

101

"Millennia of hubris has dragged the heavens down and along the dirt. The gods, in their blind rage, are destroying this world we call home and it is up to us to make them see reason once more and return whence they came."

"The unravelling must be undone 'fore any semblance of peace can be achieved within the mortal realm once more. Bring forth the tainted and be rewarded not only in spirit. Stitch by Stitch we shall resew what was torn open. So decrees The Clergy."

102

"The Clergy continues on their path of lies and self-deception. Killing our kind in hopes of mending that which cannot be mended. Their greed is what started all this, and it will not end until The Clergy and its beneficiaries have all been laid to rest."

"The elemental gods cleanse the land in their holy retribution against the impure and twisted. We must lend them all the guidance and strength we can to ensure they succeed. We will become one."

201

"This land used to be beautiful. But ever since the heavens parted, the elemental gods have been destroying it, forming their abominable domains in each corner of this land. Unable to survive their conditions, we are resigned to live in fear in the midst of it all as the gods intensify their chokehold. "

"Brothers and sisters killing one another just to be rewarded with a new day in this hell of an existence. Now that these gods that we have worshipped and sacrificed for all this time are destroying us, who will grant us deliverance?"

202

"There used to be a great settlement here. Its marketplace would fill up and become the liveliest place on this side of the great mountain once per moon as people traded their goods and expertise. We were happy."

"But in the chaos of the unravelling, massive earthquakes shook the earth for days on end, causing those who could to flee. Two days later, spires of rock and iron speared up from the ground in an instant, sealing the fate of those who stayed."

203

"Wondrous farmlands as far as the eye could see. Crops, livestock; if you could name it, it was grown here. Trade at the eastern marketplace every moon then let these goods spread across the land for all to enjoy."

"Then the god of rain and thunder descended. The livestock was the first to go. The incessant crashing of thunder would not let them sleep or stay calm, causing them to go mad and either run off or die on the spot from excitement."

"Then the croplands flooded and the continuous rain gave no respite, leaving only despair and hunger to come out of any field. Water was everywhere and it strangled out all possibility for life."

204

"The billows of smoke did not stop rising for months. All of the forests and their wildlife, burnt to the ground. In the wake of the god of the sun and fire, the green vistas were set ablaze instantaneously from the enormous heat."

"Only the agonized screams of the woodland inhabitants could overpower the roar of the firestorm. Nothing remained, and nothing could ever be again; naught but ash and dust."

"Some tried to gather search parties once the smoke finally cleared, but none of them ever returned as they left. The ones that were able to return remarked on the deafening silence that now envelops the area. Not even wind blows in that barren land, when it used to be filled with birdsong and other sounds of bountiful nature."

205

"The great mountain gave way for streams which would feed into rivers, mostly leading to this area where they would pool into lakes. A lot of craftsmen called this place home, as they were able to power their devices with the strength of the ever-moving water. That all ended however, as the biting chill descended upon the land, freezing everything and everyone overnight."

"Some were fortunate enough to survive and managed to get out, but everyone who did, were forced to leave everything behind. Now, without anywhere to go as all the surrounding places had been met with similar fates, we struggle to survive in the inhospitable swampland."

206

"We have created a monstrosity. Centuries of praying to the elemental gods empowered them, emboldened them. Now, they have descended to rule this world."

"And what has been our reward? Land that fed us, drowned. Land that housed us, skewered. Soon we will have nowhere left to go. What then? Something has to be done, something has to change."

207

"Only the void is strong enough to destroy the demons we used to call 'gods'. Only the void knows the steps required to undo the unravelling. Only the void can bring peace into this land once more."

"No gods. No suffering. No pain. Only the void."

208

"Beware all who covet the elemental orbs, for only the blessed can wield their power."

209

"Metal and rock, rain and thunder, fire and sun, wind and ice, void. These are the elements that make up existence. One locked away; its four keepers."

210

"The void seeks to envelop, to spread. For this, it was cast down into a prison below the earth. It can only be freed by an accord of the other elements."

211

"Many have heard the whispers of the void, and those who heed them succumb to despair."

212

"The flood has taken the means to survive from my people and now it is time to put my knowledge of alchemy to work."

"If I could find a way to initiate mutation on a strain of food crops that would allow it to thrive in flooded soil..."

"My people would not have to starve. I will find a way."

213

"I have found signs of a species of food crops, one that has branched off from the ones initially grown here."

"A spontaneous mutation that has allowed some plants to thrive in this new environment. How, exactly, is still unclear."

"Perhaps the myriad corpses of all the livestock left behind to rot in these fields have yielded some refreshment to the soil."

"Unfortunately, all the specimens I have found so far have been starved of resources and no longer viable for refinement."

"I must continue, for I am on the right path."

214

"I have made a great, but harrowing, discovery. A recently-spent carcass had a few viable seeds within it."

"Testing a hypothesis, I planted these seeds in my flesh. Not long did it take before the first sprouts grew out of my skin."

"I can feel them growing at every moment, but I must persevere. For my people."

"Conducting multiple experiments with alchemically altered sprouts to see if they will take to growing in soil."

215

"As my duty, I give my life for my people. The gods may have forsaken us, but I will not."

"I have found what I have been searching for. While resistant to overabundance of water, its roots are strictly carnivorous. No amount of alchemical meddling could change this fact."

"All I could do was to refine a mutation to ensure it would provide ample nutritional value to us."

"Unfortunately, my experiments have left me riddled with holes and I am no longer in a condition that would allow me to journey back home."

"My alchemical formulae were destroyed in a recent thunderstorm, and I do not have the dexterity left in me to rewrite them anymore, intricate as they are."

"Thus do I now give my own body for the cause, having done what I can. Please take this precious plant and cultivate it into a new beginning for my people."

216

"Squire Asval of the vestige, by order of the clergy, you have been assigned to conduct a search of the god of metal and rock's domain for supplies that might aid our work."

"As reward, you may keep a share of what you find to take back and share with the rest of your outfit, in accordance with your contract, of course."

"Per our records, there was a great marketplace in the area and it is bound to still contain some useful reagents to be used in our rituals."

"As always, if you happen upon dwellers while carrying out your mission, you are to apprehend and deliver any to the nearest clergy checkpoint, after which you shall return to complete your assigned mission."

"Alongside this mission statement is a list of reagents we think might be found in the area. Clergy's will be done."

217

"Squire Ashwal of the vestige, on behalf of the clergy. Day 2 of the assignment. Two of reagent a, one of reagent c. Continuing mission."

"Auditory evidence of possible dweller presence. No sightings or footprints as of yet. The pillars of earth carry echoes far and wide, so as I hear them, they must be hearing me and keeping distance. Will continue to keep an eye out."

"Two combat situations to report. Beasts and other creatures eliminated. None suitable for the clergy's purposes. None were carrying reagents pertinent to the mission. Some injuries received. Will take a day to recover."

"End of report. Clergy's will be done."

218

"Squire Ashwal of the vestige, on behalf of the clergy. Day 5 of the assignment. Two of reagent a, one of reagent b, four of reagent c. Mission paused."

"One dweller sighted during the night of the fourth day of the assignment. Pausing the current mission to pursue target. Auditory evidence of possible other dwellers."

"One combat situation to report. Great beast. Not suitable for the clergy's purposes. Was not carrying reagents pertinent to the mission. Some injuries received. Unable to take time to recover."

"Burying reagents in the ground next to two trees to allow better mobility in pursuit. Trees are growing close to three small boulders, a day's journey southeast from the entrance to the domain."

"End of report. Clergy's will be done."

219

"Ashwal of the vestige. Day 7 of the assignment. Mission abandoned."

"One dweller apprehended and delivered to eastern clergy checkpoint. That is all you will get from me."

"Requesting immediate audience with a clergy high priest upon my return."

"End of report."

220

"It's been 9 days since I took on my first mission on behalf of the clergy. My first step towards knighthood, I thought. I was hoping to one day serve in the clergy's castle grounds beyond the great mountain."

"But after witnessing what they did to that dweller, I no longer wish that. Honestly, I never really thought about what happens to those captured by the vestige. It seems I should have."

"After seeing how intelligent and how much like us the dweller was, I had my reservations about handing them over after I arrived at the checkpoint. The dweller told me things I did not want to hear, but I should have listened."

"My desire to prove myself won in the end. I requested an audience with a clergy high priest after my return from this mission. I am not yet sure what I will tell him, except that I will heed their words no longer."

"First I wanted to return here to make amends to the other dwellers. For this mistake, I will pay with my life. They would not hear my pleas for forgiveness, and instead left me here to succumb to my wounds that have become infected. This will be my penance. -Ashwal"

221

"Dear sister of the cause, we have reports of the god of wind and ice's domain possibly containing a powerful armament that we might use in our mission against the clergy."

"Our numbers grow thinner by the year and we must find ways to even the odds. In order to protect our people, we need to gain as much purchase as possible and let the gods finish their great work."

"For this, I implore you to go to the domain of wind and ice and retrieve this armament. May the god guide your path within their domain."

222

"Whoever might find this, beware of this place. The freezing cold can envelop you in an instant, as it has done to me. I am lost, afraid, and so very cold."

"I have to hope that what the elders say is true. I wish to become one by passing on my essence and strength to the gods so that they can finally fix our world."

"However, I have doubts whether or not this is the right course to take. What if by strengthening the god of wind and ice, these conditions will just spread for all the world to bear?"

"What will happen once the gods are done with their great work? What will become of mortals who still survive? I hope we are doing the right thing. The clergy certainly are not - of that I am sure. I have seen what they do to our people."

"Answers to all my questions are something I wish to find once I become one. Maybe you already have those answers and have survived through this misery. If not - take my pick and find the armament I was searching for."

223

"I set out to the scorched lands, as a select few have done before me - they for their reasons, I for mine. Fewer still have returned, but that is a risk we all take."

"Her locket as my guiding force, I have roamed the sands for what has felt like weeks. If it has actually been that long, I cannot tell - the sun never sets in this place."

"My supplies are running low, and I do not know if I can make it back. If all I have to live for has drowned in ash, then I care not to return. I will continue my search until the end if I must."

"If my journey has indeed ended and I lie here resting eternally, please find my wife and give her this locket, for I know she must be missing it very much."

301

"Esteemed members of the Vestige, we the Clergy present to you a living example of a divine conduit. This individual used to be a normal person just like any of you, but one day their body was taken over by a god, the god of metal and rock in this case, and made this person their puppet."

"Now look at them. Stripped of will and spirit, an empty husk housing the twisted, corrupted power of this god who is free to do as they want with them. Our meticulous experiments and investigations with this specimen have proved to be extremely fruitful and we trust you have studied our reports thoroughly already."

"It cannot be stressed enough, that these aberrations must be destroyed if you are ever to come across them during your patrols and excursions. Every death of their kind is a great victory for our cause."

302

"This room is an example of the spaces that the Clergy would drag our kind into, for unspeakably horrific experimentation and sickening ritualistic killings."

"We have decided to leave this one room as it was when we drove the Clergy out of this mountain, to serve as a reminder of the atrocities committed against our people. But know that rooms such as this one once littered these caves in the dozens."

"Our fellow brethren were denied the chance to become one, their blood now colouring the floor of this cursed room. They have been immortalized as reminders of the Clergy's evil. The Clergy must be brought to justice."

303

"This is a space where the dwellers would perform their animalistic rituals to appease the elemental gods. Observe how rudimentary their tools and methods are. We have decided to leave this place as it was when we initially took over this mountain."

"They would line up to forfeit their strength and even lives to the elemental gods like primitive animals. They have nothing to gain, nothing to live for. They multiply and then cull their own numbers, and for what? Just to ensure that this journey into oblivion as the gods desecrate our lands and people will be as excruciating as possible."

"They must be stopped. And if they are so keen on dying anyway, we might as well take advantage of this generosity and provide them with what they seek, and use their strength to stitch closed the heavens so we might rid our world of the gods."

"These caves are filled with dweller abodes. Study them, so that we might learn in what kinds of environments we might find more of these vermin to use for our cause. What little could be gleaned of their intelligence and sophistication has already been learned as there isn't much there to begin with, so do not waste your time in such pursuits."

304

"The elemental gods explain all life in this world. There is no evidence of anything else. Those who say they can hear whispers of an entity they call the void, are lying to further their own goals."

"With the elemental gods now descended unto the lands, people are easily persuaded to believe all kinds of things, but be not deceived by charlatans. It may even be the work of the gods, trying to draw attention away from themselves by conjuring an idea of an entity that does not exist in order to thwart the efforts of us who are trying to stop them."