reasons and ties the PCs have, they should be encouraged to take the risk and go to the Trial of Heresy.

Some PCs may want to rescue Kara and Veruka before the Trial of Heresy begins. The Fallen Elders do not support this action, however, due to the fragile state of current events. The Fallen cannot withstand another assault on Hom, and if the Nation forces them to go into hiding again (in retaliation for another rescue attempt), the end of the Children of Prophecy will be secured. Adamant PCs are on their own in taking this course of action, and may change events beyond the scope of what can reasonably be covered here. The Weaver can improvise and manipulate the Trial so it begins before the PCs arrive or have a skirmish lead them into a standoff of some sort, delaying events until Scene Three can take place. If the Weaver is up to it, she can devise extra scenes to take into account another rescue; however, the Trial of Heresy should result in Kara and Veruka's ultimate destiny.

The journey into Bazaar can be preceded with whatever precautions the PCs deem necessary. Disguises, camouflage, theatrics, uses of Eminences, acting and other useful skills and ideas can all help the PCs and accompanying Fallen Cells to filter in amongst the attending Tribals. During the entrance to Bazaar, there is an obvious lack of discipline within the Watch, and some Watchers can be overheard speaking their minds with such comments as, "The end of the entire ordeal will be a welcome change," and, "Once the Fallen are gone, what else are we going to concentrate on?" It seems as though the verdict is already set. Tribals of all guilds and factions are seen and the crowds are enormous, greater than those at the last summer's Liberation Festival, providing ample room for the Fallen to mingle in.

The actual Trial is staged outside of the Red Goal, at the center of a large open atrium. The setting provides a perfect view for the audience and many places from where the Fallen can witness the coming events. While the Fallen make their way to the Red Goal, the Weaver can introduce whatever sights and sounds she wishes and point out the differences in Bazaar since the Inquisition has taken on a less active role. Tribals walk with a greater ease and are much less watchful. Everyone is intent on getting the best seat for the spectacle. By the time the PCs arrive at the Red Goal, they should feel as though they have successfully disguised themselves amongst the crowd.

Scene 2 - The Favored of Joan

The assembled Tribals speak over each other in excitement, their anticipation building. The PCs notice a circular stage in the center of the atrium, raised about three feet from the ground, with several seats placed around the outer edge. A single pole rises from the center of the stage, and there are stairs on its northern and southern sides. The banners of the Nation, the Pillars and the Tribe of Tera Sheba hang from flagpoles of differing heights at various areas around the stage and atrium itself. Several Judges can be seen in and around the stage, while Advocates, Inquisitors and Shadow Watchers go about their respective duties and preparations.

The PCs may wish to gather information about the trial before it begins. Thankfully, the Tribals gathered are all willing to gossip with anyone nearby. The Weaver should stress the preoccupation the Tribals have with the trial, as they talk amongst their friends and companions. Many rumors can be overheard, including such dark words as public beheadings, torture, forced confessions and other imaginative ideas. Let the PCs worry over the details and actually speak to some people nearby. The Tribals are so keen on not missing a thing, that they may speak to the PCs without averting their eyes from the stage. This interaction can bring to light many of the Tribal perspectives that were not experienced or uncovered during the Inquisition proper.

3. Quest Three: Burnt Offerings

Fool's Gold

To make matters worse, Anaky, the Little Trickster of Bazaar, has her troupe working overtime within the crowds. She knows that there are Fallen who will risk coming and wishes to have some fun with them. At some point, a Dahlian disguised as Altara Ven approaches a PC. "Altara" says that she has a seat right next to the stage and offers to have the PC join her. Another Dahlian, looking like a Magdalite Concubine, can start to flirt with a suitable PC. Anaky's troupe wishes to separate the Fallen from each other, so that their stories can be as varied as possible once the trial begins. This is just another way for Anaky to better serve the Fatima of Change. While the Dahlians may cause minor confusion in enacting their jest on the PCs, it is not intended to harm them. They do not lead Fallen into traps or other such perils, and sometimes actually work toward helping them. Anaky hopes that by separating the individuals from one another, not only will different perspectives come to light, but any foolish or brash actions by groups of Fallen will be prevented.

Once the crowd grows to almost full capacity, an Advocate of the Inquisition steps out onto the stage and speaks in a clear and commanding voice. She holds before her a scroll of considerable size and reads the following:

"Let all those gathered bear witness to the Trial of Heresy. The Fallen have acted against the people of Vimary and now stand trial for their sins. The Inquisition, by the divine power of Tera Sheba, does proclaim that the High Judges in session, along with the Elder Councilors of the Nation, receive full weight of authority over all proceedings. Overseeing the Trial of Heresy is the honorable High Judge Cylix Seth'on, head of the Inquisition. The chief interrogator is the truth seeker Marshal Bartholomew Medi'on of the Terasheban Guild of the Watch. The prime representatives of the Sisterhood of all the Tribes are in attendance to see that their Fatimas' wishes are met throughout the Trial of Heresy.

"The guilty are represented by the impure and corrupted Kara the Hunter, and the soulless and wicked Veruka the Wraith. They represent all of the Fallen, as exiles and outcasts of the Nation. Their words will confirm the final verdict for the Fallen Heresy."

Sister's Pledge

Some PCs may well notice that Agnes was nowhere mentioned in the opening speech. It seems that, amongst the Shebans, the zeal of the Inquisition has overshadowed much of its original intention. With that, the Advocate steps off the stage, as the Sisterhood of the various Tribes begin to take their places around the stage. The Elder Council is already seated on the far side.

Three Yagan Old Ones walk slowly to their positions, carrying staves that hang with bones. They wear all black with white cowls over their faces. Two Magdalite Sirens, one male, one female, follow them, wearing sheer, layered robes that flow in the chill wind. The Sirens have a red paste spread across their genitals and circular blue rings pierced down the back of their spines.

Evan Shamans from Griffentowne, Westholm, Sun Blessed, Sanctuary, Roth and Delai each come in shortly after. The most numerous of the Sisterhoods, they all wear slightly different garb. The Shaman from Westholm, apparently "underdressed" for such an occasion, seems the most rustic with her brown hued robes. Those from the closest Evan settlements wear deep green cloaks with boots of sheepskin and skirts that have designs of Eva's symbol upon them. The Shaman have green lines of dye below each of their eyes.

In a slow, methodical motion, a Dahlian, adorned all in gold, creeps in. She is tall and lithe, but doesn't rest her gaze on anyone. A mask that constantly changes its expression covers her face, its pantomime visage twisting constantly in chaotic patterns. She doesn't seem to stand still, yet her movements are difficult to discern.

An Evan Nurse walks in, substituting for the Agnites who are still unable to attend due to their unbalanced mental state. She takes a position near the rear of the gathering, but has a look of disdain on her face. She seems unimpressed.

Pillar's Pride

Finally the Pillars arrive. Shera Uhan'on enters for the Templars. She wears a glimmering suit of Joan's finest armor and carries several Artifacts upon her. Three other Templars see to her, all of whom maintain a cold silent stare. While the Sisterhoods of the Tribes enters, the Weaver should coax the PCs to interact with their companions or "chaperone" Dahlian. The characters may wish to discuss their views on what is taking place, and it is also a good opportunity to remind the PCs of the time they once spent amongst the Tribes. If they have any questions regarding the hierarchy of the Tribes, the finer points of Vimary and the Fatimas can be easily explained here, in character.

To complete the ritual procession, the Shebans make an entrance with Cylix Seth'on at their head. Behind him are his personal attendants and Advocates. Marshal Bartholomew is seen near the edge of the stage as well. Cylix takes the center and recites the Ritual of Dedication. Many Tribals, regardless of their actual Tribe, mouth the words as Cylix's voice carries. Without delay, once the dedication is done, Cylix calls for the first heretic.

The Weaver is encouraged to improvise many elements of the Trial of Heresy. While the highlighted aspects are detailed here, many smaller questions can be dealt with, specifically those regarding events that the PCs had active roles in. So, for instance, if the PC Cell was active in Bazaar during the Inquisition, some of the things they did (like kidnapping an Advocate, or dealing with Keepers, for example) can be brought to light during the trial. The more personal the trial becomes the better. This attention to detail also has the added benefit of showing the PCs how their actions are seen from a Tribal perspective.

Hunter's Arrow

Three Shadow Watchers roughly drag a visibly battered and bruised Kara from the entrance of the Red Goal. They push her forcibly from behind, as she stumbles and falls towards the stage. Upon nearing the stage, Bartholomew grabs her by her tangled hair and drags her onto the stage. The crowd hisses and jeers at her, yelling out profanities and curses. It is obvious to the PCs that Kara has been severely handled, and possibly raped and tortured, something proven by the many bruises that adorn her body, but she holds her head as high as she is able.

Bartholomew throws Kara onto the floor of the stage and glares at her, disgusted. Cylix calmly walks over to her and leans down to caress her cheek. He whispers something to her and then turns and flings his hand out with melodrama that would rival a Dahlian entertainer. PCs who pay close attention can make a Notice roll (vs. a Threshold of 6) to hear Cylix tell her "You're already dead." He then begins to speak to the crowd. He states Kara's name and then lists off a series of crimes that she is guilty of, including simply being a Fallen. The crimes are not at all hers, but rather those of the "Fallen Heresy." Kara holds her eyes upon him the whole time. Cylix then calls for Marshal Bartholomew to begin the questioning.

Kara the Hunter seeks some familiar faces in the crowd, whether they be Tribal or Fallen. If she manages to see a PC, or one gets her attention somehow, she offers them a smile of assurance that all is well. Bartholomew then begins badgering and questioning Kara, bouncing from one question to the next in a mass of confusion. He wishes to draw parallels from one hashed up charge to another so that all the "crimes" he mentions add up to a long-running Fallen conspiracy. Unfortunately for him, Kara turns the tables. Bartholomew often looks to Cylix, who seems to give motions indicating what sort of questions he wants answered. The PCs may be getting an overriding sense that, no matter what Kara says, the Fallen will be declared guilty as charged.

Kara begins to use her Eminence of Fury to instigate Bartholomew further, and the Marshal takes the bait. She turns the questions back onto her interrogator. Bartholomew becomes enraged at her insolence and grows more and more angry with Kara. She can bring up crimes that the Shebans have committed, the Jonah Conspiracy (see **Word of the Pillars**), the Inquisition's crimes against the Nation and their own people, as well as some personal attacks to further her goals. The Weaver can play this up as long as she wishes, but the PCs definitely notice the crowd growing unruly at Kara's words. Many people start calling for her head and Shera sends her Templars to the stage to prevent anyone from taking a regrettable action. (For an example of the tone and content of Kara's words, see the narrative at the start of this Act.)

3. Quest Three: Burnt Offerings

Favored of Joan

The Weaver should let the PCs make whatever plans they wish, even they are hasty and instinctual decisions. Most uses of Eminence are easily accomplished and go unnoticed by the captive audience present. Actually moving toward the stage is a bad idea, because such an action only spurs the angered Tribals to follow suit and risks them rushing the stage to "behead the heretic." The scene becomes very tense and uncomfortable. While this is going on, however, Bartholomew makes a decision that drastically changes the course of the trial.

Kara's use of Fury on Bartholomew forces the Marshal to lose complete control over his senses. He knocks her over in his madness, something that further pushes the crowd toward an uncontrollable frenzy. Cylix struggles, too late, to grab hold of Bartholomew who, in a final act of impotence, snatches the Sword of Joan from a Templar's scabbard and holds it high over his head. Before Shera can stop him, the Marshal plunges the sword straight into Kara's chest, the blade's tip plunging through to the stage floor behind her. Silence reigns.

Kara's body hangs momentarily in the air, supported by her crumpled legs and the sword, which props her up in an awkward position. Her blood runs onto the wooden stage, as Bartholomew stands over her in a daze. The Weaver should have the Players immediately make Notice rolls vs. 4, while those with Recognition, Mystery, Unity or Vengeance make the roll at +2. A MoS of 1 or better reveals that Kara's spilled blood and the shadow cast by her dying form unite to form the symbol of Joan's Tribe!



Reckoning

As the PCs come to grips with what has happened, the crowd explodes into confusion and is on the verge of rushing the stage. Cylix grabs a firm hold of Bartholomew and shoves the bewildered Marshal at the Shadow Watchers, ordering them to take him away and relieving of him of his duties all in one breath. Cylix has plans for the Marshal after such a display of incompetence in front of such important dignitaries.

Shera Uhan'on screams out in shock and drops in front of Kara's body. She looks back at Cylix, who falters in his gaze, and then makes sure that the other Watchers present protect the members of the Sisterhood near the stage. The PCs may want to make a move at this time and rush the stage; however, the vast amount of Shebans and Joanites should dissuade this sort of action. PCs who insist on making their way to the stage can do so with great difficulty. Cylix should remain secure on the stage, as should the Templars.

If they have been separated, the PCs may want to regroup and find each other; the Dahlians quickly disappear into the throngs of screaming bodies. For those paying attention to the drama on the stage, Shera Uhan'on is seen (and possibly heard) making remarks to Cylix. She states that a warrior of Kara's capability and honor deserved much more than a meaningless death. She berates Cylix and condemns his actions and so-called justice. Her Templars surround Kara's broken body when, with a mournful sigh, Kara yields her last breath. Shera pulls the sword from Kara's corpse and drops it to the side, while the Templars carry her, respectfully, from the atrium stage. The Tribals nearest the stage stand in awe at Shera's act of defiance. PCs notice Watchers, Shadow Watchers and even some Shebans gathering their things and following Shera from the atrium.

The Weaver is left to her own devices in moderating the PCs' actions during the chaos, for the possibilities are too numerous to list here. No matter what the characters decide to do, Cylix orders that Veruka be brought for immediate trial. The Evans begin demanding Veruka's blood for the pain that afflicts the Agnites. The Evan Nurse who represents the Agnites starts to motivate the crowd to have Veruka brought forth so that she can be properly tried for Agnes' kidnapping. The Evans are feeling their Fatima's guilt quite heavily at this time and are inherently turning to violence in their frustration.

Scene 3 - Let It Be Known

Do not fear the future, my children, for it holds the destiny of each and every one of you. The Goddess is listening.

— Veruka the Wraith's Spirit Call

The Fallen should receive a soft message from Veruka, who is being brought from the bowels of the Red Goal. She tells them, in their minds, that all is coming to pass as it should and that they should remain to witness the first stages of their destiny. While it may be difficult for some PCs to keep from acting brashly, even those that are recognized as Fallen are strangely left to watch the proceedings unhindered. Joanites that are told of a Fallen presence simply turn a blind eye. This apparent freedom should help to quell overzealous Players.

Veruka is brought to the blood-stained stage and dropped before Cylix, who screams his words to overcome the roaring of the crowd. Veruka does not reply to the High Judge, but rather maintains an uneasy calm. She seems to be in a trance. Cylix screams question after question at the Wraith, stating that her silence only signifies her guilt. The crowd starts chanting for her to burn. Cylix seems to have taken on a reverse role, hoping that Veruka's confession will satiate the crowd. He keeps nervously looking at the gathered mob and then to Veruka, almost pleading with her to respond to his authority. The Sisterhood looks on.

Cylix finally asks Veruka why she maintains her silence in the face of death, to which she counters, "You are not yet ready to hear the wisdom of the Goddess." The Evans rise into an uproar at the heretical words, and the Sisterhood begins to glance around nervously. Without the Templar presence, and with the Blades and Watchers largely ineffectual after Shera's departure, the crowd pushes its way past the remaining active guards.

3. Quest Three: Burnt Offerings

Cylix realizes that the Trial of Heresy has moved beyond his control, and asks Veruka what the soulless can possibly know of the Goddess' words. Veruka recites Joshua's Prophecy, much to the chagrin of the Sisterhood at the foot of the stage. Many Tribals have never heard Joshua's Prophecy and the sheer number gathered ensures that the forbidden knowledge will travel across Vimary like wildfire. Veruka then goes on to state that the Fallen are closer to the Goddess than the Tribals are. She explains that true Fallen can Dream and wield Synthesis, all by the Goddess' blessing. She continues on in this vein even while Cylix screams for her silence. She screams out Joshua's Prophecy to the crowd, over and over.

The crowd rushes the stage and grabs Veruka, shouting for her blood to boil in the flames of purification. Joanites ironically try to defend her from the mob, but the task is insurmountable. The PCs can try to help Veruka as well, but with so many Tribals to contend with, success is extremely unlikely. Anyone who gets close enough to Veruka receives a vision from her that signifies that this has been her destiny, the day she has awaited for so many years.

The mob carries Veruka the Wraith, Doomsayer of the Eighth Tribe, to a makeshift pyre a short distance from the stage. She is tied to the stake and torches are lit. Cylix struggles to stop the burning, but is held back by the people he so wants to lead. Veruka doesn't struggle against her bonds while the flames grow around her. Altara Ven (the real one) and Evangel Black are seen standing near Veruka, tears streaming down their dazed faces. They have taken away their disguises and stand freely as Fallen in the midst of the crazed Tribals. PCs can do likewise with no negative repercussions.

Veruka enters a trance as the flames catch the hem of her robes. Cylix manages to get to the pyre and tries to untie her, but the flames sear his face and hands. They do the same to anyone who tries to get too close the burning Wraith. In a voice that resonates with the River of Dream, Veruka speaks words that guide the destiny of the Fallen.

I am the true voice of the Fallen.

In the exiles does the salvation of the Child Forgiver lie,

She will be returned to Her betrayers by the Outcasts,

Yet She will not fear them, for She knows their deepest secrets.

The Rage of my people, the Eighth Tribe, will save Her,

For it is within them that the truth resides.

By the Spirit of the Hunter will the broken One rise again,

From the ashes of despair to the Tribe of Destiny will She roam,

The Ravager will live once again in the Dreams of those who are truly free.

We are Destiny,

We are Hope,

We are Freedom

We are Salvation.

We are the Eighth Tribe.

We are the Children of Prophecy.

Proclamation

The crowd is silenced by Veruka's words. Everyone listens, and Fallen all over Vimary hear her voice, no matter what the distance. As she completes the Proclamation of the Fallen, the fire swirls around her body and engulfs her in a raging blaze. Veruka is consumed in the flames. The PCs receive visions of locations and events that are yet to be encountered — a part of Veruka's final Eminence of Fate, showing the Fallen the way to salvation. The Weaver can use whatever clues she wishes to foreshadow the upcoming Quest, *Raising the Torch*. Images of the Covenant stronghold, an Agnite tied down for an experiment, Templars acting as a single force and other possibilities are all available to add further depth and meaning to the Proclamation and attendant visions.

The Tribals stand in awe at one of the purest signs of the Goddess' presence since the days of the Liberation. The Tribals start to look around them and set their eyes on any Fallen who have shed their disguises. They stare in amazement as it is obvious that the Fallen are more than just the wretches that they were made out to be. Cylix commands his Inquisitors to a private audience, and the Elder Council convenes in the Chambers nearby. The Sisterhoods travel with all haste back to their domains to discuss all that has transpired with their respective Fatimas.

Evangel Black approaches the PCs and tells them that the time has come for things to be set right — Agnes must be returned to Her Sisters. As the Fallen congregate, the Joanites look at them reverently as they pass. Some Blades, Watchers and even Shadow Watchers drop their badges and cloaks to stride alongside the Fallen as they leave the Red Goal and the Trial of Heresy behind them.



Chapter four: Raising the Torch

Let go my hand
You fear; that is good
Let it drive you onwards
To places you never wished to tread
The cycle continues
Child of chastity
Stand and run, now
Run and be free
— Den-Hades' spirit-call to Agnes



Quest Overview

With the Proclamation of the Fallen as a guide to the salvation of the Eighth Tribe, the Outcasts make a joint effort to rescue Agnes from the H'I Kar. The Fallen soon join with Templars from the Seven Fingers who have been instructed by Joan to bring back the lost Child. The Fallen Crusaders meet up with the Children of Lilith who were lost at the beginning of the story and are soon overtaken by a massive Flemis horde. The Flemis is on its way to the Covenant Stronghold, forcing the Crusaders to make all due haste.

The Crusaders reach the Stronghold before the Flemis and enter the dark caverns of the Melanis society. Within, they confront the Cabal of Deliverance and finally learn of the truth behind Agnes' capture. Agnes is finally located and rescued from Her ordeal but, as the Covenant fails in its task, the Flemis arrives on its own mission. A battle to escape the H'I Kar follows, but with the aid of Agnes' divine powers, and the sacrifice of many brave warriors, the Fallen finally escape the blasted Z'bri lands. Upon returning to Vimary, Agnes is taken in by Joan and the Fallen prove that they are the chosen warriors of the Goddess.

Quest Four, Act One: Warriors Awakened

Veruka's words had a deep effect on us all. We had been so concerned with our own survival that even we, the Children of Prophecy, forgot what would save us from death's door. The Child would be returned to Her home and the Fallen would be the ones to deliver Her. The Joanite Templars were free from the Sheban shackles and their ranks added numbers to our weakened and beleaguered forces. Even the Agnite Children saw the hope in our mission, and the two arms of the Nation that were used to strike out against us were the very same ones that would help us right the wrongs. Our Destiny was at hand.

— Evangel Black



4. Quest Four: Raising the Torch

Backstory

The Fallen are given direct guidance through Veruka's Proclamation and urgently prepare for a foray into the H'I Kar in order to find Agnes and return Her to Vimary. They also receive visions that help guide them to the Covenant's secret lair.

The Nation reels from the fiasco created by the Trial of Heresy, as Faust Verkin calls a Grand Council meeting to discuss the Crucible and the crimes committed by the Inquisition. Cylix, never one to leave himself vulnerable, uses Bartholomew as a scapegoat and portrays the Marshal as the instigator of all the inhumane acts that were inflicted on the Fallen. Cylix's many contacts and ties with the Grand Council keep him relatively safe, but his bid to destroy the Fallen fails. . . for now. He immediately begins to hatch plots against the Joanites, especially the Templars. The rift grows amongst the Old Guard and the Templars and Nostra Guy'on is put in a difficult position. The open alliance between some of the Templars at the Seven Fingers and the Fallen further complicates affairs.

Meanwhile, news travels quickly of Kara's death and the defiant actions of Shera Uhan'on while the Templars devote themselves to prayer, awaiting guidance from Joan. Kara's body is taken back to the Watchtower, where Joan looks upon it and weeps a final tear before rising from Her remorse and finally taking charge of Her actions. She enters the River of Dream and sends a message to all of Her most trusted warriors. The spirit of Kara the Hunter flows through Joan and She searches for the truth that promises to save Her Tribe. The Templars receive a glimmer of strength from their Fatima and await a sign to show them their next course. That sign comes in the form of the Fallen.

The Covenant, deep within its stronghold, is ever closer to discovering the nature of the power that drives and supports the Fatima Agnes. The Cabal of Deliverance awaits the Ritual that will transfer Agnes' power to Sarah. In anticipation of this, Eth'ian sends a message to the Baron's Palace, notifying Deacon Vytor that their desired goal is at hand. Deacon Vytor, however, replies with less inspiring news. The Flemis, who has been carrying out the Baron's investigations on the whereabouts of Agnes, learns of the Covenant's lair, including the attempts to delve into the power of a Fatima. The Flemis subsequently notifies the Baron of the Covenant's existence, but is uncertain as to who leads the underground operation. The Baron sanctions a full assimilation of the conspirators if the Flemis succeeds in unmasking the minds behind the coup. The Flemis is pleased with this and sets off immediately for the Covenant to claim its prize. The Baron hopes that the Pact of the Dome is salvageable after all that has taken place, but places the Koleris, under Count Lothar (*Horrors of the Z'bri*, p. 8), in a ready position as a precaution against the worst.

Scene 1 - Call to Arms

The PCs, along with any other Fallen that were at the Trial of Heresy, regroup in Hom. Mek initiates a discussion on the import of Veruka's Proclamation, which has deeply affected the resolute Jacker.

The Fallen have an inherent knowledge, given to them by the visions, of where Agnes is being kept by the Z'bri. The signs from their visions will soon prove to be correct as the Fallen traverse the H'I Kar and make real world, landmark associations.

The PCs should feel compelled to undertake the task at hand, but a hesitant Cell can be motivated further by the talk of a new day that rings amongst their Fallen companions. Mek shows himself to be more than willing to take an active role in the coming quest, and several others speak of the strength of the Fallen Nation, surviving against what seemed to be limitless odds. It is obvious that the Inquisition has lost a lot of support from the Tribals, something that can be capitalized upon by fast moving Cells.

Altara Ven makes a bold move and approaches a group of Agnites — Children from her former Tribe. The Agnites seem willing and able to listen to her and look favorably upon all those gathered. In a show of strength, one of the Children meekly asks the PCs, "Will you bring Agnes back to us? We miss Her." Altara embraces the child and tells her that the Fallen will do whatever it takes to make sure that Agnes is safely returned to the Children who need Her so very much.

Crusade

If the PCs balk at the idea of a quest, then the Weaver can move them off to other plots. However, their reputation likely takes a serious turn for the worse. There are a few Cells that voice their disagreement with liberating Agnes, Troy Fenys (and her followers) being one example. She states that no Fatima is worth saving, regardless of whether it effects the Eighth tribe or not. The number of Fallen who agree with her is small, making her appear cowardly and faceless in light of such powerful portents. Troy realizes the sentiment against her and leaves without further ado, plotting ways in which to get even with those she sees as dupes to yet another of the Fatimas' ploys.

Mek asks that any Fallen wishing to locate Agnes prepare themselves for an arduous and difficult journey. Altara Ven accompanies Mek and helps him organize while the PCs can make whatever preparations they wish. Mek wishes to leave as soon as possible, for a time like this requires all due haste.

Several large groups of Agnites congregate around the Fallen, waiting to accompany them to rescue the Child Fatima. The Agnites say that Agnes is calling to them and says She wants to see their faces before returning home. A Doomsayer can verify that this is true, perceiving spiritual tethers growing where they were once so abruptly severed. The Agnites indeed join the Fallen before they set out; most of them in rather trance-like states, intent on the travels ahead. The Weaver is reminded that the Agnites still cannot use their Eminences and are cut off from the River of Dream. As the journey progresses, however, the Agnites seem to get a stronger sense of spiritual grounding.

Departure

The PCs, after making whatever preparations they deem necessary, join up with Mek and about three dozen other Fallen and a dozen Agnites, creating a formidable group indeed. The Weaver can have many NPCs that have shown up throughout her cycle take part here, further personalizing the journey with familiar faces and old friends that survived the Inquisition. The journey through Tribal territory is surprisingly unhindered, as the powers that rule the Nation hold continuous sessions at the Council Ruins. Many things are discussed, the fate of the Fallen being at the forefront.

The Council does not sanction a Joanite effort at rescuing Agnes, as the Sisterhood advises that the Fates do not yet approve of such a directive. The Fates are still contemplating the results of their plot with the Baron and wish to see what unfolds, as per Baba Yaga's wishes. They do risk rending the Pact of the Dome further, until the Fallen unwittingly test its strength.

The Weaver can improvise several encounters with Tribals along the way, but all should be passive in nature. The Tribal families are uncertain of what to make of the self-proclaimed Eighth Tribe and watch its members pass in confusion and disguised awe. The contrast in the freedom of movement noticed by the Fallen, now that the height of the Inquisition is over, may well be noted by the PCs. The Fallen Crusaders use the open roads and stand tall, the Agnite Children in tow.

The Fallen Crusaders reach one of the Seven Fingers after a full day's journey, unless other events take place within the Weaver's cycle. Depending on the Clan that commands the specific Tower, a cadre of Cavalry ride out to meet the Fallen.

4. Quest four: Raising the Torch

Scene 2 - Unexpected Allies

The PCs and the accompanying Crusaders see a mounted Cavalry Unit racing towards them. They order the Fallen to halt and state their business on the Northern Border. If the PCs don't speak up, Mek explains that Agnes is in the hands of the Z'bri and that the Fallen are certain that Her liberation is a part of the destiny of his people. Mek defers to the PCs if they are willing to speak up and show courage to the Cavalry Captain.

The Captain nods his head in apparent understanding, motioning for the Fallen to accompany his Cadre back to the Seven Fingers Tower. The PCs may not trust the Cavalry, but the Captain swears on Joan's honor that the Fallen are assured safety during their time spent at the Seven Fingers. Mek understands the power behind the Captain's pledge and sets any hesitant characters at ease by assuring them that a warrior's oath is unbreakable. If this fails, the PCs can easily wait outside the Tower while the Templar Garrison Leader speaks with the Fallen.

The Cavalry Captain escorts the PCs into the Tower after entering the center courtyard and securing the horses. Fallen Joanite PCs feel a sense of nostalgia once inside, as the smells, sights and sounds fill their senses with memories of Tribal life. The War Room at the center of the Tower, once reached, has an entire Cadre of Templars and two Cadres of Blades waiting for the Fallen to arrive. The Fallen, under any other circumstances, would be in a poor situation, but now the Joanites simply stand at attention and wait for the entire group of exiles to enter. At the front of the Templars is the reverent Valerie Ben'on. She bows to Mek and serenely looks at all those gathered. Valerie says that she has been waiting for the Fallen Crusaders to arrive, explaining that the Templars have received powerful visions from Joan, and that the time of the Warrior Tribe is at hand. Before the PCs can voice any questions, Valerie asks them to join her in a prayer which she leads in honor of Kara the Hunter, although she calls her Kara, Favored of Joan.

Faint Hopes

The Joanites are ready and armed, as well, outfitted in full armor and gear. Valerie says a Circle's Prayer and offers Joan's blessing to the Fallen Crusade for the liberation of Agnes. Valerie then listens to any questions or concerns that the PCs have, answering what she can. Valerie admits that the Templars were involved in the siege of Hom and in the investigation of Fallen Cells hidden in and around Vimary, but explains that they followed Joan's orders and never those of the Seth'on clan. The Templars also never took part in any torture or interrogations of captured Fallen, always making certain that those affairs were rightfully administered by the Shebans. PCs recollect that they, in fact, did not hear of or witness any Templars behaving in shadowy affairs, further supporting Valerie's claims. Valerie formally admits her regret and the guilt she feels for the wrongs done to the Fallen. She intends for the Templars to rise above the Shebans' dark dealings and self-serving edicts, the Sisterhood's first major independent action being an intended joint Crusade to rescue Agnes!

The Fallen are given ample opportunity to discuss Valerie's proposal and she leaves them to their private discussions while she sets her own preparations in motion. The Players can voice any concerns here, but most of the Fallen are more than happy to have the Templars join them on the Crusade. After all, the Joanites are well trained and share a common goal. The H'l Kar promises to hold many dangers and the additional numbers will almost certainly prove advantageous. By now, the PCs are probably fairly influential, so if they opt to deny the Templars a chance to journey with them, they could sway the vote. On the other hand, should the PCs use their influence to push Mek's agenda, the Templars readily join up.

If the Templars are told that the Fallen are uncomfortable with a Tribal presence, Valerie respects their wishes. She does, however, mount her own Crusade and may be encountered later on, depending on the Weaver's preference. Once the official ceremonies are taken care of, Valerie orders her Templars to gather their equipment and extra water from the court well and rations from the cellar. The Templars do not bring any horses and tell inquiring PCs that neither horses, nor any other beasts of burden, have ever survived the H'l Kar and its tainting evil. Only the will of a human can resist the suffocating Atmosphere of the Z'bri lands, and even that is an arguable point. Once all discussions are finished and the PCs are ready to continue, the Crusaders set out on their historic journey.

Scene 3 - Into the Nightmare

During the journey, the Weaver is encouraged to have nightmares plague the PCs on a regular basis. Visions of Agnes, the past Inquisition, the coming Flemis Collective and the Covenant's stronghold are all horrific reminders of the trials that the Fallen have undergone and have yet to overcome. These visions can also plant seeds for future scenarios of the Weaver's devising, allowing her to foreshadow plots from sessions to come.

Several boats launched from the Seven Fingers Tower get them across the River, the Templars navigating the foul waters. There are enough boats for everyone to get across in two trips and once the first wave of Crusaders reaches the other side, two rowers can make the ferry trip back to pick up anyone remaining. The second wave notices shadowy forms in the water that dart around the boats. The forms are schools of mutated fish that make up a Flemis warning system. The Flemis fish send psychic messages to other Flemis using The One Thought Sundering. The PCs can make PSY rolls vs. 4 to see if they sense Sundering in the vicinity, and while there is no outright danger in this encounter, it may set the PCs on edge.

The H'I Kar is a twisted landscape of shapes and images that mock the purity of nature. There is a noticeable lack of ambient "spirit" in the air, as though a dark vacuum exists around everything. The very laws of reality are twisted and the Weaver can use this to add further horror to the travels. The nightmares don't end when the PCs wake up, for the H'I Kar itself is the epitome of corrupt and malicious design. The landscape lacks color, and distances lose their impact, causing bony structures and distant storms that seemed miles away to be met within minutes and others that seemed close by remain unreachable. Voices travel in chaotic directions, echoing off of unseen substances and returning with cursed words that are twisted and vile, almost unbearable to the human mind.

The journey can take as long as the Weaver feels necessary, and physical barriers, such as murky pools, deep crevasses, thick tangled foliage and other residents of the H'I Kar can all be thrown at the Crusaders, the psychological and spiritual fatigue wearing away at the PCs with every step.

Old Allies

At some point in the trek, the PCs notice a trail of smoke just over a rise. Upon investigation, they see a group of humans camped against a cracked rock shelf. The PCs may assume that have encountered Serfs or other such enemies, but upon closer inspection, they recognize the huddled group as a small Cell of Children of Lilith! They are some of the surviving members of the Children of Lilith, including former members of Ardatli Maque's Cell (Kallisti, Varna and Laban), who were sucked into the forest during the first Quest. Their numbers are greatly diminished and they seem to be holding vigil in the broken, evil land. The Children of Lilith take a defensive posture upon seeing the PCs approach, obviously fatigued and injured from their time spent in the H'I Kar. They are hesitant to accept the Fallen at first, especially if the PCs are accompanied by Templars, but can be easily calmed by empathetic and kind PCs. The Children of Lilith are deeply saddened by the news of Ardatli's death, and more stricken still when told of Veruka and Kara's fates. They did not receive Veruka's Proclamation, as all other Fallen did, the oppressive atmosphere of the H'I Kar blocking such a spirit call.

The Crusaders soon camp with the Children of Lilith, who pledge their souls to returning Agnes to Her people. They, more than anyone else, know what the loss of a Fatima feels like, and they also carry a certain sense of guilt for apparently bringing it upon the Child Fatima in the first place. The Children of Lilith explain that they have been waiting to mount an expedition to find Agnes, but that the losses they suffered were too great. The PCs hopefully fill them in on the Inquisition and the many other events that have taken place in Vimary. Upon hearing of Veruka's Proclamation from the PCs, and the visions the Fallen received at her death, the Children of Lilith exclaim that they have seen some of the places mentioned. The visions are indeed pieces of a map that came to Veruka as she burned, one that will lead the Fallen to Agnes.

Valerie Ben'on offers any assistance she can to the injured Children of Lilith, amazed at their ability to survive for so long. After hearing of the Fallen's perspectives on the Inquisition and the manner in which they speak of the Goddess and the River of Dream, she feels a deeper respect and admiration for her Fallen companions. She doesn't necessarily voice this insight, but it does affect her and her Templars' behavior throughout.

4. Quest four: Raising the Torch

Horrors Among Us

Whenever the Crusaders are ready to leave (after a rest riddled with nightmares), the next day's journey shows more promise in direction now that the visions have been interpreted. The Children of Lilith point out landscape markings that correspond with the visions of the PCs, setting the Crusaders on a more definite path towards finding Agnes, and the group moves faster than it was able to the day before. The Agnites feel the growing presence of their Fatima, although it is still very weak. This "tugging" on the Agnites reinforces the feeling that the Fallen are on the right track.

The Weaver can have the PCs encounter some roving Gek'roh or a hamlet of Serfs along the way, and while this may serve to lessen the numbers of the Crusaders and provide some action for the Players, it isn't entirely necessary to the story. The party will have more than enough to deal with once the Covenant is discovered and the Flemis enter the fray.

During rest, a scouting PC or Templar discovers the remains of an encampment. The Children of Lilith state that they were not in this area and that the camp belongs to another, yet to be determined, group. A search of the camp shows that a fire was lit and that it is perhaps not more than two days old. Of interest (besides the usual detritus of an abandoned encampment) a metal casing is found. If the PCs discovered another casing during *Quest Two* (p. 40), after the Shadow Watch Captain was assassinated, this one is found to be identical.

The camp was, in fact, left by members of the Cabal of Deliverance who were returning to the Covenant Stronghold. They encountered some Serf hunters, who forced Matahar to use her relic rifle in defense. They escaped abruptly, knowing that, despite their affiliation with the Covenant, even they were not safe in the H'I Kar. The discovery of the bullet casing can leave the Players speculating on any number of possibilities, however, they have little time to ponder; once the Crusaders finish their search, a most unexpected form comes over the horizon.

Scene 4 - Tide of Flesh

The Flemis that discovered the Covenant's whereabouts is fast on the way to the Stronghold. A massive collection of forms comes over the rise and around the broken trees, right into the lap of the Crusaders. Huge behemoth creatures with hulking legs and slithering appendages, swarms of insects, hundreds of human bodies amalgamated into single entities, flying monstrosities that have web-like strands connecting them to spindly creatures below, and many more, too varied and incomprehensible for the human eye, surround, pass over and through the Crusaders. It is a single Flemis Collective that pounds the earth under its thousands of tons of weight. The PCs likely panic or gird themselves for a massive attack, as the Agnites scream in fear, and the Templars and Children of Lilith take up their arms. The Flemis, however, cares not for the humans in its midst. The PCs must resist the Flemis Atmosphere or be frozen to the spot and suffer Assimilation.

It should dawn on the PCs that the Flemis ignores them completely. Anyone that attacks or succumbs to the Atmosphere is Sundered by the Flemis touch of Assimilation while those simply trying to avoid getting squashed must make agile attempts at evasion (Dodge vs.3), although any pulping of humans is strictly accidental. Anyone caught within an inescapable mass of Flemis becomes a part of the Collective, forever lost in the ever-growing collection of flesh. Any PCs that received visions of the Flemis realize that the mass is on its way to find Agnes. The Dream reveals to them a scene of Agnes being pulled into layered folds of fat.

Valerie organizes her Templars, and Mek does the same for anyone else nearby, especially the frightened and vulnerable Agnites. The Flemis, despite its size, is slower than the Crusaders, not separating from any of its attached forms. This is a considerable advantage for the Crusaders, allowing them to sprint ahead of the Flemis and find the Covenant first. A race for Agnes ensues. As long as the PCs and the Crusaders do not hesitate or tarry too long, they create an impressive gap of several clicks from the Flemis over the course of the next several hours. FIT tests vs. 3 should be made to keep up the forced pace, with Margins of Failure of 3 or more forcing the PC to make another resistance roll against the Flemis Atmosphere. A failed resistance will subject a PC to the pain of Assimilation, as before. The Flemis has one thing on its mind: the recovery of Agnes for the Baron, which holds with it the reward of Assimilating an entire Melanis Stronghold. Once the Covenant Stronghold is seen through the choking mist, the next Act begins.

Quest Four, Act Two: Traitors

Praise the Goddess for your fortune, my sisters! You have arrived at the moment of our Deliverance. The Fallen shall walk in the shadow of the Fatimas no more, for today we shall strip them of their power. . . power that we gave them and which is our birthright! Already the Child of Envy writhes in Her last hateful dream. She no longer raises Her arm against us, for Her power is now ours. Join me in an exclamation of triumph, my sisters, the time of the Prophecy is at hand!

— Final testament of John the Revealer, of the Cabal of Deliverance

Backstory

Eth'ian of Melanis has received word from Deacon Vytor that a Flemis horde is approaching under the sanction of the Baron. Interestingly, for Eth'ian, the news coincides with some discoveries of his own — the Child Fatima is awakening from Her slumber and the Melanis rituals are not, in fact, the force behind Her coma. Eth'ian understands that his status in the H'I Kar is compromised and leaves for both his own safety and the inception of plots yet to unfold. Deciding that the Covenant has served its purpose for now, Eth'ian allows the remaining Melanis under him to continue their work, confident that their limited knowledge is useless to the Baron. The remaining members of the Covenant are unaware that their research is about to be violently disrupted, still intent on uncovering the secrets of Fatimal power. With the fulfillment of their goal seemingly within reach, they are far too preoccupied to notice the approach of the Fallen Crusaders.

Scene One - Trapped Memories

As the tide of the Flemis collective recedes behind them, the PCs catch the first glimpse of their destination: the Covenant's stronghold. It rises like a sickly blade from the horizon, a broken dagger tearing the entrails from a wounded sky. A vile black ichor gushes from its pinnacle to ooze down the sides of the edifice. The Weaver is encouraged to find a suitably dramatic piece of music to emphasize the epic nature of this moment in the PCs' lives.

As the PCs approach, they see that the construction is completely entwined in a grasping network of human spinal cords, with great clusters of brains hanging throughout like sickly grapes. Much of the noxious liquid flowing over these cables seems to be absorbed by the organs before it can touch the earth. Still, a pool has formed around the building, which the Fallen must find their way across in order to pass through a single cavernous opening that leads deep into the earth. The pool of ichor, though foul, is not actually poisonous, but represents a spiritual danger that some would consider far worse. It is a physical manifestation of pure Atmosphere of Melanis that has been distilled for generations through the thousands of undying minds that make up the Covenant's Stronghold. The Atmosphere is felt strongly by all present (-1 to resist Melanis Atmosphere, with the normal penalty for failure, but those who actually touch the liquid of the moat have to make a resistance roll versus the Melanis Atmosphere at -4).

It is best if an NPC becomes the first victim, as a warning for all to proceed with extreme caution. Anyone who fails the roll instantly loses all memories, including that of speech. Instinctual bodily processes remain active, but the person is effectively reborn into her own body with the mind of an infant, and must relearn how to walk, eat, speak and to use other necessary adult skills. The devastating impact of such a thing happening to a loved one can make for fascinating future roleplaying, and gives the PCs all the more motivation to put an end to the evil that resides here.

The PCs must make their entry quickly however, as the Flemis can be seen on the horizon. Many methods for traversing the moat's divide are possible through Synthesis, joint Rituals or more mundane means, like stilts made from staffs or bridges made from rope. Assume a ten to fifteen foot expanse, with a depth of no greater than five feet near the tower's base. Hidden inside the dark mouth of the entrance, however, is a boat used by the Cabal of Deliverance, which may also be appropriated once somebody makes it inside or uses an Eminence, such as Motion, to bring it to them.

4. Quest Four: Raising the Torch

Scene Two - The Truth Shall Set You Free

Inside, the cavern entrance reaches into utter darkness. The PCs need to light torches or come up with another form of luminescence to see. Once they do, the flickering shadows that they cast on the walls mutate into barely human forms that reach out to them, weeping desperately for help. The resonance of the minds lost to the Melanis laboratories is here to remind the PCs that, for some, the horrors of the Z'bri never end.

At the far end of the opening is a tiny square room, more like an alcove within the wall, the insides lined with human ribcages and eyes that try to focus on anyone that enters. The inner wall beside the door is marked with many ancient symbols and pierced by a fist-sized aperture. It is difficult to see down the hole, but prodding reveals a soft, organic substance within. Anyone reaching in is able to place her hand on the warm suppleness of a living brain, although many would recoil at such a sensation. The "volunteer" intuitively feels that touching the brain allows some control over the alcove. The doors to the niche slide closed when a hand is placed firmly on the organ, which may cause alarm until cessation of such contact causes the doors to open once again.

In fact, if the person thinks about a downward motion while keeping her hand on the brain, the whole room begins to move in that direction. A Keeper or perceptive PC in the group may identify the device as an ancient lift, but also recognizes that it is no longer powered by Tek-nology. It is actually Animated by the Melanis, with the help of their cerebral network and various slave sinews. The lift operator need only place her hand on the brain and think of moving upward or downward to set the machine in motion. No more than ten humans of average size can be transported this way at once, and even this is crowded, severely limiting the PCs' tactical options once they reach the level below.

The doors open again on the next lowest floor of the building, which is comprised of a large circular room with a high domed ceiling. The floor of the room is plaited with the snake-like folds of pulsing gray matter, while the walls ripple with circulatory vessels and translucent tracts that digest unknown materials and fluids. (If a character fell into the moat in *Scene One*, the PCs may see a huddled human form sliding through a tract as enzymes eat away at her flesh.) More immediately distressing to the PCs, however, is the presence of five members of the Cabal of Deliverance — one of whom is aiming an ancient rifle directly at them! Present are John the Revealer, Mhumia, Hannibal, Banting and Matahar.

Enemy Mine

The Cabal's purpose is not to harm the PCs, however; they merely want to help the Fallen understand the importance of Agnes' sacrifice. To this end, John the Revealer begins to speak powerfully, yet compellingly, on the Cabal's behalf. John is quite devout in his view of the Fallen's destiny and is adept at creating a convincing argument. He is rather rushed and nervous, however, if the Joanite presence is obvious and forward. (See the Narrative above for an example of his style of speech.) The Cabal uses all the resources at its disposal to convince the Fallen that it is their destiny to take back the power of the Fatimas.

John answers any questions the PCs may have for him honestly, as he truly believes in his twisted vision. The Weaver should remember that he and his Cell are convinced that what they are doing is for the good of the Fallen as a people. John is a very intelligent and charismatic man, who has perfectly justifiable (in his mind, at least) reasons for his actions and wants everyone to understand them. He is also very excited with the prospect of using a Fatima's power for the Eighth Tribe, instead of for the elite Sisterhoods. He dreams of a day when all will share the limitless potential of the Goddess on earth, and invites the PCs to join him in this deluded and lofty dream.

If any PCs have become close to Mhumia or Banting, the two Cabal members implore them, as friends, to listen. They remind the PCs of the suffering experienced by the Outcasts during the Siege and Inquisition at the hands of the ruthless Fatimas. They argue that the Fatimas can never care for humans, because they have no understanding of what it is to be human. In their opinion, better that a human be imbued with a Fatima's power — a human who has lived through the pain and joy common to all mortals.

Drink With Me

Hannibal also alludes to a debt of gratitude from any PC whose life he saved at the Valley of the Shrine. Matahar, who indicates that it was she who killed the Shadow Watcher Captain so that the PCs might escape, fills the same role, although she has far less tact. Their message is clear — the Cabal works to protect the Fallen and can be trusted to wield such power better than the Fatimas can. Of course, those who recall Sarah's murderous behavior at the Valley of the Shrine may be apprehensive, and it could easily be argued that the Cabal's actions were a direct cause of the Inquisition.

Matahar counters that the Tribals were merely waiting for an excuse to destroy the Fallen, and that the Cabal needed to take immediate and direct action to begin the ousting of their oppressors. Their involvement with the Z'bri, Hannibal adds, has not tainted them any more than did their previous involvement with the Fatimas; the Fallen are a free people, who rule their own destiny, and must be prepared to make strategic alliances where necessary.

Sarah and Kolrig are not present, being currently occupied with the Covenant's Ritual of Deliverance. If the PCs mention the absence of these Cabal members, John the Revealer states, quite frankly, that the ritual to transfer Agnes' power to Sarah is nearly complete, and that Kolrig is there to oversee the process. He explains that the Cabal contains an Outcast from each of the seven Tribes, and that their ultimate mission is to imbue each member with the power of her former Fatima. The PCs may find this shocking, but John takes his time making sure that everyone understands that his plan is not only feasible, but is already coming to fruition.

Time is of the essence, however, and the PCs should not forget that every minute they spend talking with the Cabal brings the Flemis that much closer. If the PCs seem unaware of this fact, a worried NPC points it out. If the PCs tell the Cabal of the impending Flemis threat, John explain that when Sarah is imbued with Agnes' power, they will have little to fear from the Z'bri. Under no circumstances does the Cabal allow the Ritual of Deliverance to be interrupted. The only course open to the PCs (other than compliance, which does have its merits) is to attack. The Cabal does not allow passage otherwise.

My Ally's Foe

Any sudden movement by a PC, hostile or otherwise, is followed by a single, well-aimed shot by Matahar. (The Weaver should keep in mind that many Crusaders are in the lift, so *someone* takes the hit!) A full melee then ensues. The Cabal is dismayed that the PCs do not understand the workings of destiny, but quickly accept that the few must be sacrificed to save the many. The Cell is moderately powerful and may pose a threat to the PCs at first, but Fallen reinforcements quickly arrive if the PCs vacate the lift or send the lift operator to bring waiting Crusaders from above.

The Cabal is eventually outnumbered and outclassed but does not surrender, fighting to the death if need be for their fanatical beliefs. Even if the PCs manage to subdue a member, she is not moved to betray the location of the Ritual. With Joanites close at hand, and bearing witness to all that transpires, the Fallen may consider it prudent to dispatch the Cabal before they can further mar the reputation of the Eighth Tribe, so taking a hostage is not without its own problems.

The PCs are probably at a loss to determine where the Ritual of Deliverance is taking place — the lift stops on no other floors (without a Cabal member's help), and there are no further exits apparent in this room or the entry cavern. The solution soon comes from an unlikely source, when the Agnite children accompanying the PCs hear a call from their Fatima and start to move toward the center of the room. They then proceed to squeeze their small bodies into the gaps within the gray matter that covers the floor. The PCs may try to stop them, but the Agnites continually try to escape into the gigantic brain. If the PCs follow, a vision comes to them after being enveloped completely.

It is a vision of the world before, a vision of times before the coming of the Z'bri. This is the last joyful memory of those whose organs decorate this macabre fortress, and it is imparted to the PCs as a gift for seeking to end the misery caused here. The PCs see a strangely familiar skyline full of flying banners and brightly painted signs. The streets bustle with people enjoying the sunny blue sky. Children scream with excitement as the great turning wheel takes them up into the air and then back down again. The PCs are seeing Horn as it once was, fantastic and beautiful.

4. Quest Four: Raising the Torch

Scene Three - Deliverance

The PCs are abruptly spilled out into a large chamber that contrasts gruesomely with their recent vision. The unending screams of scores of humans assaults the air. Bodies, grafted together and attached in painful and unlikely areas serve as tables, chairs and other furniture. A pungent and acidic smell permeates the room as well, created by a bile-like fluid used to dissolve excess organic material (skin contact with the bile causes DM 10). All around, the PCs see evidence of countless unwholesome experiments performed by the degenerate Z'bri "scientists" on unwilling and tortured victims.

At the center of the chamber, the Melanis of the Covenant encircle the body of Agnes, who has been bound hand and foot to a slab of still living, conglomerated human bodies. The Cabal member, Sarah, is similarly bound nearby and watched over by Kolrig. The ritualists are intent on the task at hand, as they attempt to use the Fatima's power to tap into the River of Dream and unlock the Fold. The Melanis no doubt become aware of the Crusaders' presence and two of them defend against the assault, using Animation on the living walls, ceiling and floor, while the others try to complete the Ritual. There are five Melanis in total, two of which may be recognized as having been at the Valley of the Shrine. Rath'cal and Is'delim concentrate on Agnes, and only engage the Fallen as a last resort.

The Melanis do not use standard attacks and depend heavily on Sundering to assist them in the melee. The shadowy Z'bri should be difficult to deal with, disappearing into the living walls and using the architecture of their Stronghold to their advantage. There are likely many losses amongst the Fallen and Agnites, while the Templars suffer somewhat as well.

Growing Pains

Without Eth'ian's steady guidance the Covenant has left all subtlety behind, engaging in ever more repulsive and sickening experiments in a desperate attempt to forcefully rip the Child's essence from Her. The Weaver should once again refer to the experiments that the PCs performed while on their visionquest with the Guides. The visionquest, while accurate in some regards, exposed only some of the many vile acts performed on the unconscious Agnes.

Unfortunately for the Melanis, their methods work against them. Although Agnes is not entirely aware of Her situation, the trauma of the experience has given Her an understanding of helplessness — a human condition that no Fatima before Her, save Mary, has ever felt. She feels shame and guilt for the selfishness She has displayed in the past and a terrible regret for the many lives She has wasted and ruined with Her uncaring whims. The idea enters Her mind that perhaps the torture She endures is all Her own doing, that perhaps She is only getting what She deserves.

It is at this thought that the Tear of Forgiveness sinks deeper into Her being, causing a tremendous wave of emotion to flood outward from the River of Dream. All present, including the Z'bri, feel the presence of all those whom they have wronged. Weavers can take this opportunity to remind the PCs of any guilty history they may have from previous quests or in their personal character backgrounds. If the PCs express remorse over their deeds, the Tear works its miracle. Should the PC encounter the wronged person or group in the future, they will be given a chance to redeem themselves; if the wronged parties are deceased, they receive a vision in which they obtain those people's forgiveness.

Those who are without remorse despite many offenses (this includes the Z'bri) feel the pain of countless burning lashes as they are scourged by the waking Agnes. The Covenant falls into howling confusion, giving the Fallen the moment they need to mount an effective attack. Rath'cal, seeing no other escape, makes a desperate bid to cross the Fold, riding on the surge of Dream. His body seems to flicker and warp, and the other Z'bri momentarily turn away from the Fallen to observe their brother's seeming success in envious admiration. Their admiration turns to horror, however, when they find the Atmosphere and Sundering power being channeled away from their own forms to fuel Rath'cal's escape!

Meanwhile, Kolrig screams at the disappearing Z'bri, whom he calls by name, for betraying the pact his Cell had with the Covenant. Rath'cal laughs contemptuously at him, gloating that only fools make bargains they can not enforce, intoxicated with the power he now wields. The duped Herite falls to his knees, his fists pounding the sinewy floor in despair and bitterness. He does not fight back against any attackers, whether they are Fallen or otherwise.

Dreamings End

Many of the Fallen and Agnites take the opportunity of this confusion to hasten to the side of Agnes, urging Her to wake up quickly before it is too late. The Children wail at the chaos around them, pleading for their Fatima to save them from the evil Melanis. The PCs can feel the River of Dream opening up, those with the Dreaming Skill gaining the most insight. Suddenly, just before Rath'cal makes his final attempt to rip through the Fold, Agnes jerks upright on Her table, screaming like a child awaking from a nightmare. At the same moment, Rath'cal's form begins to re-materialize, as he is thrust back into the physical realm. The forces he was manipulating slip from his control, tearing him apart in layering strips that explode and stain the walls, some parts of his destroyed corpse floating and drifting about the continuing melee like fleshy pollen. The remaining Melanis, growing weaker by the moment and suffering greatly from Rath'cal's energy drain, let out wails of agony as their cloaked bodies finally fail them. The PCs should now have the pleasure of overcoming the Melanis, beheading them, or giving them other such satisfying ends. The Z'bri are at their mercy.

Even if the PCs and other Fallen do not finish off the Covenant entirely, Agnes does, tearing into the Z'bri with impunity as only a Fatima can. Although Eth'ian of Melanis has some knowledge of what must be done to allow his kind to return to the lands of Spirit, Agnes, through Her visions and experience, now understands the process to a far greater extent. She knows, deep down, what must be done, but needs to grow even more in order to fully comprehend. Agnes has grown physically as well, standing taller and more defined in Her body and mind. The most outstanding aspect of Her change is a single tear that marks Her cheek, as though She weeps for all that She has seen, as well as for what is yet to come.

Forbearance

Once the Z'bri influence has dissipated after the death of the Melanis, the untold thousands of human bodies that make up the Stronghold are no longer imprisoned. As the flesh, bone and nerve tissue melts away from the building's rusted steel and concrete skeleton, sensitive PCs feel the final relief of those set free. The helpless souls are given release from the agony they endured and are freed into the River of Dream. Although the taint of the H'l Kar remains, the Covenant Stronghold seems to heal rapidly, and in accelerated time. The Melanis Atmosphere slowly fades away and the cracks in the ceilings and floors show the darkening skies of the H'l Kar. Agnes stands in front of all those gathered and closes Her eyes momentarily in respect for Her liberators.

The Crusaders stand in awe of Agnes, many unable to believe that the Fatima has weathered so well, for so long, under such distressing conditions. Agnes instantly wins the admiration of many Fallen gathered, while Valerie Ben'on has her Templars bow to the Child Fatima in a pledge of allegiance to Her command until they return to Vimary.

Mek speaks for the Fallen and states that, with Agnes awakened from Her slumber, a quick and a hasty return to Vimary is necessary — for there, his people still suffer as heretics and exiles. Only with Agnes' safe return will the Tribal Inquisition truly be over. The wounded are collected and Agnes silently ascends from the depths of the dying Covenant Stronghold.



4. Quest four: Raising the Torch

Quest Four, Act Three: Sacrifice

With Joan's blessing did we find the Lost Child and save Her from the wickedness of the Covenant. However, our battle did not stop there. The Z'bri Houses were divided and the Flemis mass was yet another evil that we, as the warrior Tribe, were meant to fight for the safety of the Nation. Only now, we were allied with a most unexpected group of saviors, the exiles who called themselves the Eighth Tribe in Joshua's name. They were the sign that Joan had given us. They would bring back the One that knew of our Fatima's pain and guilt. They had a duty, much as we had, and it was our role to make certain they carried it out. . . no matter what the sacrifice.

— Valerie Ben'on, Templar of Joan

Scene One - All for One

With the dispersal of the Melanis Atmosphere, the Fallen Crusaders gather themselves for a hasty retreat from the H'l Kar. Agnes stands to face Her rescuers, Her eyes downcast. The face of the Child Fatima seems somehow more matured, with eyes that reveal the wisdom of days of old. She quietly whispers, "Tell them. . . tell them all, I'm sorry." If Kolrig and Sarah are still alive, Agnes addresses them in a clear and calm voice, "I know you tried to hurt me, but I forgive you. I know you were tricked by the Z'bri. It happens to a lot of people, even my Sisters." She does not let anybody hurt the Cabal members, stopping any attacks with a sharp gesture.

Many of the Fallen protest against letting any surviving Cabal members live, as do the Joanites, but the sudden overbearing Atmosphere of the Flemis brings all argument to a halt. Through great fissures in the ruined building, the PCs see the bloated Z'bri horde pushing its puttylike flesh against the crumbling walls. Smaller Flemis creatures begin to break off from the elephantine monsters, dropping in slow, slug-like undulations toward the defending Crusaders. Once again, the Weaver should have the PCs test to resist the Atmosphere.

Many exhausted Fallen and Joanites fall victim to the Flemis' dominating presence, but the Agnite children are immune to Z'bri Taint, their connection to the River of Dream restored to them and close at hand with Agnes' recovery and growth. The Agnites start scooping up the small Flemis that creep up the walls and putting them to the torch. Inspired by the bravery of the youngsters, Mek organizes the Jackers and Joanites to spearhead an escape route out of the building. Agnes takes the lead.

Escape is difficult to achieve, even with the Fatima's help. The Flemis surround the base of the building and have also filled the upper floors. The PCs find it nearly impossible to properly defend themselves from the attacking horde as they clamber up the unsteady walls and pillars. The Weaver should reward good escape ideas with support from Mek or the Joanites, who follow the PCs' lead.

Agnes picks up on the PCs' bursts of inspiration and responds by enhancing the results with Wonder. Even far-fetched ideas, like running along the top of the Z'bri's heads, should be allowed to work if the PCs are willing to try them. Agnes' presence has a serious affect on the melee, allowing the PCs a +2 to any die rolls, including resistance rolls.

Agnes adds Her own touch to the battle, causing bloated Flemis Behemoths to float into the sky like oversized balloons and having the beasts walk out of their own skins. Even so, the threat of the Flemis is very real — many Fallen, Agnites and Joanites die here, lost within the layered folds of Flemis obesity. Agnes, not yet fully recovered from Her torture at the hands of the Covenant, suffers still more grievous injuries during the battle.

Scene Two - Last Respects

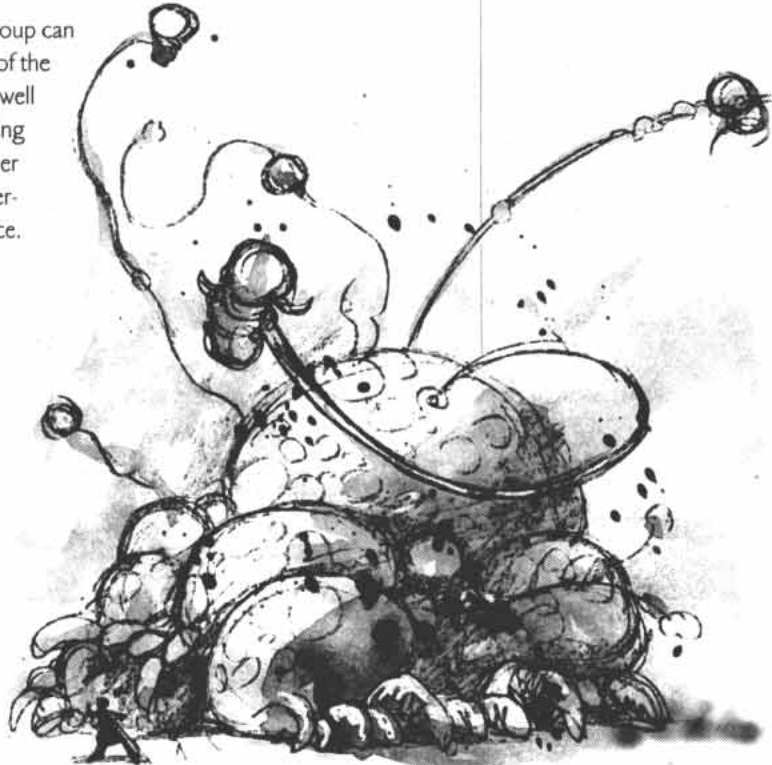
Ultimately, the Crusaders fight their way through the horde to the outside of the Stronghold, but cannot expect to escape the H'l Kar without being overrun. There are many who are injured and bleeding, further slowing any quick escapes. Although faster than the Flemis monstrosities that pursue them, the Crusaders must rest, while their Z'bri predators have no such frailty. The Children begin to have trouble keeping up, and even Agnes seems prone to fall behind, Her Children's injuries keeping Her from leaving their side. It becomes apparent that, without relief, no one will escape the Flemis.

At this point, some of the Crusaders volunteer to stay and fight the Flemis so that the rest can escape. A small force of warriors could hold off the horde long enough for the others to gain a substantial lead. The PCs may volunteer for this force, so the Weaver should make sure others commend them for their bravery and self-sacrifice.

The number of Fallen warriors who offer themselves is impressive — Mek and all his Jackers make up about half of the force. The Templars are stunned by the devotion of the Outcasts; a people whom they had been made to believe were uniformly irresponsible and cowardly are proving to be far more virtuous with each passing action. Valerie screams over the din of the battle and yells for the Fallen to take Agnes and Her Children back to Vimary, commanding that the Templars alone will hold off the Flemis onslaught. To return Agnes to Playground is the duty of the Fallen, and the Templars trust them to fulfill it with honor and devotion.

The Templars salute the remaining Crusaders proudly before fully engaging the pursuing Flemis, allowing the others to escape. The Fallen, with Agnes and Her Children, make as much distance as they can before nightfall, when they must make camp. PCs notice that Agnes appears less like a child, older or matured somehow by Her experiences. A contemplative expression fixes itself upon Her countenance as She gazes into the fire Her Children build, as though She were trying to make sense of it all. She asks the PCs to tell Her what has been happening since She left. The story of the Inquisition bothers Her, and She speaks out about Her frustration with Her Sisters, particularly Tera Sheba's binding laws and Eva's overbearing ways. She also apologizes once again for Her part in all of the misery the Fallen were forced to endure and says that She is beginning to see things a lot more clearly now. The PCs should be overcome with the innocence that Agnes possesses and see in themselves those same qualities that She now exudes.

The night's sleep is welcome, but the group can afford only a few hours, to keep ahead of the Flemis. The Fallen break camp before well dawn, traveling in the damp early morning air. As the sun sheds its bloody glow over the eastern sky, the untiring Z'bri juggernaut is seen mounting a hill in the distance. The chase continues!



4. Quest four: Raising the Torch

Scene Three - Crossing the Boundary

Agnes encourages Her Children to travel as quickly as possible, and even though the Child Fatima is powerful, those with Her are tired and wounded. Agnes knows that She herself cannot hold off an entire Flemis Collective, something that the PCs may or may not become aware of. If they ask Her, She tells them that She still feels weakened by the Tear of Forgiveness, if not physically, then emotionally.

The PCs are almost certain to draw many and varied conclusions about Agnes, but the Weaver should let them ponder the Child Fatima's growth without prompting or correction.

The chase through the H'I Kar can take as long as the Weaver wishes, although it is likely to come to a close by the late afternoon. On the horizon, the Fallen see the surprisingly welcome sight of the Seven Fingers. Once the River is met, Agnes uses Wonder to allow all those with Her to dive into the murky depths and float in air bubbles under the surface that carry them to the other side. The creatures of the water steer clear of the group as they sense the Fatima's power.

Triumphant

The Flemis dives headlong into the River after the fleeing group, ceaselessly giving chase. The Flemis beasts pile one over the other, creating a fleshy, slimy layer that forms a bridge. The Fallen and the Agnites rise on the Vimary side of the River and witness the horrific Flemis coming ever closer to Tribal lands. From the Seven Fingers, Joanite Cavalry and a mounted Cadre of Templars ride out to meet the surviving Crusaders. They are shocked to see Agnes and bow before Her in respect and admiration. Agnes orders the Joanites to fend off the Flemis before they fully rise out of the water, while She gathers everyone else around Her and guides them to the Tower for safety.

The PCs can fight alongside the Joanites and eventually defeat the spread of the Flemis in controlled waves of attack. Once the Flemis has lost too much mass to keep a bridge that spans the River, it retreats to the H'I Kar, returning to the Baron to tell of its failure to defeat Agnes and Her rescuers. The Fallen are bolstered by the Joanite forces, and the Weaver should stress the advantages the PCs have in fighting alongside rested and well-armed Joanites.

Whenever the PCs finally set out for the Tower, they see Joan standing on the uppermost turret. She glides down to meet Agnes and Her Children at the base of the Tower. Shera Uhan'on stands by Joan's side and looks to see who amongst the Fallen are the most warrior-like in appearance. If none of the PCs measure up to this assessment, Mek fills the role. Shera immediately asks what happened to the Templars and Valerie, her lover. The PCs can recount the sacrifice made by the Templars, but as to whether they all perished or not, nothing is certain. Joan places Her hand on Shera's shoulder and says that, in time, Her Chosen Ones will be avenged. Shera addresses the PCs and says that they may stay at the Seven Fingers and rest from their ordeal.

Agnes kneels before Joan and takes Her Sister's hand. She kisses it and thanks Her for offering the lives of the Sisterhood of Templars to save Her. Agnes looks up into Joan's eyes and, for an instant, understands the guilt that Joan carries with Her every day. Agnes begins to weep and collapses at Joan's feet while the Agnites look to the Fallen and begin to weep as well, feeling their Fatima's sorrow more deeply and spiritually than they ever have before.

Joan picks Agnes up in Her arms and whispers to the Child, "Now you know the pain I feel, Sister — the punishment I live with. I pray that one day, you will forgive me."

Restoration

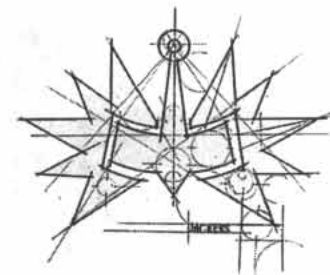
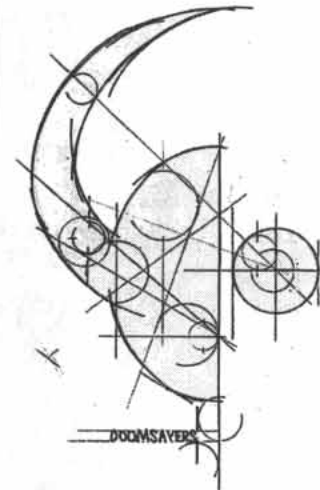
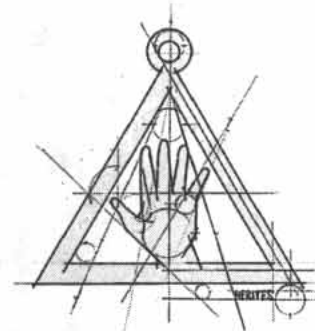
The PCs follow Joan and Agnes, with the Joanites and Children, into the Tower. There, they rest and have their wounds taken care of over the following few days. Once the PCs are recovered enough to safely travel, Shera has an audience with them. She tells them that Joan has returned with Agnes to the Watchtower where the two Sisters can speak with one another. Shera says that she is forbidding any Shebans from coming into the Tower while the Eighth Tribe are here, ensuring their safety. She is uncertain as to the status of Hom and the Inquisition, but believes that, now that the Fallen have proven to the Nation that they are more than just soulless, it is more than likely that they can safely return to Hom and prepare for the winter. After all, the Eighth Tribe did rescue Agnes.

Shera says that one day, she will quest for her lover, Valerie, and that she hopes that those present before her will be ready and willing to aid her. The PCs notice that there is a newfound strength amongst the Joanites — a glimmer of hope that had been lost for too many years.

The Agnites that stay at the Tower speak to the PCs as well. They say that the Fallen are braver than they imagined and that they no longer hold any animosity towards them. They apologize for being so cruel in the past, but also that they have to wait for word from Agnes before they can really “hang out” with the Eighth Tribe. The Agnites come across as independent, and more adolescent than childish. They speak with a more defined presence, although they are far from fully mature. They seem confused after everything they went through and look as if they don't really know whom to trust. Only the Joanites and the Eighth Tribe have shown them any real respect so far, and it will be some time before they get themselves in order.

The PCs can leave the Tower whenever they feel ready and travel back to Hom, where the news of the Crusaders success spreads like wild fire. Hom is alive with reconstruction as the Fallen — unified — rebuild their home. The Elders greet them with open arms and the PCs are received as heroes. They are told that the Grand Council disbanded the Inquisition and that those in the Shadow Watch are being tried for their crimes. The Fallen are calling themselves the Children of Prophecy openly now and with great pride.

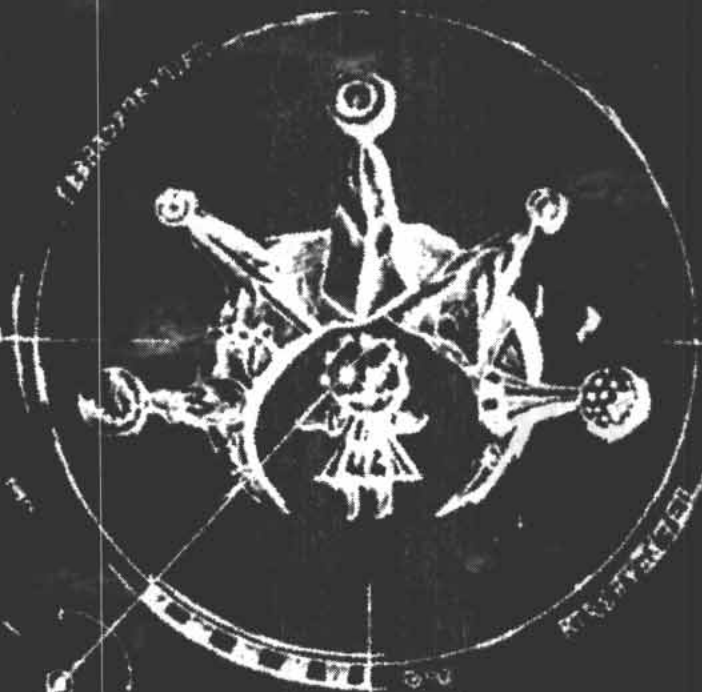
The PCs can revel in the joys of freedom as they emerge, cleansed, from their **Trial by Fire**.



Chapter five: Embers of Deliverance

You touched me in places
That I never knew existed.
You exposed me to a new life,
That I know must be mine.
You tried to rape me of my innocence,
That which can not be taken away.
You made me understand you.
That, you did not intend!

— Agnes the Child



The Fatimas

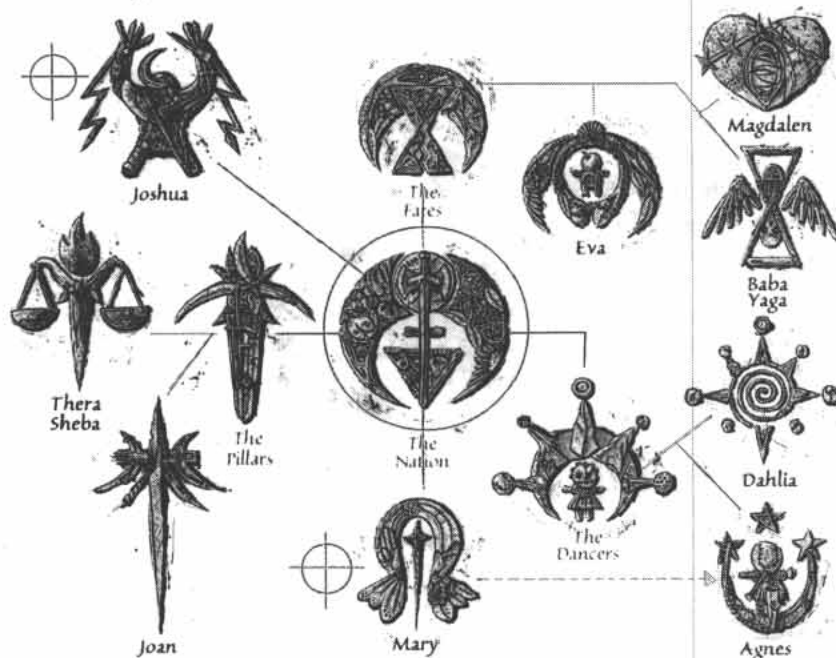
The Nation has changed immensely in the aftermath of one of the most difficult years it has faced since the Liberation. The lasting affects have a deep impact on the Eighth Tribe, as well as the Fatimas. Presented here are the outcomes of the entire Cycle to date, from the perspectives of the respective groups.

Baba Yaga: Despite the Baron falling short on his end of the bargain and the twists and turns that occurred, Baba Yaga is pleased with the overall outcome. She sees that Agnes has grown somewhat and hopes this will help the Child see eye with the Fates. Whether this happens or not is yet to be determined. The Crone also likes the fact that certain Shebans have shown their true colors, something that will make Tera Sheba more wary in general. While Eva has voiced Her concerns to Baba Yaga, the Crone feels that Eva must let Agnes go in the long run, in order for fate to run its course. These growing pains can be nothing but beneficial in Her eyes and, despite the initiative She took, Baba Yaga feels secure in Her position as the harbinger of fate.

Magdalen: Magdalen realises that the Baron cannot be dealt with in such a carefree manner any more, as it is apparent that he does not have proper control over his own minions. Magdalen hopes to have Her ambassadors to the Baron give Her as much information as possible on what the Baron's plans are after the bungled conspiracy. She also knows that Her intentions of bringing Joan over to Her arm may have just resulted in Joan's separation from all the Sisters. She knows to tread lightly now, and fears that Joan and Agnes together will disturb the power-base that the Fates have grown to depend on. As for Agnes' growth, Magdalen watches patiently.

Eva: Angered at the folly of Her own decisions, Eva becomes less the kind, caring mother and more the overbearing and directing matriarch. She knows that Agnes has grown, yet does not want to lose the Child. She fears that the blossoming relationship between Joan and Agnes will see the Child undertaking dangerous and risky behavior. She feels somewhat used after the whole affair and continues to support Tera Sheba and Her drive for absolute regulation. It seems that Eva may become a danger to the Eighth Tribe in a frightening and unforeseen way.

Tera Sheba: Tera Sheba knows that She has been manipulated by Her Sisters to behave in a way that suited their own agendas, and is planning an internal investigation into the truth behind Agnes' capture. While She suspects that the Fates initiated the whole thing, She is unwilling to bring down Her justice on those whom She holds so dear. Rather, She turns her eyes to the Joanites who are pulling themselves from Her grasp. Joan does not heed Her calls, and the Sisterhood of the Templars has publicly spurned Her most revered High Judges. Tera Sheba is forced to look at Her fellow Pillar in a new light and fears the division that grows between them.



5. Embers of Deliverance

Joan: Blessed with a clarity that could have only come in light of the crimes committed against the Children of Prophecy, Joan knows that salvation from Her guilt lies amongst the Eighth Tribe. She sees Agnes as the only one who understands the pain She endures and is looking to the Child for strength equally as much as She supports the Child in turn. After the Inquisition, Joan comes to the understanding that Tera Sheba simply used Her for Her own goals and the Warrior is starting to accept Her duty to the Joanites themselves. It will be painful for Her to fully accept all that She has allowed to happen, and She fears the repercussions will have consequences She's not ready for.

Dahlia: The Fatima of Change is pleased that Her past jest on the Fallen has left such lasting impressions. Her Caravans work overtime to discover exactly what happened to Agnes, and She is starting to understand the grand scope of the conspiracy. Dahlia's plans for this knowledge, as usual, are disguised in a myriad of games that only She can fully understand. Needless to say, She will use it to Her own benefit. As far as Her fellow Dancer is concerned, Dahlia is happy that Agnes now sees how fickle the Fates are, and will try to plant seeds in the Child that support Her own agenda.

Agnes: With the ordeals that She has endured, Agnes has entered the next stage in Her childhood — one in which She has no intention of allowing herself to be ordered around like a child. Agnes wants to prove that She is capable of standing for something, although She is not sure what that something should be. She understands Joan's guilt and has yet to discover all the effects of the Tear of Forgiveness, Mary's lasting mark upon Her. Most importantly, Agnes has learned, through Her ordeal as the subject of Melanis experiments, some previously hidden information about the reopening of the Fold; however, She does not plan on sharing this insight, or even letting anyone else become aware of it. For now, it is Her secret. She sees the Eighth Tribe as honorable and kind, in light of recent events, but is looking to Joan for some influence in Her future decisions. She is angry that Tera Sheba did not order the Nation to rescue Her from the start, but can't find it within Herself to strike out.

The Z'bri

The Baron is angered by the mistakes made by his subjects and plans an internal purge of the Z'bri Houses. He also places his vast armies of Koleris on the borders of the H'I Kar, knowing that it is only a matter of time before the Fatimas (and the Eighth Tribe) come to seek vengeance. This bolstering of forces pleases the Koleris, who have been waiting for the Baron to finally take a stand for Z'bri power. The Baron becomes too cautious in dealing with his allies, his hesitation to trust anyone making his orders largely ineffectual.

The Koleris are ready for a war and, with the Baron sanctioning their position on the borders of Vimary, plan to rend control from the Sangis. The Koleris take the initiative and send advance troops into Vimary itself, ravaging lone travelers and homesteads in the night. This instigation forces the Joanites to mount a guerrilla campaign against the invading Koleris, and the Duskfall Towers and Seven Fingers once again see action on an almost weekly basis.

The Melanis delve into their own House to seek out Eth'ian, who escaped the final conflict with Agnes and the Fallen. They know he uncovered priceless secrets from the Fatima and want to procure such knowledge for their own devices. They are careful not to give the Baron any reason to weaken their hidden political influence, and play a safe game over the coming seasons. They have bigger plans and know that the Fatimas have tighter ties with the Baron than he lets on. They continue to play behind the scenes, manipulating events to serve their own secret plans.

The Flemis are disappointed that they lost the opportunity to bring a Fatima into the collective, and are growing in their anger at the division of the Z'bri. They realise that the Z'bri are tearing themselves apart with infighting and back stabbing, and hope to sway the Baron toward forming a unified front against the Nation. Of course, the Flemis are working for their own agenda as well, making the Baron question himself in order that he may be more useful in the future.

The Sangis are bemused with the Baron's misplaced trust in the Melanis and coat their advice to him with seeds of dissent. They want to rid themselves of the Melanis' hold on their leader so that their own self-involved wishes can be satiated. The Sangis see Eth'ian's absence as the perfect opportunity to vie for positions of authority, playing games of status in the Baron's court. They are so self-absorbed that the Tribes weigh very lightly on their minds, if at all.

The Covenant is all but destroyed; however, Eth'ian still lives. He uses his connections with Deacon Vytor and escapes to Capal, where Vytor's dealings gain him the attention of Count Nemerath. The Baron's Z'bri, the Fatimas and the Eighth Tribe would all like to see Eth'ian destroyed; the Melanis know, however, that the information gathered from his experiments on Agnes make him worth more alive. He continues to plot, and seeks to reinvent the Covenant with new members and the unknowing aid of Count Nemerath of Capal. He plans on becoming a power in his own right in Capal, to the point of superseding the Baron's control in the H'I Kar. If the Melanis hear of this, they may just support Eth'ian once more.

The Eighth Tribe

The Fallen are calling themselves the Eighth Tribe with confidence now and know that the Tribals are divided in how to regard them. With Veruka, Kara and Ardatli as martyrs for the people, they feel as though a new dawn has risen — now the real work can begin, to truly liberate humanity. The Fallen Elders know that the Tribes must be dealt with and work on forming their own official Council, so that in the future, should an emergency arise, the loss of life can be prevented more effectively.

Outlooks

The Lightbringers are brought into two camps that support each other, one led by Hal Ninva, who wishes to appease the Shebans, and the other by Evangel Black, who wants to finally claim sovereignty from Tribal rule. Both camps are necessary for the future of the unified Eighth Tribe's survival, and, so far, they agree to work together to achieve their goals. All Lightbringers see Kara's sacrifice as a symbol of what it means to be Fallen. She is honored by the Lightbringers and they have named her a Martyr of the Fallen.

The Jackers saw the strength of the Templars and the capabilities of their own fighters. With this boost of confidence, they work towards showing the Templars, whom they largely see as potential allies, that they are more than ready to take the fight to the Z'bri. Many Jackers know that the evils that started the Inquisition still exist, and they seek to discover where the leaders of the Melanis secret society escaped to. Mek also takes a more active role in teaching others the skills that will be needed to protect the Eighth Tribe from future dangers.

The Herites, ashamed that an entire Cell of their Outlook caused such pain to the Fallen, form Cells intent on preventing such things from happening again. They know that the Tribes set up the Fallen in some way, and continue to seek the truth behind the Seven Deaths' agendas. While they accept the fact that Joan aided the Fallen, many are still wary of the Fatima, as it is obvious that She is not yet fully independent of Her Sisters. The Herites are divided on what to think of Agnes — many questions still need to be answered.

The Doomsayers revere Veruka's memory, calling her Veruka the Proclaimer, and (somewhat inaccurately, of course) the First Martyr. They reach deep into the River of Dream and seek to find any further hints about Joshua's Prophecy, as it is obvious that something of great portent has begun to take shape. The Doomsayers preach the Prophecy and Veruka's Proclamation to all who will listen. Their supporters grow as the signs come to pass, in turn making the Doomsayers a much larger faction than they ever were before.

The Children of Lilith, with the death of Ardatli Maque, look for answers to their destiny. They support the other Outlooks in whatever endeavours are undertaken and include some of the most driven Fallen warriors. Their anger over the wrongs done to them knows no boundary and the essence of Joshua lies heavily upon them, growing by the day. Ardatli becomes a symbol of the Children of Lilith, her death heavily mourned.

WEAVER'S RESOURCES

Trial by Fire is a Cycle Book for Tribe 8, and is designed to help the Weaver — especially the novice — easily fit the story-arc into her own cycle. As such, it includes a large amount of description, advice and pre-set NPC actions to further this goal. That being said, the Weaver should not feel constrained in any way, and is encouraged to change and/or ignore the level of detail, sub-plots and other elements to suit her own needs. The story is yours, first and foremost!

The Tribe 8 world continues to advance with each new expansion; therefore, it is important to highlight several key areas that will have an impact on future events. These character and plot points are integral to the continuity of the story and should occur in some form or another during **Trial by Fire**.

Below is a list of these milestones, in summary format:

Of obvious import is the growth of Agnes. The Child Fatima is going through some vital growing pains and this should be readily apparent even to the most oblivious of PCs. Agnes finds Herself looking to Joan for guidance and begins exploring Her burgeoning destiny.

The Fates' conspiracy with the Baron, and its ultimate failure, is vital to the fraying of the Pact of the Dome. The Fates and the Baron have a growing mistrust for each other, which creates an unseen tension that threatens to suffocate the freedom of the Tribes. The Fates should conspire in some way with the Baron, acting as the catalyst for this mistrust.

Joan has found a new spirit within Her, which in part is due to the death of Kara the Hunter. Joan has seen that Kara's destiny was tied in with Her own, one of the reasons that Kara was banished in the first place. Joan's newfound courage to stand against Her Sisters, even in the face of death, will play an important role in the near future. This is also tied in with the further separation of the Pillars of the Nation, which is evident in all walks of life within Vimary as the Watch act independently of the Joanite Sisterhood.

Veruka's Proclamation has made a martyr out of the late Doomsayer. She is considered a "saint" amongst the Fallen, and the Eighth Tribe begins to idolize her, as well as Ardatli Maque and Kara the Hunter, for the sacrifices each of them made. This venerating of humans, as opposed to the Fatimas, has a profound affect on many, adding further strength to the individual deeds of the Fallen in the name of their heroes.

Eth'ian of Melanis has lost his status in the H'l Kar, but by using his ties with Deacon Vytar, travels to Capal under the protection of Count Nemerath. Although he is no longer in the Baron's favor, he's still a power in his own right, and perhaps more of a danger in Capal than he ever was near Vimary.

The Z'bri, and the Baron's Court to be specific, are wary of the dealings occurring within their palaces after the Covenant's treachery. The Baron becomes increasingly paranoid, which further complicates the status quo of the H'l Kar; many Z'bri power plays are being made in hidden corners.

The Guides should come across as being vastly more powerful than first assumed, since their visions foretold events from the beginning. Their insight into the River of Dream gains much renown, their tutelage becoming a sought-after commodity.

Hom, although largely destroyed, is still Fallen territory. After the Inquisition, the Fallen begin the slow task of re-building the island, but with a more defined purpose. The Eighth Tribe truly see themselves as the Children of Prophecy, and Hom comes to resemble a more unified, structured environment, rather than the ramshackle collection of hovels it once was. The major structures, such as the Sepulcher, the Cage, the Temple, Junks and so forth, remain intact, although the buildings closest to the riverbanks suffered the most. The Weaver is encouraged to re-create Hom's architecture as she wishes, allowing the PC Cell to greatly affect its design, defense and direction.

The Crucible is alive and well, Cylix having placed most of the blame for its faults on Marshal Bartholomew Medi'on. The Crucible and the Inquisition should play a major part in **Trial by Fire**, regardless of whatever changes the Weaver may make. The Inquisition is what allows the Fallen to separate the chaff from the wheat, so to speak, helping refine the Eighth Tribe's vision of its ultimate destiny.

With the above kept in mind, no matter what the Weaver deems necessary to modify for her game, the result should tie in smoothly with the ongoing plotline of the **Tribe 8** world.



SWINE FEVER

An illness that affects the victims' digestive system, it is a vicious form of food poisoning. Although most common in uncooked meat, swine fever does infect fruits and vegetables that are left to stand in damp surroundings. Swine fever is easily avoided by a Yagan ritual that cleanses the food.

Contagion: 5 (Ingested)

Onset Time: One Hour

Virulence: 8

Effects: Success or MoF 0 = Stomach ache, Failed Roll = Fever and stomach cramps (-1 for MoF days), Fumble = Health vs. 5 to avoid death (success results in incapacitation for MoF days).

GROUPS

There are a few important groups taking part in **Trial By Fire** who have an impact — large or small — on the outcome of the events. Whether Fallen, Tribal or Z'bri, these allegiances meet to form the basis of the campaign. Never forget that **Tribe 8** is first and foremost about *people*.

THE SHADOW WATCH

Key Members: Unknown

Goal: To implicate the Fallen as dangerous traitors to the Nation, and bring about their destruction.

Gathering Place: The Council Ruins.

Antagonists: The Templars, the Fallen.

High Judge Cylix Seth'on formed the Shadow Watch, a Joanite faction answering to the Crucible, in response to the happy accident of Agnes' abduction by the Melanis Covenant. Although ostensibly meant to investigate the Fallen for clues as to Agnes' whereabouts, their true purpose was never difficult to divine. Using methods ranging from harassment to torture, the Shadow Watch set out to vilify the Fallen to such an extent that no Tribal would harbor an Outcast. Any Tribals still willing to aid the Fallen were also meted out punishment by the Shadow Watch as traitors to the Nation.

Relations: The Shadow Watch is a force unified by fear: none wish to be seen as soft towards the Fallen, although many find the brutal actions that make up their duties repugnant. Still, there are those members who revel in the power at their disposal and would be quite happy to wield it against any Fallen sympathizers within their own ranks.

The Fatimas: The Shadow Watch is Tera Sheba's answer to the abduction of Agnes. While Joan would prefer to mount a rescue operation, the Stern Sister will not allow the already shaky Pact of the Dome to be compromised without first trying to salvage it. She also sees the Shadow Watch as a way to remove the blight of the 'Fallen mistake' from Her conscience. The Fates originally see the faction as a crude but useful tool for annihilating the Fallen, but when they find out that Agnes is not in the hands of the Baron, they quickly throw their full support behind the Shadow Watch as enforcers for the Inquisition. Only Dahlia disapproves, using the group as a pawn to eliminate those Fallen She sees as dangerous, while having Her Tribe rescue those whom She finds useful or interesting.

The Z'bri: The Shadow Watch has little contact with the Z'bri, but is instrumental in forcing the Fallen into unfamiliar hiding places, some of which belong to Joh'an or are stalked by the Chained.

The Fallen: Since the purpose of the Shadow Watch is inimical to the Fallen, the only real relationship between them is that of hunter and prey. Still, there are those Fallen who are willing to betray others of their kind in order to escape persecution themselves. These people quickly find out that the Shadow Watch often forgets past alliances, once their utility has passed.

THE CABAL OF DELIVERANCE

Key Members: John the Revealer, Kolrig, Mhumia, Banting, Sarah, Hannibal, Matahar.

Gathering Place: The Covenant's Stronghold.

Goal: To steal the power of the Fatimas.

Antagonists: The Fatimas, the Baron.

The Cabal of Deliverance was formed by John the Revealer after his discovery of the existence of the Covenant. He struck a deal with the Melanis faction, stipulating that he and his Cell would deliver each of the Seven Sisters into the Covenant's hands in exchange for the transfer of the Fatimas' power to members of the Cabal. Agnes' abduction is only the first step in the Cabal's far-reaching plans. John and his Cell do not fully trust their Z'bri accomplices, but are confident that the prospect of further Fatimal "deliveries" will be enough incentive for them to keep to the agreement. In the end, each Cabal member is to be imbued with the power of the Fatima who banished her, beginning with the transfer of Agnes' power to Sarah.

Relations: The Cabal is absolutely resolute in its goals. Its members see each other as the saviors of the Fallen and are ready to martyr themselves accordingly should the need arise.

The Fatimas: None of the Fatimas would tolerate the existence of this group, were they to find out about it, although Agnes will be lenient with them once She understands the reason behind their actions.

The Z'bri: The Baron, if made aware of the Cabal, would see it as a dangerous threat to the Pact of the Dome. The fractious Melanis Covenant has various plans for the Cell, none of which include handing over the power of the Fatimas.

The Fallen: Most Fallen would agree that the Cabal of Deliverance is one of those Cells that gives the Fallen such a bad name. That being said, the Cell has the most altruistic motives in mind. The operating philosophy of the Cabal is that the Fatimas owe their existence to the rituals done by the people in the Z'bri Camps. Since the Fatimas have abused the power given to them by the Goddess, the people have a responsibility to take that power away and put it to good use. Many Herites could see the logic in this.

THE INQUISITION

Key Members: Cylix Seth'on, Bartholomew Medi'on.

Gathering Place: The Council Ruins.

Goal: To purge the Fallen heresy.

Antagonists: The Templars, the Fallen, Evangel Black, Kyr't the Free, Kara the Hunter.

The Inquisition, although founded by Tera Sheban Judges, is truly the offspring of the Nation's collective fear of what it cannot control. No leader could have convinced the Tribals to carry out such acts of despicable savagery against its Outcasts; no warlord could have forced them. It was the idea that the Fallen could take away their Fatimas that set the Nation into this deadly fury, a response to a need so great it has become an addiction. Without the Fatimas, the Tribes would have to think for themselves, a responsibility that none save the Fallen are willing to accept.

Relations: The Inquisition is a movement more than an organization, and incorporates a large number of people with disparate ideas and motives. First among its members are High Judge Cylix and the Crucible, who have been preparing for just such an occurrence for some time. They attempt to use the Inquisition to consolidate their hold on Tribal politics. Most others, however, are truly caught up in the fervor of the "witch hunt" and eventually become impossible to control.

The Fatimas: The Fates and Tera Sheba support the Inquisition from start to finish, while Dahlia merely makes a pretense of support in order to continue Her own investigations. Joan, though uncomfortable with the situation, bows to Her Sisters' will.

The Z'bri: The Inquisition has no official contact with the Z'bri, although its treatment of the Fallen could be said to mimic the less extreme measures of the Camps.

The Fallen: To the Fallen, the Inquisition is unquenchable death. Only a miracle can save them from its flames.

ERIN'S DESTROYERS

Key Members: Erin Swordbreaker.

Gathering Place: Junks.

Goal: To rack up the most Z'bri kills.

Antagonists: Anyone who stands between them and the Z'bri.

Erin Swordbreaker has recruited some of the deadliest warriors among the Outcasts to mount countless frontal assaults on locations in the H'I Kar. Their successes have been many, and they walk the streets of Hom with unmatched arrogance. Anyone who would join the Cell is forced into a painful initiation ritual, which is repeated every month until the initiate has slain her first Z'bri.

Relations: The Destroyers are sisters in arms. There is no open affection between them, but they feel superior to anyone who hasn't fought Z'bri, and so share a bond of respect. Erin is the undisputed leader simply because none among her retinue can match her battle prowess or her kill count.

The Fatimas: The Destroyers have no use for the Fatimas, and despise Joan in particular for giving up the Crusades. Joan, however, has an affection for the Cell that reminds Her so much of Her lost Brother. She will mourn their passing.

The Z'bri: Some crafty Z'bri Lords have been able to manipulate the Destroyers into attacking their political enemies, although this is a risk too great for most to accept. Erin's Cell has acquired an infamy in the H'I Kar, and rewards have been promised to those who manage to destroy them utterly.

The Fallen: Erin is under the impression that anyone who doesn't fight Z'bri is useless and weak, an opinion that is shared by everyone who gains acceptance to her Cell. In accordance with this philosophy, the Destroyers are belligerent in the extreme, and have no patience for Fallen who don't show them proper deference. Of course, many of Hom's residents are unwilling to give up their seats in Junks so that the Cell can be closer to the bar; hence, the group is known for its rowdy confrontations. Still, many Jackers give them credit for their impressive kill record.

THE BROKEN WORD

Key Members: Vikas

Gathering Place: Vikas' apartment in Hom.

Goal: To uncover the hidden secrets of the Fatimas.

Antagonists: The Fatimas

This relatively inexperienced Cell is made up of people who were banished for learning forbidden Fatimal lore. Currently, they are interested in finding out what really happened to Mary. They are not a combative bunch, but excel in social situations.

Relations: The members of the Cell do not yet know each other very well, having just met each other a few weeks ago. They are all quite sincere and excited about their prospects, truly believing that they have what it takes to uncover what the Seven Deaths have hidden from them.

The Fatimas: This Cell has not yet merited the notice of the Sisters, but possesses information that they would rather keep from the Tribes.

The Z'bri: The Cell has never met a Z'bri and could not be expected to survive such an encounter.

The Fallen: The members of the Cell are all well liked within their own limited social circles, although Vikas later achieves infamy for his inspired retelling of the events from the Valley of the Shrine.

THE LIBERTY CIRCLE

Key Members: Ardatli Maque, Lucas, Kallisti, Varna, Laban

Gathering Place: Lilith's Palace.

Goal: To forward the destiny of the Eighth Tribe.

Antagonists: Herites

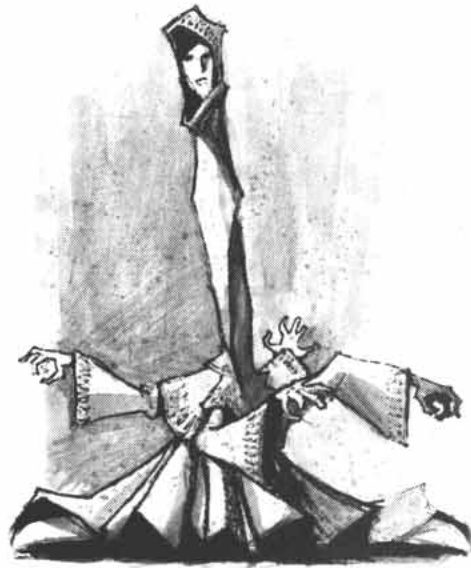
This Cell is made up entirely of Children of Lilith. Ardatli Maque directs the Cell's efforts to keep the Liberator's name alive through the performance of deeds of great import to the Fallen people, such as the recovery of a Marian Artifact. The Circle is driven, yet professional and courteous in its dealings with others.

Relations: A familial relationship has developed between the members of the Liberty Circle. Having weathered the aftermath of the Lilithian scandal, they are all but inseparable.

The Fatimas: Tera Sheba loathes this group of heretics, while Dahlia and the Fates look at them with equal parts of derision and humor. Only Joan understands and sympathises with the pain that they feel.

The Z'bri: The Baron remembers the painful incursions of the Cell under the protection of Lilith, and would like nothing better than to exact vengeance upon them.

The Fallen: Although the Cell's accomplishments are well respected throughout Hom, there are still many, mostly of the Herite Outlook, who look askance at those who were so easily duped by the Fatimas.



THE COVENANT

Key Members: Deacon Vytor, Eth'ian of Melanis, Rath'cal

Gathering Place: A hidden stronghold within the H'I Kar.

Goal: To return to the Seed, leaving the Tribes and their fellow Z'bri to wither away.

Antagonists: The Baron, the Fatimas

The Covenant has made important discoveries since its inception, but Eth'ian feels that its work cannot continue without direct research done on a captured Fatima. To this end he has made a pact with a Cell of Herites called the Cabal of Deliverance who have vowed to capture all of the Fatimas, one at a time. Although the Cell's ability to carry out the act is certainly questionable, the Covenant believes it has little to lose in the venture, and has observed that the Outcasts do occasionally have amazing insights.

Relations: The Covenant cooperates in order to accomplish its goals, but each member intends to make a play for power when the group finally achieves its ends.

The Fatimas: Although Baba Yaga knows of the Covenant's existence, She has yet to divine its purpose. The other Fatimas are unaware, but would be horrified if they learned of the Melanis' coven and its secret motive.

The Z'bri: The Covenant, with the influence of Deacon Vytor on its side, has managed to manoeuvre political events in the H'I Kar such that the Baron has had little opportunity to learn of it, although he would certainly oppose it if it came to his attention.

The Fallen: Among the Outcasts, only the Guides have knowledge of the Covenant's plans. The Cabal of Deliverance members are mere pawns in the Melanis' game.



CHARACTERS

From the Cabal of Deliverance to the Joanite soldiers, the NPCs are the Weaver's prime tools to bring the campaign and the world to life. Using verbal tics, patterns of speech or even simple props, each of these vibrant and poignant characters can take on a true life of their own.

JOHN THE REVEALER

Spokesman for the Cabal of Deliverance

John is the founder of the Cabal of Deliverance, and came upon his life's mission in a strange way. As an Advocate of Judge Verra Thaim'on, long before her appointment as High Judge, John was once given the unappealing task of interrogating a cohort of Serfs who were found skulking about Bazaar.

Under his ministrations, the prisoners admitted freely to being spies for the Z'bri, and that they were looking for allies among the Fallen. His duty complete, John had simply to turn over his witnesses to the Joanite executioners, and report the action to his superior. Something about the affair left him unsatisfied, however.

John began to renew his questioning, this time with real earnest. A creative force surged through him, giving him the insight to try different and more innovative angles of query. By the time the last of the Serfs dropped lifeless from his torture rack, he had learned of the Covenant and its plan to capture a Fatima.

Extrapolating upon the vague knowledge he had wrung from his victims, he theorized that the power of the Fatimas could be wrested from them by an unprecedented Sundering Ritual, if a Fatima could be brought under the power of the Covenant.

With his mind full of such grand designs, he followed, unconcerned, when the Watch came to drag him from his offices. After his Banishment, he convinced several Herites to make the trip with him to the H'l Kar, where he made a deal with the Covenant to deliver each Fatima in turn, all in exchange for diverting some of that Fatima's power to a Cabal member.

Highlights: Riveting, Influential, Destined

Eminences: Truth, Recognition

Attributes: INF +2, PSY +1, FIT -2, KNO +1

Skills: Dreaming 2/+1, Human Perception 1/+1, Leadership 3/+2, Lore (Fatimas) 2/+1, Ritual 1/+1, Speak (Z'bri) 1/+1, Teaching (Fatimal Lore) 1/0, Synthesis 1

SARAH

Ex-Agnite Herite of the Cabal of Deliverance

As the Agnite representative of the Cabal, Sarah intends to be the first member to be imbued with a Fatima's power. Unfortunately, she is perhaps the least stable of the conspirators. Hers is a mind filled with hatred, most of it directed towards Agnes for making her Barren.

Her anger at the harshness of the Tribal world meant that Sarah was easy to convert to John's cause. She is convinced that once she has the power of Agnes, she will be able to bear the children that she so longs for.

Highlights: Nervous, Gullible, Wrathful

Attributes: APP -1, CRE +1, PER +2, PSY -2, WIL -1

Eminences: Inspiration, Recognition

Skills: Dance 1/0, Hand-to-Hand 2/0, Melee 1/0, Music 2/+1, Notice 2/+2, Tactics 1/+1



MHUMIA

Ex-Dahlian Herite of the Cabal of Deliverance

Dahlia once had Mhumia help Her play a joke on Her Sister Joan. The game was simple: Mhumia was to allow herself to be arrested for some petty crime, and then free any prisoners kept in holding by the Watch. Mhumia, a master contortionist, could squeeze through iron bars and shackles with unrivaled ease. The problem was that the prisoners were a number of recently captured Serfs. Mhumia witnessed a Sheban interrogating the Serfs and torturing them to their deaths. This Sheban was John the Revealer. Mhumia returned to tell Dahlia of what she had seen, but Dahlia was more than displeased with Mhumia's failure and subsequently banished her.

Highlights: Seductive, Entrancing, Mysterious

Eminences: Motion, Freedom

Attributes: AGI +3, PSY -2, BLD -1, APP +1, INF +1

Skills: Athletics (Contortion) 2/+3, Acrobatics 1/+3, Camouflage 1/0, Firearms 2/+3, Seduction 1/+1, Sneak 2/+3

BANTING

Ex-Evan Herite of the Cabal of Deliverance

When Banting was a young seed, he found out early that Eva's ways were neither kind nor just. One year, when the crops were poor, he kept a small portion of grain that was to be sacrificed to Eva in order to keep a wounded bird alive through the winter.

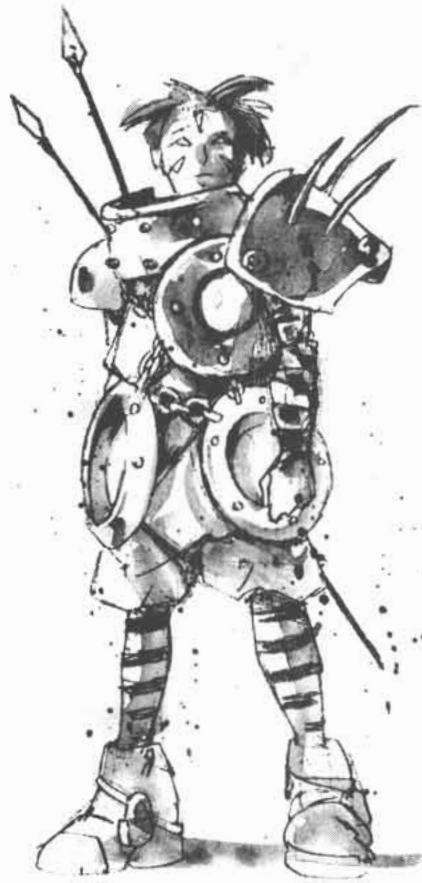
His misappropriation was noticed by the Shaman Storm Cry, who sacrificed the bird as a capricious lesson. The inner anger that was kindled in Banting's heart was forged for eternity when he was finally dragged away for Banishment. When his planned possession of Eva's power over life comes to fruition, he will scorch the fields of Vimary and raise wild orchards that shall provide for all.

Highlights: Kind, Soft Spoken, Driven

Eminences: Life, Recognition

Attributes: BLD +1, FIT -1, KNO +1

Skills: Healing 2/+1, Animal Care 2/+1, Agriculture 1/+1, Herbalism (Tea) 2/+1, Lore (Fatimas) 1/+1, Synthesis (1)



HANNIBAL

Joanite Herite of the Cabal of Deliverance

Hannibal is the sole member of the Cabal who can trace his banishment directly to the group's influence. As a Hermit Blade, he tracked John and Kolrig to the Covenant's Stronghold, where he eavesdropped on the Herites' pact with the Melanis sect.

What he heard struck a chord deep within his soul; for did he not become a Hermit Blade to escape the slavery of Tera Sheba more than to destroy the Z'bri? He stepped into the midst of his former enemies and offered his services in exchange for the power of Joan.

Highlights: Brave, Resourceful, Practical

Attributes: AGI +1, FIT +1, WIL +1

Eminences: Devotion, Freedom

Skills: Athletics 1/+1, Combat Sense 2/0, Hand-to-Hand 2/+1, Leadership 1/0, Melee (Poleaxe) 3/+1, Sneak 2/+1

MATAHAR

Ex-Magdalite Herite of the Cabal of Deliverance

Matahar was a Siren sent specifically to gather information about the secretive Keepers and subvert them toward the schemes of her Fatima. Unfortunately, she was tragically betrayed by her own methods when she fell in love with her quarry, a Keeper Derelict named Boch.

Using her knowledge of Magdalite protocols, she helped Boch's band of raiders gain entry to Xstasis, where they gained access to a number of "personal entertainment" devices held from the World Before. Before they could make their escape, however, Magadalen Herself appeared. Each derelict was seduced in turn, and Boch and his followers perished in the Lover's fatal embrace. As for Matahar, she was cast out with all the indignity of a traitor to her people.

Her consuming desire for revenge against her Fatima gave her an open ear to the rhetoric of John the Revealer. In fact, since joining the Cabal seven years ago, Matahar has practically taken the helm, using her considerable resources to turn the once theoretically-bent organisation into a devastatingly efficient conspiracy.

Highlights: Determined, Efficient, Calculating

Attributes: APP +2, AGI +1, WIL +1, PSY -2

Eminences: Conflict, Freedom.

Skills: Combat Sense 2/0, Human Perception 1/-2, Interrogation 2/0, Lore (Keepers) 1/0, Firearms 2/+1, Seduction 2/+2



KOLRIG

Yagan Herite of the Cabal of Deliverance

Kolrig was a Mordred who was banished for withholding information from his Fatima. Truth be told, Kolrig's heritage actually springs from Mary, and he had hoped to realise some connection to Her at a Shrine he had discovered in the H'I Kar. It was not to be. The Crone saw through his deception and forced him to reveal the Shrine's location. As a Fallen, Kolrig acted as a guide to John in the H'I Kar, and gave the Covenant knowledge of the Marian Shrine to close the deal.

Kolrig is not yet convinced that the Covenant's Ritual will work, but feels he has nothing to lose by trying. He appears calm, even lethargic, in the most terrifying of situations. He is present when the PCs find the Marian Shrine, and seems to know his way around it. The effect of the Tear of Forgiveness on those who touch it surprises him, though. When it becomes apparent that Agnes is coming to claim the Artifact, Kolrig subtly makes his exit. A terrifying inspiration has struck him, and he has divined that the Cabal's moment of destiny has arrived.

Highlights: Slow, Sagely, Insightful

Attributes: AGI -1, KNO +1, PSY +2

Eminences: Fate, Recognition.

Skills: Lore (Z'bri) 1/+1, Ritual 3/+1, Dreaming 2/+2, Notice 2/0, Synthesis (1)

6. Weaver Resources

QUIP

Dahlian Little Trickster

Quip takes great pride in her role as a Little Trickster, despite her youth, and travels the length and breadth of Vimary with her Caravan, "Arms of the Seven Sisters." Her route has carried her across the entirety of the Nation, mainly providing ancient metals to the Joanites for use in their forges.

She is becoming tired of Vimary of late, however, and has heard rumors of wealth available for the taking beyond the hold of the Sisterhoods. She is currently planning on traveling beyond the borders of Vimary to discover the wild Outlands.

Highlights: Manipulative, Deviant, Bored

Eminences: Motion, Illusion Aspect: Puppet Show

Attributes: CRE +2, PSY -1, AGI +1

Skills: Archery 1/+1, Survival 1/+2, Sleight of Hand 1/+1, Disguise 2/+2, Theatrics 2/0, Synthesis 3 (Puppet Show)



JULES BEARSKIN

Winter Wolf Guildsman

A Fera'on that rivals the Kil'on clansmen in size, Jules Bearskin is a sight to behold. At almost ten spans in height, Jules towers over his Hunting party companions. He wields the Longstrider Blade (T8 Companion, p. 29), gifted to him from the hand of Joan Herself some months back, in the assault on Lilith's Palace.

Jules is terrifying as a warrior, his training giving him a speed that belies his size, and may prove more than any opponent can handle, although he only fights when Joan and the Winter Wolf give him the order.

Eminences: Fury, Devotion

Aspect: Winter's Cloak

Attributes: BLD +3, AGI +1, WIL +1, STA 40, AD 10, UD 9

Skills: Combat Sense 2/0, Melee (Longstrider Blade) 3/+1, Hand-to-Hand (Wrestling) 2/+1

Equipment: Longstrider Blade (ACC+1, Parry +2, DM AD+15), Armor: skins (AR 8)

SALA

Fallen Yagan Jacker

Sala was a Flesher with a passion to preserve the history of the Tribes' most heroic members. During what was supposed to be a standard skinning ritual, he discovered that his subject wasn't actually dead. The victim seemed to be drugged and in a suspended, almost frozen state. Sala pointed this out to his mentor and was told to keep cutting. He then gave her the knife and walked away with the question of how many others had he murdered without his knowledge.

When Sala found himself in Hom, he focused his anger toward the Z'bri, whom he feels are responsible for the dark desires of humanity. He is interested in the current quest, as he thinks that Mary was the victim of a similar fate.

Highlights: Intuitive, Reserved, Steadfast.

Attributes: PER +1, PSY +2, WIL +1, BLD -1

Eminences: Death, Courage

Skills: Notice 2/+1, Lore (Death Rites) 3/0, Melee (Iron Quarter Staff) 1/0, Combat Sense 1/+1, Ritual 1/0



VIKAS

Fallen Magdalite Herite

Vikas was banished for misconstruing the truth. Unfortunately, as a Diplomat to the Terasheban, his career took a definite turn for the worst. His wife stood by him the whole time, so she and their three children were exiled alongside him.

Since coming to Hom, he was accepted into the Broken Word after claiming that he uncovered a conspiracy between Magdalen and Tera Sheba. Vikas honestly believes everything he says, despite proof to the contrary.

Highlights: Imaginative, Delusional, Sincere

Attributes: PSY -2, INF +2, CRE +1, APP +1

Eminences: Conflict, Recognition

Skills: Leadership 1/+2, Theatrics (Storytelling) 2/+2, Etiquette 1/+2

6. Weaver Resources

PV'TIR

Sangis Ambassador

Pv'tir of Sangis is a Z'bri emissary to the Magdalites, possessing a weaker Atmosphere that makes him ideal for the job. Pv'tir, despite being a lesser noble of the Baron, was once far more powerful but, when Tibor was killed, he lost much status. The Baron uses Pv'tir for his Tribal dirty work and is setting up the Sangis emissary to take a fall should the Pact of the Dome become unnecessary.

Highlights: Serious, Misinformed, Self-conscious.

Atmosphere: Sangis (weakened: PSY vs. 2)

Sundering: Soul Stealing, Appeasement

Attributes: AGI +4, APP +4, CRE +3, INF +3, PER +2, PSY -1, WIL +2.

Skills: Etiquette (Tribal) 3/+1, Human Perception 3/-1, Lore (Pact of the Dome) 2/0, Investigation 4/0.



RATH'CAL

Mad Z'bri Scientist

Rath'cal is a deviant and twisted Melanis, even by Z'bri standards. He follows Eth'ian only because he is too lazy to get involved in the political machinations that Eth'ian excels at. Hence, Rath'cal reaps the benefits of the Covenant without expending his energy on courtly intrigue and shadowy dealings. This suits him fine, for he really enjoys the experiments the Covenant inflicts on mankind over anything else. . . until, that is, Agnes showed up.

Rath'cal has gone truly insane with the Fatima's presence and wishes to hastily and foolishly take as much out of Her as possible. This arrogant stance is ultimately his undoing, for without Eth'ian's wise guidance, Rath'cal lacks the foresight and power to save himself in the face of death.

Atmosphere: Melanis

Highlights: Insane, Shortsighted, Anti-Social

Attributes: CRE +3, INF +2, KNO +4, PER -1, PSY +4, WIL +3

Skills: Intimidate 3/0, Lore (Flesh Experiments) 3/+1, Lore (Covenant) 2/+1, Interrogation (Torture) 2/+1, Mythology (Fold) 1/+1, Ritual 4/+1

AGNITE FAVORITES

Consisting of Children aged 7-17 summers, the Favorites are fiercely loyal to Agnes. They wear colorful clothing and have painted faces. Favorites seem to be Agnes' Sisterhood, although this is an arguable point, even amongst its own members.

Highlights: Cute, Vicious, Fickle

Attributes: BLD -2, AGI +1, CRE +1

Eminences: Capriciousness, Inspiration

Skills: Craft (Toys) 1/+1, Dodge 1/+1, Hand-to-Hand 2/+1, Melee 2/+1, Sneak 1/+1, Intimidate (Children) 1/-2.

Equipment: Clubs, serrated daggers, poles, sharp stones and various other impromptu weapons. Face-paint, candy and toys.



FLESHER ASSASSINS

A secret guild of Fleshers trained in the creation of powerful poisons that can drop a human in a heartbeat. They use stealth and cunning to carry out their missions, which are always of a shadowed and secretive nature. Baba Yaga understands the sensitivity of this guild and uses them most sparingly. The Assassins leave behind all of their previous familial and clan connections upon joining the guild, forever devoting themselves to a life of shadows and death. They are trained to swallow their tongues if captured and are *never* banished from guild or Tribe.

Note to Weavers: Flesher Assassins are not appropriate for use as Player Characters.

Highlights: Unknown, Hidden, Deadly

Eminences: Death, Fate

Attributes: AGI +1, PER +1, INF -3

Skills: Sneak 3/+1, Melee 2/+1, Throwing (Darts) 1/+1, Combat Sense (Ambush) 2/+1, Craft (Poison) 1/0

Equipment: Poisons (Potency: 12-15, Effects: Fatal Toxin, Onset Time: 1 minute), Darts



6. Weaver Resources

COVENANT WARRIOR SERFS

Formed to the whim of the Melanis, the Serfs under the control of the Covenant are twisted and unearthly creatures. They have lost any resemblance to humanity and only follow the orders of their Z'bri lords. They fight in a disturbing, uncoordinated manner in which one appendage acts independently of the others. The heads are not in control of the bodies and cry out for mercy and forgiveness during the assault.

Highlights: Creepy, Mutated, Disturbing

Attributes: PSY -1, BLD +3, STA 30, UD 7

Skills: Combat Sense 3/0, Hand-to-Hand 3/0

Weapons: Serrated Appendages (UD+5)



FLEMIS BEHEMOTHS

Parts of the collective, the Flemis Behemoths do not have minds of their own, something that is at times a strength and at others a weakness. It allows them to act in tandem but if forced to deal with too many attacks or against "united" yet separate entities, it takes a while for the Behemoths to respond. Getting hit by a Behemoth is likely to cause injury or death, however, as the weight of the creature's appendages crushes everything in its path.

Highlights: Huge, Lumbering, One Mind

Attributes: CRE -2, BLD +6, FIT +2, WIL +2, STR 4, STA 60, UD 17

Skills: Combat Sense 3/0, Hand to Hand 4/0, Navigation (H'I Kar) 3/0

Equipment: Trunk Appendages ACC-1, Parry 0, DM UD +15; Armor: Tough Hide AR 10.

