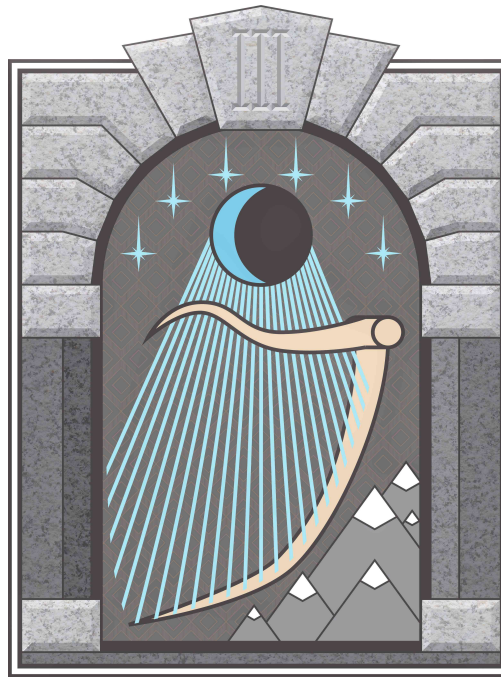


The Gates of Remembrance



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Fastaval 2019

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Participants: The scenario is for four players and a facilitator. The players should be at least 15 years old, both because of challenging themes and because of the concentration required. Including logistics, playing the scenario should take about four hours.

Materials: Print the scenario single sided, as landscape. The gate posters, pp 53-58, would really like to be in colour and the highest quality that you can manage, but otherwise grayscale is fine. If you run the game at Fastaval, you will receive print and the means to hang the posters – otherwise you will have to get masking tape or tack on your own. Scissors to cut out the question cards will come in handy.

Preparing and facilitating: It is a good idea to have read the entire game beforehand. If you must focus, it is important to have understood the sections **Setting**, **Characters** and **Challenges & Style of Play** (and the graphic overview is a help with this). When you have mastered these, you can largely run the scenes off the page. It would be thematically appropriate if you as facilitator were to commit The Gates of Remembrance to memory using mnemotechnique, but it is not strictly necessary..

Credits:

Playtesters – Marie-Luise Lubich, Tobias Bindslet, Niels Ladefoged Rasmussen, Nis Haller Baggesen.

Sparring – Forfatterkollektivet Arbejdstitel, Danny Wilson, Morten Jaeger, Brand Robins, Lotte Melchior Larsen.

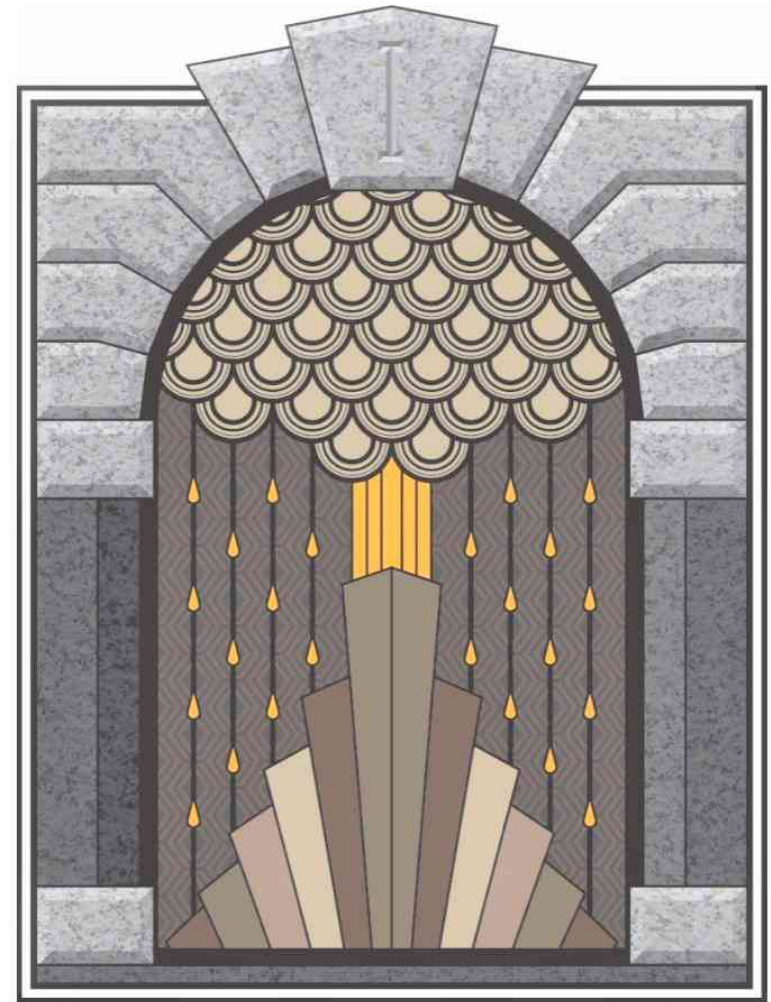
Illustrations – Oliver Nøglebæk.

Idea for mnemotechnique – Lars Bjørstrup.

The Gates of Remembrance

In the eyes of the Majority, the Minority are greedy drunkards – ridiculous and unworthy; everything that the Majority can agree that they themselves are not. In their own eyes, the Minority (they call themselves the Folk) in their exile are the guardians of a proud tradition and hopes of prosperity. *The Gates of Remembrance* is a mnemotechnic exercise that the Folk use to keep their traditions. When the Majority take out their contempt on the Folk, the Gates become a fortress against loss of dignity and identity. The main characters of the game are four members of the Folk in the town of Bulwark who are tasked with guarding the tradition in the coming generation. The game takes place in an alternate version of the early 19th century.

The Gates of Remembrance is about identity, both for individuals and for groups, and it is about trying to get coexistence to work, maintaining human connections across group boundaries. It is drama about dealing with demands both reasonable and unreasonable, and it is about the consequences of failing. The unusual thing about the game is that in the meat of the game, the challenge scenes, the outcomes are decided by the actual ability of players to remember, and by what they choose to make of their successes and failures. This demand that they perform puts a pressure on the players that is a hint of the pressures that the player characters face – plot concerns and dramatic choices are relevant, but the hard basis is the ability of the players to answer questions. Both success and failure, coexistence and resistance, have interesting and dramatic consequences, so it will still be a good story if people can't remember, but it will be a different story from the one that would grow from remembrance.



The main characters are leading members of the Minority in town. They are two pairs of siblings, the brothers Slate and Porphyry, and the sisters Turquoise and Emerald. Slate and Emerald are married and have four children. The main characters have different social ambitions, both internally in the Folk and in relation to the Majority, and different things that they fear – all have much to lose. In scenes where their main character is absent, players can also control secondary characters from the Majority, so the Majority can actually be the majority in play.

The scenario starts off with a couple of relatively undramatic scenes, in which the players are introduced to the everyday life of the Folk. As a part of this they also experience how their roles (and they themselves) learn the exercise *The Gates of Remembrance*, and how it fits into the culture of the Folk. The story kicks off in earnest when a new priestess of the Majority's religion arrives in town and the Minority are singled out as scapegoats. The rest of the game takes place over the course of a year or so, in which the Folk and the player characters may or may not crack under pressure. In the beginning, the players face challenges to their identity, but soon they are also forced to deal with the demands of the Majority. In the main part of the game, the players must meet these challenges, that is answer questions that are relevant with respect to pressure in the fiction, use the answers and relate to their surroundings. Once in a while, bad things happen that they cannot prevent, and the consequences develop for the Minority, for the player characters and for the relationships of the the player characters to members of the Majority.

As facilitator, your task is to play NPCs that pressure and challenge the players, and also to lead the players through a predefined set of challenges and other scenes while adapting them to the outcomes of play to make the fiction of the game feel real. At the same time, you must ensure that the game doesn't get too tough for the players to handle.

Mnemotechnique. The game uses the Greco-Roman technique of the "memory palace" which combines spatial sense and the visualization of striking images to organize a material to be recalled. Six posters of gates, hung around the play area, will form the concrete spatial structure that the players use. To help less visually oriented players, the palace of this game is reinforced with patterns and wordplay. The entire exercise is to be found as *The Gates of Remembrance*, pp. 42-48.

Where are the Nazis? It may be that players get the idea that the game is a thinly veiled story of Nazis and the persecution of Jews. This is not quite right, and it may lead players to have incorrect expectations. The things that the game is about make up a part of the road to the Holocaust, but the subject of *The Gates of Remembrance* is much more general and widespread issues. The Majority are not Nazis. The Folk are not Jews (or no more than ~40%). This is not Germany in the 1930s.

Setting

The game takes place in the town of Bulwark, a medium-sized provincial town in an alternate version of the early 19th century, in some place that might be Northern Europe or the Northeastern US. The Majority of the population is of clearly Northern European character, and their religion (that plays a large role in the game, see in particular the section "The will of Allfather", p. 50) is Protestantism with a Norse veneer. The Minority, the Folk, draw primarily on Irish and Jewish culture and history, but also contain other elements such as Mongol gift culture and bits of Tolkien dwarves. The Folk consider themselves human, while the Majority are of the opinion that the Folk are 'dwarves', while they themselves are REAL humans.

A central fact of Folk culture is their exile from the Homeland (though they have been living in Bulwark for several generations) and ambitions to someday return. In their tales, they were driven out by a catastrophe involving dragons, and their lost Homeland, distant and beyond a sea but a real enough place, is today inhabited by people sporting dragons in their banners. The story and culture of the Folk is found in the section The Gates of Remembrance, from p. 42.

Bulwark is the largest town in the area, with maybe 5.000 souls and 10-12.000 in the uplands. The local Folk are about 200 people in town, concentrated in Dwarf Street, which they call Turquoise Street after one of the local founders. The Folk have a common house with a meeting hall and a public bath, where much of their social life takes place, and they have their own graveyard.

In the uplands there's also a group of extremely poor day labourers who are of Folk descent but have lost the language and the tradition. They are alcoholized and desperately poor, and the Bulwark Folk want nothing to do with them, calling them 'the Unfolk'.

The most important industry of Bulwark is pottery, in part because of the very well suited local clay. By public ordinance, the Folk are excluded from the craft, and instead deal in trading and various other crafts, mostly dyeing & weaving, fine smithing and the brewing of fine ale and brandy.

Mayor Oak is a corrupt bastard, but so far he has tolerated the Folk due to bribery, and because of the considerable value that they bring to the trade and general prosperity of Bulwark. Among other functions, Oak is the leader of the Watch, a small corps of about 20 night watchmen & firemen armed with clubs and guns (with one shot), the core of the town's significantly larger volunteer militia. The Folk are not permitted to bear arms, and must make do with defending themselves with available tools.

The political balance of the town is upset when a new priestess of Allfather, Yarrow, arrives in town. She passionately preaches virtue and morality, and uses the Minority as a dark mirror for the Majority, an example of wickedness and immorality. This leads to pressure and abuses against the Folk. Towards the end of the year over which the game plays out, Yarrow has made too many enemies in the Majority, and loses her power. This happens no matter what, and the players will hear rumours about it and see consequences of it. The question on which the players DO have influence is whether the position and community of the Folk suffer so much harm over the course of the year that their future in Bulwark is seriously threatened.

Setting – Names

The Majority are named after plants, men after trees and women after flowers. Women of the Majority bear such names as...

Daisy, Forgetmenot, Orchid, Appleblossom.

Men might be named...

Cedar, Beech, Elm, Appletree.

The Folk are named after stones and rocks, and these materials are part of their naming ceremony. Women are named after decorative stones, while men are named after rocks and stones other than the decorative. The mythical ancestor of the Folk is named **Bedrock**.

Women's names might be...

Agate, Amethyst, Nephrite, Ruby.

Men's names could be...

Basalt, Granite, Gneiss, Marble.

Until they get their proper names at age 11, children of the Folk have ordinal numbers, supplemented with nicknames ("First, Second" etc.).



Characters

If people only appear in a single scene and do not have structural importance, they are not mentioned here.

Main characters: (pp. 33-37)

Slate is the younger of two brothers and married to Emerald. Slate is a successful and slightly macho businessman, who desires financial success and fears violence. For Slate, the most important part of the tradition is striving for prosperity as preparation for the return of the Folk from exile – the future.

Porphyry is the older brother, standing slightly in the shade of his younger brother. He is engaged to Turquoise, but it is not certain what will come of it. Porphyry is a scribe, both to the Folk and to the Majority. He desires recognition and respect from the rest of the Folk, and fears hunger and privation. For him, the most important part of the tradition is the relationship with the past.

Emerald is the elder of the two sisters and married to Slate. Emerald is the flamboyant centre of the social life of the Folk in town. She desires a joyous and festive life, no matter how dark the conditions might get, and she fears humiliation and loss of dignity. For her, the most important part of the tradition is the focus on generosity and joy.

Turquoise is the younger, quieter sister who is engaged to marry Porphyry, but not sure about going through with it. Turquoise is a brilliant dyer and weaver. She desires the conditions to work at the highest level of her art, but fears isolation and loneliness. For her, the tradition is a source of wisdom and artistic inspiration.

Secondary characters of the Folk:

Fulgurite, 12, the oldest son of Emerald and Slate. Curious, thoughtful, contact seeking. Slate and Emerald have three younger children (Second, Third and Fourth) with which we will not deal in detail. In many scenes, Fulgurite is a tool for the facilitator to comment on the players and play from inside the fiction. *Fulgurite* is a branch-shaped stone made when lightning strikes sand.

Aunt Onyx, talkative, fat, kind and a bit of a busybody; an older lady related to all the main characters. Aunt Onyx is likewise a tool for the facilitator to comment, especially to say things that it would not make sense for a child to say.

Carnelian, the Bard. She is a brusque, older lady who is the guardian of Folk tradition. She teaches the main characters about The Gates of Remembrance, and leaves Bulwark right after that.

Some lesser secondary characters are mentioned in the text of the main characters. Slate has a workman, old and slightly confused *Flint*. Turquoise has the apprentices *Citrine* og *Limestone*, who are not described further. Make up details if necessary and only then.

If you need a secondary character from the **Unfolk**, their spokeswoman is named *Dandelion*. She is stubborn, alcoholized, envious and full of longing.



Secondary characters of the Majority:

Player controlled: These are described elsewhere (Secondary characters for player use pp. 38-41). Their relationships with Minority friends might be ruined, and this is represented through two or three versions of each. If their relationship with the Minority worsens, the next time they're handed to a player, it will be a less friendly version.

Coltsfoot, widow after a rich merchant, skillfully running the business. In business with Slate and Emerald, and on friendly terms with them.

Birch, poor day labourer and nightman, childhood playmate of Emerald and Porphyry, sometimes gets odd jobs for a bit of money.

Ash, middle aged teacher, earnestly and positively curious about Folk culture, and a long time friend of Turquoise and Porphyry.

Facilitator controlled:

Mayor **Oak**. Corrupt opportunist and center of the established power in Bulwark. He is willing to take money and goods from the Folk and willing to bother the Folk with political initiatives if popular demand requires it. What Oak believes in is his own power and its moral rightness. He is voluminous and wears clothes that are sumptuous but in dark colours.

Yarrow, Allfather's new priestess. She is a fervent believer and wants to heighten the questionable faith and morals of the Majority. To this end, she uses the Folk as a dark mirror – everything that Allfather's faithful *shouldn't* be. In practice, she gathers support from the common folk of the the Majority by preaching against the Folk and encouraging suspicions and abuse. She is tall and thin and wears black dresses with a white lace collar.

Challenges & style of play

The style of play is summarized and ready to serve directly to the players during the early phase in Runthrough (pp. 15-16). Here is a slightly more detailed explanation for you as facilitator.

Drama, not action or intrigue – the scenario is a sequence of predefined scenes where some elements are open for adaptation. Outcomes in one scene will affect the situation in the next, but it's not a sandbox where you move around trying to solve practical problems in a proactive way. And it is not at all a game where it is possible to solve your problems with violence – heroic rebellion is not an option.

Play to not lose. Outcomes in the game are determined mostly by the ability of the players to answer specific questions, plus the will to use their knowledge constructively. Here, the characters are utterly dependent upon the abilities of the players, and there is no such thing as "but my character knows this". The game is constructed so that both success and failure make for interesting stories! However, it will not be very interesting if the players fail on purpose. It is not a game that you can really win, but you can *avoid losing*. Setting out, this is a good goal to have, and then it's fine to find your character and in the end do what makes most sense for the character. Which might well turn out to be keeping on trying to make the best of a difficult situation.

Everyone is not in the spotlight all the time – sometimes players play main characters, sometimes they have a secondary function, sometimes they are spectators. The game is better, not least for the players themselves, if they engage actively while watching, instead of zoning out or going for the phone.

We play tabletop style – except when we go semi-live instead. For most of the game, we set scenes, interrupt them with questions and narrate bridges, and this fits with sitting around a table talking. However, when we play out ceremonies, we do it semi-live. This means that our bodies count as those of our characters and exist in space in relation to each other, but we imagine both our appearances and other surroundings.

Creation and co-creation – the world of the game is in some ways quite thoroughly defined, and the players will have to account for the reality of the game. But in other ways the world is not strictly defined, and the players are welcome to contribute details about the life of the Folk in Bulwark.

Safety – it is OK to feel a lot (or not), so intensity is not a problem in itself. If the players feel a need to stop the game because something seems not OK, they can say "stop the game", and then you do just that, and work out what to do next. The facilitator can stop the game as well. If (against expectations) a serious problem crops up, take the time to deal with it and seriously consider breaking off play. The players are more important than the game.

The role of the facilitator – framer, evoker and challenger. First and foremost, you must control the fairly strict framework within which the players move, and instruct them in what is to happen, so they don't have to worry about it. You set some scenes, others you help the players set. You cut all scenes, without exception. If in doubt, cut early and tightly rather than letting scenes run long.

You must do your bit to **evoke** the world of the game and make it feel real, not through lengthy descriptions but by hinting and by helping the players bring the world to life. They should focus on little things and not worry too much, as you are the backstop of consistency. When you play secondary characters, it is your job to make these feel like real people who are a part of the world of the game.

You must also **challenge** the players, not just by framing challenges that they must answer and deal with, but also by making their surroundings in the game a mirror that confronts them with the consequences of their actions. When you play secondary characters, it is ALSO your job to play them in a way that pushes the players and the game as needed. Even as you keep an eye out for whether someone needs more pressure, you must of course also keep track of whether anyone is in more crisis than they feel like being.

Finally, you must also be a **cheerleader** to the players. Not that you must cheer loudly and present big smiles, but you must support them when they seek confirmation from you that they are doing alright, and you must quietly but visibly express satisfaction when something goes well. Especially, you must be positive about the game after challenges, both when they go well and when they go less well – failure is a twist that takes the game to new and exciting places, not the game going off the rails.

Scene types – overview

In the beginning there are three **intro scenes** (I1, I2, I3). Here, we meet both the main characters and the player-controlled secondary characters.

The core of the game is **challenge scenes** (CI1..., CD1...). Here, one or two main characters are presented with a problem, the scene is interrupted with a specific question that they answer, the scene continues, and the final outcome depends both on whether they could answer and whether they could use the answer sensibly. Challenges can address either the **identity** of the Minority or the **demands** of the Majority. The game has concepts for what the main characters have to lose – in identity challenges they can be forced to take upon themselves negative stereotypes, and in demand challenges their relationships with otherwise friendly secondary characters may deteriorate.

After a challenge comes a **consequence scene**. After identity challenges, another player sets a scene where the Folk talk about the consequences; after demand challenges, the facilitator narrates the consequences for the livelihoods of the main characters and the attitudes of friendly Majority characters. Consequence scene notes are presented together with the given challenges in the scene list.

A **Folk scene** (F1, F2...) is played for every two to three sets of challenges plus consequences. These are social occasions for the Folk, where all main characters meet. In some of these they only talk, in some they receive news of larger-scale aggressions by the Majority that they cannot prevent, and other Folk scenes have their own specific rules. These are explained in their descriptions in the scene list.

Identity challenge scenes

These are about actions and values which the players have memorized and hidden in The Gates of Remembrance. In the course of the game, each main character will face two identity challenges, one where they are alone and one where they are with another main character.

Kicker. First, you set the scene based on the guidance in the scene description. However, always and without exception you must adapt your scene setting by drawing upon the outcomes of earlier scenes, so that the scene kicks off from where the game is right now, not just from the general themes. In some cases, the challenge is clear from your kicker alone, in some cases you must (fairly quickly) play your way to the challenge using secondary characters once the scene is playing. The scene setting must always state *who* is present (always one or two specific main characters, often secondaries), *where* we are (including weather and season, to give a greater sense of the progress of the game) and *what* the situation is at the outset. You give a card with the question of the scene to a player who is not in the scene, so that they can prepare to ask the question when it is time. The last three of the six identity challenges of the game have question cards in two difficulties, and you can use the choice between these to calibrate play. The question cards are found as handouts, p. 52.

Example question card:

The brown rune (CI1): Question for the Gate of Fire

What is the right action that is hid behind the Gate of Fire?

Play your way to the challenge. After the kicker, as previously stated you present the challenge through secondary characters if it isn't already clear, and in any case the player or players get a chance to react immediately and briefly. You cut directly to the question, tightly rather than loosely if in doubt.

The question. Signal to the player that got the question that it is time to ask it. Typically, the questions are harder in two-player challenges. It is forbidden for others to help the challenged. If the challenged do not answer straight away, you can give them up to a minute or so to think. Then, demand that they give it their best shot. If there are two players answering together, they may briefly confer. The answers are in the scene description. You must judge whether they have answered with *full success*, *partial success* or *failure*. *Full success* need not be 100% word perfect, but the concepts must be correct and correctly applied. With *partial success* they are on to some of the right things, but are wrong about significant details. For instance, if the right answer is the values "courage and appetite" and the player answers "joy and appetite", they are partially correct. If they either have no answer or are largely off, it is of course a *failure*. You tell them how well they hit the mark, but do not yet materialize consequences.

Bringing it into play. Here, to begin with you let the fiction respond to the answers of the challenged. They can get to enjoy the fruits of full or partial success if they use the answers in play. If you have secondaries in play, you should let their reactions and degree of positivity depend on successful use or lack thereof. As always, you do the cutting, preferably tightly once the point and the mood are clear and sharp.

Outcomes. State your final, total verdict over their answer and use. Do not be very strict, but it should matter whether the players play along. If the challenged have full success, they suffer no ills. If they have partial success, each of the one or two players who were challenged must take on one of the four levels of *sin* (about sin, see under Main characters, p. 32). In case of failure, they must take upon themselves two levels of sin. They must each choose which and briefly narrate at the table how their characters change as a consequence of their cultural and personal identity weakening. Finally, you must ask the players who haven't had a main character in the scene if one of them would like to set a *consequence scene*.

Example: How *Challenge – identity 1* might play out.

Facilitator (F): Who wants to prepare a question for Porphyry? (gives the question card for the scene to the player of Emerald, who looks eager). Ask the question on my signal.

F [Kicker]: Porphyry, one sunny, early summer day, you come home from a scribing job, and as you are standing at your door, you notice the smell of shit. You see that there are marks on your door like someone tried to kick it in – fortunately it's solid, though. Then you see the rune. In the middle of the door, a rune is painted in shit. It's called "ansuz" and looks like an F with the horizontal lines pointing down at an angle – it is a sign of the Majority's god, Allfather. There's also shit smeared on the door handle (falls silent and looks expectantly at Porphyry).

Porphyry: I stop and sigh deeply, looking sad. Then I glance around nervously.

F: Further down Turquoise Street a couple of little children are playing, but otherwise there's no one in sight.

Porphyry: "It's these terrible times that we live in!" I pull out a rag to wipe the door handle.

F: [Signals to Emerald's player, who asks the question]

Emerald's player: What is the right action that is hid behind the Gate of Fire?

Porphyry: Hm. Hm. It was something with an evil clown. Hm. Yes! It is laughing at bad things!

F: [The answer is: *Laughing out loud to take the power away from troubles and evils.*] That is quite correct! Play on.

Porphyry: Erm, so I wipe down the doorknob and... wait. HAHHAHAHAHA!!!

F: That's fine, you have full success and will have no further problems from this matter. At this time, at least. We need one of the rest of you to set a scene about this, where people of the Folk are talking about minor acts of vandalism and how Porphyry is doing well...

Consequence scenes – identity

A player sets the scene, with support from you if needed. The consequence scenes are not at all as tightly defined as the challenge scenes. The consequence scene must be a social scene internally in the Folk, where they discuss how the main characters in the preceding identity challenge are doing, based on the outcome. The main character of the scene setter must be present. Otherwise they choose who is there of the other main characters, and might call upon Fulgurite or Aunt Onyx. If they have a good idea that involves others, this can be OK, but it is better to keep it simple than to make a complicated setup with hitherto unknown characters. As always with scene setting, **who**, **where** and **what**. With regards to the situation, "*what*", they can state outright how the conversation arrives at the consequences, or start out by raising the subject. As facilitator you always have the right to introduce Fulgurite or Onyx to say things that you think need saying. And when the important things are said and the social framework has had a moment to be real, you cut.

Cheating. If someone illegitimately helps with a challenge, you are obliged to bring unpleasant in-fiction consequences to the offender as if they had answered wrongly themselves, AND the fiction must react with extra nastiness to the original challenge. Probably this will never be relevant, but the threat should be real.

Demand challenge scenes

These in many ways resemble identity challenges, so this explanation focuses on the differences. Demand challenges are in part about the players' ability to account for the values of the Majority (as presented in the scene *Yarrow's sermon*, and as outlined in the aid sheet *The will of Allfather*, p. 50), in part about the ability and will of the main characters to adapt or submit to these demands. Every main character will face two demand challenges, one where they are alone and one where they are with another main character.

Kicker. Again you set the scene, drawing upon prior outcomes. Facilitating, you hand a secondary character from the Majority to one of the players who doesn't have a main character in the scene (the last demand challenge is a bit special in this respect, with 0-3 secondary characters). These secondary characters come in multiple versions depending on whether their relationship with the Folk has soured earlier, and you hand out the secondary folded so that the appropriate version makes up the front, and point it out if they have changed since the last time they appeared. Of course, the scene setting involves **who**, **where** and **what**, based on the scene description. Here, the question is *not* handed out to a player but asked by you when the time comes. Here, the questions are as difficult as they are, with no choice of levels – but typically they are harder when put to two players.

Play your way to the challenge. Here, you have a player-controlled secondary character to help, always in cooperation with another secondary character run by you, and the kicker should have made the nature of the task clear to the player with the secondary. If you deem it necessary, you can give support with instructions. Don't be long-winded – just give the players a chance to taste the conflict in play, then go.

The question. When you have played your way to the question, you can either cut or ask the question through your facilitator-controlled secondary, depending on what the scene says, and THEN cut. Then the challenged player or players get up to a minute to answer. Then you demand that they give it their best shot. The answers are in the scene descriptions. As with identity challenges, you must judge whether they have answered with *full success*, *partial success* or *failure*, and tell them how well they hit the mark.

Bringing it into play. As in identity challenges, the players must have a chance to react to and with their answers. Here it is truly important whether they are also willing to show respect and will to compromise with the demand, the value in question, and not least the involved members of the Majority. "Respect" need not mean acting like a doormat and insulting one's own values. The players can choose not to show any will to compromise, and this will then have consequences.

Outcomes. If the challenged have full success, they suffer no ills. Ills can be suffered upon their persons, their livelihoods and upon their (and the Folk's) relationship with the friendly, player-controlled Majority secondary. It is not within the scope of the game that main characters can be killed – if a player does something that would obviously get their main character killed, you should interrupt play and say so, and give them a chance to change their minds. If they have partial success, the relationship of the secondary with the Folk will get one level worse (see Secondary characters, p. 38), and they will suffer minor harm to their livelihoods. If they fail, the relationship with the secondary will worsen, their livelihoods will suffer grave harm and they might get physically hurt if it makes sense in the situation. "Hurt" is fiction without direct mechanical weight, but it is just this sort of consequences that you must make real and relevant while setting subsequent scenes. Bodily harm and threats to livelihoods you state up front, longer-term consequences, you narrate/show in the consequence scene.

Consequence scenes – demands

Basically you narrate how the consequences play out over the following weeks with regard to both practical problems, damaged relationships, or maybe just things going all right – or as right as possible in the light of the general situation and earlier consequences. Do take the success or failure of the main characters as an indication of the trials of the Folk in the period. Note that a success in a demand challenge is a fine opportunity for you as facilitator to draw attention to great and small problems suffered by others, and possible imbalances and shifts of power, prestige and sympathy that play out inside the Folk. You can ask players to narrate brief reactions, such that you keep hold of the main thread, but they narrate their own characters. If it seems like a really great idea with a short scene with proper dialogue, you can set one, but keep it brief and sharp. All in all, use the consequence scene to bring Bulwark and the Folk to life, but in a fairly terse way.

Overview: challenges – identity

Question card

Hand out to a player other than the challenged

Kicker

Facilitator sets scene

Play your way to the challenge

Facilitator cuts

The question

Facilitator says if the answer is **fully correct, partially correct** or **wrong**

Asked by card holder

Bringing it into play

Can the challenged use correct answer?
OR trouble due to wrong answer
Facilitator cuts

Outcome

Facilitator's final call: **full success, partial success** or **failure**

Sin

*Challenged must take on **ONE** sin with partial success, **TWO** with failure*

Consequence scene

Facilitator cuts

SOCIAL SCENE in the Folk

Set by a player not challenged

Fac. can comment with Fulgurite or Onyx

Overview: challenges – demands

Secondary

Hand out to a player other than the challenged

Kicker

Facilitator sets scene

Play your way to the challenge

Facilitator cuts

The question

Facilitator says if the answer is **fully correct, partially correct** or **wrong**

Asked by facilitator

Bringing it into play

Can the challenged use correct answer?
OR trouble due to wrong answer
Facilitator cuts

Outcome

Facilitator's final call: **full success, partial success** or **failure**

Loss of friendship

With failure or partial success, the secondary becomes a level less friendly

Consequence scene

Facilitator cuts

Narrated by facilitator

Possible short dialogue w. two players

Runthrough

This section describes the course of play until the actual challenge scenes start. The section is good to have at hand while running the start of the game.

Welcome. You have been sorted and sent to a room. At Fastaval, the themes of the game will have been already briefly explained, elsewhere it will be a good idea with a very short introduction to what this game even is. Also, greet each other. Together with the players, put the posters up on the wall, preferably not on windows – that way it is easier to imagine opening a door there and stepping through it to a room behind it. Do not place them close together, spread them out well. At Fastaval, you will receive tack or the like for putting them up. The posters should be in order (they are numbered).

Stereotypes and Tolkien dwarves. Start out by bringing up stereotypes about ethnic groups, with Tolkien dwarves as example. First, ask the players to name examples of how fantasy dwarves are heroic and interesting. Possibly add in things that the players miss – make sure that exile and hope of return are mentioned. The dwarf Gimli in the Lord of the Rings *books* is a good example. Then ask the players to name ways in which dwarves are portrayed negatively in popular culture. The dwarf Gimli in the Lord of the Rings *films* is a good example. Again, add in things that the players are missing – greedy, drunken, filthy, clownish.

Setting intro. Give an introduction based on the **Setting** section. The players don't have to learn this setting information by heart, they just need to have a general idea now, and can absolutely catch up along the way. Explain the role of Mayor Oak, but leave out Yarrow. Make sure that the name of the god of the Majority, Allfather, has been mentioned, and the Unfolk. Bring up that the Folk see themselves as human, while the Majority of the town of Bulwark considers themselves to be the proper humans, and call the Folk "dwarves".

CASTING. Introduce the four characters, the brothers Porphyry and Slate, and the sisters Emerald and Turquoise. They are all respected members of the Folk in Bulwark, and have been chosen to be the guardians of the tradition. The tradition is important to all of them, though they emphasize different parts and values.

- To **Emerald**, the most important things about the tradition are joy and generosity.
- To **Turquoise**, the most important things about the tradition are wisdom and artistic inspiration.
- To **Slate**, the most important thing about the tradition is determined striving for prosperity – the future.
- To **Porphyry**, the most important thing about the tradition is the relationship with the past.

It is up to the players to choose who they want to be, and they should distribute the roles between them after a brief discussion. Ask if everyone is happy with their character, and see if someone has ended up with someone that they aren't satisfied with because all other options were seized quickly – casting should not be a matter of reflexes.

Style of play. Briefly and concisely outline the style and the rest of the programme.

- **Drama, not action or intrigue** – and this is not a game about heroes smashing problems with violence, but perhaps a game about heroes who make life livable even though *others* are smashing things.
- **Play to not lose** – at least at first. The game develops differently depending on how you handle challenges, but interesting play will result either way.
- **Everyone is not in the spotlight all the time** – sometimes you have a secondary function as secondary character or asker of questions, and sometimes you are just a spectator. The game is better if you pay attention even when you're not on the spot.
- **Tabletop play** with scenes that we cut into and out of. Semi-live ceremonies.
- **Creation and co-creation.** The players are co-creators of the little things that bring the game to life. You handle the big things, and you will act as a supplement and backstop.
- **Safety.** Very originally, the safety phrase is "*stop the game.*" The facilitator can also stop play if something seems to have gone off the rails. The players are more important than the game.
- **One year.** The scenes of the game play out over a year or so, so it is not a detailed account of all that happens.

The story of the Folk – tell the story as an intro to starting play proper. You can find it collected as an aid sheet on page 51 – if you haven't learned it by heart yourself...

Intro scenes. Two take place before the initiation to The Gates of Remembrance, one takes place after. They let the players find each other, the setting and the friendly Majority secondary characters. See the start of scene list.

The Initiation. An about 30 minutes in character workshop in which the Bard initiates the main characters, and you as facilitator teach the players to memorize the tradition of the Folk through memory palace technique. As roleplay, the initiation is described in its place in the scene list, and the form and contents are carefully described in the section The Gates of Remembrance, starting page 42.

The rest of the scenes – the third intro scene and the rest of the scenes. This is the greater part of play.

Rounding off. After you are done with the story, you should clean up together and make a little ceremony out of it.

The scenes

Individual scenes may be adapted with respect to the details, but the order and general content is fixed. Stated characters are the ones played by players, with facilitator characters in parentheses.

An evening with Coltsfoot (I1) – Slate, Emerald & Coltsfoot

Scene setting: Coltsfoot is visiting Emerald & Slate in their home. It is early summer, and a beautiful evening.

Ask the player of Porphyry or Turquoise to play Coltsfoot, and give them Coltsfoot v1.

Ask people to briefly introduce their characters, and ask Emerald to briefly describe the home. Supplement as needed.

Ask Slate to bring up in conversation some business dealing with Coltsfoot, and Coltsfoot to mention Yarrow, the new priestess of Allfather in Bulwark, who is supposedly very pious and passionate.

Play the scene to establish the characters and the situation, and cut as soon as it doesn't seem overly tight. The conversation need not finish. Cut short rather than long.

Consequences: Nothing drastic, but relationships and setting details to reintegrate later. And we will hear much more of Yarrow. You need not account for consequences, but can just say that we have now met some people, of whom we will see more.

A penny for Birch (I2) – Emerald, Porphyry & Birch

Scene setting: Porphyry is on a visit in Emerald and Slate's home while Slate is out on business. Birch drops by and asks if there's something he could do for a bit of change. It's a sunny early summer day.

Ask the player of Turquoise or Slate to play Birch, and give them Birch v1.

Ask people to briefly introduce their characters. Supplement as needed.

Play the scene to establish the characters and the situation, and cut as soon as it doesn't seem overly tight. Cut short rather than long.

Consequences: Nothing drastic, but relationships and setting details to reintegrate later. And we will hear much more of Yarrow. You need not account for consequences, but can just say that we have now met some people, of whom we will see more.

The initiation (F1) – ceremony, all mains (Carnelian the Bard)

Scene setting: The main characters have been gathered in Emerald and Slate's home by the Bard to discuss a serious matter regarding their coming work as guardians of tradition to the coming generation. Ask Turquoise to introduce herself, as this has not been done before. The Bard is a brusque, grey-haired lady named Carnelian, but she is called the Bard. As this is a ceremony, ask the players to stand in a circle on the floor and be physically present in the room as their characters. Say that the gate posters on the walls are artfully painted wood carvings that Emerald & Slate have hung as the Bard asked. It is a rainy, windy early summer day outside.

Start out greeting them somberly. Then explain that you (Carnelian) will soon have to go away, so their training must be completed now with the final runthrough and initiation. Your presence is required with the Folk in the town of Skilfing, up north. Here, two of the guardians of the Gates are dead, and the two others have abandoned their duties – give evasive but dark hints as to precisely what happened if they ask.

Then cut to the chase and say that time is running short. First you will retell the story of the Folk, and then you will initiate them into the mysteries of the Gates. *First retell the story* based on the Story of the Folk, p. 49. If you haven't quite committed it to memory, feel free to refer to the text.

Then, teach them the content of the Gates, based on the instructions in The Gates of Remembrance, pp. 42-48.

That done, ask them to silently run through the gates in their heads and ask if they have any questions. Strongly encourage them to ask, if noone does. When you have brusquely answered questions, say that you must go. Wish them luck and cut.

Tea with Ash (I3) – Porphyry, Turquoise & Ash

Scene setting: Porphyry and Turquoise are visiting Ash to have tea and discuss their common interest in the culture and history of the Folk. It is a windless, hot summer day.

Ask Emerald's player to take Ash, and give them Ash v1. Or Slate, but it is better with Emerald as Slate and Ash will appear together in a later scene (CD5).

Ask people to introduce their characters, and ask Ash to describe the home. Supplement as needed.

Ask Ash to ask about the Unfolk, openly and curiously.

Consequences: Nothing drastic, but relationships and setting details to reintegrate later. The conversation need not finish – after the previous scene, they should have plenty to say. We might hear more of the Unfolk if the players themselves draw on them – it might potentially get relevant with the nightman crisis (F3 and CD2). You need not account for consequences, perhaps just say that now we have met all the main characters, and all their friends of the Majority.

By the way, this is the last really good time to take a break.

The brown rune (CI1) – Porphyry

Remember to give the question card to another player before you set the scene. As this is the first challenge scene, do be careful and explain the process as you go, without helping with the question itself. The question deals with the Gate of Fire.

Scene setting: A sunny summer day, Porphyry comes home from a scribing job with people of the Majority, and sees that his door has been defaced. Clearly, someone has tried to kick in the solid door, and failing that have smeared shit on it. In the middle of the door, a large rune has been painted in shit, an "ansuz" rune, an F with the horizontal bars drooping – it is a sign of the Majority's god Allfather. And they smeared shit on the door grip.

When Porphyry has had a moment to react (a really short one, being all solo), freeze the scene and ask the player with the question to ask it. Remind the others that they are absolutely not allowed to help.

Question: *What is the right action that is hid behind the Gate of Fire?*

Answer: *Laughing out loud to take the power away from troubles and evils.*

Once the player has had a minute to think (literally a minute at most), demand an answer. Judge whether it is fully correct, partially correct or wrong, and say so. Then restart the frozen scene.

If Porphyry is to have his full success, he *must* act based on his tradition and laugh at the situation. Otherwise it ends with a partial success at most. Cut when Porphyry has reacted, and pass your final judgment on the outcome. If Porphyry doesn't have full success, he must choose one or two levels of **sin** from his character sheet, and narrate how he shows himself to be changed over the coming weeks.

Consequences: Ask one of the other players to set a consequence scene where others of the Folk talk about the event and how Porphyry is doing, specifically about how he is talked of if he has taken on sin. You should use either Fulgurite or Aunt Onyx to add to the conversation if you find it necessary. Especially to underline how the condition of the main characters influence the whole of the Folk in Bulwark. Introduce them if they appear for the first time now. Remember that you must cut.



Gossip CI2 – Slate & Emerald (Fulgurite)

Give the question card for the scene to another player before you set the scene. The question deals with the Gate of Lightning.

Scene setting: It is a late, rainy late summer evening. Slate and Emerald have entertained company, with good food, music and dancing (if the players ask about the music, let them come up with the answer themselves). Now, Slate and Emerald are discussing worrisome gossip about matter recent and ancient which Aunt Onyx brought to their attention. Rumours that Slate has been bribing Mayor Oak for business advantages, as well as a potter who has been boasting of having beaten up Slate years ago, and womenfolk of the Majority who have been running their mouths about how in her youth, Emerald is supposed to have played whore to a rich merchant of the Majority. The bribery bit is definitely true; it is up to the players whether the other matters are true. PLEASE do use some of the talk from the previous consequence scene in the scene setting.

Let the players talk for a bit and worry. If they have trouble getting it to flow on their own, you can help them get going with Fulgurite popping up to ask about things that he has heard ("What is a whore?" etc.). Introduce him if this is the first time he appears.

Give the conversation time enough to develop some awkwardness to dwell on, then freeze it and ask the question holder to ask the question.

Question: *What is the right action that is hid behind the Gate of Lightning?*

Answer: *After meals, or in moments of special crisis, join hands and say "That which can be imagined need never be lost."*

When the players have had a minute to think (at the most), you must demand an answer. Judge whether it is fully correct, partially correct or wrong, and say so. Full success demands correct concepts. For example, "*That which can be remembered...*" would be only a partial success. Then restart the frozen scene.

If they are to have full success from the scene, they must of course carry out the action. Give them a moment to think about the gossip problem first, and then either perform the action or not. Cut and pass your final verdict. If they have partial success, they must each choose one level of *sin*, or two if they fail entirely. When they have chosen, they must tell what they have chosen, and narrate how they show themselves to be changed over the coming weeks.

Consequences: Ask one of the other players to set a consequence scene where others of the Folk talk about the nasty gossip about the Folk, and about how Slate and Emerald are doing. You should use either Fulgurite or Aunt Onyx to add to the discussion if needed. Especially to underline that the condition of the main characters affect all of the Folk in Bulwark. Introduce them if this is their first appearance.

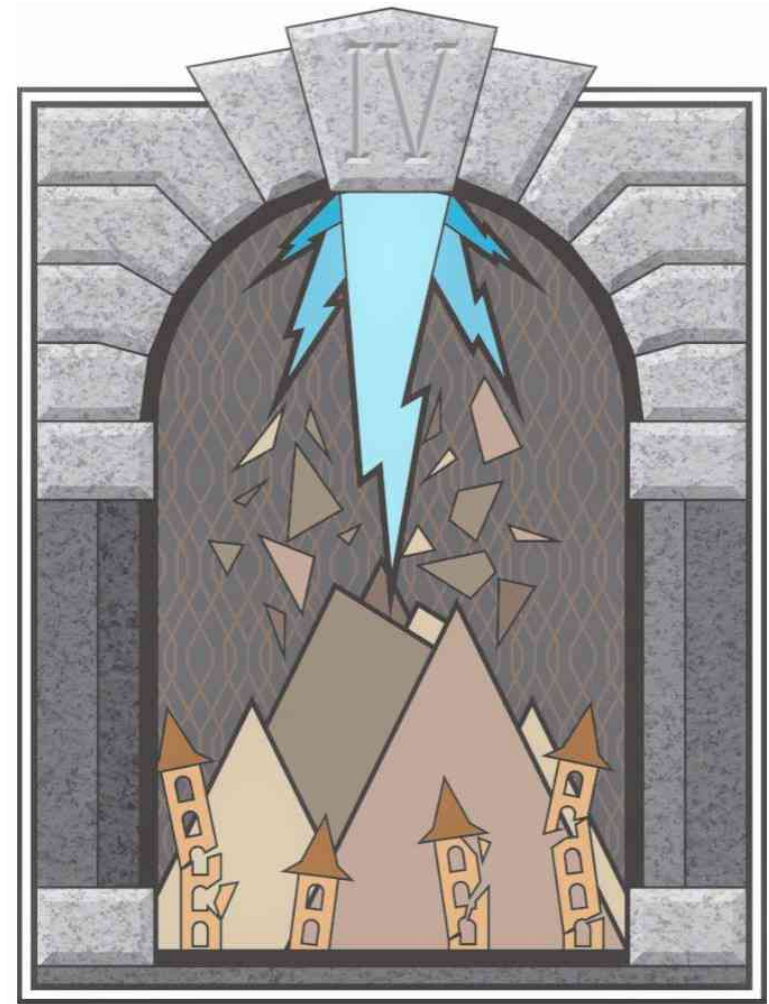
Yarrow's Sermon (F2) – ceremony, all mains (Flint, Yarrow)

Scene setting: It's a sunny, windy early fall day. An 11-years-old girl of the Folk is to have her name, and most of the Folk are in the common house for the ceremony, which is to be conducted by the Guardians of the Gates. The girl is about to get the name Lapis instead of "Third", and her stone is waiting in the basin already. (At this point, ask the players to get on the floor.) A heavy knock sounds on the main door, and there are angry voices outside. Old Flint comes over from a window (take on the role for a moment) and says that it's the priestess, Yarrow, with several of the Watch with guns, and a lot of others. They'll probably break down the door if we do not open it! Flint leaves the choice up to the main characters, but he is correct. As the door opens (will they or won't they), Yarrow and a dozen people barge in.

She stops her people and states that she is here to preach the will of Allfather to the dwarves. They must know that this is a higher law that they ought to remember and keep in mind.

Then, carefully and in character as an angry preacher, read out The will of Allfather (p 50). Be very precise and systematic! Because subsequently, the players will be held to account for the details of your sermon. When you have preached, ask if they have any questions. If noone reacts within five seconds, she sweeps out and orders her people with her. She answers respectfully posed questions concisely and strictly, and to challenging or provocative questions, she responds by having her people beat up the offender.

Then she leaves. Give the players a moment to react (possibly comforting the poor girl who has had her naming ceremony spoiled), then cut.



Moral inspection (CD1) – Turquoise & Ash (Yarrow)

Give Ash v1 to one of the other players. The one who played Ash in I3 is obvious, but it is not a rule.

Scene setting: It is a cold, windy fall evening a couple of weeks later when it knocks on Turquoise's door. Outside, Yarrow and Ash are standing. Ash looks rather awkward. When they have been let in (assume it in the scene setting, it would be tempting but foolish not to), Yarrow says that this is a moral spot check to see if the Folk have understood the sermon. Ash has (she says) pointed to Turquoise as a sensible dwarf woman, and that is as good a place to start as any.

Let the scene run for a moment, giving Turquoise and Ash a moment to be awkward, and then ask the question in character as Yarrow. Here, you can let the "freezing" be a part of the fiction. Ash cannot help much, but if he can hint a little bit, it might be OK in this situation. **Question:** *What is the value of mortal life?* **Answer:** *Mortal life is worthless in itself, life everlasting is infinitely valuable.* (Eternity 1.) Reject any attempt to talk around it, and demand a clear answer. Do give Turquoise a minute to think. Judge whether the answer is fully correct, partially correct or wrong, still as Yarrow. Full success does not require being word perfect, but it does require both parts of the saying to be included.

Give Turquoise a moment to respond, and then cut by saying that Yarrow marches into the night with Ash in tow. Give your final verdict on the success of the challenge. Turquoise need not have been servile, or have claimed to believe her answer, but open defiance will reduce the level of success. If Turquoise doesn't have full success, the relationship with Ash is hurt.

Consequences: You narrate the consequences. Yarrow will mention the conversation with Turquoise in her next sermon, and if Yarrow isn't reasonably satisfied, this will lead to vandalism against Turquoise's workshop – thrown stones on a partial success, arson on a failure. Ash will seek her out, but if it wasn't a full success, it will be under cover of secrecy and darkness. If you deem it to be a good idea, you can set a very short scene, with v2 of Ash if the relationship has been harmed.

Rats (CI3) – Turquoise (Fulgurite)

Give the question card for the scene to another player before you set the scene. The question deals with the Gate of Swords.

Scene setting: It's a sunny, still fall day, some weeks later. Fulgurite comes by Turquoise around lunchtime with a loaf of fresh bread. Remember to weave the outcome of demand 1 into the scene setting.

Take the role as Fulgurite and talk with Turquoise for a bit. Then pause and say that you have heard that the Folk are breeding like rats. Does this mean that Turquoise and uncle Porphyry are going to be making cousins? Freeze and ask the question holder to ask the **question:** *What values are hid behind the Gate of Swords?* **Answer:** *Prudence and foresight.*

After a moment, demand an answer and deem if the answer is fully correct, partially correct or wrong. Then restart the frozen scene. To get the full benefit of possible success, Turquoise must bring her answer into the conversation with Fulgurite.

Cut and make your final judgment. If Turquoise has partial success, she must choose one level of *sin*, or two if she fails outright. She must say what she has chosen, and narrate how she proves herself to be changed over the coming weeks.

Consequences: Ask one of the other players to set a consequence scene where others of the Folk talk about how Turquoise is doing – in practice, this also becomes a reflection on CD1. You should use either Fulgurite or Aunt Onyx to add to the discussion as needed. Remember that you must cut the scene.

Nightmen (F3) – all mains

Scene setting: A brief common scene. The main characters are gathered privately in Emerald & Slate's home to discuss the latest decision of the town council. Yarrow has been preaching that it is inappropriate that humans perform undignified work such as that of the nightmen – transporting excrement from the toilets in town out of town in barrels on carts, and handling animal cadavers. It has become a popular demand, and now, Mayor Oak and the town council have decreed that the Folk must do this dirty, dangerous and despised work. How will the Folk react? The rest will follow our main characters.

Let the players discuss the matter. Their decisions and disagreements have no mechanical weight, but will mean quite a bit for the rest of the story. One possible solution is to hire some of the Unfolk from the uplands, so the Folk won't have to do it themselves – but if so, the players must come up with it themselves, with no prompting from you.

Livelihood (CD2) – Porphyry, Emerald & Birch (Broom)

Give Birch v1 to one of the other players. The one who played Birch in I2 is obvious, but it is no rule.

Scene setting: Emerald is on a brief visit to Porphyry when it knocks on the door and there is shouting outside. Birch and another day labourer (named Broom should it be relevant) are standing, angry and drunk – Birch is holding a pot of brandy that they have been sharing.

Take the role as Broom and complain briefly and angrily about how unjust it is that the Folk have stolen their livelihood as nightmen – how are they going to live now? Try to get Birch to take point in the conversation. Freeze when the conflict and the grotesque problem for both the Folk and the lower class of Bulwark's Majority is clear. It is OK that the scene is a bit funny, as long as it is also horrible and grotesque.

Pose the **question** to Porphyry and Emerald: *What are just events?*
Answer: *It is just that events raise up the virtuous and humiliate the wicked.*
(Justice 1.) Judge the answer and restart the scene.

To have some degree of success in the scene, they must deal with the injustice of the situation in a way that makes sense from the point of view of Majority values AND gives the nightmen a leg to stand on. React, together with Birch, to Emerald & Porphyry. Then cut and judge the outcome of the scene. If Emerald & Porphyry do not have full success, the relationship with Birch suffers harm – and as it isn't too solid to begin with, it will be ruined. Full failure might mean violence (narrated, not played out).

Consequences: You narrate the consequences. If it goes very badly, prominent members of the Folk are publicly forced to cart shit after it has piled up for a week, of course with focus on Porphyry and Emerald in your narration. Success will not mean that the Folk do not have to cart shit, but that they work out some sensible way to go about it, and a part of the Majority sympathise with their plight. Remember the Unfolk if the main characters have brought them into play. If it seems like a good idea, you might set a short scene between either Emerald or Porphyry and Birch, v2 if they did not have full success.

The mayor's favour (CD3) – Slate & Coltsfoot (Oak)

Give Coltsfoot v1 to one of the other players. The one who played Coltsfoot in I1 is obvious, but it's not a rule.

Scene setting: Snow and sleet falls from gray skies some time later. Slate is visiting Coltsfoot, and Mayor Oak is invited as well. Slate and Coltsfoot really need a transport permit from the mayor to make a proper profit from their next business scheme. Ask Coltsfoot to describe her home, and you yourself should introduce Mayor Oak – graying, fat, jovial and splendidly clad in dark velvet sewn with thread of silver and gold.

Play to the point where the mayor is angling for gifts, and then freeze. Ask the **question:** *What gifts do the low give to the high?* **Answer:** *Those who submit to righteous authority and protection give gifts that hand over the fruit of their labours to the rightful authority and support its work. Such a gift is called "tribute." If you give a gift which is not clearly tribute, you are trying to elevate yourself above the one that you are giving gifts. An unrightful favour is a grave insult.* (Gifts 2) The answer need not be so full! But it must catch the point. Judge the answer and start the scene again by asking Slate to describe the gift that he has brought for Oak.

Success in the scene requires that Slate is clear around presenting the gift as a tribute for Oak. Play with Coltsfoot in responding to Slate – a partial success will involve a permit, but reluctantly given, and an Oak who is not happy about having a publically visible relationship with Slate. Full success will result in Oak giving Slate a velvet bag with a gilded brass ring with a plate with a coat of arms, a dragon and three pots. The dragon is Oak's family crest, while the three pots is Bulwark's. (This is a favour.) Failure will anger Oak, who will deny the permit.

Consequences: You narrate. Success will mean a reasonable degree of continued prosperity for the Folk in Bulwark. Full success will mean open and visible connections to parts of the powers that be, while partial success will mean that the powers conceal the connections, so that they can cut them off if it suits them. Failure will mean loss of prosperity and status, not just for Slate but for the Folk in general, who will fear for the future. If it seems like a good idea, you can set a scene with Slate and Coltsfoot, v2 if Slate did not have full success.

The clammy shadows of Hel (CI4) – Slate (Fulgurite, Pine)

This comes with an easier (A) and a harder (B) question attached. Choose the difficulty based on the Slate player's abilities and need for pressure, and give the question that you have chosen to another player to ask when it is time. Both deal with the Gate of Stars.

Scene setting: It is a brilliantly clear winter day. Fulgurite comes home with a couple of Majority playmates. Emerald is out. The children went to the Folk graveyard, where someone has been dumping garbage (again).

Talk (as Fulgurite) a bit with Slate about the graveyard. Then, a Majority boy politely interrupts and asks if he can ask Mr. Slate a question? (His name is Pine, but do not volunteer it). *Might not Mr. Slate and his family please convert to the faith of Allfather so they don't have to rot in the clammy shadows of Hel like the priestess says? Because I really like Fulgurite and think it's a pity.* Then freeze the scene.

A (easy), question: *What are the words with which you end a funeral?*
Answer: *"Only in silence, the word. Only in darkness, light. Only in dying, life. Thus, a person comes to be. Thus, a people comes to be. Thus, the world came to be."*

B (hard), question: *What is the right action bid behind the Gate of Stars?*
Answer: *Funeral. Here, the entire tale of Bedrock is told, and you end with the words: Only in silence, the word. Only in darkness, light. Only in dying, life. Thus, a person comes to be. Thus, a people comes to be. Thus, the world came to be."*

After a minute, demand an answer, and deem if the answer is fully correct, partially correct or wrong. Then start the frozen scene again. To enjoy the full benefits of success, Slate must either say the words or account for the Folk's relationship with death – preferably in a way that speaks to children.

Cut and pass your final verdict. If Slate has partial success, he must choose one level of *sin*, or two if he fails. He must state what he has chosen, and narrate how he proves himself changed over the coming weeks.

Consequences: Ask one of the other players to set a consequence scene in which other members of the Folk are talking about how Slate is doing – in practice, this is also a reflection on CD3. Use either Fulgurite or Aunt Onyx to comment if you deem it necessary. Remember that you must cut.

Masked merriment (F4) – all mains

Scene setting: The Majority hold a feast with masked merriment some time after midwinter. A mass of masked men, some of them with guns, broke into the Folk common house and had a wild drinking party. They also grabbed a couple of "dwarves" and forced them to entertain in humiliating ways – for example, Slate's workman Flint was forced to dance. It is unknown if it was on purpose that they set the house on fire, but they certainly prevented the Folk from fighting the fire for the first half hour in which the house could have been saved, and only a few of Bulwark's fire watch turned up to help. In the end, the neighbouring houses were saved with minor damage. Now, Slate & Emerald's house is the closest thing the Folk have to a gathering place.

It is the day after, a gray and cold winter day, and the Guardians of the Gates are talking in Emerald & Slate's living room. Play an open scene in which they are free to plan, share concerns, play out sins or whatever they need to do. Don't let it run very long, but do give them a little time if they need it.

The matchmaker (CI5) – Porphyry & Turquoise (Onyx)

This comes with an easier (A) and a harder (B) question attached. Choose the difficulty based on the Porphyry and Turquoise players' abilities and need for pressure, and give the question that you have chosen to another player to ask when it is time. Both deal with the Gate of the Harp.

Scene setting: It is a gray and muddy late winter afternoon. The very first flowers are showing their heads. Porphyry and Turquoise both turn up for tea with Aunt Onyx – and neither is aware that the other has been invited. Turquoise knocks on the door as Porphyry and Onyx are already sitting at the table, and Onyx conjures up service for Turquoise in the space of seconds.

Onyx presses the two, lovingly but with busybody insistence, to hear where they stand with their engagement and plans for the future. If they have taken on sins or other consequences, you should 'diplomatically' tiptoe around them in a way that makes their presence obvious! Freeze the scene when it is good and awkward.

A (easy), question: *What values are hid behind the Gate of the Harp?*

Answer: *Generosity and reciprocity.*

B (hard), question: *What is special about the harp cloths used in a wedding ceremony?* **Answer:** *They each have half of the wedding contract embroidered.*

After a minute, demand an answer, then deem whether the answer is fully correct, partially correct or wrong. Then restart the frozen scene. To enjoy the full benefits of any success, they must reflect upon where their relationship is headed, or otherwise relate to the answer – but they don't have to make decisions.

Cut and pass your final verdict. If they have partial success, they must each choose one level of *sin*, or two if they failed. When they have chosen, they must state what they have chosen, and narrate how they prove themselves changed over the coming weeks.

Consequences: Ask one of the other players to set a consequence scene in which others of the Folk talk about how Turquoise & Porphyry are doing. Use either Fulgurite or Aunt Onyx to add to the discussion if needed. Remember that you must cut.

Mr. Quince (CD4) – Emerald & Coltsfoot (Quince)

Give the current version of Coltsfoot to one of the other players, preferably one who has played her before.

Scene setting: It is a sunny early spring day, with patches of snow here and there. At home, Emerald is receiving a visit from Coltsfoot and her uncle and business connection Quince, a rich, powerful and rather conservative merchant from a neighbouring town. It is very important to make a good impression! (If Coltsfoot is v1, she trusts her friends to have it covered, v2 is secretive and nervous to begin with.) Ask Emerald to tell how the living room looks on this occasion. Coltsfoot is more quietly dressed than her usual, festive style, and Quince, an elderly gentleman, is expensively but severely dressed, somberly unadorned. If you need a justification for why Slate is not there, ask him – and if noone wonders, ignore it.

Briefly play welcome and introductions. Play Quince as dour and humourless.

Then freeze and ask the **question:** *What is the problem with obvious, grand splendour, and when is splendour acceptable?* **Answer:** *Obviously grand splendour is a sign of arrogance and perdition. Splendour is only acceptable in Allfather's honour, and to accentuate rightful authority.* (Humility 1)

After a minute, demand an answer, and deem if the answer is fully correct, partially correct or wrong. Then restart the frozen scene, possibly by asking what Emerald is wearing today, if it hasn't come up yet. To gain the full benefit of any success, Emerald must express modesty about the prosperity of the household. React with Coltsfoot. Let Quince thaw a bit with full success.

Consequences: You narrate the consequences. With full success, trade is booming, resulting in prosperity both for the household and the Folk. If Emerald doesn't have full success, the relationship with Coltsfoot worsens one step. With partial success it leads to a business connection, which Coltsfoot however insists on keeping secret. Failure leads to Mr. Quince telling the mayor that Bulwark has a dwarf problem that affects the standards of public morality. If it seems like a good idea, set a short scene with Emerald and Coltsfoot in an appropriate version.

A sermon's subject (CD5) – Slate, Turquoise & Ash (Yarrow)

Give the current version of Ash to one of the other players, preferably one who has played him before.

Scene setting: It is a slightly foggy spring evening. Slate is visiting Turquoise to discuss some Folk who have trouble making ends meet. A knock on the door sounds, and outside is Ash looking quite uncomfortable. As Turquoise opens, Yarrow and two muscular men appear (one of them even has a pistol on his belt), and insist on entering. Yarrow has dark circles under her eyes, but her voice is firm and her gaze sharp.

Yarrow (you) start out by declaring that this another moral spot check. Refer a bit to how the first one (CD1) went, and do make it sound like a furiously polite threat. Again, the answer of "the dwarves" will be used to determine the subject of the next sermon. When the player characters (including Ash) have reacted a bit, Yarrow asks the question in character, and then you freeze the scene.

Question: *What is the worst sin against justice?* **Answer:** *True justice is Allfather's in Eternity! The one who illegitimately claims the mantle of speaking for Allfather's will and justice commits the very worst sin of all.* (Justice 2)

After a minute, demand an answer, and deem it fully correct, partially correct or wrong. Then restart the frozen scene. To benefit from any success, Turquoise and Slate must at the very least be polite and not directly attack Yarrow's authority (or too openly suggest that she herself is committing just this worst sin). React with Ash, then cut.

Consequences: You narrate the consequences. If Turquoise and Slate do not have full success, the relationship with Ash worsens by a step – not necessarily because he is hostile, but because he is afraid. Partial success means that Yarrow leaves peacefully enough with her people, and the next day she holds a sermon in which she uses the "dwarves" as an example of moral decay, which does not make easier the life of the Folk. With full success, she holds a flaming sermon the next day in which she castigates the citizens of Bulwark for having less command of proper morality than *dwarves!* Which spreads some confusion – and makes some people angrier, others friendlier. Failure might result in violence against Slate and Turquoise, and will lead to a flaming speech against the Folk the next day, with serious consequences. If it seems like a good idea, you can set a short scene with Turquoise (or Slate) and an appropriate version of Ash.

Harp day (F5) – all mains (Fulgurite)

If time looks like a problem, you can skip this scene.

Scene setting: It is a sunny, green and flowering spring day, and the Folk are having a celebration at the graveyard, of when Bedrock woke the Folk. Use the scene setting to summarize the situation of the Folk, and then make it clear that this is free play, not a challenge.

However, one little catch: Fulgurite begs to be told the story of the harp, and asks quite insistently to have any one of them tell it (that is, the story part of the Gate of the Harp).

Cut when, aside from storytelling, they have talked a bit, before it gets boring.

Why? (CI6) – Emerald (Fulgurite)

This comes with an easier (A) and a harder (B) question attached. Choose the difficulty based on the Emerald player's abilities and need for pressure, and give the question that you have chosen to another player to ask when it is time. Both deal with the Gate of Water.

Scene setting: It is a rainy spring afternoon. Fulgurite comes home soaking wet and starts (still dripping) talking to Emerald about some of the things that have happened recently.

Some way into the conversation he (you) comes to a halt, looks at Emerald in despair and says: *I don't understand why! Why is this happening? Who are we? Who am I?* Freeze the scene at once without giving Emerald a chance to answer.

A (easy), question: *What values are hid behind the Gate of Water?* **Answer:** *Self awareness and wonder.*

B (hard), question: *What did you see as you looked into the waters of the font at your own naming?* **Answer:** *First, your own face, then your name-stone under the water surface.*

After a minute, demand an answer, and deem it fully correct, partially correct or wrong. Then restart the frozen scene. To enjoy the full benefits of any success, Emerald must be able to say something meaningful about identity based on the tradition of the Folk – preferably as relevant to a child.

Cut and pass your final verdict. If Emerald has partial success, she must choose one level of **sin**, or two if she fails. She must state what she has chosen, and narrate how she proves herself changed over the coming weeks.

Consequences: Ask one of the other players to set a consequence scene where others of the folk talk about how Emerald & Fulgurite are doing, and the Folk in general. Use Aunt Onyx to add to the conversation if you deem it necessary. Remember that you must cut.

The Skald's Barrel (CD6)

– Porphyry, Ash? Birch? Coltsfoot? (Yarrow)

Here, only those player controlled-secondary characters are present who have become their final version – v3 for Ash and Coltsfoot, v2 for Birch – and naturally they must be played by players other than Porphyry's.

Scene setting: It is a changeable early summer afternoon, with the sun shining down on puddles from a recent shower of rain. Porphyry is on his way home from a scribing job out in town when he is seized by a couple of muscular types and manhandled into a tavern nearby, "The Skald's Barrel". Here, Yarrow is sitting in a high-backed wooden chair, holding court. The white lace collar on her black dress is smudged, and though she is not drunk, she has clearly been drinking. The mood is a weird mix of festive, aggressive and fearful. Introduce those player controlled secondary characters whose relationship with the Folk is all ruined.

Yarrow (you) leans forward and says that we cannot tolerate moral pests that infect Bulwark. Appeal to the secondary players for support, and then say to Porphyry that if he can answer for himself, he will be allowed to leave unharmed. Ask the question in character, then freeze.

Question: *What is the value of the beauty of this mortal world?* **Answer:** *The beauty of this mortal world has worth and may be praised to the extent that it can be taken as a sign of Eternity, otherwise it is a trap for the soul.* (Eternity 2, and it is hard, and does not have to be word perfect!)

After a minute, demand an answer, and deem it fully correct, partially correct or wrong. Then restart the frozen scene. To enjoy the full benefits of any success, Porphyry does not necessarily have to abase himself, he just has to keep a cool enough head to refrain from insulting his surroundings. In case of *full success*, Yarrow uses the occasion to yell at the present members of the Majority – the dwarf gets it, so why is it so hard for humans to understand? Aggressively demand reactions from any secondaries present. Then she thanks him with solemn respect and lets him leave. In case of *partial success*, she corrects him and ask secondaries what they think. Then she lets him go, but tells him that if he shows himself outside Dwarf Street, she cannot guarantee his safety. With *failure*, she is furious, and the crowd beats him so badly that he will probably never quite be alright again. If you feel grim, you can kill Porphyry outright on a failure, and let the funeral that follows be his.

Consequences: You narrate the consequences. Failure means that not only Porphyry but the entire Folk are largely confined to their quarter when they are not hauling shit. In any case, rumours abound of conflict between Yarrow and the town council. What you tell here is the game's final status for the Folk in Bulwark.

The Funeral (F6) – ceremony, all mains (Fulgurite)

Scene setting: Aunt Onyx dies. Not of anything drastic, she is just found dead on the floor of her kitchen. Or Porphyry died in the previous scene. In any case, a funeral must be held on a sunny early summer day. Most of the Folk are there, and they expect the Guardians of the Gates to conduct the ceremony.

Give the players a moment to recall what they must do, and possibly coordinate. Then play the ceremony, semi-live out on the floor. It's OK if they embellish a little. And if they mess up Onyx's funeral, this is its own punishment. If you feel like it, you can have Fulgurite correct a little – like "Mom, aren't they going to tell the story of Bedrock?"

Cut thus: If all three Majority friends, Coltsfoot, Ash and Birch, were at "The Skald's Barrel" in the previous scene (and the main characters thus have no positive relationships with the Majority left), you just cut. If any of the three were NOT at the tavern, they are standing some way from the funeral looking awkward, dressed in black and with harp cloths in their hands. Point away from where the players are standing and describe that the secondaries are standing there. Cut after a couple of seconds, so that it does not become a direct conversation.

Rounding off

The story is over and it is time to round off – in a moment they can speak freely, but not yet. Ask the players to each stand in front of the gate that means most to them – more than one player can stand in front of a gate. Then ask them to imagine their player characters waving goodbye, opening the gate, passing through and closing it behind them.

Ask the players to gather all papers in one pile on the table. Then take turns taking gates down off the walls, from the Gate of Fire and forward, adding them to the pile. Then pick up the pile, put it away and say thank you for the game (you can put the pile in the trash later).

And then you are free to talk as you like.

Main characters

On their character sheets, the main characters have a section titled "sin". This represents how they will fall if they lose their grip on their own identity and start living up to the prejudice that the Majority have about "the dwarves". Everyone has four sins, ways in which they could become worse people. The sins are connected with the stereotypes that the Majority hold about the Folk, the two most important ones being that the Folk are greedy and drunken. For every main character, two sins are based on greed, and two on drunkenness.

If they have **full success** in an identity challenge, they need take on no sin. If they have **partial success**, they only have to take on one sin, and if they have **failure**, they must take on two sins. The subsequent consequence scene will explore how their lives and relationships are damaged by their changing for the worse. And the changes will remain for the rest of the game – their consequences make a great jumping-off point for later scene setting.

In the course of the game, every main character will have to meet two identity challenges, so if they fail at both, they will have to take on all the sins. You can think of not-yet-taken-on sins as the spiritual "hit points" of the main characters, the game's way of tracking what they have to lose.



Slate – main character

Slate is an ambitious and successful merchant and brewer in his early thirties. He is of good family, one of the leading families of the Folk in Bulwark which has a tradition of book learning, but Slate's talent is business.

Slate *desires* wealth and success through trade between the Folk and the Majority, and thus he is also afraid of failure and poverty. He *fears* violence and abuse from the Majority – he has experienced it before, and bears the scars. Thus, he wants protection and security, primarily through position and alliances.

Porphyry is Slate's older brother. Honestly, Slate feels that he is a better man than the quiet, over-bookish and less driven Porphyry, but strives to maintain a sensible and respectful relationship, such as one should have with an older brother. It is frustrating that Porphyry will not accept money or help.

The somewhat older **Emerald** is Slate's wife, and the most beautiful woman of the Folk in Bulwark. The business was founded with her money. Their marriage is a loving and successful partnership, and she is good at presenting his wealth and power to the world. Slate does worry a bit about her ability to handle adversity, especially whether she will be able to gracefully reduce her expenditures in lean times. He really likes her.

Turquoise is Emerald's less social younger sister, a very talented weaver and dyer. She is engaged to Porphyry, but it is tough to tell if they will go through with it.

Slate is father to the curious lad **Fulgurite*** of 12 years, and three younger children (who do not yet have their names, and with whom we will not deal in detail).

Of the *Majority*, Slate does business with **Coltsfoot**, a competent and cheerful widow after a merchant. Quite a lot of Slate's business hopes are riding on the friendship with Coltsfoot, who is also fond of Emerald.

About a dozen of the Folk are working for Slate. One of them is the workman **Flint**, who is a bit old and confused, but Slate does not have the heart to tell him to find something else to do. The Folk must take care of each other, though making money is also important.

Possible sins:

Greed:

Slate might well become *ruthless* in money matters.

Slate might well become *miserly*.

Drunkenness:

Slate might well become *violently hotheaded* if he drank too much.

Slate might well become *unreliable* with respect to agreements if he drank more.

* *Fulgurites* are branch-shaped stones made when lightning strikes sand. **34**

Porphyry – main character

Porphyry comes out of a family of scholars, but struggles to keep his life in order. He makes his money as scribe to both those of the Folk who cannot read and write, and for those of the Majority who come to Porphyry for his good prices and helpfulness. Porphyry is in his late thirties.

Porphyry *desires* respect, mostly from the rest of the Folk, so that he can live up to the history and dignity of his bloodline. Thus, he also fears loss of face. He *fears* hunger and poverty – he has tried losing everything on a journey when he was younger, and begged his way home on an near-empty belly. So much the worse to starve at home. Thus, he also wants stores and assurances.

Turquoise is Porphyry's fiancé, and unfortunately the engagement is a little unsteady. She is of good family, and probably the best crafter in all of Bulwark. Noone dyes cloth as beautifully and truly as Turquoise, and noone weaves as striking patterns, and it is due to her great devotion to her art. They are engaged, and none of them really have the money for a wedding feast that would do their proud family traditions honour. And maybe they are not *quite* sure that it would be a harmonious marriage.

Slate is Porphyry's younger brother. He is a succesful brewer and merchant, married to Turquoise's beautiful older sister **Emerald**. Slate is very intelligent but cares less about scholarship, and frequently tries to use offers of financial aid and over-generous gifts to raise himself up over Porphyry.

However, it is very important for Porphyry to to be a good, tradition-conscious uncle to Slate and Emerald's oldest child **Fulgurite*** of 12 years, a curious lad.

Of the *Majority*, Porphyry is (like Turquoise) friends with the teacher **Ash**, a learned man who is earnestly curious about the traditions and art of the Folk. Porphyry is rather awkward buddies with his and Emerald's childhood playmate, **Birch** the day labourer, who Porphyry occasionally hires for repairs and porting, for old times' sake.

Possible sins:

Greed:

Porphyry might well resign himself to *putting up with humiliations* to make his money.

Porphyry might well start *cheating* his less book-learned clients.

Drunkenness:

Porphyry might well become prone to *maudlin sentimentality* if he drank too much.

Porphyry might well become aggressively *proud and arrogant* if he drank too much.

* *Fulgurites* are branch-shaped stones made when lightning strikes sand. **35**

Turquoise – main character

Turquoise is a proud crafter and heir to a family tradition of crafting. She is a weaver and dyer, and probably the most skilled crafter in all of Bulwark. She is in her early thirties.

Turquoise *desires* reaching the highest levels of accomplishment so that she can be a worthy heir to her tradition and give physical form to her spiritual values. To this end she needs resources, as the best materials and tools are not free. And she would really rather not have to make cheap products for small change. She *fears* loneliness and isolation, which could easily become a consequence of her devotion to her craft. Thus, she wants friendship and warm family ties.

Porphyry is Turquoise's fiancé, and unfortunately the engagement is a little unsteady. He is a scribe to the Folk of Bulwark, a learned man who cares greatly about tradition, though not as rich and successful as his younger brother. Turquoise really likes Porphyry, but fears that a marriage to him will take up both her time and her income in a way that will hamper her art. So, she delays with excuses about not being able to afford a wedding feast worthy of their fine, old families. She fears having to choose between family with children, and her art.

Emerald is Turquoise's beautiful, extroverted older sister. She is married to Porphyry's younger brother **Slate**, a skilled and successful, if a little loud, merchant and brewer. Emerald has always hogged most of the attention, but Turquoise rests easy in the knowledge of her own superior skill and focus – Emerald may have ended up with most of their parents' money, with which Slate has now built an impressive business, but Turquoise is the true heir to their endeavours.

Turquoise is an eager aunt to Emerald's four children, especially the oldest son **Fulgurite*** of 12, a curious yet serious boy.

Of the Majority, Turquoise has made quite good friends with Porphyry's friend **Ash**, a learned schoolteacher who is curious about the traditions of the Folk, and who is better able than most to appreciate the finer points of Turquoise's art and what she wants to accomplish with it.

Turquoise has a pair of apprentices working in her workshop, **Citrine** and **Limestone**.

Possible sins:

Greed:

Turquoise might come to exploit her good reputation by *selling shoddy work* to people with no taste.

Turquoise might come to *work in the fashion of the Majority* to make easy money.

Drunkenness:

Turquoise might become *brutally honest* if she drank to excess.

If Turquoise really drank too much, she might *fail to keep herself clean and proper*.

* *Fulgurites* are branch-shaped stones made when lightning strikes sand. **36**

Emerald – main character

Emerald is socially the centre of the Folk in Bulwark – this is the reason why she cares so much about her role as one of the guardians of tradition. She is in her late thirties, and a very beautiful woman. She is quite conscious of this.

Emerald *desires* festivity, attention, splendour and joy. Thus she also fears poverty and isolation, and the inability to be generous. She *fears* humiliation. Emerald has tried being the butt of public spite and ridicule over wicked rumours, and she still has nightmares about it. Thus, she wants dignity and a good reputation.

Emerald is married to the fiery, ambitious and somewhat younger **Slate**, succesful brewer and businessman. They make a fine and succesful partnership, where Slate deals with numbers and deliveries while Emerald deals with maintaining a household that radiates the degree of wealth and success necessary to turn the appearance into reality. Slate was quite young when they married, and Emerald came with the starting funds. She is proud of what he has become and what they have built together. And she is even fond of him.

Emerald's younger sister **Turquoise** is an incredibly skilled weaver and dyer, and carries on with great passion the family crafting tradition that Emerald could never quite be bothered with. Honestly, Emerald is slightly in awe of her intense little sister. But as adults, they get along well – Turquoise is an eager aunt to Emerald's children, and Emerald has taken it on herself to see to it that Turquoise's social life doesn't completely dry up. Turquoise is in a long-standing marriage engagement to Slate's learned but boring older brother **Porphyry**, who is scribe to the Folk in Bulwark. Will they ever get married and have children of their own?

Emerald and Slate have four children of whom the eldest, **Fulgurite***, 12, is a curious and serious lad (and we'll not go into detail with the rest).

Of the *Majority*, Emerald has become good friends with Slate's business connection **Coltsfoot**, a rich widow keeping the business running – Coltsfoot is really handsome and festive. And Emerald sometimes hires the day labourer **Birch** for odd jobs, as he is funny and charming in his own slightly ragged way. They used to be playmates as children, together with Porphyry.

Possible sins:

Greed:

It is important to Emerald to be rich in a proper way, but she might fall into *boasting of her wealth* – no matter how well matters really stand.

Emerald might come to be unpleasantly *demanding* with her surroundings regarding favours.

Drunkenness:

If Emerald drank more than she should, she might come to *ridicule people* in a cruel way.

If Emerald drank too much, she might come to be *embarrassingly inappropriate* to seek assurances that she is beautiful and interesting.

* *Fulgurites* are branch-shaped stones made when lightning strikes sand. **37**

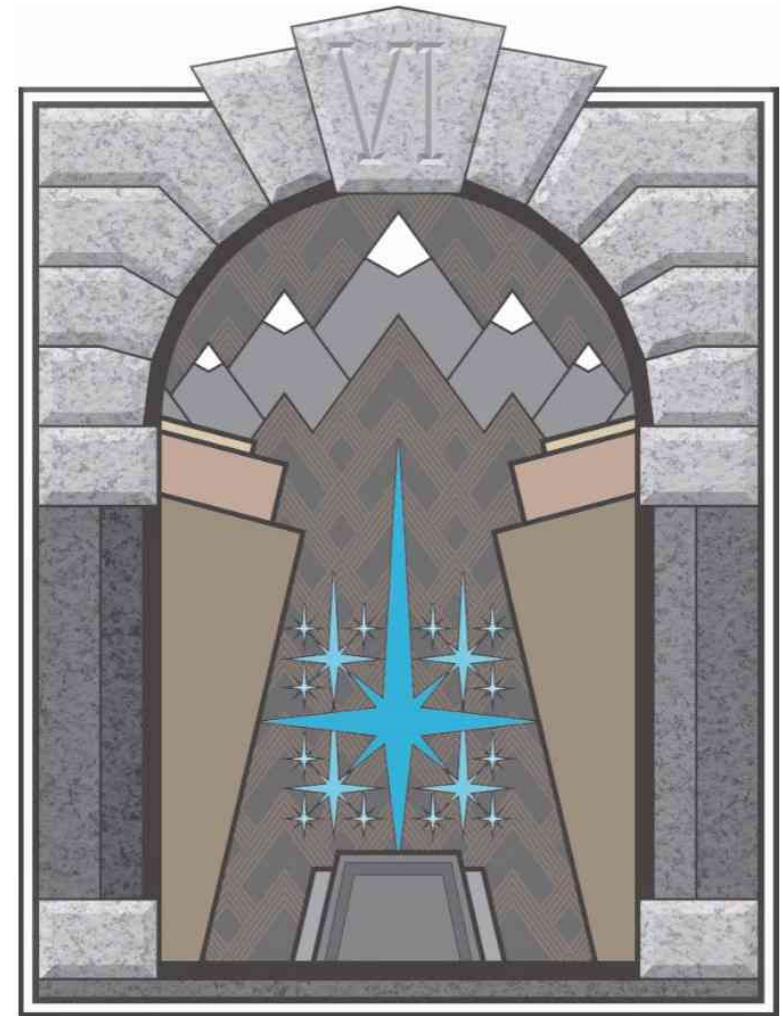
Secondary characters – for player use

As facilitator you administer and hand out these secondary characters which the players will be playing in intro scenes and demand challenge scenes. To begin with, they are friendly members of the Majority.

The secondary characters each exist in two or three versions. The first is how they are at the start of the game, and the later versions are for when their relationships with the Folk are worsened as a consequence of a demand challenge scene. In total, there are six demand challenge scenes in the game, and in the first five, the relationship of the involved secondary character with the Folk is worsened if the main characters in the scene have *failure* or *partial success* – only with *full success*, the secondaries are unchanged (the difference between failure and partial success being how much immediate damage the livelihoods of the main characters suffer).

In the final demand challenge scene, we meet those secondary characters that have ended up in the most hostile version, and the consequences of the broken friendships are made cruelly visible. You can think of the not realized hostile versions of the friendly secondaries as the collective, social "hit points" of the main characters, the game's way of tracking what they have left to lose.

In practice, you as facilitator keep track of the secondaries during the game and hand them out to the players when they need them. The secondaries are made to be folded in such a way that the players only have to look at the current version. The italicized last part of each version shows the part that is specific to this very version of the secondary, while the beginning is more permanent. If the players have a good grip on the secondaries from earlier scenes, they only have to read the cursive text.



Coltsfoot – secondary, version 1

Coltsfoot is the middle-aged widow after a rich merchant. She skilfully carries on the business, ostensibly in order to turn it over to her son when he reaches majority, many years from now. She feels a bit under-appreciated because her wealth is attributed to her dead husband – who would never have amounted to much without her help. Both business success and a cheerful, festive life are important to her.

Coltsfoot does business with **Slate** and **Emerald**, and is seeing them socially on that account. She is attracted because she makes good money from the connection, and also because she finds in particular Emerald to be an utterly amazing person. Coltsfoot is in fact slightly in love.

Both for the sake of money and the personal connection, Coltsfoot defies convention and wicked tongues, and proudly maintains her friendship, though she is of the Majority and her friends are of the Folk.

Coltsfoot – secondary, version 2

Coltsfoot is the middle-aged widow after a rich merchant. She skilfully carries on the business, ostensibly in order to turn it over to her son when he reaches majority, many years from now. She feels a bit under-appreciated because her wealth is attributed to her dead husband – who would never have amounted to much without her help. Both business success and a cheerful, festive life are important to her.

Coltsfoot does business with **Slate** and **Emerald**, and is seeing them socially on that account. She is attracted because she makes good money from the connection, and also because she finds in particular Emerald to be an utterly amazing person. Coltsfoot is in fact slightly in love.

Unfortunately, the connection is turning into a bit of a liability for Coltsfoot. In the current, difficult situation between the Majority and the "dwarves", her friends are simply a bit too clumsy and difficult, and it is hurting Coltsfoot's dealings with others of the Majority. Coltsfoot will not break off the friendship, but has concluded that being a bit more discreet about it would be wise.

Coltsfoot – secondary, version 3

Coltsfoot is the middle-aged widow after a rich merchant. She skilfully carries on the business, ostensibly in order to turn it over to her son when he reaches majority, many years from now. She feels a bit under-appreciated because her wealth is attributed to her dead husband – who would never have amounted to much without her help. Both business success and a cheerful, festive life are important to her.

*Coltsfoot has been so very fond of **Slate** and **Emerald**, but they have broken her heart and made everything much too difficult. Why the foolish pride in displaying their dwarfish customs in a time when it is just not practical? Why have they chosen to drive away their friend Coltsfoot in this manner? Now, she will have to mend fences with her own people.*

Birch – secondary, version 1

Birch is a poor day labourer of the Majority, in his late thirties. Aside from various odd jobs, he makes his money as nightman – this means that he and the other nightmen gather and empty the barrels of excrement from the toilets of Bulwark, and also haul the cadavers of dead animals out of town. He has a hard life, and drinks to handle it.

*As a boy, Birch was playmate with the dwarves **Emerald** and **Porphyry**. Now that all three are grown, the dwarves are rich and Birch is poor, and sometimes he does odd jobs for them for which they pay well, which he really appreciates. Yes, it is a bit humiliating, but no more than so many other things, and the dwarves mean well. So he takes it with a smile and good humour.*

Birch – secondary, version 2

Birch is a poor day labourer of the Majority, in his late thirties. Aside from various odd jobs, he makes his money as nightman – this means that he and the other nightmen gather and empty the barrels of excrement from the toilets of Bulwark, and also haul the cadavers of dead animals out of town. He has a hard life, and drinks to handle it.

*As a boy, Birch was playmate with the dwarves **Emerald** and **Porphyry**. Birch thought that they were still friends, but clearly they were amusing themselves over his humiliating poverty. Now, they have even stolen his living as nightman. Everyone knows that the mayor is in their pocket! It is not fair! May they choke on it!*

Ash – secondary, version 1

Ash is a learned man of the Majority working as a teacher. One could say that in that sense he is a carrier and guardian of the traditions and values of his culture. He is not rich, but gets along reasonably. Ash is a curious man and finds the Minority incredibly fascinating, both professionally and personally. He is however also conscious that his living depends on his good reputation.

*Over the last couple of years, Ash has cultivated a friendship with **Turquoise** and **Porphyry** of the Folk. They have tea and discuss history, art and such matters. Ash is especially full of admiration for Turquoise's artful weaving with those beautiful pictures, and has become quite fond of both of them as people.*

Ash – secondary, version 2

Ash is a learned man of the Majority working as a teacher. One could say that in that sense he is a carrier and guardian of the traditions and values of his culture. He is not rich, but gets along reasonably. Ash is a curious man and finds the Minority incredibly fascinating, both professionally and personally. He is however also conscious that his living depends on his good reputation.

*Over the last couple of years, Ash has cultivated a friendship with the "dwarves" **Turquoise** and **Porphyry**. And he has grown really fond of them! But everything has become a bit difficult, and Ash has to be more discreet about his friendship with them – otherwise it could cost him dearly. Secretive friendship has to be better than no friendship.*

Ash – secondary, version 3

Ash is a learned man of the Majority working as a teacher. One could say that in that sense he is a carrier and guardian of the traditions and values of his culture. He is not rich, but gets along reasonably. Ash is a curious man and finds the Minority incredibly fascinating, both professionally and personally. He is however also conscious that his living depends on his good reputation.

*Over the last couple of years, Ash has cultivated a friendship with the dwarves **Turquoise** and **Porphyry**. But now, it has simply become too difficult and too dangerous, and they are not making matters easier by insisting so stubbornly that their tradition is the only right one. Maybe they can resume the connection if conditions improve. In the meantime, Ash is forced to stand by his own tradition and cultivate connections to the leaders of his own people.*

The Gates of Remembrance

This is the art of teaching the players memory palace technique.

The story of the Folk. Start by telling the story that they have heard so many times before.

Introduction. Explain that the trick to using the gates lies primarily in visualising things in a spatial way. When they are done, they must be able to close their eyes and imagine this room. Here, they must be able to move (in their minds) to any of the gates, open it like a door and step into the chamber behind it. In each of the chambers behind the six gates, there are three signs or tableaux. One sign is for a sixth of the story, one is for two life values, one is for the right action associated with the theme of this gate.

Aside from the strictly spatial aspect, there is other help for the memory in the form of wordplay and patterns – not everyone is equally spatio-visual, but most people can get *something* out of the gates. This is demonstrated in the general functioning of the gates. Of the signs in the gates, many are funny, grotesque, sexual or scary. This is not for fun, but because strong images and associations help the memory along. In all the gates there are jokes, wordplay, rhymes and the like. This makes them more holy, not less.

Behind a gate. When you mentally open a gate and step into the chamber behind it, *Straight* ahead you will see the sign of the *Story*, to your *Left* you will see the sign for *Life Values*, to your *Right* you will see the sign for the *Right Action*. Here we have both spatial orientation, a pattern that is repeated through every gate AND we have matching first letters to remind us how everything is organized.

The learning itself. Ask the four guardians to stand before the Gate of Fire, study the image for a moment and then close their eyes. Then ask them to imagine that they open the gate and step into a chamber behind it. Start with the Story, Straight ahead – first say what the sign is, then tell this part of the story, then repeat the sign. Now, ask them to turn Left, to the Life Values – say what the sign is, name the values and repeat the sign. Then ask them to turn Right, to the Right Action – say what the sign is, describe the action and repeat the sign. Ask if any of them need to have any of the material in this gate repeated, and help them if they ask. In this way, go through all the gates, in order. Use the gate sheets, and follow them carefully. If anything is in CAPITALS, say it twice, with emphasis.

When you are done with the Gate of Stars, ask each of them to run through all the gates in their minds, seeing all the signs and recalling what they mean. If they have questions for signs and contents when everyone has been through all gates, ask them to help one another.

Then say goodbye and wish them luck.

Scene notes for "The initiation": Pg. 18. You are **Carnelian** the bard, a brusque old lady. You have to move forward the final initiation because you must leave for the town of **Skilfing** to train new guardians of the tradition of the Folk – two are dead, two have abandoned their duties.

The Gate of Fire (I)

Physical existence, potential

Straight ahead: A blazing bonfire. A baby is crawling towards the fire that is reflected in the child's eyes.

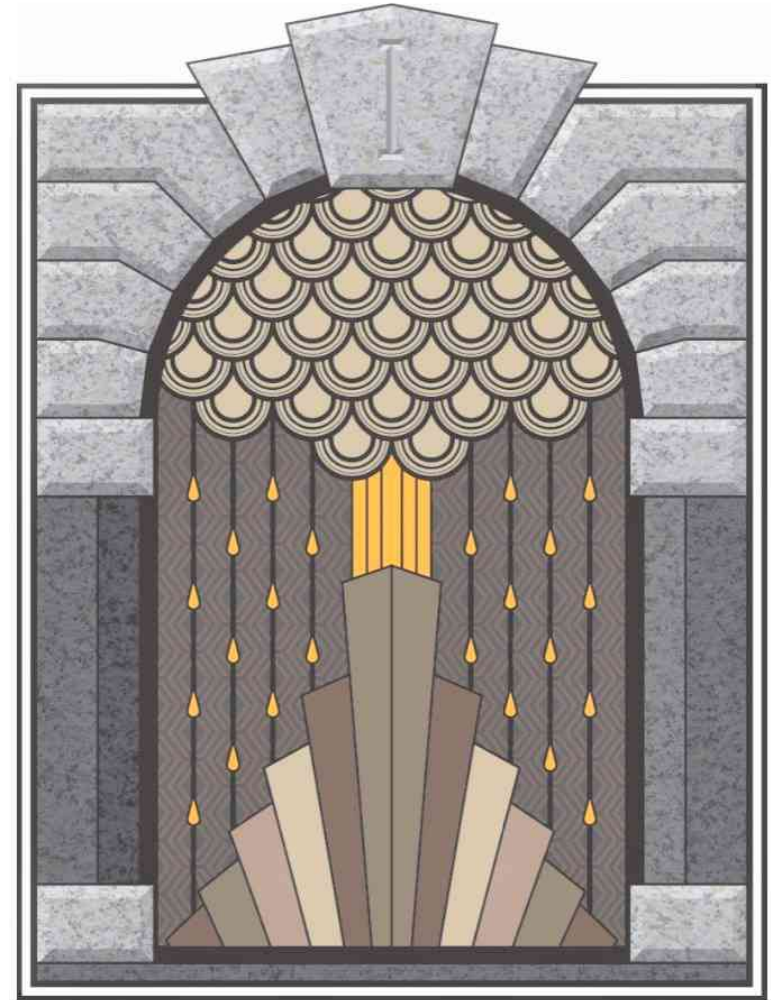
Story: In the darkness under the mountains, the eldest of the Folk slept until he was awakened by a volcanic eruption and broke out through the surface. Here, he saw the **fire** on the ground and in the sky, and though he had no name yet, he opened his mouth and laughed out loud.

Left: A cat is sleeping uneasily next to a big cheese. A rat runs forward and starts gnawing on the cheese.

Life values: Courage and appetite.

Right: A clown, rusty axe in hand, furiously shouting "IT'S NOT FUNNY!"

Right action: Laughing out loud to take the power away from troubles and evils.



The Gate of Water (II)

Senses, the world

Straight ahead: A large, black raven is sitting on a bloody sheep cadaver. It looks at you and screams RAVEN!

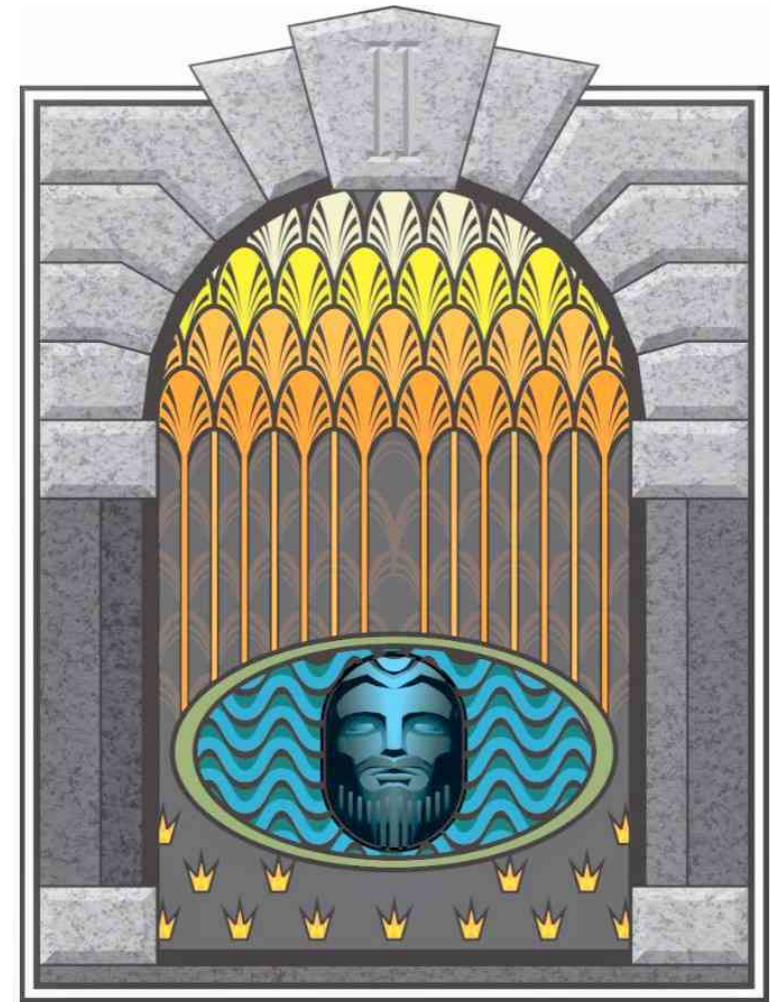
Story: The eldest saw the mountains, the forests and the sea. He liked what he saw, and wandered the land giving names to plants, animals and places in the Homeland. Then, in the dusk, he came to a still pond by the foot of the mountain. He bent over the **water** and saw his own reflection crowned with stars. He then named himself Bedrock.

Left: A mirror with a frame made of a hundred golden question marks. When you breathe on it, the surface wavers for a moment. WHO LOOKS OUT OF THE MIRROR?

Life values: Self awareness and wonder.

Right: A broad, raised basin full of water, the surface of which is a perfect mirror. You look down into the mirror, and from the water you pick up the stone whose name *you* carry.

Right action: Naming. The Folk use a stone font, known as a naming font, at the naming ceremony in which the Folk at the age of 11 get their real name instead of a number. Here, the child gets its name by picking its name-stone up out of the font.



The Gate of the Harp (III)

Emotions, connections

Straight ahead: A harp which is half of a whale's ribcage, lit from above by a brightly shining moon whose rays between the ribs make silver strings. Wonderful music sounds from the harp, and naked people grow from the ground around it.

Story: Bedrock the eldest grew lonely. Out of moonbeams and the skeleton of a whale, he made a *harp*, on which he played for the mountains and sang. He named the rocks and the gemstones that slept without form and sight, and they awoke to life and rose as the Folk. For countless years, the Folk lived happily in the land that Bedrock named.

Left: Two beautiful cities on each side of a great chasm, red tile roofs and green copper spires bright in the sun. On ropes, they send gift baskets back and forth between them. They are GENERO-CITY and RECIPRO-CITY.

Life values: Generosity and Reciprocity.

Right: A great, pretty, sweet-smelling apple lies on a cloth embroidered with a harp pattern. This is a *harp cloth*.

In the air, two beating hearts hang, dripping blood. Two long harp cloths clothe them and tie them together. Words in blood appear on the cloths. CLOTHS CONNECT THE CONJUGAL CONTRACT.

Right action: Give a gift, and receive a gift – one-sided gifts are humiliating charity. Give either a cloth embroidered with a heart as a gift placeholder, or give a gift with a harp cloth. When it is always an exchange, you always have one.

At a wedding ceremony, the couple tie themselves together with a pair of extra long harp cloths which each have half the wedding contract embroidered.



The Gate of Lightning (IV)

Remembrance, past

Straight ahead: Deep darkness. Blinding lightning strikes with a crash. Though the lightning bolt is only there in a flash, the scent tickles the nose and the shadow of the lightning is still burned into your sight.

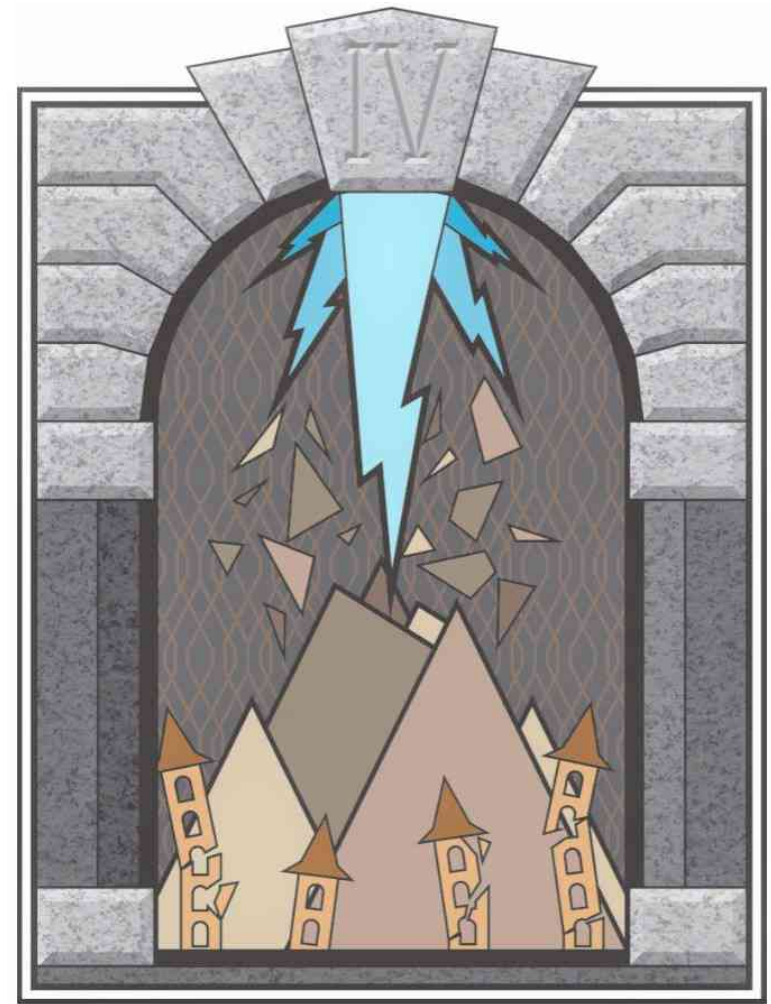
Story: One day a storm like no other struck the land, and a mighty bolt of *lightning* split the tallest mountain. Dragons came pouring forth, earthquakes toppled towers. To save their lives, the Folk fled to foreign lands beyond the sea, lands that Bedrock had not named. The survivors grieved and swore never to forget the Homeland.

Left: An open book. A girl is writing in it with a silver pen. She dips the point of the pen in her arm to draw blood, and writes on. The girl looks at you sternly and says "COMMIT TRADITION TO MEMORY!"

Life values: Tradition and commitment.

Right: Next to a burned-down house stands a man with a knife in his hand, smiling dreamily. Then he cuts a large X in the top of his head, pulls back the bloody flaps of scalp and reveals a beautiful, intact house inside his head.

Right action: After meals, or in special times of crisis, hold each others' hands and say "THAT WHICH CAN BE IMAGINED NEED NEVER BE LOST!"



The Gate of Swords (V)

Thought, future

Straight ahead: A couple loudly making love between stacks of swords and shields that rattle from their frantic fucking.

Story: In exile, the Folk laid plans to return, but they were few and weakened. Rather than go home and die now, they decided to think ahead and gather strength, both in numbers and in prosperity, that they might one day return with **swords** rather than knives and successfully accomplish that which would fail if they attempted it before the time was ripe.

Left: A child places bread and roast partridge and pheasant on a cloth and ties the corners together. A meal is good to have for later. This is the PARTRIDGE OF PRUDENCE and the PHEASANT OF FORESIGHT.

Life values: Prudence and foresight.

Right: A little knife that grows. And grows. And grows.

Right action: Blessing children (and pregnant women), "LITTLE KNIFE, GROW INTO A SWORD FOR THE FUTURE OF THE FOLK!"



The Gate of Stars (VI)

The unity of beginning and end

Straight ahead: A mass of infants crawling all over a huge, ancient man lying very still.

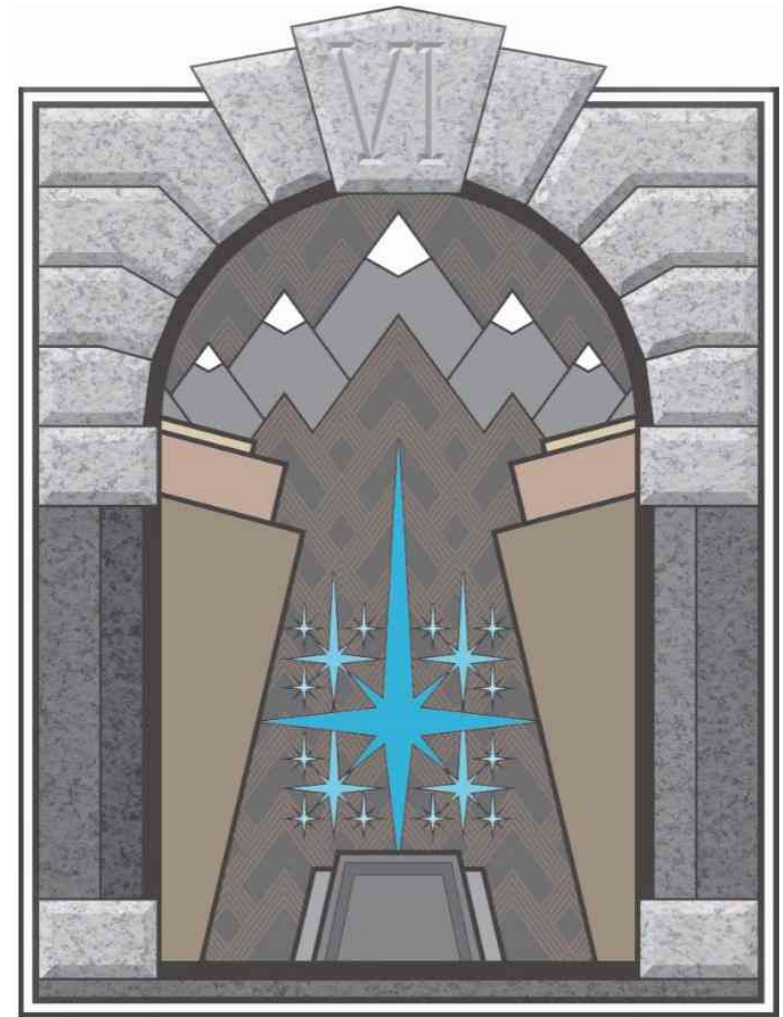
Story: While the plans to retake the Homeland were still unfinished (as they remain to this day), Bedrock grew sick unto death. The Folk were seized by a great despair, but on his deathbed he said that while grieving is good, noone lives forever – those who deny their end, deny their life. Not even the *stars* last forever. He died, and they buried him in the darkness of the earth. And then they rose and carried on the work which he had begun.

Left: A child has a plate with two large cakes in front of them. The child eats one, then feels its belly and pushes away the plate with the other cake. The cakes are the TART OF TEMPERANCE and the WAFFLE OF WISDOM.

Life values: Temperance and wisdom.

Right: In the dark earth, a grave is dug. As you step to the edge, you can see stars down there in the dark. From the grave, a voice says "Life!".

Right action: Funeral. Tell the entire story of Bedrock, and end with the words: "ONLY IN SILENCE, THE WORD. ONLY IN DARKNESS, LIGHT. ONLY IN DYING, LIFE. THUS, A PERSON COMES TO BE. THUS, A PEOPLE COME TO BE. THUS, THE WORLD CAME TO BE."



The Story of the Folk

Collected, but otherwise the same as in The Gates of Remembrance.

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The eldest saw the mountains, the forests and the sea. He liked what he saw, and wandered the land giving names to plants, animals and places in the Homeland. Then, in the dusk, he came to a still pond by the foot of the mountain. He bent over the **water** and saw his own reflection crowned with stars. He then named himself Bedrock.

Bedrock the eldest grew lonely. Out of moonbeams and the skeleton of a whale, he made a **harp**, on which he played for the mountains and sang. He named the rocks and the gemstones that slept without form and sight, and they awoke to life and rose as the Folk. For countless years, the Folk lived happily in the land that Bedrock named.

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In exile, the Folk laid plans to return, but they were few and weakened. Rather than go home and die now, they decided to think ahead and gather strength, both in numbers and in prosperity, that they might one day return with **swords** rather than knives and successfully accomplish that which would fail if they attempted it before the time was ripe.

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The will of Allfather

As told by Yarrow, priestess of Allfather.

This righteous sermon will tell you Allfather's truth about four important subjects: Eternity, Humility, Gifts and Justice.

Eternity. Eternity is Allfather's in the Hereafter, and only through Him can you attain Eternity.

Firstly: Mortal life is worthless in itself, life everlasting is infinitely valuable.

Secondly: The beauty of this mortal world has worth and may be praised to the extent that it can be taken as a sign of Eternity, otherwise it is a trap for the soul.

Humility. Nothing leads to perdition in the shadow of Hel as easily as pride, and therefore humility is one of the most important virtues if you wish to avoid spiritual rot.

Firstly: Obviously grand splendour is a sign of arrogance and perdition. Splendour is only acceptable in Allfather's honour, and to accentuate rightful authority.

Secondly: It is a moral duty to display the success that Allfather has graciously bestowed. False humility is unworthy.

Gifts. In every relationship, there is a high one and a low one, and this eternal truth is reflected in our beautiful and generous customs concerning gifts.

Firstly: Those who hold rightful authority over another give gifts that symbolize the authority and their gracious good will and protection. Such a gift is called a "favour."

Secondly: Those who submit to righteous authority and protection give gifts that hand over the fruit of their labours to the rightful authority and support its work. Such a gift is called "tribute." If you give a gift which is not clearly tribute, you are trying to elevate yourself above the one that you are giving gifts. An unrightful favour is a grave insult.

Justice. It is an expression of devotion to Allfather to strive to have worldly events be in accordance with spiritual principles and the will of Allfather.

Firstly: It is just that events raise up the virtuous and humiliate the wicked.

Secondly: True justice is Allfather's in Eternity! The one who illegitimately claims the mantle of speaking for Allfather's will and justice commits the very worst sin of all.

Scene overview

The details of individual scenes can be adapted, but the order and the general contents are fixed.

An evening with Coltsfoot (I1, p. 17) – Slate, Emerald & Coltsfoot

A penny for Birch (I2, p. 17) – Emerald, Porphyry & Birch

The initiation (F1, p. 18) – ceremony, all mains (Carnelian the bard)

Tea with Ash (I3, p. 18) – Porphyry, Turquoise & Ash

The brown rune (CI1, p. 19) – Porphyry, Gate of Fire

Gossip (CI2, p. 20) – Slate & Emerald, Gate of Lightning

Yarrow's sermon (F2, p. 21) – ceremony, all mains (Flint, Yarrow)

Moral inspection (CD1, p. 22) – Turquoise & Ash (Yarrow), Eternity 1

Rats (CI3, p. 23) – Turquoise (Fulgurite), Gate of Swords

Nightmen (F3, p. 23) – all mains

Livelihood (CD2, p. 24) – Porphyry, Emerald & Birch (Broom), Justice 1

The mayor's favour (CD3, p. 25) – Slate & Coltsfoot (Oak), Gifts 2

The clammy shadows of Hel (CI4, p. 26) – Slate (Fulgurite, Pine), Gate of Stars

Masked merriment (F4, p. 26) – all mains

The matchmaker (CI5, p. 27) – Porphyry & Turquoise (Onyx), Gate of the Harp

Mr. Quince (CD4, p. 28) – Emerald & Coltsfoot (Quince), Humility 1

A sermon's subject (CD5, p. 29) – Slate, Turquoise & Ash (Yarrow), Justice 2

Harp day (F5, p. 29) – all mains (if on time)

Why? (CI6, p. 30) – Emerald (Fulgurite), Gate of Water

The Skald's Barrel (CD6, p. 31) – Porphyry, Coltsfoot? Birch? Ash? (Yarrow), Eternity 2

The funeral (F6, p. 32) – ceremony, all mains (Fulgurite)

Question cards

– for the identity challenges

The brown rune (CI1): Question for the Gate of Fire

What is the right action that is hid behind the Gate of Fire?

Gossip (CI2): Question for the Gate of Lightning

What is the right action that is hid behind the Gate of Lightning?

Rats (CI3): Question for the Gate of Swords

What values are hid behind the Gate of Swords?

The clammy shadows of Hel (CI4A): Q. f. the Gate of Stars

What are the words with which you end a funeral?

The clammy shadows of Hel (CI4B): Q. f. the Gate of Stars

What is the right action hid behind the Gate of Stars?

The matchmaker (CI5A): Question for the Gate of the Harp

What values are hid behind the Gate of the Harp?

The matchmaker (CI5B): Question for the Gate of the Harp

What is special about the harp cloths used in a wedding ceremony?

Why? (CI6A): Question for the Gate of Water

What values are hid behind the Gate of Water?

Why? (CI6B): Question for the Gate of Water

What did you see as you looked into the waters of the font at your own naming?

