

NIGHTFALL IN REMMISH

AN ADVENTURE FOR 5TH EDITION
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BACKGROUND

Remmish, the capital of Chayrshellech, lies on the northern coast of the Schothred Sea, in a plain far below the highlands that make up the bulk of the country. It's a region of violent winds, heavy rainfall, and constant mercantile traffic.

Remmish is a very old city, founded around 4,000 years ago by the first heathfolk that descended from the mountains. Its location and low elevation place it on the easiest road from Trentsmund to the regions eastward. Despite being the capital of the largest heathfolk nation, it isn't a pristine representation of that race's culture, having been "sullied" (as many heathfolk see it) by human contact.

The heathfolk are a people whose circle of intelligentsia includes even the poor. Literacy and education are so common among them that even the homeless and destitute are capable of penning an extrapolation of the most current aesthetic and philosophical movements. Most crude labor is performed by the sarrow, a diminutive race that was long ago folded into heathfolk society as a servant caste.

For centuries, a group of dissident heathfolk called the Yaelcar have waged a secret war against arcane spellcasting, which they see as a dark art. Often their activism takes violent turns. Not three days ago, Professor Falbonnach, one of the foremost Transmutation specialists in the world, was assassinated under mysterious circumstances. Many fear what further bloodshed this event might inspire.

OVERVIEW

Nightfall in Remmish is a brief adventure for 2nd-level characters, meant to be played in a single sitting. It begins at a poetry reading in Remmish, which quickly spirals into a race against the very fabric of time.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The characters should be participants, guests of honor, or audience members at the annual Coudhiuhain University Writer's Conference. They've been here for a day or two and are familiar with the important figures and locations on the academy campus.

The adventure is framed around a reading by Dhoinnach Barrobayrn, the famed national poet of Chayrshellech. Characters might be onstage as participants or administrators in the conference, or they might be seated in the crowd. However you choose to get them there, make sure it's clear where precisely they're seated: **stage**, **orchestra**, **balcony**, or **box seats**.

OBACH HALL

The reading takes place in **Obach Hall**, a lavish theater that seats nearly 3,200. The floor of the hall is gently sloped so that the orchestra pit is 10 feet lower than the entrance doors at the back. Wide aisles hug the right and left walls of the hall, stretching 100 feet from the entrance doors to the edge of the stage, where a wide orchestra pit is nestled. Three box seats hover over each side of the orchestra pit, accessed from hidden corridors.

A balcony with additional seating is set about 30 feet above the entrances at the back, and 35 feet above the midsection of the orchestra seating, where a narrow rail marks the edge of the overhang.

Outside the hall is a 40-foot by 120-foot lobby. Stairs lead from the sides of the lobby up to the balcony and box seats.

On the stage is a row of about 20 chairs, set behind a single oaken podium that, although heavy, is mobile.

ARRIVAL AND SEATING

As you set the scene, begin with the player characters arriving at Obach Hall. They hear the university bell toll seven, and make their way to their seats. **Take note of where the characters are each located 5 minutes before the event begins.**

During the next 5 minutes, a local scholar steps up to the podium and grins at the bustling crowd that has filled the hall. He stutters in nervous glee:

"My good people...I—I cannot express...That is... Welcome to this *wonderful* eve—ah...this occasion of—of—well, it should be quite a treat for us all.

"I need not tell you how...beloved...er...the esteemed, inimitable poet...We—we thank her for sharing a special reading with us tonight. Please, please give...show her our adoration. I give you *the* poet of our nation, Dhoinnach Barrobayrn!"

Dhoinnach Barrobayrn is a red-haired **heathfolk mage** (15 hit points) with pale grey facial markings in a thorny patch beneath both eyes. Those eyes are a striking blue, even against the light markings that frame them. As the national poet of Chayrshellech, she is haughty and dry in her interactions. Despite her obvious pride, Dhoinnach is impossibly charming.

She takes the stage with grace, bowing her head gently to the giddy man who made the introduction. He shuffles back to the row of chairs to watch the

reading from behind the podium. Nineteen others are seated there beside him, all with eager attention on Dhoinnach as she takes the podium.

“Well, I’ll try not to sully that introduction,” she says. After a laugh from the crowd, she clears her throat and says, “I thought I’d read a new one for you all.” A hush comes over the hall, and she begins.

Her reading is entirely in Roccurish, the native language of the heathfolk. If characters don’t speak the language, they’re simply struck by its mellifluous natural ease. It reminds them of winds in the trees. For those characters that do speak Roccurish, the poem begins with these lines:

A character familiar with heathfolk culture (who

*“Last in the heavens I admitted defeat, hanging
Proud but broken on the altars of gods;
Though blood and stars and time ran their ring
By howling night, I tended them not for years.
And when the skein unfurled you choked upon
your dreams
And saw the eyes of death in misted streets, and
No comfort would you accept. Your bones
groaned in dismay
And babes spat your blood back into your throats
Before the skein ran true and the world-end fled
away—”*

understood the poem) notes that it references Ruethas, the primordial being who commands the threads of time. With a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (History)** or **Intelligence (Religion)** check, they catch the following.

According to legend, Ruethas was imprisoned with the other primordials when, at the creation’s end, they disputed the gods’ claim of dominion over Vinramar. During Ruethas’ imprisonment, the heathfolk say time itself became warped. Many creatures experienced the moment of their death or saw visions of the end of the world. The poem refers to these legends.

A SHOT FROM NOWHERE

EARLY DEATHS

This adventure revolves around the early death of a major NPC, and using a powerful artifact to reverse time and save her.

If a player character dies in the opening scene, don’t panic. The party has a way to jump back in time and try again. Be sure to drop clear hints.

After these first few lines, three rapid gunshots suddenly ring out in the hall. The crowd goes berserk as the curtain falls down over the stage, and many people leap from their seats to reach the exits.

A character with a **passive Perception of 12** or higher notices Dhoinnach fall behind the podium, cracking her head on the floor of the stage. If their **passive Perception is 16** or higher, they notice a rope trailing upward into the catwalk above the stage as the curtain falls.

A character in Box G sees a strange woman, clad all in black from neck to wrists or ankles, enter the box and suddenly draw a flintlock pistol. She fires it twice at Dhoinnach, then jumps down to the orchestra seating and blends into the crowd. The DC for spotting her amid the press that follows is 17.

THE PRESS

The panic quickly becomes dangerous. Each round that a creature remains in the orchestra seating or the balcony, it must succeed on a **DC 10 Strength saving throw** or take 1d6 bludgeoning damage and fall prone as the crowd presses and tramples them.

If a character in the balcony fails three of these saves, they must succeed on a **DC 10 Dexterity saving throw** or fall 35 feet into the orchestra seating, taking 3d6 bludgeoning damage on impact.

To avoid these hazards, the party may attempt to pass through the stampeding crowd out of danger. For every 5 feet a creature moves, it must make a **Strength (Athletics) check**. On a failure, it loses its remaining movement that turn. Characters can aid another to make this check with advantage, but doing so imposes disadvantage on the aiding character’s next saving throw. A creature reaches safety once it moves to an exit or succeeds on this check 3 times, whichever happens first.

Stage or Box Seats. Characters seated onstage or in a box seat aren’t required to make the check unless exiting their seating area to join the crowd. Each box seat has a single door that leads into a hallway outside the theater.

The stage and box seats leave creatures exposed. If one or more player characters is located in such an area, choose up to 3 of them to be shot at by the hidden gunmen. Characters can shelter from the attack by ducking beneath the seats (half cover), or dropping to the floor of the box seat (full cover). If a character exits the theater, they are safe from attacks and from the press of the crowd.

THE FALLEN

Dhoinnach remains onstage, crumpled behind the podium. A character that inspects her condition finds three bullet wounds—one in her chest, one in her shoulder, and one in her thigh. A successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check** discovers that the bullets came from three different directions—two angled from the front and one from behind.

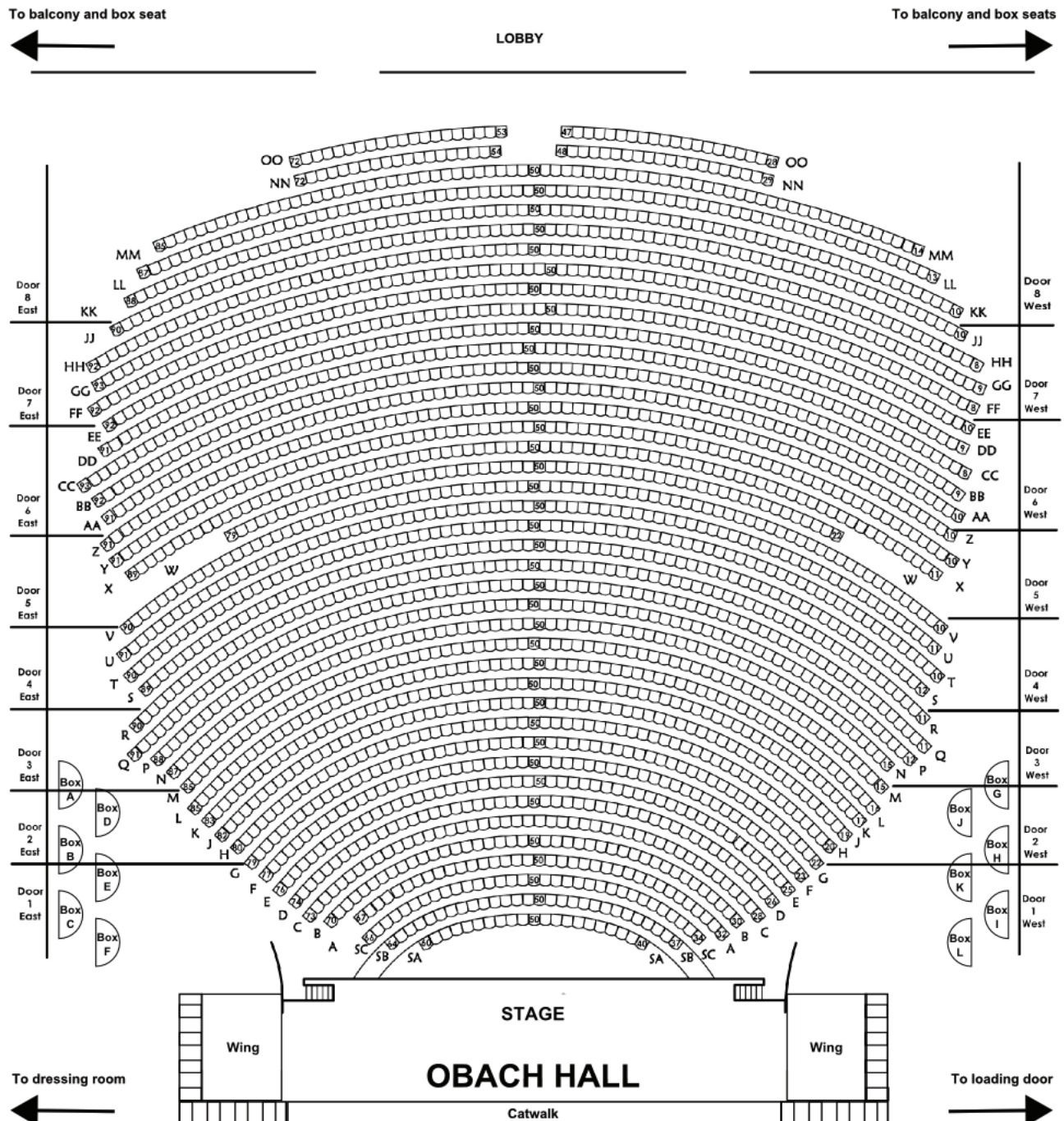
If the characters escape the hall and show no sign of concern for Dhoinnach, she limps out among the last stragglers, attempting to hide among the crowd. Characters outside automatically recognize her, despite her attempt to cover her face with a hood. If they follow her away from the hall, she limps to a nearby

alley and then collapses.

Wherever Dhoinnach ends up, make it clear that she is quickly dying from her wounds. As a player character reaches her, she hands them the crumpled, bloody page of her poem. “Finish it,” she pleads. “Finish the reading before—” With that, she passes out and begins making death saving throws.

At this point, characters with healing spells or items may begin to treat her. Use this as the trigger for the events described in the following section: The Agent.

The page on which the poem is written is soaked with blood, but legible, as long as the character examining it can read Roccurish. If none of the PCs



speaks Roccurish, most of the heathfolk nearby do. But as you'll see, it's not exactly safe to run out waving the poem in the air and asking for volunteers.

A *detect magic* spell reveals that the page on which the poem is written has a powerful aura of chronomancy magic. *Identify* reveals that, if read, the page will rewind the timestream back to the exact moment when the poem was infused with magic.

For more information, see the section below entitled The Poem.

THE AGENT

Soon after the characters find Dhoinnach, her hot-headed agent **Pollas** rushes the scene demanding if anyone has seen her. Pollas is a dark-haired heathfolk who wears a dark, knee-length jacket and a silver-embroidered waistcoat. Unlike the other heathfolk, he lacks jewelry of any kind. His black mane is cropped to about a two-inch length, an uncommonly conservative style for his people.

If she's conscious, Dhoinnach sighs with relief and waves Pollas over, uttering, "Pollas will know what to do." Unfortunately, as soon as he comes within 15 feet of Dhoinnach, Pollas pulls an ivory-handled pistol from his jacket and shoots her in the neck—even if she's unconscious. She dies instantly, and can't be saved from this.

If Pollas kills Dhoinnach, or if she's dead by the time he appears, he calls out for help, setting a small corps of officers from the university constabulary against the party. He says whatever is necessary to frame them for the killing.

The officers are **five guards** with flintlock pistols (range of 30 ft., 1d10 piercing damage) and no armor. They attempt to apprehend the "murderers" as best they can, but will shoot to kill if they feel threatened.

One of the officers carries a 5 gp bank note with a hastily scrawled message in Roccurish on the back. It reads "It's tonight. Remember where not to look."

THE POEM

At this point, the adventure might go several ways. The characters might be captured, killed, escape, or any combination of the three. The most important thing is that they end up with the blood-stained poem. This item is the key to correcting the past and saving the lives of whoever may be dead or captive. If the character holding the poem is captured, be sure to have it escape the guards' notice. Let it stay with a player.

If the party manages to defeat or escape the guards, they might find a safe spot to hide. It could be an inn or club where they're residing while at the conference. It might instead be the house of a local who can be trusted.

If the players don't immediately read the poem aloud, feel free to drop clear hints. You might point out to spellcasting characters (or those proficient with the Arcana skill) that they felt an odd magical sensation while the first lines of the poem were being read. Perhaps a character has a vivid dream of Dhoinnach begging her to read the poem aloud before it's too late.

Whatever the context, the players should be coaxed into reading the poem aloud in its entirety. When this occurs, a strange blue haze creeps over the vision of anyone within earshot of the words. You may read the

Reality seems to peel back, revealing a whirling stream of glowing threads all around you. You have the feeling that an unseen intelligence—something that yearns to harm you—is screened by this tapestry of light, but before it reveals itself the timestream interlaces around you again. The dazzling lights fade, and you are suddenly back outside Obach Hall. The university bell tolls seven. It's 5 minutes before the reading began.

following description:

THE HIDDEN SHOOTERS

With some investigation the players can attempt to find whoever fired the gunshots at Dhoinnach. As they explore backstage, they discover the following areas in whatever sequence matches their path of movement: the **Loading Door**, the **Wings**, the **Catwalk**, **Dhoinnach's Dressing Room**, or the **Roof**.

If at any point they read the poem in its entirety again, creatures within hearing of the words jump back to the same moment about 5 minutes before the reading began. Affected creatures always return to the exact place and state they were in at that time. Characters cannot go back in time and interact with themselves. They are their past selves. Only their consciousness is being transported backward.

By using the poem this way, the party might go through the events just before the shooting several times, experiencing moments identically or in an adjusted way, depending on their choices.

The catch is that **each time the poem is used to travel, one line of the writing disappears**. To continue using it, a character must remember the missing lines

in order to speak the entire poem. To do this, the character must make an **Intelligence check**, where the DC is 5 + the number of missing lines from the poem. A natural 20 automatically succeeds in recalling the exact wording. Once all 50 lines are gone, however, success becomes impossible.

Each additional area is listed in the following pages, with a breakdown of what happens each minute after the time travel. Keep track of how many minutes pass in each area to capture the urgency of the investigation, and to accurately portray events. For the purposes of the game, it takes 1 minute to travel to an area from anywhere else in the theater.

In order to arrive at an area during Minute 1, a character must succeed on a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** to sprint there. This activity draws the attention of 2d4 officers, who begin following. On a failure, they arrive at the beginning of Minute 2. Characters that can Dash as a bonus action have advantage on this check. Those who can teleport 60 feet or more automatically succeed.

Note: The party should fail to save Dhoinnach at least twice. That's the fun of the adventure: jumping back in time again and again to try and solve the puzzle.

LOADING DOOR

Around back of the building, there's a large swinging door that opens into a room for loading in sets and large-sized freight.

Minutes 1-3. Inside are two 4-foot tall **sarrow thugs** moving crates to the edge of the open doorway. Unless the party interrupts them or they see that they're being watched, the crewmen talk about "the chief" being ready for the job. "He says it's time to put her down before she finishes the last one." They seem to think that "this last one is an abomination." "It's unnatural, and he won't stand for her finishing it."

If they realize they've been spied on, the two crewmen will try to teach the characters a lesson.

Minute 4. The loading dock is empty except for an assembly of large crates lining the doorway. The crates contain wooden beams, iron hinges, and other building materials.

Minute 5-6. Three gunshots are heard from inside the theater. A few people stream into the loading dock looking for an exit, including two crewmen.

THE WINGS

Just offstage on each side, there's a 10-foot by 20-foot area with hanging "legs," or curtains to mask waiting performers from the audience. On the walls opposite

the entrance to the stage, there are weighted ropes that hold the curtains and other rigged equipment above the stage. An iron-skeleton staircase, similar to a fire escape, climbs sharply up from each wing into the Catwalk. The staircases provide half cover from creatures below.

Minutes 1-2. The party finds Pollas pacing impatiently in the **left wing**. He's waiting for Dhoinnach to come down to the stage, and he's got his ivory pistol hidden in his jacket. He tries to shoo away the characters, but won't become hostile unless they act aggressively toward him. If a struggle breaks out, he will head for the stage to draw the attackers out of the shadows, or call the constabulary like before (or after, depending how you look at it).

Minute 3. Dhoinnach appears in the **right wing**, her poem in hand. The stuttering scholar gives his introduction, and Pollas motions for her to go out and begin. She takes a deep breath and walks onstage.

Minute 4. The audience roars with applause as Dhoinnach makes her joke. She begins to read.

Minute 5. The shots are fired. If Pollas isn't aware he's being watched, he fires at Dhoinnach from behind with his ivory pistol. Otherwise, he attempts to hide. The audience erupts into chaos. Pollas makes his getaway by cutting a rope from the rigging. The counterweight is severed, and he rides the rope up to the catwalk as a curtain falls onstage.

Minute 6. Dhoinnach hides wherever the PCs found her in the opening scene.

THE CATWALK

Above the stage, there's a catwalk made of iron bars, where the ropes that hold the curtains up feed through their pulleys before going back down to the counterweights in the wings. The catwalk is accessed by a stairway from the wings, a door to the roof, and a door to Dhoinnach's dressing room on the stage left side.

A **DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** is required to climb onto the catwalk. Characters that are pushed or damaged while on the catwalk must succeed on a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw** or fall 60 feet to the stage, taking 6d6 bludgeoning damage.

Minutes 1-4. The catwalk is empty, but it affords a good view of the audience. A successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the location—but not identity—of one of the shooters (Box G).

Minute 5. The shots are fired, the one from Box G visible to anyone looking in that direction. Suddenly a rope starts to slide and the curtain goes down. Characters on the catwalk must succeed on a **DC 10**

Dexterity saving throw or be pulled down to the stage with it, taking 6d6 bludgeoning damage.

When the curtain hits the stage, the rope that held it is pulled up to the catwalk, revealing Pollas at the other end of it. He pretends to be looking for the shooter, and will try to frame the player characters by calling the constabulary.

Minute 6. Pollas leaves the catwalk through the door to the roof and circles back down to the main doors.

DHOINNACH'S DRESSING ROOM

The stairway in the left wing leads to the catwalk, and contains a door to Dhoinnach's dressing room. At the top of the staircase is a door to the roof. The dressing room is small, with a mirror and an ornate lamp that's lit with a *light* spell.

A dresser near the mirror contains a set of stage makeup and brushes, a sealed envelope, and an ancient book inscribed with Chronomancy spells (*Darkplane: A Campaign Setting*, pp. 145-149). Many are illegible, but a wizard can attempt to copy the following spells from it: *axis of eternity*, *chronal shift*, *delay*, *haste*, *time dilation*, and *timelike curve*.

In a dresser near the mirror is a sealed envelope addressed from Dhoinnach to a person named Huori (the text of the letter clarifies that it's her sister). **A handout of the letter can be found on page 15.** The letter reveals the following information:

- Dhoinnach has been experiencing profound depression. She's taken to late-night walks and is contemplating suicide as an escape.
- She is planning to infuse her poem with powerful magic from an arcane tome.
- The magic will transport the entire audience of the reading back in time as a way to express and heighten the sense of time distortion in the poem's story.
- She believes that this effect will set in motion an infinite timeloop within the area that the reading can be heard.
- In her mind, it will be a magnificent experimental art piece.
- She also intends it to be a statement against the Yaelcar, a group of political dissidents who recently murdered a prominent arcane scholar.
- Pollas caught her examining the tome's spells. She doesn't think much of it, but he seems uncomfortable with her use of magic.

Minutes 1-6. Dhoinnach's dressing room is strangely empty. She's not onstage and she's not here.

THE ROOF

A door leads from the catwalk onto the roof of Obach Hall. A wide view of the city stretches out, and in the distance the yellow moon glimmers in the Scothred Sea.

Minute 1. Dhoinnach stands at the edge of the rooftop, contemplating suicide. She's visibly upset. After a moment, she steps back, reaches into her handbag, and takes out the poem. Reading, almost singing it, she rocks her head back and forth as faint, spectral arms grasp at her from the dark night. After a moment she puts her heels on and heads down to the right wing.

If she's confronted at this moment, she may open up to the characters if they succeed on a **DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check**. On a success, she tells them about her fits of depression and anxiety. Strange spirits have followed her ever since she first read the Hidden Book of Ulmhasa—a grimoire of bizarre spells from the days before the timestream was guarded by planar wardens called the yuriphim.

She intends, as they may already know, to make this reading very special. She won't tell them just what will happen, but "it's going to change everything you ever knew about poetry." If the characters tell her what's really going to happen, she'll follow them if they manage to sway her with a **Charisma (Persuasion) check of DC 14** or excellent roleplay.

Minutes 2-4. The rooftop is empty.

Minute 5. Shots and cries can be heard from the hall.

Minute 6. Pollas bursts through the door and climbs a fire escape to the front of the building, where he reenters as if looking for Dhoinnach.

THE YAELCAR

If the characters or players aren't already familiar with the Yaelcar, the letter is a good place slip in some exposition. A character proficient in the History skills can recall the following information.

The Yaelcar are a sect of heathfolk that rebelled and separated from the nation of Chayrshellech in its early history. They're firm in the fundamentalist belief that arcane magic is evil and shouldn't be practiced in any form. They're culturally at odds with the northern heathfolk, who commonly use small forms of folk-magic. Several murders of arcane scholars in this area have been attributed to Yaelca dissidents.

A Yaelca often wears all black, abstains from cutting the hair, and keeps his or her body covered from neck to wrist to ankles.

THE YURIPH

There are many ways this adventure might go, but hopefully the players will be able to rinse and repeat until they find Dhoinnach and manage to convince her that she is going to be assassinated. Alternatively, the players may decide that her plan is too dangerous, and that the Yaelcar are right to put a stop to it.

If the players remove all three shooters from the building before the assassination occurs, Dhoinnach completes the poem. Barring any further interference from the players, the entire building and everything within 30 feet of it falls under a recurring loop from which no one inside can escape or prevent.

Players can watch from the outside (without fear of being affected) as the audience is repeatedly transported from their moment of rapture at the poem's completion to being outside the hall 5 minutes before the reading begins. This time, however, the bell does not toll for them, since they are outside the effect of the spell.

Each time the loop repeats, a threatening presence lurks behind the threads of the timestream, as if waiting to emerge. A silhouette of eight grasping claws becomes clearer and clearer with each repetition. If the party sticks around for 5 repetitions, they hear (and perhaps barely see) a terrifying aberration burst through the timethread and begin to devour the time-imprisoned souls within the hall. As it feasts, the creature releases a telepathic cry, heard in the minds of the entire city: "Insolent anomalies! You shall all be ground to paste for weakening the integrity of the planes. The yuriphim will bring misery upon your heads!"

This catastrophe may cause the players to charge in for a climactic showdown. Others may leave the poor trapped souls to their fate. In the former case, stage a combat encounter with the yuriph (see page 13) in the concert hall. The yuriph will be exhausted from its efforts to break through the temporal prison. It has 4 levels of exhaustion and only deals half damage with its attack and spells.

WRAP-UP

There are many ways this adventure might go, but hopefully the players will be able to rinse and repeat until they encounter a satisfying conclusion. Once they've saved Dhoinnach's life, they might try to expose the true murderers, or simply get away before Pollas comes for them. In either case, they'll have made a loyal friend of Dhoinnach.

The page that has transported them back in time will only ever take them to the moment 5 minutes before the murder, and always to the place where they were when the spell was inscribed—just outside the concert hall. If they use it again once Dhoinnach's life has been saved, they will undo any progress on that front.

To that end, Dhoinnach may ask for the poem back to ensure her own safety. It may very well mean, though, that she will go through with her devastating plan. If the players have gathered enough information, they may turn on her to prevent this tragedy.

Whatever happens, the page containing the poem cannot be destroyed by any mundane means. Dispelling the magic causes the timestream to revert to the original version of events where Dhoinnach (and any other casualties) fall victim to the circumstances.

Saving Dhoinnach is a minor quest worth 250 XP. If the players decide to turn on her after discovering her plan, they receive 800 XP instead.



HEATHFOLK

The heathfolk are a technologically advanced race native to the moors and highlands that once belonged to their maahiset forefathers. They're descended from the original maahiset aristocracy who, when the demon-spawn attacked, elected to flee into mountain sanctuaries rather than live underground.

As the highland settlers prospered, these sanctuaries developed into vast cities perched on remote precipices. They grew taller, hardier, more scientific, and their numbers swelled. Today the heathfolk continue to thrive as a result of their political neutrality and characteristic charm. Most have a love of learning and art instilled in them from a young age.

Folk magic is a fundamental part of heathfolk culture. With the exception of the Yaelcar kindred, most of them treasure the arcane as part of their heritage. Their universities are the only formal institutions for magical instruction in the world.

ARTISTIC AND OPEN-MINDED

Among the heathfolk, enlightenment is everything. Children are assigned personal tutors at age four, and their education continues until they come of age at 22. Most heathfolk are inculcated with an open mind and a passion for art and learning. Their high literacy rate and quality of life set them apart from other cultures.

Heathfolk often practice simple forms of arcane magic, which perhaps contributes to their fascination with that which they don't yet understand. While most cultures are eternally suspicious of the arcane, heathfolk tradition embraces it as both a science and an art. The handing down of ancient folk magic practices defines traditional heathfolk society. Indeed, Ruethas—their racial deity—is a patron of arcane secrets.

MARKS AND MANES

Heathfolk usually stand just shorter than humans, and their natural build is slim above the waist. They tend to have muscular legs, and heathfolk women are often curvy with petite shoulders. Green and brown eyes are common among them, but some have eyes of amber or dark grey.

A heathfolk's face has earth-toned markings, often centered on the eyes like a raccoon. This trait is genetic—usually children's marks resemble those of their parents, but each is as unique as a fingerprint. They can be light or dark, intricate or subtle. These markings commonly appear in muted hues of green, grey, brown, yellow, red, and blue. The heathfolk usually have an olive or light brown skin tone.

Heathfolk have very thick, bushy hair that grows long. The men have lion-like manes that surround their heads. The mane grows in one mass, covering the entire head, neck, shoulders, and upper chest, leaving only the face visible. They have high foreheads, and their facial hair stops at the corners of the mouth, the lack of mustache

further suggesting the appearance of a lion. Females grow strong, thick hair commonly worn past the waist, but theirs doesn't grow from the shoulders and chest. Heathfolk hair colors tend to be shades of red and brown. Black hair is particularly predominant among the separatist heathfolk of Yarcarrach, causing neighboring humans to nickname them the Black Heathens.

These secular dissidents call themselves the Yaelcar. Their men have a strict cultural practice of shaving their manes below the ears, giving them a more distinctly human look. For both men and women, the hair on the top of the head is often braided or beaded, but never cut. Their clothes are made of plain black cloth, covering the wearer from the wrists to the ankles.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE

Self-centered thinking is a mark of ignorance to most heathfolk, while cultural awareness and an open mind are the marks of nobility and intelligence. It's common for them to travel the world, not only to become cultured, but to share that enlightenment with those they meet. This love of travel is greatly facilitated by their unique talent for learning languages. Paradoxically, many heathfolk believe they are superior to other races because they think themselves the least self-interested. They love playing the role of mentor, and they love to be the only heathfolk in a crowd.

REMOTE UNIVERSITIES

All three heathfolk political bodies are bound together in an Imperial Order, which only truly exists in name. In reality these nations interact very little. Each is governed by a council of political academics called fellows who preside over the government while maintaining positions at their respective educational institutions. Three post-graduate degrees are required to sit on the governing councils, and many of their members have far more than that.

At the center of most heathfolk communities is at least one university. Life in these remote cliff-cities revolves around such institutions, and few heathfolk live beyond the city walls. Most subsist on fruit, fish, and sheep, though more luxurious food is imported for those who can afford it. The Yaelcar live along the verdent southern coast of the Chayrshellech region, where they can farm and herd in communities less cramped than those of their northern kin.

ENLIGHTENED ADVENTURERS

Heathfolk characters are likely to be pleasant in an adventuring party. They may be dismissive of those they consider ignorant, but are quick to follow a good leader. When fortune falls on them, they are usually more than willing to assume command.

Every land in Vinramar has seen heathfolk travelers, usually speaking the local language. Their pursuit of enlightenment draws them on extensive voyages through

foreign countries, which helps their amicable relationships with neighboring races. Though most heathfolk prove to be quite versatile, the northern kin have traditionally preferred vocations that involve the arcane. The Black Heathens of course avoid such pursuits at all costs.

HEATHFOLK NAMES

A heathfolk has a given name, usually taken from the mother's family history, and a clan name, usually the father's. Genealogy is very important to the heathfolk, and their clan allegiance comes before almost any other.

Male Names: Aillourath, Archolloch, Bretham, Chuyrdash, Fayruch, Garaym, Jennam, Laithscael, Lothanser, Nassach, Pollas, Siorash, Shouthan

Female Names: Antayleach, Bureas, Ciaynhain, Dassacha, Hanlayr, Hulmara, Ishath, Kenshayloch, Maralash, Roshalya, Sheleach, Seairsha, Yessas

Clan Names: Athelsoth, Barrobayrn, Beal, Falbonnach, Iulainn, Margeynnach, Mararchtach, Marenchella, Obaech, Umiurthar

HEATHFOLK TRAITS

The heathfolk share an array of traits that reflect their education and cultural aptitudes.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 2.

Age. Heathfolk have a lifespan just longer than that of humans. They commonly live to 100, but rarely 120.

Alignment. Moderation goes hand in hand with enlightenment, and the heathfolk value their ability to ride the middle of the road. Neutrality is often a compelling alignment choice for them.

Size. Most heathfolk have a height around 5 feet, with a particularly short individual dipping to as low as 4 feet, and a very tall heathfolk reaching 6 feet. Your size is Medium.

Speed. 30 feet.

Heathfolk Weapon Training. You have proficiency with the flintlock pistol, longsword, and rapier.

Incidental Knowledge. If you miss an ability check's DC by a margin of 1, you still succeed. This trait does not apply to saving throws or attack rolls, but it does allow you to win contests that result in a tie.

Less Sleep. When taking a long rest, you only need to spend 4 of the 8 hours sleeping. You can spend a week concentrating on a single downtime activity during the remaining 4 hours of each long rest. After a week, you gain the benefit of 1 day engaged in that activity.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Roccurish and two extra languages of your choice. If your Intelligence score is 13 or higher, you learn another additional language.

Roccurish is the native language of the heathfolk. It has many unique sounds that can be difficult for other cultures to learn. It's a whispery, smooth-sounding language thought to be closely related to that spoken by the ancient maahiset.

Subrace. Choose a subrace. Two are described here: black heathen and northern kin.

BLACK HEATHEN

The Black Heathens, also called the Yaelcar, separated from the heathfolk nation of Chayrshelech several millennia ago. They are vehemently secularist, denying the usefulness of both magic and religion. To outsiders, the black heathens seem somber and plain-thinking, but they have all the intelligence and tenacity of their northern kin.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Secular Training. You gain one of the following:

- (a) proficiency in two tools or weapons of your choice
- (b) proficiency in one additional skill from your class's skill list

NORTHERN KIN

The northern kin are the traditionalists among the heathfolk, representing the majority in their culture. They're often raised around the use of simple folk magic, but not all of them go on to study arcane practices in depth.

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Folk Magic. You learn two cantrips from the following list: *blade ward*, *dancing lights*, *light*, *mending*, *message*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, or *true strike*.

THE COMPANY OF FOOLS

It's common for heathfolk to look down on religion, especially large churches that devote themselves to one god. For the northern kin, this is because they believe in the superiority of arcane magic—though many of them casually worship Ruethas, the patron god of time and spells. For the Black Heathens of the south, it's because of their strict secularist beliefs. In the company of religious characters, a heathfolk might have a terrific time making light of their zealotry.

YURIPH

In the dark gaps between dimensions swim the yuriphim, deformed celestials who wield the supernal signs of planar travel. Wherever beings traverse the boundaries of reality, these sentinels watch in vigilant silence. Their existence in the Darkplane has left the yuriphim with a haunting appearance: sallow skin, misshapen faces, and eight twisted arms.

Servitors of the Ivory Keys. During the creation, these creatures were imbued with the light of the Ivory Keys, celestial artifacts that reinforce natural reality and can open or close passages between the planes. As bound minions of any who holds the keys, the yuriphim can transport themselves and others anywhere in existence with a simple gesture.

The yuriphim seldom appear alone. In groups, they can easily overpower most planar threats, though they are always beholden to the Keys (and whoever controls them) as the source of their power.

Celestial Captives. Sowm first created the yuriphim as celestial guardians of the planes, sentinels tasked to ensure that all living things remain in their proper dimensions. When Gallister wrested the Ivory Keys from Loragg, however, he carried the yuriphim into the Darkplane, after which they became known as the Pinioned Keepers—merciless aberrations pressed into Gallister's service.

Wardens of Planar Travel. The yuriphim continue to carry out their duty as cosmic gatekeepers. Creatures that travel between the Realms of Existence are often observed or escorted by these stoic figures (whether they know it or not), and those that threaten the laws of dimensional integrity should expect swift and stern reprisals.

YURIPH

Medium celestial, lawful neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 125 (22d8 + 26)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +7

Damage Resistances radiant

Damage Immunities cold

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages all (see Innate Spellcasting below)

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Aberrant Gatekeeper. The yuriph is considered an aberration as well as a celestial.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The yuriph's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no verbal or material components:

At will: *gate, levitate, light, telepathy*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The yuriph makes eight fist attacks.

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Superior Invisibility. The yuriph turns invisible until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the yuriph wears or carries is invisible with it.

Void Stare. The yuriph targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. If the target can see the yuriph, it must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or take 28 (5d10) psychic damage and become stunned until the end of the yuriph's next turn.

My Dearest Luari,

Times are dark, and I know little of what lies in store for me. The Jackar are gaining power in the city. Only last week, they murdered Professor Falbannach in his own Arcanum. How they could have caught him so unawares is sheer mystery to me, but it bodes ill for the rest of us. I fear tonight will be my last reading.

Dallas caught me basking over the old tome. He wouldn't normally object to a little arcane demonstration, but what I have something a bit more in mind.

The mad swings have returned. I spend entire nights walking the dim streets as a lamb awaiting the cut of the butcher. I feel that Despair herself pursues me. Who could guess it? The most celebrated woman in the North would sooner dash herself against the riverbed than live! I fear there is no escape.

The fourth spell should do. A fold in time, a wave that crashes and rails upon itself for eons immemorial. If I am to die, then this final act, this last poem will be my eternal, living monument. And the souls encased within, my pall bearers evermore. We all shall be entombed in time itself, like Ruethas of old.

I know you will grieve me, I would say do not, but in truth I wish you to. Remember me, sister.

With ageless love,
Dhainnach