



# Narrative Document

CRITICAL PATH NARRATIVE OUTLINE FOR GUARDIAN'S OF AETHER  
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## About this document

This narrative document lists the chapters, quests, and descriptions thereof. The point of this document is to detail the story progression for players throughout the game, along with providing references for design and development teams during the game's development. Included in this is also a table of barks for some of the more central characters (see Game Design Document) that will support the player in certain instances as well as villains that will have speech.

Each quest is colour coded to denote those quests that can be completed in any order within the chapter (**red**) and those that are part of the linear story telling (**purple**).

The second person perspective has been used in the writing of this document so that the descriptions of the quest's descriptions can be directly put into a quest log/journal within the game to allow players to review the narrative as they complete quests with minimal editing from this document to in game presentation. This will allow the players to quickly refer to the narrative of the game when they return to it should they not wish to watch cutscenes.

Chapter	Quests	Narrative
Chapter 0 – The Escape	<b>The Escape</b>	<p>You awake outside a burning building resembling the remnants of your family home. The sounds of screaming and explosions are muffled by the slowly cracking walls. ""Your end is not here"" a whisper from your mind seems to say.</p> <p>You gather yourself and head down the streets of your hometown. Set ablaze from an unseen cause you hear your neighbours and acquaintances screaming amidst the sounds of fire crackling and buildings collapsing. You head towards the town square, observing your home being burnt to the ground. As you enter the square you observe a large ominous shape in the distance behind the courtyard leading to the mayor's house moving towards your town causing stronger tremors as it crawls closer. An earthquake causes the gates to the courtyard to collapse, to escape the incoming dust cloud you head east towards the markets in hopes of finding anyone still alive as the town continues to crumble and burn around you. As you make your way up the steps to toward the markets an ominous figure clad in what looks like armour approaches your sword raised "So one of these savages yet draws breath. No matter our plans will move apace and you, like all who dwell here, will become naught more than fuel for our machines. Now die." As the shadowy figure raises his blade a voice echoes from your mind "This is not your end. Run from this place." You run from the shadowy figure, towards the western edge of the square hoping to escape the shattered remnants of your destroyed home and collapse just past the fallen towers on the eastern side of town. As the light fades you here the whispered voice one final time ""Stay strong young hero, your journey is just beginning."</p>

<p>Chapter 1 – A Fresh Adventure</p>	<p><b>New Beginnings</b></p> <p><b>Finding your Feet</b></p> <p><b>Knowing Your Surroundings</b></p> <p><b>My First ChiChi</b></p> <p><b>Mysterious Ticking Noise</b></p>	<p>You awaken in the back of a cart heading towards ones of the major city states (based on starting class - see Character Choice Appendix). As you sit up you speak to Weary Traveller who explains he pulled you from the wreckage on the outskirts of Artoria. They go on to explain that the Gzlemath Empire has begun construction of a large outpost over the smouldering remains, and that this is the biggest Imperial push into Althemisa since they conquered the southern continent 15 years ago. As the cart approaches the city Weary Traveller suggests that you head to the Adventurer's guild and talk to Inn Keeper if you're looking for work.</p> <p><b>New Beginnings:</b> Upon arrival to the city, you enter the Adventurer's guild and are pointed in the direction of your classes guild to begin learning your class. After meeting the head of the order, you are sent into the field do deal with a small number of local pests under the observation of one of the Order's higher ups who explains the basics of your chosen classes actions. After another discussion with the Order's leader, you are sent back to the Adventurer's Guild to begin looking for work. Back at the Adventurer's Guild, the Inn Keeper highlights 3 jobs for you to undertake; Clearing out some local pests just outside the city, heading out to the local outposts and delivering supplies to the guards there &amp; Heading to the ChiChi Stables to help out the ChiChi Keeper.</p> <p><b>Finding your Feet:</b> The inn keep has suggested becoming acquainted with the local guard battalion in the city to better acquaint yourself with the issues that the city might be facing of late. You head to the barracks for the cities guard and speak the lieutenant. You are tasked with heading out of the city and clearing out 2 different sets of local fauna that are causing problems to the city. After slaying the beasts you return to the lieutenant who thanks you for your efforts.</p> <p><b>Knowing Your Surroundings:</b> The inn keep thinks it's about time that you headed out to a nearest local village outside of the city. You head to the village outside of your starting city to check on the local people. Upon arrival you meet with one of it's citizens asks if you would like a tour of the village and gives you a tour. As you walk around with them they point out a range of the municipal facilities on offer including merchants, repairmen and the local Aetherfont that you can use to teleport to other areas where you have gained access. After the tour they hand you a list of supplies the village will need and head back to the city to hand it to the inn keep.</p> <p><b>My First ChiChi:</b> The inn keep believes you would benefit from a ChiChi on your explorations of the realm and suggests you head to the ChiChi stables just outside the city's walls. You arrive at the stable and are met by a cheery stable master who agrees to take you out to survey the ChiChi's (horse sized chinchilla's that are rideable) that are currently in the pen. You, in the first person, survey the area and choose a rather exuberant ChiChi. After scouting out your new rideable friend the stable master takes you to meet them. The stable master explains that a dense hay is needed to feed and ultimately summon your new friend and hands you 10 of them. He also asks that you deliver a crate back to the inn keep for their ChiChi's they have in their stables for goods transportation. You head back to the inn keep to pass over the crate.</p> <p><b>Mysterious Ticking Noise:</b> The Inn Keeper informs you of a strange series of disappearances that have been occurring of late and that a series of guards have been sent to investigate but have yet to report back. You are tasked with heading to the outposts to investigate. Arriving at the outpost, you discuss the disappearances with one of the city guards there, they detail that a group of guards have gone to</p>
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		<p>investigate the site of the last series of disappearances and ask that you head to their last location and investigate. On the way to the guards last known location you talk to a handful of local people and learn that there has been an odd mechanical noise around the time people have been disappearing. When you arrive at the last known location of the guards you find signs of a skirmish. On further investigation of the area, you find a trail of what you assume is blood, possibly from a guard. After following the blood trail, you discover the body of a guard, after investigating her, you realise she is alive and offer aid. She mutters the worlds Imperial and Monster before passing out. At that moment a loud mechanical grinding sound is heard, growing louder as though it is coming closer until a large mechanical creature like a Monitor Lizard leaps in front of you. You draw your weapon and are thrust into a gruelling battle against the AetherMech Monitor Mk II (Solo Foray). After reducing the Monitor Mk II to scrap metal, you speak once again with the guard and offer to help them back to the Adventurer's Guild. Upon arriving back to the Adventurer's Guild, the Inn keep, and Head of the City Guard are discussing your recent exploits and ask you to follow them to the dirigible platform to meet with the head of your current city.</p>
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<p>Chapter 2 – Althemisian Envoy</p>	<p><b>A Most Unsettling Development</b></p> <p><b>The Nixairuth Bastille</b></p> <p><b>Nes'Han Stirring</b></p> <p><b>Silvarian Sepulcrum</b></p> <p><b>Conference, Sweet Conference</b></p>	<p><b>A Most Unsettling Development:</b> You meet the head of your current city and explain that along with their city, the other 2 major cities that form the Alliance of Althemisa are having similar issues with bizarre mechanical creatures abducting people and laying waste to large areas of Althemisa by somehow disrupting the natural aether of the land causing a number of concerning natural events including earth tremors and aggressive tidal movements on top of flora and fauna dying at an alarming rate. They ask of you to explore 3 potential hot beds of supposed imperial activity: The Frostfallen Bastille in Xinth Mesa, The Fel'Ahn Grotto in the centre of Solitaidem and The Animus Sepulcrum deep within the Shaded Holt.</p> <p>You choose which of the cities you are going to work with first and either depart on the dirigible or travel to the seat of the state's leader.</p> <p><b>The Nixairuth Bastille:</b> You travel to the Seat of the Marquis in Nixairuth and meet with Marquise de Verglas, the noblewoman who rules with a senate over the goings on of the Xinth Mesa and the sprawling city of Nixairuth. They inform you of some concerning report of strange noises and abductions near the Frostfallen Bastille a once great fortress that was used as a key outpost by Nixairuth, gem of the frozen landscape of Xinth Mesa, to monitor the Isle of the Damned, home to an ancient cult that worshipped the Celestial Horrors. In recent years, the Bastille has fallen into disrepair due to an increase in attacks from aggressive creatures and the strain the city has felt from decades of imperial assault from the sea.</p> <p>You travel to the Frostfallen Bastille, the once great fortress has clearly seen better days. Where once stood great walls and battlements now stands a ruinous battle-scarred monument to failure. You are met by a contingent of armed winter guards from Nixairuth who explain that the fortress has recently been the epicentre of strange tremors and some scouts have reported blood curdling screams periodically and heavy metal clanging at night. There have also been reports of some aggressive beasts taking up the bastille as their residence.</p> <p><b>Frostfallen Bastille (Dungeon):</b> You enter the fortress to ascertain what is causing these bizarre occurrences. The Bastille has been overrun by a great many beasts, as you make your way through the courtyard to slay a number of the polar creatures and fend off a huge shaggy looking yeti as you make your way through the central gate. Moving deeper into the fortress you come across some of the aggressive local wildlife but sporting heavy clockwork appendages. As you fight through to the main courtyard you battle against an armoured Frostbear. The creature is in a severe fit of rage, probably due to the excessive armour plating covering much of its white/blue fur. Pressing on into the great hall you battle against more armoured beasts, however as you approach the northern battlements you battle against more clockwork soldiers, although humanoid in nature these machines have blades instead of hands and are seemingly more focused on killing you and your team than protecting anything. Upon reaching the throne room you notice a number of the abducted chained to bizarre spike plates that are glowing with a reddish-purple light. Before you can check on them however, a large clockwork machine resembling a Snowguin, albeit far larger and more aggressive. The machine attacks you in earnest. After finishing off the Imperial machine, you rush to the abductees and realised, although alive, they have been drained of aether and are in a very weak state.</p>
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You return to the winter guards and give them a report before returning to Nixairuth to report back to Marquise de Verglas with a full explanation of what you have discovered of the abductions. They thank you for your investigation and for dealing with the imperials and beasts in the Bastille. They mention the need for an alliance conference to discuss these events with the other leaders.

**Nes'Han Stirring:** You travel to the Sandstone Seat to meet with Czar Constantine III, Lord Ruler of Nes'Han and protector of Solitaidem sand wastes. He informs you of some odd occurrences that have befallen the Fel'Ahn Grotto, a once beautiful oasis that stood in the centre of Solitaidem where the tradespeople of Nes'Han once used as a resting point on their journeys to sell armour, weapons and tools to the other city states. Several contingents of Sandburnt Protectorate have been sent to investigate the disturbances however have not been heard of in days.

*Fel'Ahn Grotto (Dungeon):* You venture to the Fel'Ahn Grotto to discover the remains of one of the contingents sent to investigate the disturbances. Unlike those that went missing from the Lizard attack, you notice these soldiers have been incinerated from extreme heat. You sense a burst of magic emerging from the centre of the grotto and venture towards it. As you move towards the energy burst you notice a number of the local beasts have gone into a rampage. You battle through several waves of beasts moving towards a series of caves, just outside the caves you are set upon by a large, rampaging Scorpite and its larvae. You engage the beast in battle to press ever forward. You enter the cave system that winds towards the magical energy that you sense. More beasts are rampaging in the cave systems, and you engage them. As you move towards the depths of the cave you encounter an armoured Shrewth, a large sand mole in a frenzy. You engage the beast that blocks your way to the centre of the grotto and defeat it. As you enter the inner part of the grotto you notice a clear blue stream running from a source. The energy you sensed is emanating from the source of the stream, you continue onwards head through the larger cavernous areas and are engaged by more frenzied beasts but also a few robed individuals wielding powerful fire magics. You manage to make your way through the cavernous area and reach the source of the stream - a bright blue lake, seemingly glistening despite a lack of light. Standing in the centre of the lake stands a strange individual in a deep purple robe. They turn to face you, say nothing and raise a staff with a pair of bells hanging from the top. As the bells chime a burst of energy erupts from the lake and a large blue flamed monster appears, with 4 frontal arms and a cocoon-like face. You engage the horror in an attempt to give chase to the robed individual.

After defeating the horror, you return to Nes'Han and report to Constantine. He is disturbed by your reports of the purple robed individual and his acolytes and make mention of a need to meet with the other leaders of the cities to discuss this development.

**Silvarian Sepulcrum:** You travel to the Seat of the Archdruid in Silvarum to meet with Tian Glen Darach the Archdruid who communes with the Shaded Holt's spirits to work towards a state of complete symbiosis between those of the physical and those of the metaphysical. She informs you of some troubling developments surrounding the Anima Sepulcrum, the supposed resting place of Animus (the ancient god of darkness) that, with her twin Aeon (ancient god of light) sealed away then Celestial Horrors in the Lacuna Abyss. The Sepulcrum is located deep within the Shaded Holt, the sprawling forestlands surrounding the eastern city of Silvarum. It is supposedly very rich in natural aether and ancient artefacts that date back to events beyond any living memory and has been sealed off for over a millennium. In recent days



there have been Aetherial disturbances and as such there have been supposed sighting of spectres and apparent undead in the areas around the Sepulcrum. She has prepared an escort for you with the head of the Twinleaf Sentinels (Silvarum's guards) to investigate the sighting and disturbances. You arrive at the entrance to the Sepulcrum and venture in, after the Twinleaf Captain clear you for entry.

*Animus Sepulcrum (Dungeon)* The Sepulcrum is a sprawling labyrinth of ancient stone tunnels etched with bizarre symbols. As you venture forth into the labyrinth and come face to face with a large number of undead beings shambling around the tomb. As you slay multiple undead and proceed into a large antechamber with a large undead troll blocking your path. You engage and defeat the troll; despite its attempts to poison you. You press on, deeper into the labyrinthine corridors of the Sepulcrum battling against more undead and angry spirits that block your path. As you move closer towards the centre, you notice pipes installed in the walls, and follow them into a large empty chamber where your path is blocked by a large, robbed spirit wielding a scythe. The spirit of the damned attacks you and you are forced to finally lay it to rest. You continue to follow the pipes and being to encounter clockwork insect-like creatures slowing your progress. The machines become more numerous as you approach the centre of the labyrinth, and you use cogs they drop to fix a broken ancient stone bridge that extends towards a central pillar in the middle of the labyrinth. Once across the bridge you notice a pulsing dark steel device in the centre of the platform slowly emitting a purple/reddish light. As you approach a massive clockwork snake coils up the tower and attacks you. After defeating the imperial warmachine you notice the box has been shattered, however a fragment of a glowing crystal and, what you assume is the outer plating remain. As you pick up the pieces you briefly glance at a figured stood on a ledge, wearing what seems to be a veil of black smoke, however, are unsure of what you really see before the figure disappears.

You take the fragments with you as you return to Tian Glen to report your findings. Following your report, she states the importance of the need for a conference with the other city leaders to discuss the developments in the Shaded Holt.

**Conference, Sweet Conference:** Following the completion of the 3 cities issues, you converse with the leader of the last one you completed and are told that you will need to attend the alliance leader conference to relay all your findings. Boarding a dirigible, you head to The Conclave in the Nixairuth capital where you are met by all the city leaders and are led into a conference hall. Once seated, each of the city state leaders informs the others of the issues they have faced in their nations, you provide further details of the events, including the aether drained abductees found in the Bastille, the strange, robed individual in the Fel'Ahn Grotto and the fragments of the strange devices found in the Animus Sepulcrum. The leaders then turn to you for some guidance based on your first-hand experiences of what has occurred in each city and whether you believe all of these occurrences are the empires doing. You provide them with some of your own thoughts on the issues and the threat based on the evidence you have provided and your experiences in each of the cities. As your explanations come to a close the doors of the chamber open and a strange man in frayed clothing and a tattered wide brim hat walks in. The leaders do not react, as if this interloper's appearance is expected. They introduce themselves as Xeth'Ita, leader of the Keepers of Knowledge and apologise for his lateness. He looks at you and asks you to recount your thoughts. After which he hypothesises that the Empire are looking at a means to gain access to the vast quantities of Aether that are naturally occurring in Althemisa. He goes on to explain how the imperials have been unable to channel Aether for centuries due to a genetic mutation and as such they have had to develop machines powered by fire and steam rather than make use of the naturally occurring Aether that permeates the planet. This

		<p>technological development has been led by Empress Lucrezia and Casius Sie Valanth since she took the throne a decade ago. Since then, the Gzelmethian Empire has begun a massive offensive against all neighbouring nations to drain them of Aether for reasons unknown. He goes on to explain about the recent decimation of the town of Artoria and the construction of a massive imperial structure in its place. You pause and look at Xeth'Ita and must choose to reveal that Artoria was your hometown now or later. After this decision the leaders all agree that the empires aggressive expansion, the abductions and fragments of the strange devise are possibly linked to Xeth'Ita's hypothesises, and while the purple robed man is concerning, they all agree that the imminent threat is that of the Empire and their invasion. As such they all agree that combatting the empire would be the best way forward and pledge sizeable forces to combat the threat on all fronts. Xeth'Ita vows that the alliance will have full access to the 6 Keepers and their unique skills to aid them in combatting the Empire.</p>
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Chapter 3 – Powers Null and Void	<p><b>The Keepers of Knowledge</b></p> <p><b>Clockwork Menace</b></p> <p><b>Guardians of Old</b></p> <p><b>Stop That Ticking</b></p> <p><b>And Now There's a Cult?</b></p> <p><b>Ominous Clouds</b></p> <p><b>Deforestation</b></p> <p><b>The Archon Steps Forth</b></p> <p><b>Call of the Abyss</b></p>	<p><b>The Keepers of Knowledge:</b> Xeth'Ita is looking at you with a great interest. Xeth'Ita asks you if you would help him in a mission to the Ruins of Aeon so that he can call introduce you to the 6 other Keepers of Knowledge. He informs you that there are some things he is uncertain of and wishes to discuss them with you present with the rest of the Keepers so that you can gain a full understanding of the events that are challenging the balance of Aether in Althemisa.</p> <p>You speak with Xeth'Ita again and they go on to describe the location of the Ruins of Aeon as being situated in the northern most edges of the Solitaidem, bordering both the southernmost reaches of Xinth Mesa and The Shaded Holt. Xeth'Ita urges you to board a dirigible and travel, with all haste, to the ruins to meet with the other Keepers. On arrival in Northern Solitaidem you spy a large black obelisk to the far north, you begin your long journey to towards the obelisk, the way point describes by Xeth'Ita as the entrance to the Ruins of Aeon. As you approach the obelisk a strange voice is heard on the wind, the voice is seemingly familiar, but you cannot understand what it is saying.</p> <p>Despite this you continue to approach the obelisk. You arrive at the obelisk and speak with Xeth'Ita. As Xeth'Ita begins to complain about the lateness of his fellow Keepers, you spot 6 figures approaching from different directions. As you draw your weapon, Xeth'Ita bellows "It seems punctuality is something we still ignore, my friends!" and motions for you to lower your weapon. The 6 figures approach and introduce themselves by name: Ruvay an ashen-haired female Goliath with a spiked mace attached to her waist and a shield on her back (a Saint), Thraleve a black haired male Elfid with a set of Kunai strapped to his chest and waist (a Shinobi), Alina a blonde-haired Hyara female with an ornate rifle on her back (a Hunter), Lucian a brown-haired male Hyara with a large great sword strapped to his back (a Shade Knight), Milla a red-haired Kitsu woman (human-esque, with fox ears and a fox tail) with a Shakujo on her back (a Caller), Rai'Ahn a black-haired Drem'ath male with a large scythe strapped to his back (a Harbinger). After introductions, Xeth'Ita asks you to introduce yourself to the Keepers, who all comment on having heard parts of your exploits while they have been surveying the stability of the aether in their respective nations. Xeth'Ita and the Keepers go on to explain the role of Keepers as an ancient order that has monitored the stability of the realm's aether for centuries. Their chief goal is to ensure that the 13 seals of the Abyss stay stable to prevent the resurrection of the Celestial Horrors, the colossal creatures that once lay waste to the entire planet until the races came together and beseeched the ancient embodiment of light and dark, Aeon and Animus, to seal them away deep within the Lacuna Abyss to protect the realm from total annihilation. You learn, through conversations with each of the keepers that they have been monitoring the aetheric balance and stability in each area of Althemisa and each have detected anomalies in each region, likely caused by the imperial assault. You speak with each of the Keepers who give you more information about their role within the order ending with Xeth'Ita.</p> <p><b>Clockwork Menace:</b> Xeth'Ita is ready for you and the keepers to investigate troubling reports to the north. You speak with Xeth'Ita who informs you that, prior to the conference at the Conclave he was investigating reports of an imperial operation at the Crestfallen Lake in the Southern Shaded Holt. Along with the Keepers, you make your way from the obelisk towards Crestfallen Lake.</p> <p><i>Crestfallen Lake (Dungeon):</i> You arrive at Crestfallen Lake, a once serene blue lake with a single tower made from pearlescent stone at its centre, to discover several imperial war machines are beginning to drill into the tower for reasons unknown. Xeth'Ita, clearly very concerned about the importance of the tower as a point by which much of the Holt's aether flow to and from, beseeches you to attack the imperial's camp and protect the tower from further harm otherwise it is likely the Shaded Holt will be thrown into total chaos. You enter the Crestfallen Lake and are met with a number of imperial clockwork drones at the lakes</p>
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southernmost point. You battle your way through them to enable you to press on towards the norther bank and the earthen walkway that leads to the towers entrance. As you approach the entrance to the tower, your way is blocked by a 9-foot-tall imperial drone, named the AetherMech Warrior Mk III, you engage the savage drone and, despite its armaments of blades, manage to defeat it. You enter the lower floors of the pearlescent tower and battle further drones on your way up the tower towards the upper levels. As you approach a seemingly impassable corridor, you are forced to battle a mobile AetherMech cannon, a large tank-like mech wielding an array of cannons and firearms. Despite the size of you quarry you can best it and in so doing activate the Aetherial staircase that takes you into the upper levels of the tower. As you battle more imperial drones and smaller cannon mechs on your way to the central observation platform on the highest floor of the tower. As you arrive on the highest level you come face to face with a pair of dragonfly-like imperial war mechs, the AetherMech D/Fly Mk II. You engage the first of the machines and as you whittle its defences it switches places with the second. As the battle reaches its climax both machines connect through a clockwork mechanism on their undersides and begin counting down to a self-destruct. As you finish off the machines a strange familiar voice calls out that you must protect yourself. You are encapsulated in a vortex of purple and green aether seconds before the self-destruct happens and can seemingly atomise the imperial mech before it can destroy the tower.

Following the battle Xeth'Ita and the Keepers come rushing in after you, they are all seemingly shocked by your sudden outburst of aether to destroy the machine before it destroys the tower. The Keepers, all still in shock from what they witnessed, congratulate you successfully repelling the imperials from the tower. Ruvay and Lucian go on to explain the tower as the source of flowing Aether for the Shaded Holt, and that the tower is somewhat less active than normal. Thraleve and Milla point out that large dark steel device sitting against the northern most wall and approach it with suspicion. As the device begins to glow with a reddish light you call out to them that it resembles the device you destroyed in the Animus Sepulcrum. Milla approaches the device and notices tubing that seems to have been affixed to the walls of the tower. Rai'Ahn uses his scythe to cut the tubing and the device stops glowing. Xeth'Ita then notices that the Aether of the tower has seemingly returned to normal. The Keepers, along with yourself agree that it would be best to exit the tower to investigate the device. As you leave the tower and regroup on the side of the lake, the Keepers begin to discuss the strange imperial device, Alina hypothesises that the device may well have been installed to draw the tower's aether into the device as a form of storage. Lucien and Thraleve support this by sharing their observations of the imperials war machines having a strange aetheric resonance. Xeth'Ita draws the conclusion that the strange device is probably the project that Empress Lucrezia and Archon Casius have been developing for the last decade, the device that has seen the Empire begin its aggressive expansion across several neighbouring continents in recent years. He then suggests that this news must be shared with the 3 Seats of the Alliance so that all can be fully informed of the Empire's possible plans. Following this Xeth'Ita requests that the Keepers take the device to the Hall of the Keepers in the western quarter of Nes'Han, he bids that you join them there.

**Guardians of Old:** Upon arriving at the Hall of the Keepers, Milla asks you to follow her to the Lunar Platform - the gathering point for the Keepers, to discuss both the device and some startling thoughts she has had about your strange abilities observed in the Pearlescent Tower. You follow Milla to the Lunar Platform where Xeth'Ita and the other Keepers are waiting. You all sit to discuss the imperial device found in the tower, Ruvay and Alina explain that they have channelled a small portion of their Aether into the device, and this has led to it

activating briefly. Upon further investigations they have found that the devices seem to drain the aether from whatever is near to them. They demonstrate this by asking Lucien to channel his Aether into the device whilst it is set amongst an array of flowers. As Lucien channels the Aether into the device, you look on in horror as the flowers around the device wilt and die. Lucien too becomes seemingly less exuberant as the flowers begin to decay. Lucien stops using channelling Aether to the device and slumps back in his chair, he notes that the imperials have outdone themselves with this contraption. Rai'Ahn speaks up and points out that if the Empire have a means to drain the land of Aether, then the integrity of the 13 seals is very much at risk of failing and this would cause cataclysmic events that haven't been seen in a millennium. Xeth'Ita agrees and asks that Ruvay, Lucien and Alina head to each of the seats to provide a full report on the severity of the situation, however, implores them not to mention the integrity of the 13 seals as this would only sow panic and potential discourse throughout Althemisa should work get out. You are asked what you know of the 13 seals and reply in a fashion equal to your knowledge of them. Rai'Ahn explains that the 13 seals were created over a millennia ago when Aeon and Animus sealed away the Celestial Horrors in the depth of the Lacuna Abyss, a swirling void bereft of Aether where they would be unable to gorge themselves on the very lifeforce of the planet. Milla chips in explaining that the Celestial Horrors and their seals were created by Aeon and Animus bestowing a great power on an ancient set of warriors known as Guardians. She goes on to explain that these Guardians represented to sheer force of mankind's will to overcome the destruction brought on by the Celestial Horrors and this force of will allowed Aeon and Animus to channel that will into a power that would resist that of the Celestial Horrors. Thraleve interjects and explains that while Aeon and Animus created a prison - The Tartarus Carceream, these Guardians engaged the Celestial Horrors in combat, given the ability to shield themselves from their might through a power known as the Guardian Force, a power that is bestowed upon select individuals since those times when there has been great need to defend the realm. You are given the choice to ask for more information or to ask whether they believe if you have this strange ability. Depending on your question you are either given further explanation of the stories around the ancient Guardians or told that the Keepers believe that you may be one of these Guardians from the stories. Xeth'Ita wraps up the meeting by suggesting that you should return to each of the 3 cities and enquire as to any developments that may have occurred following the conference and recent developments with the imperials.

Xeth'Ita, he suggests that you speak to Alina, Thraleve, Milla and Rai'Ahn for further information on how you and the Keepers will support the Seats and the 3 Cities of Althemisa.

**Stop That Ticking:** Allina is preparing to depart to Nixairuth to discuss the increase in the imperial's activity in Xinth Mesa, she would appreciate your help due to your good standing with the Marquise. You arrive in Nixairuth to discuss the increased imperial activity in the region with the Marquise. She informs you that the winter guards have reported several imperial mechanica have been spotted in the eastern province and asks that you and Allina investigate and destroy all imperials you find there. Allina accompanies you to the 4 sites where there has been reported imperial activity. You engage and destroy a number of imperial war machines and discover some paperwork from what is obviously a commanding officer with plans to further push into Xinth Mesa. The plans make reference to the construction of an imperial facility on the northern most shore of the western province. You return to Nixairuth and update the Marquise the destruction of the imperial camps, you also hand over the notes about the imperial's facility. The Marquise confirms that some of the winter guard scouts have reported a large facility and additional imperial activity coming from the northwest of the region. She asks

whether you think these camps were to draw attention away from the construction of this facility or not. Your response leads her to send word to the other seats to inform them of the development in the north. You speak with Allina and return to the Hall of Keepers.

**And Now There's a Cult?** Thraleve would like to explore the Ruins of Aeon with you to gain further insight into the legends of the Guardians and to also assess the aetheric stability of the Solitaidem. You arrive at the Obelisk and Thraleve explains that the Obelisk is just the waypoint that identifies the entrance to the tomb. Thraleve asks you to follow them to the tombs entrance. Along the way you can ask Thraleve further questions about the role of the Keepers and how they work to defend the realm from the Celestial Horrors, you also have opportunities to ask him about the ancient guardians and their roles throughout the history of Althemisa. After some walking you and Thraleve arrive at the entrance to the Ruins of Aeon.

*Ruins of Aeon (Solo Foray):* Thraleve is concerned about the tomb being open and suggests that you continue carefully. As you enter the tomb you notice there are footprints in the sand, Thraleve suggests you follow them. You follow the footprints through a series of ancient stone square chambers with Thraleve, throughout your journey Thraleve and you will have opportunities to interact with the wall's markings and diagrams. Thraleve will give you some vaguely accurate translations of some of the scripts telling stories of the powers given to the guardians from the twin deities of light and dark. As you approach the central antechamber Thraleve stops you as he can sense a presence coming from within. You move towards the entrance of the Antechamber and observe a group of people in reddish-purple robes standing in a circle. There are two individuals standing in the centre, one in a flowing black feathered robe and a pointed hat, the other wearing a purple robe from head to toe. Thraleve looks concerned, you can point out that you've dealt with these individuals before when you were investigating the Fel'Ahn Grotto. You and Thraleve enter the Antechamber of the tomb to listen in on what is going on. Hidden behind a pillar, you observe as the figure in the purple robe begins to address the others. They explain how the seals are beginning to weaken and that the hour of rebirth is close at hand. The feather-garbed figure then speaks up and explains that the Cosmic Horrors once came from across the sunless sea of stars, claiming all planets in their path and that the Heralds of the Abyss will continue this great work to conquer the cosmos by unleashing the Horrors that are confined to the Tartarus Carceream and absorbing their vast powers for themselves and allow them to bend the cosmos to their will. The figures around the circle begin to cheer. Thraleve suggests that you exit the tomb as fast and quietly as possible. As you reach the door the figure in the black-feathered robe announces that they have guests and laughs as the acolytes charge you and Thraleve. You and Thraleve manage to defeat the acolytes, much to the dismay of the robed figures who introduce themselves as Cornicula (Feathered Figure) and Norbraea (Purple Figure) Leaders of the Heralds of the Abyss, an organisation that plans to unleash the Cosmic Horrors so that they may absorb their powers and conquer the planet. As you and Thraleve prepare to battle the pair they disappear in a blinding flash. Thraleve suggest that you reconvene at the Hall of the Keepers and update the others of your discovery.

**Ominous Clouds:** Rai'Ahn has received word of some strange clouds coming from the far western edge of the Solitaidem, overlooking Ancient's Alight, he is seemingly in a hurry to report to Constantine and gain further insight. You and Rai'Ahn head to Nes'Han and consult Constantine on the ominous clouds building on the western edge of the Solitaidem. Constantine informs you both that the clouds started

appearing a little time ago, he is concerned what it is, but is yet to send a guard contingent as he believes a stealthier approach would lead to better results and admits the Sandburnt Protectorate are ill equipped for covert operations. You and Rai'Ahn agree to investigate the cause of the clouds and head towards the north-western edge of the Solitaidem. As you approach the large ominously dark clouds Rai'Ahn notices a disturbance in the aetheric stability. He suggests you move forward with caution. You and Rai'Ahn find a spot atop a high sand dune and spy a large imperial structure. Rai'Ahn suggests you get a closer look at the structure but proceed with caution on account of this being a covert mission. You manage to approach the outer walls of the imperial structure and observe the imperials moving crates of the Aether Drain Devices into the facility. You make notes at 5 points around the facility of observations of imperial plans including large mechanical ships docked at a load dock near the ocean, a large contingent of imperial drones along with what looks like many imperial soldiers, many Aether Drain Devices being loaded into machines with propellers attached to the tops, large amounts of smoke leaving the chimneys of the structure and what looks like a drone production plant. You report back to Rai'Ahn and the two of you travel back to report your findings to Constantine. Constantine is angered by the news of a large imperial structure being built in the Solitaidem and orders messages be sent to the other seats about planning a military offensive against the imperial's plans. You and Rai'Ahn travel back to the Hall of the Keepers to report your findings to the others.

**Deforestation:** Milla is eager to head to Silvarum to update Tian Glenn of the imperials push into the Shaded Holt with you. You travel to Silvarum and Milla provides an update to Tian Glenn of the imperial advancement. Tian Glenn confirms this update and informs you both that the Twinleaf Sentinels have begun engaging several imperial war machines that are cutting down trees on the south-eastern edge of the Holt. She asks that the two of you head there and help the Twinleaf Sentinels in their attack on the imperial encampment. You travel to the eastern most edge of the southern quarter of the Shaded Holt and meet up with the Twinleaf Captain. Along with Milla, you and the sentinels head to the imperial encampment and destroy several machina that are armed with circular saw blades. You succeed in destroying the encampment and discover notes that refer to the almost complete construction of an imperial processing plant located further to the east. Along with the Twinleaf sentinels you head to the supposed location to scout out the imperial facility. Once there you see a large dark steel building with pipes and storage tanks located on its exterior. The twinleaf captain suggests that you report back to Tian Glenn before moving forward. Upon your return you provide a full report along with Milla and the Twinleaf Captain, Tian Glenn thanks you for your efforts in defending the Holt and suggests that the Twinleaf send a contingent of Hunters and Shinobi to scout the location for more information. Milla suggests you reconvene at the Hall of the Keepers to update the others.

**The Archon Steps Forth:** Returning from your quests across the realm the Keepers gather in the Lunar Platform and you, along with those that left with you, update the others on the state of the realm. Xeth'Ita is seemingly more concerned with the so-called Heralds of the Abyss than with the imperial expansion, however and suggests that this cult is either working alongside the empire or is taking advantage of the chaos they have created. Thraleve backs this up by suggesting that the imperial incursion has weakened the aetheric stability of the realm and in turn this has likely weakened the integrity of the 13 seals. Xeth'Ita rallies the Keepers that now is the time to begin a counter offensive against the Empire by supporting the alliance leaders in preparation for this event. The Keepers all agree that this would be best, however Milla points out that the alliance would need time to plan a counter offensive. She suggests that the Keepers send word to the 3 Seats and request they meet in earnest to plan for this as soon as they are able. Xeth'Ita agrees and asks that the Keepers form pairs and



go to discuss this counter offensive with the leaders. At that moment, Ruvay enters the Lunar Platform closely followed by Lucien. They inform the room that a large imperial mech has been spotted in the Barren Flatlands, the salt flats that lie between the 3 nations of the realm. Xeth'Ita asks for further details and Lucien explains how this seems to be a new type of Machina, one they haven't seen before, equipped with a bizarre weapon that seems beyond the Empire's technological understanding. Xeth'Ita asks if you would be happy to investigate this whilst he and the Keeper's head to the three nations to support them in the preparation for a counter offensive. Before you decide to leave you have the option to ask Lucien and Ruvay for more details on the war mech. After this you leave the Lunar Platform and head to the Barren Flatlands.

The Barren Flatlands (Dungeon): You arrive in the Barren Flatlands and begin to battle your way through the imperial war machines. Unlike previous battles however, the machines are joined by a number of Imperial Soldiers. As you approach the edge of a cliff overlooking the flatlands you are stopped by a heavily armoured imperial wielding a steam powered hammer. After defeating the imperial captain, you make your way down the side of the mountain dealing with flying imperial drones and smaller D/Fly units. As you reach the bottom of the cliff an approach the flatlands you are attacked by an armoured mech cannon roller, a clearly upgraded version of the one you battled earlier. Despite the machines improved artillery you manage to triumph over it and progress across the salt flats towards the large imperial mech on the horizon, battle more imperial soldiers and mech drones. As you approach the imperial machine, you discover it to be a 15-foot clockwork spider, aptly named the AetherMech Arachnid Mk I. The mech has an advanced aether canon that allows it to fire a blast of concentrated Aether at you, despite its many challenging attacks you triumph over the towering machine. As you begin to bask in your glory as large blast of energy knocks you down and renders you powerless. A heavily armoured imperial steps forth wielding a long sword, despite yourself you seemingly recognise this figure from the night Artoria, your hometown, was annihilated by the Empire. You are given a choice to acknowledge this memory or to ignore it. He introduces himself as Casius Sie Valanth, Supreme Archon of the IVth Imperial Phalanx and strategic leader of the Gzelmethian Expansion. He starts to monologue how the empire has long sought a way to manipulate the naturally occurring Aether of the planet, however it wasn't until Empress Lucretia took the throne 10 years ago that they were able to develop the means to extract and refine it into a useable fuel. He goes on to explain how, like all the females in her bloodline, the Empress has the power of foresight and has seen the end times so together with Casius they have developed a plan to save the empire. He then comments on how your feeble attempts to stop the empire have done nothing but slightly hinder the speed of their plans and that your powers are nothing compared to the true might of the imperials force. He then calls out to seemingly no one that you are theirs to do with as they please.

**Call of the Abyss:** Cornicula and Norbraea appear where Casius stood and gloat about the vaunted power of a so-called guardian and challenge you to withstand a slither of the might of Horrors (whom they refer to as their gods). The pair open a rift under you, and you are dragged into a murky abyss. Just as all seems lost you hear the whispered voices of Animus and Aeon who will you to keep fighting. You battle against the pull of the rift as a set of tentacles emerge to pull you down. Shielded by a vortex of purple and green you are dragged through the tear in the fabric of reality.



The Aetherial Tear (Trial) You stand atop a platform as the Abyssal Tusoteuthis floats in front of you. The echoed voices of Aeon and Animus command you to battle against a crimson monster with multiple tentacles and a crushing maw less the horrors gain your power. The voice of Norbraea calls out that you will be no match for Abyssal Tusoteuthis and that it will tear the world asunder. Although challenging, you manage to defeat the Abyssal Tusoteuthis and escape the Aetherial Tear.

As you climb out of the tear you are met by the Keepers and a series of guards from each of the allied nations. Despite your very near-death experience, you seem healthy enough to stand, you ally rush to your side to check on you. Xeth'Ita is surprisingly absent, you are given the opportunity to comment on this, and Ruvay explains that he is using an arcane ritual to explore the scope of the damage to the 13 seals and Aetheric stability of the realm.

Chapter 4 – To Rise unto the Heavens	<p><b>Dark Clouds on the Horizon</b></p> <p><b>Sealing the Tears: Nes’Han</b></p> <p><b>Sealing the Tears: Silvarum</b></p> <p><b>Sealing the Tears: Nixairuth</b></p> <p><b>Imperial Espionage</b></p> <p><b>Drain This, Imperials!</b></p> <p><b>Imperial Excavation</b></p> <p><b>That Is A Big Spider!</b></p>	<p><b>Dark Clouds on the Horizon:</b> Your allies inform you that whilst you were battling the horror in the Aetherial Tear there have been developments across the realm and that you all need return to the Conclave to discuss this with the 3 Seats. Arriving at the Conclave you are informed that a number of smaller aethereal tears have opened across the realm and that you must work with the alliance to seal them and defeat the lesser horrors that are spawning from them. The Twinleaf Captain explains that all of the alliance’s forces are spread thin from trying to scout the imperials forces and dealing with the rifts. Lucien adds that there has been significant activity at an imperial facility in the north of Xinth Mesa and would like you to investigate this when you are able. You and your allies return to the Conclave in Nixairuth to discuss each of the quests available to you.</p> <p>Outside the Conclave, you are presented with a number of choices, speaking with the Winter Guard Captain, speaking with the Twinleaf Sentinel Captain, speaking with the Sandburnt Protectorate Captain, speaking with Lucien and speaking with Rai’Ahn.</p> <p><b>Sealing the Tears: Nes’Han:</b> The Sandburnt Captain is restless and eager to have you aid his soldiers in sealing the tears in the Solitaidem. You travel with Sandburnt Captain to the Southernmost part of the Solitaidem and are forced to battle against 8 lesser abyssal horrors. These kinds are reminiscent of Black Wyverns. You manage to defeat the horrors and, by channelling the guardian force, seal the Aetherial tear. You speak with the Sandburnt Captain who informs you of another tear that has opened in the western part of the Solitaidem. With him, you head there and engage another wave of lesser Abyssal Drakes, once again sealing the second tear. You speak with the captain and travel back to the Conclave. He thanks you and vows to ensure Constantine is given a full report.</p> <p><b>Sealing the Tears: Silvarum:</b> The Twinleaf Captain has a worrisome expression regarding the state of the Holt with the Tears. You travel with the Twin Leaf Captain to the Northern Shrouded Holt where you encounter a series of multi-eyed lesser horrors known as Lesser Observers. You slay the creatures and, by channelling the Guardian Force, seal the tear. The Twinleaf Captain informs you of another tear in the Eastern Holt and you head there with him. Once there you battle another 6 Lesser Observers and once again manage to seal the Tear. You speak with the Twinleaf Captain and return to the Conclave. He assures you that a full report will be given to Tian Glenn on the success of the mission.</p> <p><b>Sealing the Tears: Nixairuth:</b> The Winter Guard Captain is eager for you to join the fray and seal the Tears in the Xinth Mesa. You head to the central province of Xinth Mesa with the Winter Guards to engage icicle covered wolves known as Lesser Amarok. You slay the bests and channel the Guardian Force to seal the tear. The Winter Captain informs you of another Tear that has emerged on the Eastern most province and offers to head there with you. You engage another pack of Amarok’s and once again succeed in seal the Tear. You return to the Conclave with the Winter Guard Captain, and she offers to provide a full report to the Marquise in your stead.</p> <p><b>Imperial Espionage:</b> Lucien has need of your individual skills to look into the imperial facility in Xinth Mesa. Lucien explains that he is curious of the purpose of the imperial facility in Xinth Mesa and asks you to accompany him in a scouting mission to learn more about its purpose in the imperials plan. You head to the western province of Xinth Mesa with Lucien to scout out the imperial facility. You approach a vantage point and begin scouting the imperial facility. Lucien informs you that there are 4 things that should give you a good idea what is going on: The large chimneys, the imperial machinery in the courtyard, the large tanks to the south and the inside to the main building. After observing the area’s Lucien suggests you report back to him and he concludes that this facility is possibly being used to</p>
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extract Aether from the Xinth Mesa, he suggests you return to the Conclave so he can share this development with the other Keepers. You return to the Conclave and speak with Lucien once more. He plans to write out your findings ahead of discussing them with the other Keepers.

**Drain This, Imperials!** Rai'Ahn seems to have a plan in mind regarding the imperial production facility on the western edge of the Solitaidem. Rai'Ahn details a plan to launch a stealth attack on the imperial production facility you scouted with him. The goal is to destroy the Aether Drain devices that have been popping up at an array of imperial encampments across the continent. Rai'Ahn believes this will be a key victory by crippling the Empire's means of developing more of these devices in Althemisa. You travel to the outskirts of the Imperial Encampment and Rai'Ahn goes through the plan of attack.

*Imperial Production Facility (Solo Foray):* The two of you are to sneak into the facility and destroy the production equipment within the main structure using timed Aether charges – devices that will detonate a concentrated burst of Aether after 5 minutes have passed. While you are doing that, Rai'Ahn will be setting charges on the Imperial ships docked outside the structure in an attempt to cripple their means of transporting equipment back to Gzlemath. You are being the infiltration and set the 5 charges on the machinery whilst steering clear of patrolling imperial mech drones. As you set the final charge you hear a loud explosion coming from the dock area. The imperial base enters high alert and the mechs begin to move towards the dock area. Fearing for the safety of Rai'Ahn you run towards the dock too. You spot Rai'Ahn battling a group of Mech drones and rush towards him. You join the fray and, with Rai'Ahn, battle against the mech drones. Rai'Ahn points out that the fuses on the charges would have automatically started after you set the final charge and that you need to escape before they go off. As you head towards the exit an AetherMech Titan attacks. The 10ft Humanoid clockwork mech swipes at you and Rai'Ahn with a pair of large swords. After you destroy the mech you and Rai'Ahn escape the facility just in time to see it collapse in a colossal fireball caused by the detonation of the charges.

You speak to Rai'Ahn who, albeit out of breath, instructs you that you should both return to the conclave. Upon your return Rai'Ahn informs you that he will happily inform the other Keepers of the success of the mission.

Following the completion of the quests assigned you, you speak with Ruvay who has contacted Xeth'Ita. He has completed the ritual and will be arriving at the Conclave along with the 3 Seats to discuss the way forward.

**Imperial Excavation:** You enter the Conclave's main chamber along with the Guard Captains, the Keepers and the 3 Seats. Each of the captains gives a brief report on the success of the closure of the Aetherial Tears across the realm. Each of them highlights that your skills made short work of the lesser horrors and the Tears. Each of the Seat's thanks you for your help in solving this grave threat. Rai'Ahn then explains the success of the bombing mission on the production facility, he offers you the opportunity to add details to his report. Finally, Lucien shares your findings of the imperial excavation facility you and he scouted. He presents a hypothesis that this building is being used to extract Aether from the northern nation and that this facility, like the production facility, must be destroyed if the alliance is to have any hope of preventing the empire from further damaging the realm. At this point Xeth'Ita explains that at present the 13 seals are beginning

to degrade to the instability of the realms Aether. He explains that should the seals break then Cosmic Horrors would be unleashed and the entire planet would be brought low though the cataclysmic release of them. Constantine then raises the point of planning an attack against the imperial's main foothold in the realm – The Anaktaron. This is supported by Marquise de Verglas, however Xeth'Ita points out that the Anaktaron, which stands atop the remnants of Artoria, has a dense energy barrier surrounding it. Most likely it is fuelled by the Aether that is currently being extracted using the devices and the Xinth Mesa facility. He concludes the best course of action is to lead an assault of this facility to prevent the flow of Aether to the Anaktaron. Xeth'Ita asks what your thoughts on the matter are. After responding, Xeth'Ita asks you to enter the facility and destroy the central control room Lucien noted during your scouting mission. Marquise de Verglas suggests that the Winter Guards could lead an assault to distract the bulk of the imperial forces, allowing you enter the facility largely unhindered. You give your views on the plan. The conclave agrees that the assault on the extraction facility should be the next move to disrupt the imperials plans and gain ground from them. With the first step on the counter offensive planned, the conference is concluded and you all exit. You speak to the Winter Guard Captain who is eager to begin the operation at your word.

**Aether Extraction Facility (Dungeon):** The Winter Guard forces march on the Aether Extraction facility in force drawing out many of the imperial mechs and soldiers, allowing you the slip into the facility unimpeded. Once inside you make your way through the courtyard towards the facilities central building. As you approach the entrance you are blocked by a Mk II AetherMech Titan. Unlike the one at the production facility, this model is wielding a spiked mace and an arm cannon. Despite its best efforts the Mech is destroyed, and you continue your way into the facility. Despite the Winter Guards distraction, the facility still has several imperial drones guarding it. You battle your way through several of them and make your way up to the second floor of the facility. The central platform is guarded by a Mk IV AetherTank, a more formidable and armoured version of the mobile cannon. It's overwhelming arsenal of weapons and advanced mobility are, however, no match for your skills as you destroy the machine. You continue onwards towards to top floor of the facility, battling imperial soldiers on the way. You reach the control room and come face to face with Casius and a heavily armoured imperial general. Casius merely chuckles and leaves as the general, armed with two rotating blades, turns to face you. After an intense battle the general falls. The aftermath of the battle is made clear, and you manage to destroy the control units for the facility before heading after Casius.

**That Is A Big Spider!** You chase down of Casius leads to the central extraction tower that stands at the centre of the facility. As you look around for Casius a hulking war mechanica rises to tower over you and the tower. Caius' voice comes from the depths of the machine as he explains this is the Mk II Arachnid, codenamed The Terminal Spider, the ultimate example of his technical genius. The Terminal Spider will drain all the major confluences across Althemisa, providing the empire with near limitless resources for their future and the Empress plans to raise the Empire unto the heavens. He ends his speech with stating that the weapon will be your doom before attacking you.

**Principal Extraction Tower (Trial):** You battle the Terminal Spider atop the tower, defending yourself against its relentless onslaught of attacks until unleashes a fully force barrage on you. You harness the power of the Guardian Force to defend yourself but are left exhausted. Casius, assuming he has defeated you leaves with the mech in a heavily damaged state, stating that it clearly requires some fine tuning to reach its full potential before retreating.

		<p>With the battle concluded, Xeth'Ita appears behind you in your exhausted state. He says little other than you clearly are not worthy of the powers bestowed on you and that he will have to resort to his backup plan. Before you can say a word, he unleashes a blast of energy and throws you from the top of the tower before teleporting away.</p>
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Chapter 5 – For the Future of The Realm	<p><b>Fallen From Grace</b></p> <p><b>To See the Realm Burn</b></p> <p><b>Requiem of the Guardian</b></p> <p><b>Allied Counter Offensive</b></p> <p><b>Guardian of Aether</b></p>	<p><b>Fallen From Grace:</b> You hear the voices of the Keepers, albeit distorted. You clearly survived Xeth’Ita betrayal, however, do not have the strength to open your eyes. The voices fade as you return to a state of unconsciousness. You awaken in the Conclave to see the Keepers gathered around you, the 3 Seats and guard captains are discussing the aftermath of the assault with Ruvay and Rai’Ahn. Milla is excited to see you awake and the room turns to face you. Allina asks if you are well enough to describe the events of the Principal Extraction tower. You are given the choice to describe the battle against Casius in detail, explain the reason behind the imperial’s invasion or to remain silent. Constantine comments that the huge imperial machine that you engaged was seen being carried off towards the Anaktaron, the imperial base of operations over the remains of Artoria (your hometown). The 3 Seats agree that the imperial’s machinations should be stopped with all effort, they ask for your thoughts on the best way to prepare for the climactic battle, giving you the option to suggest either a full assault or a two-pronged attack like the excavation facility. The Seats decide a mixture of the two approaches would best allow you to put an end to the imperial occupation. With you seemingly back to full strength, the Seats agree to return to their cities and being preparations for the final assault with the captains. They offer the Keepers full use of the Conclave currently to enable them to discuss any other developments. Thraleve thanks them for the offer but suggests that you all return to the Hall of the Keepers so that you may discuss the matter of Xeth’Ita sudden disappearance in the aftermath of the battle.</p> <p>You leave the conference room and must travel back to the Hall of the Keepers. Upon arriving at the Hall of the Keepers you notice the heavy wooden doors have been blown off their hinges. Rai’Ahn and Milla behind you confused and concerned that someone would attack the Hall. You enter the building and are set upon by 3 Lesser Mantids, creatures from the abyss that are pitch black mantises. You fell the creatures and make your way through the corridor towards the Lunar Platform. Upon entering the remaining Keepers join you to find Xeth’Ita standing in the centre of the room. You are given the choice to aggressively accuse him of attempting to kill you, calmly ask what he was thinking or to remain quiet. Xeth’Ita ignores your words and merely states that the end is near. At that moment Cornicula and Norbraea appear by his side. The three of them turn to face you and the Keepers mention that the Altar of Tartarus is ready. Xeth’Ita unleashes a wave of energy towards you and the Keepers, however Thraleve and Ruvay shield you all from the blast. As the dust settles the trio are gone. You speak with Thraleve and inform the Keepers of Xeth’Ita betrayal atop the principal extraction tower. Ruvay states that, regardless of everyone’s feelings on Xeth’Ita he has clearly been deceiving everyone for his own goals and must be stopped.</p> <p><b>To See the Realm Burn:</b> Ruvay seems angered by the recent development and Xeth’Ita betrayal, nonetheless she has a resolve to stop him burning in her eyes. Ruvay explains that you need to stop Xeth’Ita at all costs. She has heard reference to the Altar of Tartarus in her investigations around the Heralds of the Abyss. She orders the Keepers to head to the Ruins of Aeon as she believes the Altar is located there. You arrive at the Ruins of Aeon and Lucien informs you that he is detecting a large convergence of Aether coming from the depths of the ruins. Thraleve believes the Altar is possibly in the central chamber where you and he first encountered Cornicula and Norbraea. You enter the tomb and battle 2 groups of the Herald’s acolytes on the way to the central chamber. As you enter the large room you spot Xeth’Ita, and the others stood in the centre of what looks like a large magic circle. You approach the circle and Xeth’Ita explains that the seals around the Tartarus Carceream will be broken, and the Cosmic Horrors will be unleashed. Using the Altar and the imperial’s Aether Drain devices he will drain the Aether they have absorbed from across the cosmos from the horrors and use it to ascend to godhood along with the pair stood behind him. He orders Cornicula and Norbraea to demonstrate the powers that can be obtained from absorbing a small amount of this power while he goes to oversee the final preparations alongside the Archon at the Anaktaron. The Keepers rush to stop him</p>
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but are knocked back by a wave of energy. Cornicula and Norbraea are engulfed in a dark mist that, once dissipated reveals they have become a pale creature clad in black and purple wings. The creature exclaims that it is the Abyssal Herald and shall ring in the end times. The echoed voices of Animus and Aeon cry out that this creature is fuelled by the malice of the horrors and you, Guardian, must destroy it now, less the seals degrade more.

The Tartarus Altar (Trial) You engage the Abyssal Herald in battle and manage to vanquish it, as the creature falls it becomes Cornicula and Norbraea again who fall to the floor and disintegrates in a cloud of dark mist.

You speak with Ruvay and agree to return to the Hall of the Keepers to plan your next steps.

**Requiem of the Guardian:** Lucien seems ready to return to the conclave and discuss the counter offensive against the imperials at the Anaktaron. You travel to the Conclave to finalise plans against the imperials alongside the Keepers. Ruvay reports on the developments of Xeth'Ita betrayal and asks you to describe your conflict with the Abyssal Herald. The Conclave, after this update, move that the time to strike is now. All nations in the alliance are primed and ready to launch an assault on the Anaktaron to draw out the bulk of the imperial forces whilst you lead a small team into the fortress to deal with Casius and Xeth'Ita to bring an end to their machinations. Constantine and Tian Glenn ask that you meet with the guard captains who have set up an operations camp on the outskirts of the Anaktaron to better plan the assault. The Keepers offer to join you, but Thraveve suggests they would be better positioned to repair the damage to Aetherial stability at the convergence points across the realm. You leave the Conclave and head towards the Allied Operation Camp. You arrive at the Allied Operation Camp and discuss the plan with the Guard Captains. They confirm that the destruction of the excavation facility has resulted in the energy barrier surrounding the Anaktaron being deactivated and ask that you scout out the fortress to better gauge your personal plan of attack. While scouting the structure you notice that there is a central tower that is seemingly at the centre of the structure, you assume this is where Casius and Xeth'Ita are located and report your findings to the Guard Captains. With your route of entry decided to be the landing platform on the southside, you and the Guard Captains prepare for the final assault against the imperials.

**Allied Counter Offensive:** The Twinleaf Captain looks eager to send his troops towards the Anaktaron. You speak with the Twinleaf Captain to inform him that you are ready to proceed with the mission. Before you set out however, he suggests talking with the other Captains and the 3 Seats that have arrived to coordinate the assault. You speak with the Sandburnt Captain who is eager to push the imperials from Althemisa. You speak with the Winter Guard Captain who is observing the Anaktaron with a quite reserve, he thanks you for your bravery in the face of the imperial's invasion in Xinth Mesa and swears his soldiers will do all they can to ensure victory against the empire. You speak with Constantine who thanks you for igniting a spark of hope in the hearts of all the citizens you have helped in Solitaidem and assures you that victory will come swiftly. You speak to Tian Glenn who shares her gratitude for you work in bringing a level of stability to the Shaded Holt and informs you that she and the Twinleaf Sentinels stand ready to ensure you triumph over the imperials. You speak to Marquise de Verglas how relays her respect to your swift thinking and fearless attitude in the defence of Xinth Mesa and Nixairuth. She is ready to lead the charge with the Winter Guards against the imperials that will allow you to remove the threat from the realm. You speak

with the Twinleaf Captain again who signals that the time has come for the Alliance to move out. The 3 Seats wish you luck in your battle and motion to a black clad dirigible, a stealth ship that will carry you towards the Anaktaron whilst the Alliance forces engage the imperials in full force. When you are ready, you board the dirigible towards the Anaktaron.

The Anaktaron (Dungeon): You take the dirigible to the Anaktaron flying over the Alliance forces that are beginning their assault on the gates of the Anaktaron. You are dropped off on a balcony area three floors up. You battle your way through several of the IVth legions best soldiers and make your way up the tower. 2 floors up, after collecting 2 imperial identification cards from the corpses of fallen imperial soldiers you open a large mechanical door leading to a control room. As you enter your path is blocked by large and imposing imperial commander armed with an impressive looking steam powered cannon with a spike protruding from its front. After a challenging battle against the commander and his chained spike cannon you manage to ride the elevator on the northwest corner of the room up to the upper floors. As you exit the lift you are met by a set of imperial mech drones Mk III along with a pair of Mk II AetherMech Snowguin on your way through what is a set of imperial labs that are constructing more imperial war machines. As you approach the central lab you are met by an imperial manning a Mk III Titan brandishing a great sword. You engage and destroy the machine, probably killing the imperial manning it. Over an intercom system you here Casius calling to you, asking you to face him atop the observation platform and unseals the elevator to the observation floors. As you make your way through the sprawling donut shaped room towards to final elevator you battle more waves of imperial soldiers and mech drones. You take the elevator to the top of the observation platform. Casius merely laughs at you and raises his sword against you. After a gruelling battle you fend off against Casius who is seemingly exhausted after your battle, he is not however done with you yet. He provokes you into rushing him just as a bigger, more intimidating Aether Spider climbs up the tower. Casius leaps onto it's back and offers you one final battle against a more sophisticated and armoured version of the Terminal Spider, aptly named Telos Arachnae. The monumental machine clambers down the tower towards the courtyard of the Megaron. You are left with but one choice, to follow Casius and end this once and for all.

**Guardian of Aether:** There is an external lift leading towards the Megaron where Casius has headed inside the Telos Arachnae, you steel yourself for your final confrontation against the Supreme Archon and his terrifying war machine.

The Megaron (Trial): As you approach the Megaron Casius' voice echoes from the Telos Arachnae, he describes the reasons for the Gzelmethian invasion and the Empress seeing the release of the Cosmic Horrors. His monologue points out that only through the imperial's technology does the planet stand a chance and that the less developed and savage land of Althemisa should bow down to the imperials rather than resist. He explains how Xeth'Ita reached out to help him develop the Aether Drain devices so that they could create a weapon that would destroy the Horrors when they are unleashed. You can interrupt and divulge what you know of Xeth'Ita true plans or to let him continue his explanation. Casius then asks why you fight, you are given the options to fight for the realm, the planet or for the thrill of battle. He response highlights his negative opinion of you as nothing more than a savage that does not see a bigger picture. He finally ends his monologue with an invite to you to end this once and for all. As you battle against the Telos Arachnae the voices of Aeon and Animus will you forward. As the machine's health reaches critical levels Casius exclaims



that the Aether Reactor is going to overload and that the machine is beginning to self-destruct. Aeon and Animus' voice beseeches you destroy the weapon before that can happen as the Guardian Force will not protect you from the torrent of Aether released in the self-destruct. You manage to destroy the Telos Arachnae before it self-destructs, however the core detonates regardless releasing a torrent of Aether that crystallises the Megaron into a pillar. Casius ejects, however his armour is shattered, and you assume he is dead. Xeth'Ita appears on a fragment of crystal extruding from the pillar. He berates Casius on his failure before turning to you. He reiterates his plans of using the imperials machines to release the Cosmic Horrors, absorb their power and ascend to a god to rule over the cosmos, his plan now will be to draw the Aether of the realm into the pillar so that he can release the Horrors and realise his goal of ascension. He provokes you into a final battle to settle things once and for all before floating up to the apex of the pillar.

*The Crystalline Pillar (Solo Foray):* Before you stand a tall crystalline pillar, Xeth'Ita has ascended to the apex and plans to use the Aether of the pillar to break the 13 seals. Stop him before he brings and end to all things! You ascend the crystalline pillar to its apex where Xeth'Ita stands awaiting you. As you approach, he asks you for your reason to fight, you are given the same options as when Casius asked you the question, however Xeth'Ita responds to your chosen response attentively before asking you to join him in deciding the fate of the realm by matching the power of a Guardian against those of the Cosmic Horrors. You battle Xeth'Ita and as you believe yourself victorious as he falls a strange black mist envelopes him and he rises anew clad in black robes armed with a purple crystallised staff. He challenges you once more to battle him as the voices of Animus and Aeon echo in your mind telling you that you must vanquish your foe, lest the realm be plunged into darkness. As they say this a vortex of energy erupts around you increasing your own strength as you battle against Abyssal Xeth'Ita. As your battle comes to a climax, Xeth'Ita draws a magic circle covering the entire arena and charges up to cast Dark Star which will cause a cataclysmic event should he unleash it. As Xeth'Ita is defeated and the magic circle fades he tells you that you shall meet again where all things end. He is then swallowed up by the dark mist enveloped him. The Crystalline Pillar begins to pulse with energy as Rai'Ahn and the other Keepers arrive on the stealth ship to take you to safety. You are informed that the Alliance have pulled all soldiers back as they believe the pillar will destroy everything in and around the Anaktaron. As the stealth ship flies away the pillar explodes, levelling the fortress and the surrounding area. Again, you are forced to watch as your hometown is engulfed in flames, this time however the light is too much for you to observe.

You arrive back at the Conclave and are met by the 3 Seats and their Captains. You are congratulated and thanked for your efforts in defending the realm against unspeakable evil. They announce that word has already spread about the victory and the city states are celebrating in earnest. Following this meeting, you and the Keepers return to the Lunar Platform where you explain what occurred with Casius, Xeth'Ita and the voices of Aeon and Animus providing you with the power to repel the forces of the Horror's that Xeth'Ita channelled. Thraleve concludes that more investigation into the Heralds of the Abyss is warranted and that you may yet need to challenge the cult. Lucien comments on the worrying premonition Casius divulged from the Empress about the end of days and suggests that there may be a need to investigate the validity of the imperial royal bloodline and their abilities.

		<p>Though many questions remain, and the road into the future is uncertain rest well Guardian for the next adventure will occur sooner than you think.</p> <p>Epilogue Scene: Across the seas there is a rumble and a large gate, surrounded by spikes set into the black sandy planes of an island begins to open. A figure in a black robe stand overlooking the gate and utters “The gate will soon open, and despair will be unleashed”.</p>
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## Bark Table

Below is a table of barks for a variety of characters that are present in the game. They are divided into 2 categories: Allies and Villains. All barks will play with these characters in instanced content.

Character		Barks	Character		Barks
Villains	The Abyssal Herald	Your soul is ours Tartarus take you! We are all We will bring forth the end We are the end times Darkness reigns	Allies	Aeon & Animus	Our powers belong to you now, fell this evil May the blessing of the planet flow through you You will rise anew Stand tall against this threat You may undo this doom
	Casius	Burn! We shall rise from your corpse For the Empire This is Her will and I am her hand! I will not falter or fall I will end you! Your power is nothing compared to our might		Xeth'Ita	Stand tall my friend, we will prevail. You will stand against us no more! We will prevail. Behold the true power of the Keepers Abysse take you
	Xeth'Ita	You have meddled enough times We are legion! Their power belongs to me Die! The ancients cannot save you		Ruvay	By the divine light! Flee fell creatures By her grace, I will end you Enough!
				Thraleve	Didn't see that coming, did you! I am as the wind Surprise! Hold on! Allow me, my friend
				Alina	Check this out Can't escape my aim! Aww, looks like that hurt Time for some fireworks!
				Lucien	By Animus' grace, you are mine! The dark take you May your soul burn For the realm
				Milla	Our cause is just I cannot fail Watch this I'm finishing this Behold the power of the cosmos
				Rai'Ahn	Run while you can To the abyss with you I will tear you apart I call forth your doom Enough of this