

Seven locks

He stares up at the woman sitting on the throne, a contemptuous, overconfident smirk twisting his face. Gold glitters on his horns, on the jewelled rings in his ears, in his nose, on the gilding of his splendid green iron armour, in his eyes. "You're weak, Brazen."

If the insult fazes her, she does not show it.

"It's Basileia Brazen, in case you have forgotten. Basileia will be sufficient, if it is too much for you to remember."

"I don't care." He takes a step forward, away from his bodyguards, but not so far that they can't defend him if the figure on the throne tries anything. "Chaos on the streets? Intervention of the Lictors? No clear leadership for months? And now you're reforming the Five Pillars! Where's your mandate? Where's your strength? You can't hope to hold the Stack Freed Gates without my support, and without them, you cannot hold the city."

One of the other minotaurs nods along with their master, the other five stand still as stone, faces unreadable. She is alone apart from an unarmed secretary who stands to the left of the throne, eyes downcast. Brazen never takes her eyes off him.

"You may certainly think so," she says. "But go on, explain how you're going to help me."

"You appoint me as Tribune Diumvirate. You tell them what to think, I hold their heart in my fist." He gestures to the warriors at his back. "Abandon the Five Pillars, and together we can restore order to the city."

"What a tempting offer." She smiles with disarming sincerity. "And if I say no?"

He shakes his head, his smirk shifting from insolent to mocking.

“Have you forgotten who you're talking to? I was there at the start, remember? And all along the way until you decided you didn't need me, didn't need the Stack Freed Gates any more. Cut me out and your dirty laundry gets aired out all over the city. Every body you've buried, every deal you've broken, every lie you told to get on that seat, all exposed for everyone to see.”

“How dreadful. But I have a counter-offer you might want to consider.” She glances up at his bodyguards. “Seize him.”

It's over before he realises what is happening. One minotaur lies face down on the floor, a short spear protruding from their back. The others have him disarmed, arms behind his back, forced to his knees. He starts to panic.

“What? No! What? How? No! Weren't you listening? Everyone - ”

“Will know my secrets, yes. But the thing is, nobody cares any more.” Something cold creeps into her smile, a smile that has not faltered at any point in their meeting and that he now realises is not an expression of nervous weakness as he had assumed but of terrible certainty. “After a frankly eye-watering number of very generous gifts, everyone I've crossed is feeling rather inclined to forgive if not forget. The Ward Lock Blade? The Helical Arbor? All forgiven. And as to the Stack Freed Gates... well as you can see, I've made other arrangements. Take him away.”

To his credit, perhaps, he refuses to go quietly, alternating between calling out threats and pleas for mercy. He's strong, but his struggles - against the warriors he was so certain were loyal only to him - are futile.

The smile has fallen from her lips. Her face is a mask.

“Tomorrow at the Mainspring Pinion I will make a very sad speech, explaining how one of my oldest friends was tragically slain by assassins. Everyone will know what has really happened, of course. but nobody will care. Because they know who holds the reins of the assassins, and the next time one of them thinks of trying to extort me they will remember you. For a little while at least. One last service you'll have done me. I suppose I should thank you for that.”

He understands then how absolutely he has been outmanoeuvred, and his final anguished wail is cut short by the slamming of a brass portal. She stares after him for several moments, then shrugs. She calls her secretary.

"Call the Five Pillars," she instructs. "We need to prepare for tomorrow. Nothing can be allowed to go awry."

Basileia Brazen, Sovereign Lady of the City of Locks, leans back on her throne, as that quiet little smile returns, but it does not reach her eyes.

Overview

- Seven eternal have sent emissaries to Anvil, apparently in response to plenipotentiary messages from the Imperial archmages
- Four have agreed to meetings of one kind of another, either in person or via emissaries
- The other three have provided messages, opportunities, or gifts of one type or another

Every season, each of the six archmages may send a single plenipotentiary message to an eternal of their realm. The eternal are bound to respond, although not always in a way the archmage may wish. Following the Summer Solstice, somewhat

unexpectedly, seven eternalists seem to have responded to invitations to parley via their emissaries.

After some discussion it's possible that one of these supposed plenipotentiary responses is not, in fact, a response to a plenipotentiary sent by an Archmage. It has been included none-the-less on the assumption that even if it isn't a legitimate plenipotentiary the Archmage should still be aware of it and hopefully can sort out exactly what is going on.

The Veiled Ladies

- A meeting has been proposed between a potent lieutenant of the Whisper Gallery (?), the Archmage of Night, and a number of cadets
- The meeting will take place at the Imperial Regio at 20:00 on Friday evening, but move to a chamber thereafter
- It's not initially clear if this is a formal parley or not
- The current Archmage of Night is Eliina "Realm's Visionary" Lailasdottir of Wintermark

Three days after the Summer Solstice, a sinister figure appears at the Hub. Nobody remembers seeing them arrive. Features hidden in a porcelain mask, wrapped from head to foot in night-black sable, they claim to be Boutine il Messaggero, an agent of the Dömur Spunanálarinnar. They have a message for the Archmage of Night. During the Autumn Equinox, the the Veiled Caballero who is also known as the Curator of Places Secret and Hidden - a powerful noble in the court of The Veiled Ladies of the Saturnine Chamber wishes to meet them, and a small group of others, at the Imperial regio on Friday evening. The meeting will take place at eight o'clock, and the Archmage is to bring some (or all) of the cadets who have been dealing

with the matter of the Tomb of Achism, especially with regard to the Jotun and a certain missing archivist.

There will be no need for any magistrates; the meeting will involve no exchange of boons, only of knowledge. The Veiled Caballero has a vested interest in ensuring the matter of the Tomb is resolved, and licence from the Courtiers of the Chiaroscuran Halls to meet with the Imperials in pursuit of their shared goal. The Veiled Caballero will ensure that all the cadets present - even if they are not themselves capable of opening a portal - will be able to reach the chamber where the discussion will take place, and that everyone will return safely to Anvil.

Having delivered their message, Boutine il Messaggero departs, and while they are followed apparently lose their tails in Outer Anvil. All signs point to the herald being an agent of the Whisper Gallery, although they do not come out and say it directly. The civil service are not entirely sure what is going on, but suggest that any cadets who do know may wish to make contact with the Archmage of Night. Obviously there is the issue that if this is the Whisper Gallery they are under enmity of the Imperial Conclave, but it is not illegal for anyone (other than a sorcerer) to deal with them only to accept their boons. Hopefully the Archmage of Night knows more?

Queen of Silence

- Kaela invites nine named groups to show their understanding of death through story and song, in the Hall of Worlds at 23:00 on Friday
- She will also send a representative to speak to the Winter Archmage and others on the possibility of “recruitment”
- Members of the Grim Legion will wait by the Sentinel Gate after the battle on Saturday and Sunday, any may offer

terminal characters an eternal place among their ranks

- This is not a formal parley
- The current Archmage of Winter is Ematius of the Great Library of Urizen

Two weeks after the Summer Solstice, at daybreak, a Highborn cataphract marches into Anvil. Clad in full plate they make their way straight to the Hub. Those who come close glimpse boney, withered limbs through the thin slits in the armour. They unfurl the tattered banner of a long-dead chapter and announce a message for the Winter Archmage from the Cold-Hearted.

She is pleased to accept the suggestion that they repeat the format of their last formal parley, inviting several groups to offer her “song and story of the inevitable decay and end that the path of life takes.” Those named by the Archmage are: the Unshackled, Circle of the Drowned, Heralds of the Reaper, Wolves of the Pale Raven, Black Garden and Nation's Guard. She also extends the same invitations to three others: The Winter Wolfborn, Hraefnhall, and an Imperial Orc named Frith. The herald tersely insists that these people should be expecting such an invitation. Each of those named will be granted up to five minutes before her, and have the opportunity to receive a boon if she is satisfied with their offering. This time she intends to be there in-person, appearing at the portal in the Hall of Worlds.

While this is happening she will also be bringing one or two of her Grim Legionnaires to speak with the Winter Archmage. It has been some time since a hero of the Empire was granted a place in her Grim Legion, and she wishes to send heralds to “recruit” at the Sentinel Gate as people return from the battles on Saturday and Sunday morning. As she is currently under a Declaration of Amity there is technically nothing to stop her

from doing this, but she considers it only polite to have a discussion first. Anyone with strong feelings on this topic, in either direction, is encouraged to attend and make them known.

Should this offer be emphatically refused on Friday, the heralds will still attend, but only to help the dying prepare for what awaits them, and perhaps offer some respite from their pain.

Otherwise, as the battle ends on Saturday and Sunday morning, Grim Legionnaires will position themselves near the Sentinel Gate, likely opposite the Anvil Hospital. If the conversation on Friday night was productive they will be offering a place in the Grim Legion to anyone terminal who they deem worthy.

Anyone chosen will have some time to say their goodbyes, then be marched off Anvil through the Imperial Regio, to spend the rest of eternity in her undying service.

There are a few topics that Kaela is not interested in discussing at this time. She makes no claim to Rhonwen's Fall - or at least no claim she is minded to enforce. She encourages anyone with an interest in it to let time work its slow change on the place and let it collapse into ruin. She offers no guidance on the subject of the Axou, except to say that it is always worth remembering that all things end - even anger. Perhaps the Empire should just leave them alone for a few decades? It worked last time, after all.

And one final note: she does not intend to discuss the vallorn directly but has decided to send her herald Marcescence to meet with the Navarr on Saturday. The creature's expertise in curses that wither plant life may be of interest to their campaign against the Folly of Terunael. Marcescence is prone to distraction, especially in areas rich with plant life, so it would be unwise to attempt to provide a specific arrival time. Luckily he should be easily recognised thanks to his small stature and resemblance to a papery, wilted plant not dissimilar to a form of

nightshade.

City of Locks

- Basileia Brazen will attend the Hall of Worlds at 11:00 on Saturday.
- She wishes to speak with the Imperial Magus, the Warmage, and any Grandmasters who are willing to attend on her. She will tolerate speaking to the Proxy Archmage.
- Heralds of the City of Locks wish to speak separately with Bloodcrow Udoo and Quay Stone.
- The current Archmage of Autumn is Edmundo of Damakan's Forge

At an offensively early hour of the morning on a warm day shortly after the Solstice, the Imperial Regio disgorges a heavily-tattooed Herald. She wanders through Anvil, alternately asking for directions and attempting to sell drugs to anyone who looks tired. Upon locating a civil servant she cheerfully (and unnecessarily loudly) informs him that she represents the Union of Stevedores and Lock Keepers, and bears a message from the recently-crowned Sovereign Lady of the City of Locks.

Basileia Brazen is pleased to announce that the City of Locks is once again open for business. She is, of course, very pleased to entertain the requests of the Casinean Empire and open a new chapter in the relationship between these two factions. Some of the Proxy Archmage's requests are sadly not practical - shutting down smuggling routes is very much the opposite of what the City does, and gathering information for blackmail purposes has been sadly removed from the City's list of services for reasons that the Proxy Archmage should know perfectly well. If the Casinean Empire wants to truly swing the balance of power

in this war with the Grendel, the Basileia suggests that they start by gathering knowledge. Fortunately, knowledge is something that the City of Locks has in abundance - if the price can be paid. The Herald indicates that the Conclave might wish to begin snapping up as much Tempest Jade as they can, that being the favoured currency of the City this season.

However, the Herald says, the Basileia is happy to leave the discussion of trading to subordinates. The Overseer of the Surveyor's Cartel will be happy to discuss gathering intelligence on the Grendel to one of the Proxy Archmage's associates - maybe Bloodcrow Udo? Furthermore, the Boss of the Union of Stevedores and Lock Keepers would be interested to speak with Quay Stone to see if some kind of mutually beneficial arrangement could be negotiated. When the baffled civil servant enquires why two random Imperial citizens without any formal responsibilities would be selected to speak with the City, the Herald just grins. "They know what they did. Make sure to tell the others that we'll be in touch." No clarification on who 'the others' are is forthcoming.

While others handle the messy business of exchange, the Sovereign Lady of the City of Locks wishes to discuss the current political state of the Empire. The great houses of state seem to be in constant conflict at the moment, and the Basileia is interested to see how the Conclave is handling this situation. Consequently she is interested in conversing with the Imperial Magus, the Warmage, and any Grandmasters who are available. There are plenty of opportunities to be had in times of crisis for those with the wit to seize them.

Message delivered, the Herald departs. It is not until they have been gone for a while that anyone realises that they have walked off with a brief primer on Imperial Law, casually lifted from the desk in the Hub.

King Under the Mountain

- Adamant declines parley
- The King Under the Mountain presents an opportunity for the Master of the Koboldi, and has left a piece of paper with the civil service for them
- The current Archmage of Summer is Mirella of the Twisted Rose

A week before the Autumn equinox, a small group of the brightly-scaled servants known as koboldi arrive at Anvil. They spend a little time exploring the tents, entertainments, and shops that have already been erected, clearly enjoying themselves, before gathering at the Hub. After some furious whispered discussion, the tallest of their number is pushed forward and with a great deal of pomp declares themselves a royal emissary of the King under the Mountain, responding to a missive from the Archmage of Summer. After due consideration, Sharaz, of the Throne of Adamant chooses to respond to one of the petitions placed before him.

The ambition of Sikari Nightscale, who is grandmaster of the Rod and Shield, finds favour with the Worldshaper. A mighty fortress in oft-invaded Segura to defy the enemies of the Empire and stand stalwart against the wear of time.

The Adamantine Dragon expresses surprise that Segura, given its wealth and exposed position between two enemies, has not been fortified already. Was there not a scheme laid out four years ago to create a castle in the heart of the territory? Still, it is the current work that matters, not the works of the past or the future. So Adamant makes this promise; provided the Master of the Koboldi commissions a suitable fortification in Segura, the eternal will send his servants to aid in three ways. First, they will help design the structure so that it is mighty enough to

match Olgafsdottirshal or Reumah's Rest - that is they will ensure it is a rank two fortification, although the Master will still need to source all the materials (assuming no other opportunity, this means the fortification will cost 180 white granite, and 330 Thrones, but will have a defensive strength of 6,000). They will ensure that the work takes only a year to complete despite the size of the structure (rather than two years as would be required to build a rank one fortification and then upgrade it). Finally, they will infuse the foundations of the structure with adamant, meaning that like the Gate in Semmerholm, it will be unbreakable and while it may be captured by the enemy it will not fall save to the most potent magic - and Adamant makes it clear that no attacker will gain the aid of Summer eternal to shatter what he has made solid. To invoke this boon, the Master of the Koboldi should call on Adamant's aid while commissioning the fortification. As with any such promise, if the Master is already taking advantage of a different opportunity to build something in Segura, the effect of Adamant's boon will be unpredictable but it will have an effect.

Given the current problems in Segura, with the rising of the river, the Master of the Deep Caverns knows it may take some time for large-scale construction to be feasible, so he leaves this boon open to the Master until the end of the Summer Solstice two years from now (Summer 388YE). The kobold cautions seriously however that the boon can only be invoked once and if there is a false start - as there was with the Iron Qunat the boon will be wasted.

After this, and following a grandiose bow that sets several of the other koboldi to applause, the spokeslizard quickly runs through a list of things that Adamant will not be addressing at this time. Regardless of what a Day eternal may have said, the Granite Lord does not wish to speak of the Eye of Morrow, nor of those who shaped the Sentinel Gate, and regrets that at

this time the koboldi are far too busy to spend time visiting a tavern. The spokeslizard coughs at this and mentions that if they do find themselves in the vicinity of Anvil with time on their hand, they will certainly bear the kind invitation in mind, however.

As to the Master of Koboldi, Adamant's messenger produces a small sheet of paper, and asks the civil service to take custody of it. It is a gift for the Master, given in recognition of the fine work they are doing transforming the Empire. (OOO Note: The Master will be able to pick the piece of paper up from the Hub after time-in).

With that, and a great deal of boisterous enthusiasm, the koboldi depart, not for the Summer realm but for Karov where they are apparently joining the workers there to put the final touches to the Great Hall of Fabric Arts.

Centipede General

- The Centipede General declines parley with the Archmage of Spring
- Their emissary delivers several messages for the Archmage and the Navarr in particular
- The current Archmage of Spring is Ibiss Briarheart of Urizen

The last herald of the Centipede General who came to Anvil appeared as a massive beast. Not long after the Summer Solstice, a creature of much more modest size appears, presumably late at night. It sneaks to the Hub, unnoticed, and curls up under a desk there. When the civil servants come to open the place up, they are taken by surprise when it slithers out into the light - a short humanoid with four arms and a monstrosly chitinous face. A great deal of hot sweet tea is

consumed immediately after, while the thing lurks patiently, waiting to deliver its message. It speaks for the Queen of Scorpions and comes in response to the missive of the Archmage of Spring.

Firstly it wants everyone to understand that the fane its master has discussed with the Navarr is to help the Navarr out. It isn't a gift to the Sharp Fangs, it's a gift from Sharp Fangs. The herald isn't sure how the Empire does things, but usually you don't have to bribe people to accept a gift. Either they want its aid, or they don't. A fane is simply the closest thing to a crossing-place the Empire has, so it uses that term. It'd be equally happy with a manse, temple, shadow den, grand regio, or crossroads (those being some of the names this kind of thing are known as elsewhere). As long as the place is given over to the Envenomed Blade it doesn't care how it is built.

Secondly, there seems to be a misconception. The Maw-of-Spikes doesn't give two figs what the "Empire" wants or thinks. It is dealing with the Navarr, who the Shadow-Hunter feels it has shown its appreciation for on multiple occasions. It's already removed some of its support from the Druj, and although they have made a good showing in Therunin it's not especially inclined to favour either side in the conflict there. It certainly won't try and fabricate ways to deny the Druj the use of any rituals that draw on its aid, any more than it would do such a thing to wriggle out of a deal with Imperial magicians. As to the request for a college of magic - if the Empire wants to align with the weak creature of rivers and streams, let them. Telling a being they must bribe people to accept a gift freely given is not a good time to ask for more gifts.

Thirdly, this is the second time at least someone has asked the Gasping Breath to remove the curse from the shield Ajax. He has no interest in doing that; he is a creature of poison and

sudden violence. He doesn't care about the shield, and he doesn't care if someone removes the curse. He views his part in this matter over. Take it to some desperate fool eager to earn the Empire's favour like the self-styled Tarnfather to find purifying water. Don't ask again.

Fourthly, the Web of Blades has no interest in offering rituals to the Empire at this time. Why would they want the vicious protective magics he offers the Druj while they have the soft gifts of the Prince with a Thousand Foes? While that ritual is part of Imperial Lore, Arhallogen will not share his defensive wards of stealthy beasts and sudden traps with the Empire and, likewise, they should stop asking.

Finally, the Many Move as One is actually pleased to hear the Navarr are ready to attack the vallorn. They would be glad to offer their boons to an army to bring dripping death to the creatures spawned by that place. The Navarr may have turned down their last offer but they hold no rancour - it was a gift offered. Once the fane has been built, or something comparable, then they will offer their boons of death and war again.

Skittering Dark holds no malice towards the Archmage, but declines parley. There have been a lot of words of late, and now it is time to see some actions. With that final comment, the herald skitters away, returning to the Imperial regio and the Spring realm.

Navigator

- Roshanwe invites the Archmage and representatives of a number of covens to attend a meeting with a respected lieutenant
- They wish to discuss the failures and successes of the Combing the Beach ritual

- The meeting will take place in a chamber reached via the Hall of Worlds at 14:00 on Saturday
- The current Archmage of Day is Skywise Gralka

The messenger of the Navigator arrives at the Imperial regio without fanfare. Dressed in the garb of a smart Suaq hunter, in a coat of eyes, boats, and stars, it makes its way purposefully to the Hub to speak with the voice of its mistress. It would barely stand out in a crowd save for the six coiling tendrils that spill down from its face where its mouth might have been, and for the shifting azure of its smooth skin. No merrow ever looked like such an eerie creature of the seas. Its voice is soft, polite. Its mistress understands why the Sevenfold Path might question her understanding of virtue, but she chooses not to debate that matter with them at this time of crisis and unrest. It is a good question, surely, and dangerous to take any matter on hearsay alone, but with due respect Roshanwe's understanding of Wisdom is based on the same learning as that of the Empire, but there are many routes to a destination that all start from the same point.

The failure of Combing the Beach is viewed by Roshanwe as a learning experience, and she hopes the Empire sees it the same way. With that in mind, she invites a number of magicians to come speak with her friend, Flyl, who was responsible for helping create many of the replies. Perhaps between them they might work out what went wrong and how it might have been done differently, and perhaps understand better the questions that were asked in response to the ritual. Along with the Archmage themselves, Roshanwe invites a representative of the Adelaarscoven, Convocation of the Mistral, Coven of Barabbas, Las Brujahs de Zuhri, Lyktan coven, Saque Magique, Song of Taniki, Spire of the Auric Horizon, the Scrying Pool, the Sphinx's Sage, and Wings of Skywise.

There will be an opportunity to talk about the answers given, so it would be ideal if those who attend bring copies of the answers they were given with them, if they still have them, or whatever notes they might have if they do not. If they cast the ritual more than once, then it would be best if they chose the results they are most interested in discussing. Crucially, Flyl wishes all who attend to understand clearly that one of the questions they asked, and the answers they received, will be discussed at the meeting so if they do not wish their words with Roshanwe to be known by others there, they should not attend.

The meeting will take place in a chamber reached via the Hall of Worlds at two in the afternoon on Saturday. One member of each coven is invited, ideally one who was part of the ritual performance of Combing the Beach. The meeting will not be a parley, as Flyl wishes everyone to be able to take part in the discussion without the formality of seeking permission to speak. Roshanwe has no fear for the safety of her herald.

There is one other matter, of course. After the death of Alecta, Caradaemon asked not to return to the Empire, and Roshanwe has honoured that request. She will not break it now. The herald worked fully with the militia after the murder of their mutual friend, and it is the decision of the Fisherman that they would have little to add that was not said before. Roshanwe would dearly love to see the case of Alecta's murder solved, and her killers brought to justice, but she was killed seventy-seven years ago. The likelihood that anyone involved is still alive is very low indeed. With that said, Roshanwe has prevailed on the Celestial Library to provide them with an excerpt from a scroll in their possession that recounts the circumstances of the death, and has provided it to her herald to deliver during the meeting.

Crucible

- Azoth declines a parley, but has prepared an alchemical gift for the Navarr
- The current Archmage of Night is Eliina "Realm's Visionary" Lailasdottir

The herald Fulminate is no stranger to Anvil. They take the form of a tall, lithe orc with scales and feathers across their brow, and are a favoured servant of the Crucible. They arrive barely two days before the Autumn Equinox, and the first thing they do is deliver their apologies; apparently the Great Work underestimated how long it would take to complete some of their tasks. Jorgen of Wintermark, the civil servant who most often deals with heralds coming in answer to plenipotentiary missives is a little nonplussed. There has already been an answer to the plenipotentiary of the Archmage of Night. Fulminate seems to share the civil servants' confusion - they are very clear that they are here to reply to the Archmage. After some discussion, and calling in some other civil servants, the decision is made to simply present both answers to the Archmage and trust that they know which eternal they have spoken with and what about.

Fulminate indicates that the Azoth is not able to attend a parley at this time, but is very pleased with all the work Imperial magicians have been doing to challenge their boundaries, explore and surpass their limits, and change their world. The Sweet Dark Mouth is especially excited by the possibilities presented in Madruga in the aftermath of the rivers rise and indicates that it waits with interest to see what the swirling mess of magic and water and star-metal has wrought there. It is fascinated by the "coincidence" that the conflux of Winter, Spring, and Night bound up in the place mirrors the

accounting of the Ring of Adversity and wonders what that might portend. Fulminate becomes quite excitable and agitated, talking faster and faster, and Jurgen is forced to ask them to slow down and get to the point.

Two subjects concern the Azoth. Firstly, it can offer no help to the Archmage with the matter of the destructive regio in Hahnmark. Living things cannot endure the light that spills from that place, and it is equally inimical to heralds, even those born from unliving matter. Anything capable of acting to close the wound, as the Archmage describes it, would be undone by that place before they could achieve their goal. The Azoth proposes that Imperial magicians use whatever tools are at their disposal to explore other areas tainted by Cold Sun and collect together residues and materials from them. Once they have a representative mix of things, bringing them together and submitting another plenipotentiary might at least start alchemists and eternal alike down a path that leads to the closing of that great wound. Fulminate suggests that other eternals might encourage magicians to be cautious, but that way lies stagnation and tradition, and the herald is sure Imperial magicians will embrace the opportunity to expand their understanding even as their bodies fall apart.

On the matter of the Navarr, and the Terunael Singing Stone, however, Fulminate is even more effusive. Azoth challenged them to make a fundamental change to themselves, and they have done. At first Jurgen assumes the herald means the decision to take the fight to the vallorn, but Fulminate corrects him. The Navarr have always intended to destroy the vallorn - changing the speed at which they do so is impressive but not fundamental. Rather, it appears that the "great change" the Navarr have undertaken is the decision to accept the Great Forest Orcs as their family. It bespeaks an entirely new way of looking at the world, and the Rebus is very excited about it.

Consequently, the Master Alchemist has created a preparation that will allow the Navarr to work an equally fundamental change on the singing stone. It is still brewing, unfortunately, but will be finished by the Equinox. The Archmage of Night can call the cauldron forth by coming to the Imperial regio between one in the afternoon and sunset on Saturday during the Summit, and casting operate portal while loudly thanking Azoth for their boon. Ideally there should be some Navarr present. At that point the cauldron containing the preparation will appear. It will need to be used by the end of the Equinox or it will lose its potency.

Fulminate doesn't know exactly how it works but believes it requires a casting of Distill the Serpent's Stone to activate it. It requires three rings of ilium to finish its empowerment, rather than the more usual one, but that between the substance and the nature of the Singing Stone, it will allow any number of Navarr magicians to cooperate together to cast the ritual and realign it to their nation. Fulminate cautions that the preparation will work for anyone so in theory any other nation could use it along with the stone to change it so that it favours their people instead; the Navarr will want to make sure nobody steals the two for obvious reasons. The Mirror Crack'd has apparently mentioned that they know there are no Navarr magicians who have mastered Distill the Serpent's Stone attending Anvil, but is confident that there are enough masters of Night magic among them to carry off this significant and impressive achievement - especially with the aid of the Archmage of Night, the existence of shadow eggs, and the ready availability of both Infant Starts with a Blank Slate and Calcination of Bone and Lye. The latter raises some eyebrows as it doesn't seem to be a ritual known to Imperial magicians, which seems to take Fulminate by surprise. The herald quickly changes the subject and doesn't answer any more questions on this topic.

At the very end, just before leaving to return to the Night realm, the orc-featured herald clears its throat and looks a little shifty. The Changer of the Ways is reasonably confident that the transformation of the stone will go off without a hitch but obviously it has been impossible to test this preparation and it would be quite tricky to make any more of it. The magicians involved might want to take all the usual precautions one would take when working with untried magic based on a good theory rather than tried and tested ritual texts.

Timetable

These meetings are taking place in a number of places; in chambers reached via the Hall of Worlds. The times, and the eternal involved, are summarised here.

Day	Time	Eternal	Realm	Note
Friday	20:00	Whisper Gallery (?)	Night	Imperial regio moving to chamber
Friday	23:00	Kaela	Winter	Hall of Worlds, not a purely
Saturday	11:00	City of Locks	Autumn	Hall of Worlds, parley
Saturday	14:00	Roshanwe	Day	Informal meeting in a chamber reached via the Hall of Worlds