

## RECENTLY, IN THE WORLD OF KISHAR SAMAZAR...

[OOO: Consider this an in-character document, a snapshot in time from an in-character perspective as of the end of Season 10, summarizing that Season, which was also in-character the year “Eismana 5.” This summary can be considered to be accurate as of late in that year from the perspective of the knowledgeable Adventurer’s Guild NPC who wrote it.]

## A SUMMARY OF THE YEAR EISMANA 5:

What a year! Let me explain. Well, no, it’s too much, so let me sum up.

### FIRST, WE GOT AN AIRSHIP AND THERE WAS A WEDDING, BUT ALSO, BRAINWASHING AND ASSASSINATION

Rashad and Obeah pitched in together to buy the Adventurer’s Guild its own airship to use, rather than continuing to borrow Obeah’s, because he does have to use that for other things (like making a living, I guess). It was going to need improving – and a new name! – but we were up for the challenge. (Oh, we did eventually name the ship: The Diamond’s Edge!)

The next day, a much-anticipated **wedding** of Guild members Ēlinyr, Alair Syldithas, and Ithuryn N’vea was set to occur – and did occur – but not without incident. As the wedding concluded and the guests congratulated the newlyweds, something strange came over Ithuryn and he suddenly stabbed Diamond Assembly Councilor (and our former Guild-mate) **Orcus!** I wasn’t there but it was all very scary and strange. Ithuryn wasn’t himself, apparently, and was very confused when he came out of a sort of trance. Further investigation revealed that Ithuryn had been brainwashed and secretly commanded to assassinate the Councilor. Orcus could not be immediately revived, as his soul was captured in the strange, ensorcelled dagger, but after some months’ effort the Guild did both find the originator of the dagger, free Orcus, and find out more about the brainwashing. It seems there are many others affected by this program, including a Professor of the Academy of Innovation, whom Skegulf stopped from trying to assassinate Councilor di Rossi a few months later, as well as our own dear chef (and baker of the best cookies!), Calder. (Not to spoil the rest of the story, but he’s OK now! You can trust him, I promise.) It turns out the whole thing was a conspiracy by the Nocturnal Empire called **the Lunarch Program**. Guild reports indicate that some of the affected victims have been freed of compulsion and some of the people responsible have been caught, but we know that some of them escaped during the recapture of Ulfdar and Isildar, as the remaining forces of the Nocturnal Empire fled, but I’m getting very ahead of myself now, so please hold on a bit and we’ll get back to that part.

### WE FOUND THE RELAY

The same weekend that there was all that awfulness with the (sort of) assassination at the wedding, we did have a great victory in the bigger picture! We managed to locate and retrieve **The Relay**, a member of **the Quintessence Forge**. That made three of the nine members back in working order! (The others are the Operator and the Defender.) With the Relay back in Samazar and operational, we found that we could broadcast messages to the entire city in an instant – very useful! – and the Guild members now

have little hand-held communication devices that let us communicate over great distances via **The Frequencies**. Very, very helpful!

Unfortunately, it really only works within a certain range of the city, which means we can't stay in touch with Obeah any longer because he retired from the Guild, what with Ēlinyr's mom, **Captain Mariana Andaleh** showing up and offering him a seat on the new **Prinyan Sky Decade!** Can't exactly blame him for that, can you? Wow!

## LIAN WU WAS A PLANT ALL ALONG

We kept hearing about a **Voice of the People** named Lian Wu who was at the center of a lot of discontent in the city and a lot of complaints about the Diamond Assembly. People all around the city were complaining more and more about the injustices of unequal representation, but something just didn't seem quite right about Mr. Wu, so we tried to talk to him. At first, he seemed pretty reasonable, but he slowly got more and more dodgy and evasive, and eventually we found evidence that he was really being paid by someone in **the Onyx City** to stir up resentment and start rumors, demonstrations, and even riots protesting the Diamond Assembly! I mean, we're all about letting people have a say in how things are run around here, but this guy was getting PAID to cause trouble, so we decided to track him down. And you know what? He was a real pain to catch, but we did catch him eventually, and now, after a fair trial, he is serving his time under the oversight of the Jin Shi.

Meanwhile, it finally came to light how the **Dessanorans** had been getting plans for their small, light, and fast airships, which have made it possible for them to act as privateers (pirates) on our cargo airships and generally harass anyone and everyone from the air. It turns out that none other than a member of the Diamond Assembly, **Councilor Khalil Abebe**, was selling them the plans! But... it wasn't actually quite as selfish as it sounds, because he was sending all of the money back home to Embra-Jaka to help rebuild after the Great War of Flame. Embra-Jaka fared poorly under the Flame Lord's wrath and has had a really tough time recovering, which led to even more problems later on...

## A LONG SLOG AGAINST THE NOCTURNAL EMPIRE

We knew we had quite a fight ahead of us against the Nocturnal Empire, but it got much worse when they managed to capture **Embra-Jaka**. Weakened by having lost their greatest city and central leadership, the fractious tribal leaders of Embra-Jaka had been unable to reunite under any particular leader, and so when the Empire's forces kidnapped or killed most of the tribal leaders, the country was effectively brought to its knees. Conscripted into service, many Embra-Jakan people have been forced to labor and fight for the Empire.

The Guild received an anonymous tip that led to an information drop, and it turned out that the Empire was planning an offensive on **Khaz'dar**, the Emerald City, using a similar plan to the one they'd used to take Isildar and to try to take Kishar. Both agents planted within the city and armed forces outside the city would attack at the same time, creating chaos with both sabotage and open combat without and within the city. We had to act quickly, so we amassed as many Adventurers as we could without giving ourselves away and we split into groups to tackle the advancing troops and hunt down the stealthy agents within the city. We were ultimately successful, though it was a very difficult fight and not without its costs. I am told it was heartbreaking to fight some of the conscripts, who did not want to be fighting

at all, and while a few were able to surrender, most were forced to fight by officers and had no choice. It was awful.

Having saved Khaz'dar from this major offensive, our efforts returned to our own home territory. We faced attacks by the Nocturnal Empire again and again on the six Shrines, but stalwart efforts managed to force them back. (Pit Rat in particular managed to take out a lot of them, and got captured in the process, but it's OK because we found him and broke him out.) Then, we could turn to helping our closest neighbor, **Senabi**. We learned of a group calling themselves the **Black Tigers**, who were leading resistance efforts in both Senabi and the Onyx City. They sent us a note that let us know a specific date to be ready to retake Senabi by force, and even though we'd surely be outnumbered, we took them at their word and made ready. Sure enough, that day all the soldiers of the city (which, not coincidentally, were almost entirely Nocturnal Empire soldiers and very few Onyx City soldiers, by the way!) all fell ill around the same time, vomiting, feverish, and weak, unable to defend their occupation of Senabi at all. With the help of the stealthy Black Tigers, Senabi was liberated once more!

Also, for months, we kept finding WANTED! flyers around the area from Nocturnal Empire agents for various members of the Guild. To be honest, they were mostly funny or encouraging to us; I think they became a point of pride!

## PLUS A WHOLE OTHER DIMENSION FULL OF VAMPIRES AND WEREWOLVES

So, a couple of years ago the area of the desert (formally called the Great Wastes) that is known as **the Lost Valley** – because it is full of the ruins of some ancient, lost civilization – filled up with undead, and so mostly we had been avoiding it, but over a year ago we learned that there was, well, a hole in reality there. A sort of jagged portal to another plane, which we have since learned was fairly unsophisticated as permanent inter-planar portals go. (Yes, I did just write “permanent inter-planar portals.” Multiple. Stay with me.) Anyway, besides the *Necromancers of Sulith* and *dozens and dozens of undead*, the weird *hole in reality* was letting in creatures from that other plane. These creatures are quite varied, but the name for them in the language on that place has been roughly translated to “demon”.

Anyway, the creepy nightmare plane on the other side isn't full of necromancers, just vampires and werewolves (yes, those are REAL by the way), who seem to farm humans, mostly. As far as we can tell so far, we think that there might not be any celestines there, or fey-touched, or many other lineages. The vampires run everything, the werewolves work for them, and the humans are more or less their chattel. But apparently, in recent years, the vampires have been overtaken by necromancers of Sulith, and those awful, evil people are now running the show! We do NOT like necromancers of Sulith, so Paschur helped us negotiate an alliance with the **Baroness Pavlovna**, who owns the “Barony” immediately on the other side of the portal, and we've built a small, timber Guild Hall there, with a small crew manning it at all times.

A few months later, we were unexpectedly visited by a... well, a *very distinguished* gentleman from X'a. He let us know that there was a very nice, permanent stable **portal to Cyrillia in Maha'vira**, but it was currently closed or shut down (on purpose) and would need to be reopened if we wanted to use this method of travel (you know, as opposed to the *hole in reality*, ahem). So, one group went to Maha'vira

by airship and one group went through the hole in reality and made their way through Cyrillia to the other side of the portal (not nearly as far away on that side, by the way). And now there is a better, more stable way to travel that doesn't involve fighting a lot of undead!

(Are the vampires of Cyrillia good guys or bad guys? I am honestly not sure right now. I think we will have to wait and see!)

## MEANWHILE, THE QK TAKES EVERYONE BACK IN TIME...

A while back, several guild members had the... interesting chance to visit the throne room of the true fey who called himself the **Quartz King**. (We nicknamed him "QK" for short.) This worked out alright for some, but less so for others, who ended up owing him "favors." Magdelene Birdrat (Mags) owed some and, being a follower of Lyla and an avid gambler and wanting to try her luck, tried to gamble with QK and... that went about as poorly as you could possibly imagine, so she ended up owing a LOT of favors.

The time came that QK called these due. He appeared and told the guild what he wanted from them: to go through a rift in time, back before Samazar had phased out of existence, back when Djinn and Celestials were still in the air, to retrieve a bag of some sort and to bring it to him without opening it or disturbing it. By doing so, it would clear all the guild debts. Every single one.

It was an amazing trip, there's no doubt about it. To see the Diamond City as it once was, the Djinn and Celestials... I almost wish I had been there, even with what happened. There was even some fun and joy – ask Mags, Calder, or the others about the game called **Cloud-Slapping!**

Unfortunately, it was also the exact day the Efreets began their great assault on the city, so as they rained fire down upon the city, the great defenses having been shut down by some unknown collaborator, the Adventurers descended into the undercity for their goal. Several strange and serendipitous coincidences occurred – if you could call them that. Among other things, Nadir, when sneaking off and trying to find his former Djinn self and stop his own bottling, managed to cause the very distraction that got his Djinn self bottled in the first place.

Also serendipitously, perhaps the guidance of the gods themselves, that very morning before traveling back in time, the guild had received a message and decoded it, tracking down the location of the **Chronographer** in a cave in the Great Wastes. However, the guild's Artificers were able to tell that the great Construct was damaged beyond repair. A core component was missing.

Back in the past, some guild members were able to fight through defensive automatons that had been activated and locate the bag that the QK wanted. Meanwhile, others learned that the damaged Chronographer was still very much intact in that present (past) time. With the Chronographer's help, they were able to explain the future situation, start phasing the city (to *wherever* it was sent), and then she gave them the core part needed to repair the Chronographer in the future. This meant that the *past* Chronographer was effectively no longer functional. (This angered the **Mechanist**, the member of the Quintessence Forge who preceded the Defender, and tidily explains why the Mechanist then vowed to attack all "invaders" and made things very difficult for us 1100 years later!)

Once the bag was acquired, the QK immediately appeared. He opened a portal and sent everyone through to a very different future. Having gotten what he wanted, the downside was this: the QK consumed Friend and, having never been trapped within the box he had initially been found in, the

timeline was altered so that all the other Fey Courts never came to be. In this altered future, ALL feytouched were in the **Quartz Court** – and everyone outside the Adventurer’s Guild seemed to have NO memory of any other Court ever existing! On top of these, an aura of despair pervaded everything, and as the days wore on, it only grew worse and worse. The Diamond City felt tremors from time to time and before long, the Chronographer appeared to let us know that **the time stream was unstable**, and she had to put all her energy into keeping the city itself stable and afloat. Furthermore, she could not take us back in time to fix this; anything before the moment the Guild traveled back in time was impassable. The despair and instability would only get worse. We’d need to find a solution on our own.

## REMEMBER NOT TO ROB GRAVES, PLEASE!

After we came back, some guild members whom I will not name made some much less world-shattering mistakes. I would think this one is pretty self-explanatory, but how about this: Suhl’sekh might literally send powerful minions after you to kill you if you do this thing. So don’t do that. Even if people pay you to, and even if they seem nice.

Some nicely dressed folks claiming to work for Suhl’sekh came along late one night and they quietly (and not through official channels – that’s important) offered to pay guild members to go dig up some graves and remove some items from them. They had good-sounding reasons, of course, but it really boiled down to desecration and robbing of graves. These were *actually* thieves, almost certainly Hidden Court bad guys, and disappeared as soon as they had what they wanted, never to be seen again. The long-term consequences of this is that **the very real Suhl’Sekh** became *very* mad and sent a very powerful servant after all the members of the Guild who were involved... repeatedly, for several months. That was hard not only on *them*, but on everyone *around* them. So, as a reminder, any time someone hires the guild, unless it is an emergency, please *please* make sure they actually did so properly, and when it smells fishy (metaphorically!), double-check with the appropriate people (like, say, the Temple) that the people hiring you are legitimately who they say they are... and when it, you know, *blasphemes a god*, be *really sure you’re doing the right thing first* and *maybe make sure you have the Temple and/or some followers of the god(s) in question on your side and along for the trip too* oh and *maybe tell someone in charge at the Guild so they can double-check the credentials and...* You know what, just try not to do this again, OK?

## WE FREED THE DAO IN THE STAFF AND RE-DISCOVERED CAVERN

### DWARVES!

On the other hand, due to other guild members’ diligent efforts, we DID accomplish a task many years in the making, a truly epic accomplishment: freeing the Dao enslaved in the Staff.

As you may know from previous archives of the Adventurer’s Guild, over the years we have found five pieces of **the Staff of the Dao** scattered not only over the Great Wastes, in places like the Tomb of the Heirophant, but beyond. The first was won from the Efreet now known as the Seeker of Peace, quite a few years ago now. Once assembled, the Staff allowed the bearer to command the Dao inside like a slave – a slave as powerful as any Djinn. But this did not sit right with Nadir, with faint memories of having once been a bottled Djinn himself – so he spoke to this trapped Dao and learned her story. Her fate was a punishment, her imprisonment a sentence, but a sentence for what? Well, it turned out that

her crime was for something truly dire in Dao society; loving a mortal, a human, something quite dangerous and foolish, something that cost this immortal being her freedom and eternal servitude.

Since she was so eager to *serve* a mortal, they reasoned, she was made to forever serve us; and the poetic means to free her was that mortals, in turn, must undertake a truly dangerous and life-threatening quest to the deepest parts of the world, destroying the Staff and giving up great power, in order to free her. For you see, the Dao believe that mortals, above all else, are greedy and desire power, gold, and wealth more than anything. Mortals would have to prove her right and them wrong if she were ever to be free.

But we Adventurers, led by our Captain Nadir, we did it. Nadir rooted out the mystery of where to go, first, based on the Dao's memories and other clues. Then we took the airship halfway across the world to the northern Hinterlands and then fought deep, deep underground, and only after fighting foes never before encountered were our brave guild members able to throw the staff into the magma deep under the world and free the Dao for good.

In exchange, we were given a gift, **the Oathstone of the Dao**. Should we need their assistance, we may call upon them, once.

Between us and the Dao, our guildmates encountered not only creatures we expected, but a variety of new and terrible creatures – and a new society! Foremost among those terrors was **a new kind of formian – Blue ones!** – and these were even more dangerous than the red, it seems. They were fierce and tough like the Red, but also seemed to have some sort of psychic abilities. They defeated our group and captured them, dragging them away and releasing them with a threat not to return to the area. Not good.

However, there was also an amazing discovery halfway to the magma, as well. There was a beautiful light and sound and we discovered the society of a whole new kind of dwarves – **cavern dwarves!** They have lived deep under the earth for as long as we have lived above ground, and they lived close with the Dao centuries ago when Samazar flew in the sky with the Djinn... they sang stories of this, and they know the language of the Dao and their own language, besides, called Kaldu, and they have their own unique magic involving singing. They also have unique crystals that only form deep underground, and these crystals are also connected to their singing magic somehow – the crystals grow and move with the singing, somehow? To be honest, I cannot describe it well since I did not see it myself, but it was quite the amazing discovery! If it were not such a dangerous place to visit, I am certain the Academies would be sending groups there and the Courts would send diplomats immediately.

## ENDING THE CELESTINE CURSE USING A LITTLE TIMEY-WIMEY NONSENSE AND A LOT OF FATE

The short version here is, **“Way to go Ark!”** The long version is this:

While everyone was romping around 1100 years or so back in the past, our illustrious experimenter, Ark, decided to talk to a random Celestial about our modern-day Celestine problem – well, curse. He'd tried just about everything to get Hathana's wings to work – and other Celestines' too – including completely replacing them physically! But it seems to be some sort of metaphysical curse. So, with that in mind,

given the opportunity to go back in time to *before* the curse was placed, he wanted to do something about it.

Back in the present, he got permission from the various city organizations to dig up the various plazas as part of this... at least, I think that's what it was, but it WAS officially sanctioned! And lo and behold the excavation teams found... the Ewer.

**The Celestial Ewer** was ancient (well, at least 1100 years old) and carefully wrapped. All made of gold, bearing 6 wings, and inscribed in Sah'mat, it became clear that at least one Celestial had given their life to create this magical device, and the instructions for a powerful ritual involving the Ewer and the Engines of Fate were inscribed on the Ewer. Ark, Hathana, and many other members of the Guild took the Ewer to the Hub room for this ritual, not sure how dangerous it might be, but the Sah'mat inscription said that the many required ritualists, ritualists from all Paths, must give willingly of their own Fates at the Hub and that when the Ewer was full, and only then, could the curse be lifted. The language, being necessarily poetic, well... the ritual went well, and everyone is fine, and the curse is lifted now, but it's not really as simple as one might have hoped. The curse couldn't be lifted for existing celestines... but new celestines born? They will be able to fly! And, well, it will drain the Ewer each time one is born, so it will have to be refilled by volunteers, but I can't imagine there won't be many parents and others willing to give a bit of their own live force, just as the Celestial who gave all of theirs, so that our children can return to the skies like our ancestors. So, Ark may not have returned Hathana and me to the skies, but this is still pretty awesome. I'll take it!

## PLEASE DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR

Hathana needed the win, really, so I was happy for her. In general, you should be nice to Hathana. She's had a rough time and we all get the serious impression she has a *distinctly dark past*.

Look, I know *most* of you do, but this time I mean it! If you hear a voice suggesting that you open a door, especially if you *see* some strange door, DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR. EVER. (I am told it is really scary in there, possibly even actually Gorgath. No, really. Don't.)

Really, she's kind of crazy and you should be nice to her and not just because she can heal you.

## A MYSTERIOUS THIEF STOLE OUR STUFF...

...and a bunch of other organizations' stuff too, all of it highly secured and either highly dangerous, secret, valuable, or controversial. Weirdest of all, none of us can figure out how this thief got in. He even defeated my camel hair trick! I need a better trick. (Which is why it is OK that I am telling you about it now.)

Honestly this is all very TOP-SECRET STUFF so I shouldn't put most of it in writing in general but this is a GUILD-ONLY DOCUMENT anyway so I'll share what I can. Just NEVER SHARE THIS OUTSIDE THE GUILD, GOT IT?

Someone broke into the Adventurer's Guild Vault and took 1) the Sword of House Kuronuma and 2) the Mandaean Tablet, also known as the Gods Tablet (or "the Door Stop" as it is code-named around the guild for safety – I'll explain in a moment).

## ...BUT FIRST, A FLASHBACK:

**The Sword of House Kuronuma** (also known as the dragon sword, for reasons that will shortly become obvious) was gifted to former Adventurer Bey Suzaran Aomori by her soon-to-be-wife, but it turned out to be a deeply cursed object, home to a dangerous dragon spirit. It was long said to be good luck to the family as long as it was never drawn from its sheath. Well, a foolish rival in the family of Bey Aomori's (and an enemy of the guild, who was running a drug operation we were fighting) stole the sword and, when confronted by the Guild on a rooftop, drew it, releasing the bound dragon spirit. The dragon immediately knocked the rival off the roof of the building he was on, killing him, which was *definitely* bad luck!

The sword, now damaged, could no longer bind the dragon spirit, who managed to escape the Guild's clutches. The Guild at least recovered the masterwork sword, so months later, talented crafters Ark, Silim-iaali, and Kya were able to work together to repair the great masterwork so that the dragon could eventually be re-bound... if we could ever find him again and defeat him. But now the sword is missing!

**The Mandaean Tablet** is a truly ancient artifact, written in the Mandaean language – a language so old it predates Oranti! Paschur found this tablet *servicing as a door stop in the Wandering Bazaar* – hence its silly code name – but its true nature turned out to be dangerous enough to *need* a code name. If the owner at the time had any idea what he had, Paschur probably couldn't have gotten it at all, let alone cheaply...

Mandaean isn't a language any of us can read, not even Nadir (or any Sah'jann that we know of), but Paschur knew that the tablet had *something* to do with the gods themselves – because that had to do with the guidance or vision or whatever that led him to it in the first place. So, the various faithful decided they'd try to *Comprehend* it and THAT went unexpectedly. I have never gotten a *complete* and accurate account of exactly what transpired next, but if I understand it correctly, Kya started to read it, something about a hole tearing in the sky and Auran coming through and appearing in our world for the first time, followed by the other gods, and then, well, KORA told Kya to stop, and when he didn't... Kora seems to have broken off a part of the nearest building and *thrown* it at him, hitting him in the head. All the gods didn't like it apparently, and told their followers to attack Kya, and Ark TORE KYA'S MAGIC EYE OUT, but Kya stopped reading and then everything was OK again... I think. And then Kya left Kora's service and may have converted to the Twins... I'm not sure.

## A SIDE NOTE: EVERYONE SWAPS EYEBALLS

EYEBALL SHENANIGANS. There was a while where everyone was TEARING OUT THEIR EYEBALLS and/or TRADING THEM. Tahima's eyes were being USED TO SPY ON US by the Self-Proclaimed Quartz King for a while, until they weren't anymore, at which point they literally FELL OUT and rolled across the ground for a while, until Ark picked them up and decided to use them for himself, because of course he did. This is AFTER B'hari gave her magical healing eye to Hathana, who tore out her own eye to use it, then changed her mind and didn't want it and gave it to Pigeon, who had to tear out THEIR eye to use it, and... well, Kya also tore out HIS eye to put the CHUNK OF MAGIC METEORITE FROM THE SKY that he found in Embra-Jaka into it, which GAVE

HIM MYSTERIOUS VISIONS (which is maybe why Ark tore it out of his head later, I don't know). Anyway, I am sorry I may be a healer but blood makes me ill and I am DONE WITH EYEBALL STUFF NOW.)

## OK, NOW THAT YOU'RE CAUGHT UP ON ALL THAT...

So yes, THOSE TWO THINGS were STOLEN. And in their place, two things were left! Yes, that's right, the thief also *left gifts*. Pretty big gifts: the desiccated *arm of a Marid (!)* and an ENORMOUS DIAMOND. All of this with no sign of entry or other displaced items, and no disturbance of the Zone of Simplicity.

Later that morning, we received quiet visits by a fairly high-ranking member of the Merchant's Guild and a fairly high-ranking member of the Academy of Innovation. Both were making discrete inquiries about the rumor that we, like them, had been victim to a strange and mysterious theft. It turns out that both of their high-security vaults had also been targeted and each had two high-value items taken as well! While both were cagey, because (as it turned out) each had items stolen that they weren't really supposed to have, they eventually came around to speaking somewhat freely out of necessity. The Merchant's Guild had lost none other than the **Star of an'Dwapeh**, a nearly-priceless (but not actually priceless!) enormous diamond that is deeply important to the royals of an'Dwapeh. They wouldn't say how they came up on this famously *stolen* artifact, but they had recently negotiated sale of it back to an'Dwapeh... and already received a deposit. They needed it back.

Meanwhile, the Academy of Innovation was missing a dangerous and highly volatile opaque flask – which it turned out had been placed in the Merchant's Guild's vault, and could be immediately (and carefully) returned – and the preserved, accidentally severed **arm of a Marid**, from experimental explorations in Crythia. They were *not* licensed by the Diamond Assembly to be performing the particular experimental portal ritual that they'd been trying when that occurred, and angering the Marids could get us all killed, so... the Marid arm was a dangerous secret. They needed it back, quietly, too.

We arranged for the Star to be transported back to the Merchant's Guild immediately. The arm we agreed to transport later, once we were sure we could do so safely and without drawing more attention. The Merchant's Guild mentioned that the other item stolen was an ancient sword, an heirloom of a Sultan from the early years of the Jeweled Cities.

So far, there haven't been any other thefts reported, but we'll need to stay in touch with other organizations and be careful. We'll be increasing security around our vault for certain!

## THEN WE DEFEATED CALIBAN (OK) WITH HOPE! BUT AT A PRICE...

Just as the waves of despair were getting pretty unbearable, our ally **the Quartz Messenger** gave the Guild an opportunity to finally stop the self-proclaimed Quartz King and fix everything that had occurred. However, it would require guild members to go into the very place where the Fey themselves live to do so. (That messenger sure does ask a lot of the Guild!) They told the guild to **hold to hope**, no matter what.

The guild went through a portal and ended up in a *very* strange place. It was a very hard place to describe, but they went through a series of weird doors, shattering into pieces, getting pulled through space, changing size and shape, until finding a door that led to a way forward. They eventually came upon a river that, well, whomever touched it seemed to give away a part of their memories. (I heard that DEATHWOLF gave up something very important, but I don't know what.)

Finally arriving at QK's throne room (this part was bad, OK?), the QK pushed Sionnach and Ulchabhan into the ground and opened Ulchabhan's chest, exposing their still beating heart! But everyone continued screaming and not giving in to anything he did! No one gave up, and this resulted in Friend getting expelled from QK, and in the meantime, all the Quartz Fey that the Messenger had worked so hard to free showed up, including **the Matriarch of the Quartz**. Appearing before them all, she bent QK to her will and feelings of hope and victory filled the air. Sparkling magnificently, she asked the guild what *they* believed Caliban's fate should be – Caliban being the True Name of the QK – should he die, should he be tortured, and if so, how? And the guild decided to **let him live, but as a mortal**. With a wave of her hand, Caliban was stripped down into a simple feytouched and forced to go back to the normal world.

The feytouched MacSidhegorm twins were taken into the Quartz Court, now a single entity. Meanwhile, Higgitta, the deer hiwani, who had been turned into a being of glass by the strange fey lands, asked to also join the Quartz. The Matriarch made his transformation into glass a permanent one and granted him the gift of becoming a true fey, him following her and "the Twin" into the **Feywilds**.

When the guild members returned home, all the fey courts were restored, and everything was put back to the way it was... mostly. Some things, some families, would never be the same. Somewhere, a gem in a feytouched etherialist's forehead cracked, bled, and fell, though he didn't know then exactly why.

## SO WE HAD A PARTY!

We couldn't end the year on that note. Just in case things didn't go well in the fey lands, Saabi and the rest of us back home had been planning something special for when Audun and everyone else got back. You see, Audun is our friend, and he is hundreds and hundreds of years old, but with his memory so faulty as it is, well... he has *no idea* when his birthday is any more. To Saabi especially, *that* is a very sad thing. Hundreds of years and no birthday? Very, *very* sad.

So Saabi and the rest of the Casino **threw Audun a surprise birthday party**.

It was the best birthday party the Adventurer's Guild has EVER had. We were all so inspired, we decided it was time to...

## KICK THE EMPIRE OUT OF ISILDAR (AND ULFDAR TOO)!

With Senabi freed and that fey "king" crying in his soup – he has to EAT now, you know, haha! – it was time to turn the tides of the war on the Nocturnal Empire! Ulfdar was finally ready to join the fight. You see, they were never *all* our enemies; they had a secret plan all along. The time had come for the old Onyx Sultan to peacefully and quietly sign a writ of abdication, and **Princess Tewasti** (who we in the Guild once knew as Quartermaster and then Chaptermistress **Ankh'abi**) became Sultan! After sending her father into "exile" for "collaborating" with the Empire, her guards seized disloyal viziers and threw

them off the top of the **Tower of Vultures** at the Onyx palace, thus signaling to the **Black Tigers** and other member of the rebellion that the time had come to act. All over the city, people firmly enmeshed in the Empire's war machine begin to lash out, bringing it to a crashing halt! Then it was our turn; we shut down the Lunarch Program facility outside of the city, in the Elfwall mountains. The next day, we turned to Isildar!

We divided our forces into three strike groups. Two strike teams would assault Isildar with support from the **Sultan's Might** and the Black Tigers. One would be part of a distraction attacking the East Gate (the one closest to Kishar), intending to draw the most enemy attention. The other would sneak through the Lady's Forest and arrive at the West Gate, which should be opened for them by their fellow Adventurers (the third group) and **the Army of Flowers**. At that point they would need to subdue any remaining resistance in the city while minimizing casualties.

Our plan was solid, and to our leaders' credit, it was resoundingly successful. We beat the Empire that day, and **Prince Artimir of Isildar** was himself there, disguised as a member of the Sultan's Might and fighting alongside our Guild members at the West Gate when we retook the Pearl City. But I will not pretend that the victory that day came without a cost.

In the late hours of the night before, as we advanced on the city and took key bridges, **Ayman Al Asad** – oh, that gentle soul and quiet merchant who did so much for the Green District – gave his life protecting his guildmates against Empire soldiers.

And in the final battle in Isildar, not far from the Prince, one of our longest-standing guildmates faced off against a fiercesome commander in one-on-one combat. Calling upon the elements, I am told that **Rowan Oakborn** went up in a great pyre of flame, leaving behind only ash and one final (albeit somewhat melted) masterwork that he had created for the Guild's use.

They were not the only heroes that died that day, but they are the ones I will miss the most.

- Rahlee Wadia Zafrani, Quartermaster of the Adventurer's Guild