

SPOILER WARNING

This document aims to compile most of the lore clues given throughout the game in a (mostly) comprehensive timeline of events. It also makes use of **speculation** to fill the gaps of parts of the story which have yet to be revealed. This, inevitably, may lead to major spoilers of story chapters that might ruin your enjoyment of the game.

You've been warned



(Last updated for 1.20)

by Darce

Setting & Glossary

Due to some records encountered in-game [\[Diet of Kings\]](#), descriptions of what can be interpreted as a feudal system, and certain armor pieces, fruits and berries ~~(and what's been said by the devs)~~ we can set the location and date of the events of the story to be set in an alternate late 13th, early 14th century Europe.

- **House Falx**
 - A feudal estate ruled by Lord Ingmar Falx, whose endeavors as a mercenary earned them favours with the emperor
- **Jonas Falx**
 - Son of Lord Ingmar Falx. A young inventor, alchemist, scholar, and philanthropist. Inventor of the **Lens**, **Locust**, **Eidolon**, **Bell**, discoverer of the **Prima Materia**, and designer of **The Great Machine**.
- **Tobias**
 - Young farmhand who, by chance, became acquainted with Jonas Falx. In time he would become his right-hand man.
- **Locust**
 - Spider-like automatons who were used by the common folk as tools for digging and the like.
- **Eidolon**
 - Mobile automaton colossi who were used for construction.
- **Bell**
 - Worm-like automatons used to communicate and as mobile alarms for miners.
- **Prima Materia**
 - Alchemical magnum opus that would be used as the fuel for his many inventions.
- **The Rot**
 - An incredibly contagious disease, affecting both human, animal, and plant life. Turning everything it touches into decay.
- **The Great Machine**
 - Falx's solution to save the world from The Rot. A sort of time machine that would shift the world to undo what couldn't be undone.

- **Seraph**
 - The player character. People who were lost to time when the Great Machine was activated, brought back by an old Alchemist. Characteristically changed in appearance.
- **The Lens / Temporality**
 - Falx's first invention. A sort of gateway that allows the user to gaze into another world, the **Rust World**. This mechanism is called **Temporality**.
- **Rust World**
 - A strange, twisted world full of metallic beasts and unrecognizable landscapes.

Early Days at Falx's Estate

The excerpt written by Tobias starts as an autobiographical description of the author's early days of being in contact with House Falx. He recalls the days of the Falx estate's fiefdom over his village, the old Lord Falx's rule being feared.

[Reflection - Tobias]



"I stole into the Falx estate once, as a young man. I had intended to bring home a few pounds of our wheat and perhaps a handful of coins. I dared not take too much. The old Lord Falx mostly ignored our village in the shadow of his fiefdom, but he was a harsh, stringent man who would not suffer the insult of a robbery. Nevertheless, I intended to rob him."

During this time, notes from Dmetri Arvo, a scholar at Caydehill University, mention a certain "Falx boy". He is alluded to be the son of an individual that has earned the fear of the academy, Ingmar Falx, described to be part of a royal house of the same name. It can be implied they are not well respected by some of the people in the academy because of their "lesser bloodline" and Lord Falx's previous endeavors as a mercenary.

[Dmetri's Notes: Research - Natural Order]



"To think that an upstart sellsword who butchered his way into the nobility could startle and cow his betters into submission"

"The house of Ingmar Falx should never be welcomed into our institutions. We of the finer bloodlines should not give way to the masses."

He continues, mentioning that House Falx might have "earned favors of the emperor" by way of pillaging and conquering.



"They may win the emperor's favor with conquered cities and burning fields, but we will always have his ear with our superior acumen and grace. It is a birthright we risk depriving ourselves of, should the lowborn be given proper education."

As a child, Tobias recalls an encounter he had with the Lord's son, Jonas Falx, on his way to sneak into the library, avoiding his father's cruelty. The two bonded over their interests and became friends.

[Reflection - Tobias]



"I knew the forests and paths around this land, as well as the quiet places. In time, I would show them to him. My trespassing onto the estate became a common occurrence. I would teach him about the land and the yeoman's life, and in return he offered me lessons in writing, art, and the natural philosophies."

In time, old Lord Falx died and Tobias was ***"able to walk through the front door as an honored guest"***.

It can be inferred from Tobias' words that here is where Jonas' inventions started. Tinkering in his late father's old library, turning it into a workshop. It's here where his first true invention came to be, the Lens, which, according to Tobias, inspired all of his future creations.



[Tobias conversation]

It's been... over five centuries since I first saw him use this. I was young, then. We both were. A mere farmhand and a lord's son in his father's library. By that point he had already turned the room into his own workshop...

It is the first. The first true device he ever made. And from it like a wellspring all the other miracles come forth...

The Lens

Jonas himself would write in passing about this invention, referring to the method through which he gained his knowledge as “gazing through the Lens” [\[Breakdown-Jonas\]](#) or Temporality [\[Tapestry - Dangers of Temporality\]](#). Described by Tobias as literal lenses or “a window” through which one can see another world or another time. A world full of twisted metal and clockwork-like beasts, a Rust World if you may.



[\[Breakdown-Jonas\]](#)

“...Gazing through the Lens [...] I am in the other world...”



[\[Tapestry - Dangers of Temporality\]](#)

In private he spoke of a world unhinged. Unbound by the geas of reality.



[\[Tobias conversation\]](#)

We cannot step through, not yet, but one can peer. Peer through and see the strange, inconceivable landscape. The towers, the sheer edges, the metallic, rumbling beasts shifting and moving like clockwork.

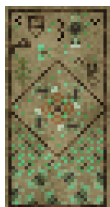
Using what he had seen in this new world as a blueprint, Jonas would become a renowned inventor and scientific prodigy before even getting into higher education.



[\[Tobias conversation\]](#)

From there, he stole inspiration. He learned how to use the flux. How to simulate what he had seen. How to change the world.

Despite this, both mentioned by Jonas and Tobias, the use of this device could (and would) bring unforeseen consequences on the world and his own psyche.



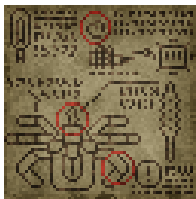
[\[Tapestry - Dangers of Temporality\]](#)

"It is a place of wonders, my friends. And yet, I ask for caution -- lest we see our own world changed in kind."

Time at Caydehill University

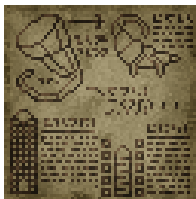
By the time he was aiming for higher education, Falx was already the subject of much talk throughout high society, both because of being regarded as a prodigy and scientific genius, and his new inherited lordship. He was expected to do great things, and he enrolled in Caydehill University looking to achieve that. Tobias followed him as his valet.

Tobias mentions that Jonas made great progress there. Although initially doubted because of his House's reputation *[Dmetri's Notes: Research - Natural Order]*, he found himself held in high prestige and highly requested for consultations. He also found in himself a great propensity for invention, producing many valuable tools to ease the toils of the common folk.



[Schematic A - Locust]

Devices such as the **Locust**, which was one of his first automatons, were used to dig and organize materials, although many workmen also took them as pets, “a jolly companion for the workshop.”



[Schematic B - Bell]

Others, such as the **bell**, used to communicate, record, and call for help, were detested by commoners and nobles alike, but adored by the workmen. It became a sign of good luck and an assurance that “help would surely come should the tunnels give way.”



[The patronage of Tibalt Amaro]

“Having just returned from my cousin the King’s residence, and seeing one of these... Bells, as they are called [...], nothing bell-like about them at all. Akin to a snake, more like.”

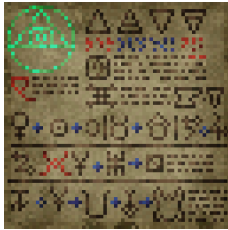
“I am a God-fearing man and find this form unnerving. Curious that our Church, so eager to lambast every drunkard and enjoyer of the carnal pleasures, remains largely mum on these.”



[Schematic C - Eidolon]

Lastly, the eidolon, a mobile colossus for scaffold and hoisting. As it mentions, *“When they first started moving, the crowds almost panicked and fled. But eventually a cheer went up. Finally, we had made something greater than ourselves.”*

Finally, the discovery known as the Prima Materia. A concoction which would serve as a fuel for his many inventions.



[Schematic D - Prima Materia]

"With the prima materia, all is possible. I'll never know how he found it, but that discovery changed everything. We became sorcerers. Miracle workers. An essence, long theorized, that opened up the possibility of heaven on earth."

Despite the initial doubt, to both the common and titled people alike, he began to be seen as a beacon. From inside and outside the kingdom, travelers from all over started to appear across the lands, attracted by his innovations *[Clothing - Fur Set]*. He was the man of the future, guiding them to the new era. Or that would've been until news came.

First Appearance of The Rot

Around this time, rumors start to appear about a bad season. Crops are dying and people are getting sick with a very contagious disease.



[Admirer of the Miller]

*"There are so many odd rumors going on out in the villages."
"I'm sure they are just rumors..."*

[Dmetri's Notes: Research - Natural Habitat].



The researcher Dmetri Arvo, at the Caydehill University, mentions that for days, planters and merchants have been begging for the University's help with a "new blight" ruining the year's harvest, being incapable of solving the affair on their own. He mentions taking a carriage south to the village of Grolte.

This is the first official report of the Rot, a new blight destroying everything in its path, both harvest and mind, human and plant. Erasing any clue of what came before.

[Tapestry - Rot].



"It left nothing behind. Not harvest, not livestock, not arbor nor stream. Not a child nor mother. When it came, you could only run and pray you did not see it again."

As people started noticing the Rot, messages of its existence and effects on neighboring villages were being shared around, most likely helping its spread.



[Clothing - Messenger set].

"They carried a simple message, and they were hated and feared for it."

"The message eventually reached every village, every town. At least the ones that were left."

Reports started to appear more often, as often as every single day, forcing people to flee their villages and become refugees, wandering from town to town. *[Reflection - Tobias]*



[Admirer of the Miller - The Mill]

"Only a week after we had met in the mill, the gathering, and evacuation of villagers and townsfolk started. I so dearly hope that the miller is safe in a shelter like I am."



[Clothing - Merchant set].

The Hanseatic League (a confederation of merchant guilds) taking notice of the new blight, offered their services to charter and transport an incredible amount of goods, materials, and refugees via their merchant navies.

As the illness started spreading and affecting both people and animals, its effects on the mind and body started being more apparent. Making both men and beast go mad and disfigured.



[Tapestry - Rot Beast].

"When the sickness reached the brain, it sometimes led to extended bouts of madness; a patient in the lazar house might suddenly rage against those around them. In the case of beasts, it led to these wandering monstrosities: Skin sloughing off, full of rage and fear, they mindlessly attacked anything around them. Naturally, any survivors of such an onslaught were likely to contract the Rot as well."

Not even nature was safe from the ailment, as it would consume everything in its path and force it into an unrecognizable mass of putrid sludge.



[Letters - Diaries].

"The horror I felt was beyond thought. What used to be a realm of withered plants and bare trees has sloughed into a putrid mass of horrid black sludge as far as my eyes can reach. The air was ripe with death. I can still taste it on my tongue. There were corpses in various stages of decay lying all over the ground. They made a nauseating sound, collapsing upon the weight of my footsteps."

The Emperor sends out a call for an assembly of scholars from different universities, compelling them to find a solution. Among those was the so-called Jonas Falx. Upon receiving the news, he locked himself in his laboratory, working for months. [Reflection - Tobias]

Mentioned in the findings of a researcher, Dmetri Arvo, at the Caydehill University is the containment of the "Black Filth" known as Rot to study it and understand it further, as requested by the Emperor. These efforts, although fruitless in finding the solution requested, brought to light some qualities of the ailment.



[Dmetri's Notes: Research - Natural Philosophies].

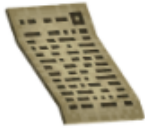
"One of them, the older, goutish fellow, caught fire to his laboratory trying to incinerate the black filth."

"It seems to spread, regardless of condition. No procedure I have tried can halt it."

This being its ability to spread without stopping and its resistance to natural deterrents such as fire.

The Diet of Kings

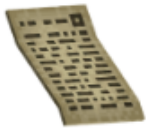
Jonas Falx of House Ingnard-Falx presents himself upon the Diet of Kings to show his findings, starting with those in the medical field regarding the Rot. It is mentioned to cause tissue decay, showing **“numbness and darkened skin”**, further progressing to the ligaments.



[Diet of Kings - Research - Scribe's notes: 1318].

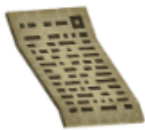
“...The victim may lose control of entire limbs. Eventually, the flesh sloughs off in small heaps.”

By this point the infected might enter a “cataleptic state”, losing muscle control, pain sensitivity, and showing full body rigidity.



“This may as well be a blessing for them; the rot will have overtaken their eyes and ears now, depriving them of their senses.”

He mentions that, by the final stages, **“the rot consumes the mind and the whole body, leaving nothing left of distinction”**



“Arriving at the last parchment, he paused and gazed upon it [...] it appeared only to be a drooping mass of charcoal smearings.”

At this point during the intervention, the King of Undland interjects, asking if a treatment for the malady exists.

Falx responds by mentioning that the only control being used is isolation, which will only last until the food supply is tainted.



“As for treatments, I have found none. Perhaps some of my betters from the academy have made progress, but judging by their silence I think not.”

The transcript ends by the offer of a possible solution **“a better fate”**.

It is implied that, after showing them the schematics of his **“Great Machine”**, he asked them to divert all attention and funding to the project.



[Tapestry - Diet of Kings]

“How they must have quaked then. All those crowned heads with eyes wide and furrowed brows. Asked by a mere scholar to cast aside the endless work and slaughter of their forefathers. The hoards of wealth and banners. And yet, cast aside they did. “

After his presentation, the researcher Dmetri Arvo reluctantly clamors Falx as a genius and maybe “the only hope”. Making mention of the “Lord Falx’s Great Machine” as their only viable option.



[Dmetri's Notes: Research - Diet of Kings]

“The convention has come to an agreement. In light of the endless reports of devastation, and the collapse of two neighboring kingdoms, we have decided that Lord Falx's Grand Machine is our only viable option. We are to begin sending materials immediately.”

Construction Of The Great Machine and The Underground

It is implied that, following the mention of isolation as the only countermeasure (though temporary), and seeking a way of preventing contact with the infected, the rot beasts, and the spreading rot itself. Falx decided that migrating to depths below while the construction of the Great Machine was carried out was the best way to prevent further infection.



[Confessions - Jonas]

"I led these people here, down to these hellish depths. Gave them up to darkness and starvation like lambs to the altar, and for what?"

[Tapestry - Nightfall]

"I had thought our work would free humanity from our self-made burrows. Yet still we find ourselves huddled together, fearing what's just beyond sight."



Through different texts it is implied that the people that followed him would take an Oath not to return to the surface.



[Clothing - Gold Coronet]

"Vestments of the old royalty, who refused the Oath and clung to their lands. Hail to the lords of rubble."

Over time, the groups that migrated would start organizing themselves to be able to remain safe while working in the project and also scouring and foraging for resources, separating groups of people based on their professions.

People such as hunters were sent on scout-teams looking for food and other resources



[Hunter Class Description]

"Loose the arrow, kill the beast. Take it home to your dying child. Eventually the child will die, and you'll find yourself providing for someone else's dying child."



[Tobias Conversation]

"You were never at peace in the underground, but we would never have survived without your aid."



[Clothing - Hunter Set]

"Warm and obscuring for those who traveled overland during the last hunts."

"Hunters across the land were called upon to put their talents to use and bring mercy to their old quarries."

Others, such as clockmakers, whose knowledge and tinkering would be invaluable during the construction of The Machine, were in high demand.



[Clothing - Clockmaker Set]

"Horology lent itself well to the new inventions, thus clockmakers found themselves in high demand."

"Unassuming wear. The garb of a craftsman suddenly elevated to an important role."



[Tobias Conversation]

"With the rising age of invention, your precision skills became highly sought after. Jonas himself recruited many of you for the Machine project."

During this time, certain efforts were also delegated to expanding on the depths and making them more accessible for easier work, storage, and transport of materials by building networks of tunnels.



[Tapestry - Blackguard Map]

"This looks like a strategist's map. It reveals a section of the tunnels, covered in symbols and etchings. Each one marks a cache of water, a hidden guardpost, or suspected rebels."



[Clothing - Blackguard Set]

"They relied only on each other, using whatever means they had to ensure progress in those dark tunnels."

As more time passed, and the construction progressed, the community underground started to define itself and set up a system of rules. This included a guarded gate to the underground, which prevented the entry of newcomers, rot beasts, or reentry of scouts deemed possibly infected.



[Clothing - Malefactor Set]

"Any discoloration on the mask would be deemed too dangerous to allow re-entry. Those who were brave enough to make multiple journeys would carve tallies on their masks, to show how many times they had cheated death."



[Clothing - Silver Diadem]

"Brave and pure, Wilfried remained behind on the surface with a small regiment. He was tasked to hold back any desperate, violent beings seeking entry to the underground."

Great battles were fought preventing entry to the underground, trying to prevent the black filth from spreading further down.

[Tapestry - Holding the gate]

"The last great battle of our time was fought not between two belligerent nations, only two desperate remnants of humanity. Those who desperately sought entrance and those who must deny them. Rot amongst the besiegers; soon rot amongst the besieged. The knights rode out one last time and were dragged from their saddles."



It's also mentioned that those who committed crimes in the underground were sent along on scout missions to find something of value and earn their reentry.



[Clothing - Malefactor Set]

"Vagabonds, foragers, and thieves; the outcasts would venture to the surface in search of any remaining resources [...] or until they found something of value to bring back."



[Tobias Conversation]

Your kind was condemned to the surface and only allowed to return if you scavenged something of value. A terrible fate, and terribly cruel. But your resourcefulness was undeniable, and we would all come to be scavengers by the end. For what was done to you, I am sorry. And truly glad to see you have survived to find freedom again.

As the underground became more structured, certain sects started to emerge as a manifestation of the reasoning that different groups of people had migrated to the underground.

Those who were loyal followers of Falx and believed in his ideal, started to develop a divine adoration for The Machine. This is the spark of what would become The Order of The Forlorn Hope, a fanatical vanguard group devoted to the faith of the metal savior.



[Clothing - Forlorn Hope Set]

"The right hand kept loose, they were quick to challenge any slight against the faith."

"The knights put their faith in the blessed device to deliver them from imminent death."

"They were the vanguard; fanatical defenders of the new faith."

While those who migrated mostly looking to keep themselves safe from the rot, and only cared for keeping the underground safe, would end up manifesting their own company, The Blackguard.



[Clothing - Blackguard Set]

"A new company was formed. This one cared not for liege nor coin nor faith."

"They were a grim lot with a heavy burden: to uphold some semblance of order in the depths [...] while the world collapsed around them."



[Tobias Conversation]

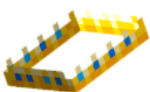
You and your companions did what was necessary to keep order in the underground and were hated for it. But there were some who respected you for it, myself and Jonas included. We would have failed and perished long ago without your help.

Although the public trusted and believed in Falx's inventions, not everyone would follow him to the depths. As when it came time to retreat, groups such as the Hanseatic League refused, dropping off the last of their cargo, and setting sail into the sea." As well as kings, who refused to desert their lands.



[Clothing - Merchant Set]

"They chose a different struggle. Who knows if any of them survived?"



[Clothing - Gold Coronet]

"Vestments of the old royalty, who refused the Oath and clung to their lands. Hail to the lords of rubble."

And even those who found refuge underground initially started having their doubts about staying/returning to the underground after scout missions.



[The Weight of Stone]

"...are you sure you want to stay? Why not pack up and come back with me?"

Although life above ground wasn't any better, resources would start to dwindle and people's minds wouldn't be able to stand the soul crushing work, debilitating hunger, claustrophobic darkness, and work related accidents for much longer.



[Clothing - Malefactor Set]

"Some people adapted poorly to the underground. They longed to see the forests again."



[Confession - Jonas]

"They dwell in filth and hunger. Civil services have collapsed under the long, unbearable weight of the endeavor."

[Letters - Diaries]



"Our food stocks are depleted. The huntsmen corps managed to trap two healthy squirrels and a gray gosling, I'd wager. It was not nearly enough to feed all the workmen. The ones in the mines had to be prioritized, as expected of their labor. Despite the additional meal, their health is declining. We are running out of options."

"I've stopped counting days. Stopped counting time. All I know is every moment is the same - dark, cold, filled with fear and uncertainty. The work is heavy, my whole body aches. Maybe it will give up first."

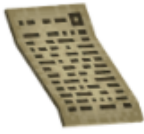
"We thought we knew hunger, yet nobody was prepared to face this merciless starvation. I could not dare wish this upon my greatest enemy. The feeling of emptiness is crushing me. I cannot tear it from my mind. With each passing day our strength wanes and our demise reaches closer."



[The Weight of Stone]

"They say he went too deep, ...not enough air..." "Hush, they're carrying the body out." "From the stone we make our living, and to the stone we will return."

As basic necessities started to get neglected due to lack of resources, people started dying, due to exhaustion, exposure, starvation, or rot. Still, most fanatics didn't lose faith in Falx, seeing him as their savior in the flesh and were willing to give their lives trying to see his vision realized.



[Reflection - Tobias]

"I have seen noble and commoner work, sing, weep, and die side by side. I have seen horrors [...] I have struggled alongside the fiercest stars of our ruined "land": scholars, engineers, soldiers, hunters, merchants, even beggars. All who found the strength to resist our doom. My countrymen."

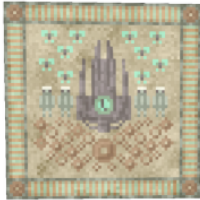


[Confession - Jonas]

"These men and women have no means of rubbish disposal. Many of them have already been stricken by Rot. If any other soul should wander through their dwellings, they would tear him apart from the ligaments in search of food. And yet, they by some power withstand their hunger when they gaze upon me. They weep for joy and offer me what meager supplies they have."

Ending the Construction Of The Great Machine

As construction of “Lord Falx’s Great Machine” came to an end, Jonas grew worried of the emergent clamoring and excitement to “wake the machine up” in contrast to the silent desperation of the early days.



[Tapestry - Salvation]

“There was a turning, at some point. A change in the air. The people began saying such things as “We may yet survive”. Perhaps they started to sense it: the majesty of his work. The genius of his Machine. “



[Breakdown - Jonas]

“Constant clamoring. People shouting. I’m worried. Things were quieter before. We had almost given up. Nobody spoke, we just desperately worked on the project. But now it’s almost time to wake it and the people are excited. They’re too excited.

In time, he started to distrust his own creation, worrying about what he might be bringing upon the people, loathing the worship and holiness bestowed upon him.



[Breakdown - Jonas]

“They don’t know. They don’t understand. I don’t even understand it. What have we created? What greater doom have we wrought upon ourselves?”



[Tapestry - Holy]

“They worshiped him as a savior. He wanted none of it. Imagine the weight of all humanity upon your shoulders. How could anyone withstand such a thing?”



[Breakdown - Jonas]

“This monstrous creation... I fear to recognize it as my child. The common people look upon it as though it were salvation. As though it were god itself. And they see me as the messiah. I walk amongst their halls and shelters, and I shudder at what remains of humanity”

As he continues, he makes mention of visual hallucinations he's been recently having, even while not "gazing through the Lens".



[Breakdown - Jonas]

"Walking down the halls, looking at the prints, suddenly my vision shifts and I'm in a world I cannot comprehend. I am in the other world, and it is leaking into this one."

He mentions that his creations, the locust, the bell, and eidolon (which he mentions were of paramount importance to the project) have something wrong with them. He alludes to an "otherworldliness" that he gave to them and is making them unrecognizable to him.



[Breakdown - Jonas]

"An eidolon was found two shifts ago with blood and mutilation splattered across its plates. The workmen, they wrote it off as an accident, but I know better."

Unfortunately, Tobias would contract The Rot before the Construction of The Machine was completed and would not be there for its activation. Moved to a lazaret at the request of Jonas, he would suffer the effects The Rot is known to cause to everything it touches.



[Tobias Conversation].

I'm sure you've seen the Rot's procession. It slowly ate away my limbs. By the time I could scarcely see the dim candles or the sunlight through the shaft, I knew it had finally reached my head. All I could do was wait for death.

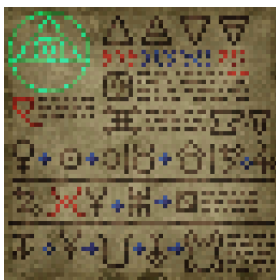
The Great Machine

(SPECULATION)

Though the machine's method of operation is still unknown, we can piece the clues to what it was, how it was made, and how it worked.

We know that, through the use of the Lens, Jonas was able to obtain the knowledge necessary for the concoction of the **Prima Materia**, known as an alchemical magnum opus. Based on the tapestries available and the colors used to depict the material and events, we can assume this material was paramount to the creation of the Great Machine

[Schematic D - Prima Materia]



[Tapestry - Salvation]



Due to the implied use of the Lens to come up with the idea of the Great Machine by Falx, the strong imagery of time and clockworks in the *Salvation* Tapestry, as well as the use of the same color used to depict Prima Materia in its corresponding schematic, it can be implied that **Temporality** was heavily used to power The Great Machine.

Due to this, its mechanism of action can be assumed to be related to the shifting of time. This is hinted at during the seraph's conversation with Tobias.



[Tobias Conversation]

The world had shifted. [...] From what I understand, when our grand machine awoke everything was changed. [...] You and your fellows were lost beyond time.

The Great Machine's Activation

(SPECULATION)

All of the information regarding the Activation of the Great Machine and its aftermath comes directly from Tobias and his experience with the effects.

From the conversation with him, it seems like the Machine shifted the world and its landscape back in time, cleansing it of the Rot and returning life to the lands.



[Tobias Conversation]

[...] I woke up to a terrible rumbling of the earth and found the Rot scoured clean. What was gone remained gone, but I lived.



[Return -Tobias]

Eventually I found my way out. Everything changed. Green again. Brown and red and blue again. Life returned.

This, however, had different effects on the living beings depending on how far away from The Machine they were. People who were in near proximity to it seemed to have been “lost beyond this world, time even”, but “had not perished”.



[Tobias Conversation]

“Those who were nearby were lost or worse. You and your fellows were lost beyond time. Beyond this world”

“I was delirious by the end, but I believe there were many from the underground who were lost but not perished.”

People who had some distance to it, such as Tobias, would feel as if time had not passed at all, and would feel close to no effects.

[Tobias Conversation]



“I awoke alone in that dreadful Lazaret. Everyone was gone. The world had shifted. It took me many years to ascertain what happened. ”

“And perhaps I did indeed die. I cannot say for sure. Only that I woke up to a terrible rumbling of the earth and found the Rot scoured clean.”

The world, seemingly having gone back in time with its creatures and inhabitants unaffected, would appear as if the Rot was wiped clean. But, knowing how The Machine operated, Tobias knew better. He prophesied that, as the years passed, the time of The Rot would come once again and people should be ready for it.

[Tobias Conversation]



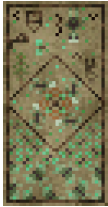
"The Rot, my friend. The Rot returns. And these paltry survivors are not prepared. Even if they were, I suspect our past endeavors could not, should not, be replicated."

"Our enemy is not finished. It comes for us again. Comes to eat the rest of me and the dream we've realized."

Rifts, Storms, and Temporal Instability

(SPECULATION)

With all the warnings of the use of temporality spoken of by Jonas, it seemed inevitable that his biggest and most dangerous creation, The Great Machine, would be the one to make his greatest fear come to be.



[Tapestry - Dangers of Temporality]

"I ask for caution -- lest we see our own world changed in kind."



[Breakdown - Jonas]

"Suddenly my vision shifts and I'm in a world I cannot comprehend. I am in the other world, and it is leaking into this one."

It seems that the activation of The Machine and the reckless use of temporality to shift time caused ruptures in the fabric of time and reality, fracturing the stability of the lands. This split them into areas of high and low temporal stability, leaving the lowest areas ripe for the merging of our world with The Rust World

Sometimes, pockets of extremely concentrated temporal instability can produce what is called a **rift**, which allows for a direct connection between our world and The Rust World. This sort of "portal" leads to the appearance of different creatures such as the "drifters", "shivers" and "bowtorns" [\[Tobias Conversation\]](#), [\[Brief Discussions with the Traveler - Act III\]](#)



Finally, the **temporal storms**. These are periodic events where our world seems to merge with the Rust World for a short period of time. During these, high winds, lightning, dust storms, rust-colored fog and warping of the lands can be observed. Giant metallic creatures such as the Thunderlord can be seen striding in the distance alongside enormous turning cogs. As the buffer between our world and the Rust World is completely lost during this event, creatures such as the drifter and shiver are allowed to roam free.



[Tobias Conversation]

"You think it's bad now, you should have seen the world in those days. The storms were worse then."

Nadiya and The Devastation

As Tobias staggered back to consciousness and emerged from the depths of the Lazaret, he would find himself scarred, weary, and broken. It would take some time for him to find the strength to start again, finding some lost souls who aided him.

[Return -Tobias]



I woke up in the dark. [...] Every breath in agony. [...] Eventually I found my way out. [...] I could finally look at myself. [...] Flesh half gone. Joints missing. No leg. [...] It took me many years to regain my focus. Around me, humanity started to adapt and flourish again.



[Tobias Conversation]

In those days I was naught but a lowly worm, crawled loose from the Lazaret. Yet I found a group of stragglers who would aid me. In turn, I told them what I could of building, farming, metallurgy, and the like.

In time, this band of lost souls would grow into a village—a refuge, a home—Nadiya. As the eldest among them, Tobias became their guide, a steady hand in uncertain days. For a while, peace endured, and his wisdom shaped the heartbeat of the community, as Tobias used his time to study the natural philosophies and become an alchemist himself. *[Tobias Conversation]*.



[Sedna Conversation]

He was wise man from the dark days of yore. It's said he could command angels to do his bidding. Here in Nadiya, they consider him their patron and it's believed he helped build this village long ago. But many villages have their own stories about him or the other saints.



[Liga Conversation]

See that statue outside in the village square? That's Saint Tobias. He was real, regardless of what you might hear elsewhere, and he helped found this town. But he has got to be long dead now. No one lives forever.

This newfound interest for inventions, tales from people who disappeared once the Machine was activated, and his own premonition of the return of The Rot, lead him to devise a way to bring the people who worked on the Great Machine with him back from “the other side” by tearing a hole in the world.



[Tobias Conversation]

I wish it didn't have to happen, but tearing a hole in the world is no simple feat. Have you wondered why you awoke again after all this time?

I needed your help, and so I poked a hole that you might leak back through eventually. A desperate gamble, but it paid off.

Employing the help of generations of nadiyans, and taking many years as well, he would start the construction of a Tower, through which he would tear the fabric of time apart.



[Tobias Conversation]

A lifelong project, for most. My companions and I built it over many years. Alas, many of them did not live to see it pierce the firmament, but that ruin is proof of their mettle. We succeeded in our task and in doing so forever destroyed that dear tower and the lands around it. Such is the cost of miracles.

By (at least) the 19th century, the construction of this great monument would be concluded and, through its activation, a rift in time came to be, maiming the lands around it with rust-like qualities and rust-like beasts.



[Gerhardt Conversation]

Take this. The Devastation will be hard to miss. The air is strange and metal grows like moss upon the ground. A tower centers it, and some huge beast casts its shadow there. This is the work of Saint Tobias, the holy and the feared, to be sure.



[Agnieszka Conversation]

The Devastation is a cursed land full of horrors. Legends say it clawed itself out of a rift many years ago.

It is after this endeavor and its unforeseen consequences on the land that Tobias would decide to step out of the village for many years. Still, though, he decided to keep contact with some select few who, after so long, barely recognize him anymore as their patron, only knowing him as the old man.



[Tobias Conversation]

I still keep some contact with a few souls in Nadiya, but after the Devastation I felt it was best to keep my distance.



[Agnieszka Conversation]

The old man is mysterious. Some say he's Saint Tobias, the one who helped found the village. The old man's ancient, but not that old. He sends me designs from time to time. I make them. Then one of those foolhardy traders delivers it somewhere out in the wilds.



[Gerhardt Conversation]

He's a madman who lives far out in the wilderness. Claims to be Saint Tobias, but that's blasphemy.

Before leaving, though, he left some letters and instructed the villagers to spread them around. These, written in a then-forgotten dialect, would help a strange traveller that would one day come looking for him.



[Liga Conversation]

This letter is old! Perhaps old enough. Years ago Saint Tobias, or a man using his name, paid a number of villagers to take letters like this to places all over. Is this one of those letters? I don't know.



[Sedna Conversation]

I have heard they're connected to Saint Tobias, but all folktales are measured only by the beauty of the voice that sings them. In any case, they're written in an old tongue and not easily translated.



[Agnieszka Conversation]

The old man told my grandmother to keep an eye out for a strange traveler come to town looking for him. Never expected it to take this long...

Year 0

and the Age of The Seraph

The events of the Devastation and the hole in time it created in an effort to bring back the people lost during the Great Machine's activation, gave birth to a new being; **The Seraphim** believed to be people changed by their time spent lost between worlds. These altered humans are described as being taller than before, glowing with strange-looking colors, having lost their memories from before they were returned, and suddenly appearing all across the land.



[Tobias Conversation]

Well, suffice it to say bringing you back here had a cost

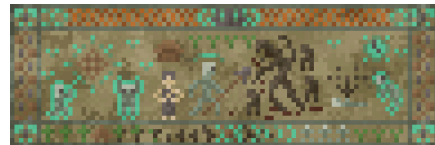


[Trader Conversation]

Haven't seen you around before. You just wake up? Your kind have been popping up like daisies across the land. Dunno where you're from. Dunno what you're doing here. None of you seem keen to talk about it. That 's right. Strange-colored strangers walk the land.

[Tapestry - Seraphim]

To think we would have a chance to fight again. I do not know why we are returned to this world, but I am grateful.



This is where the game begins