

Submission

Attend the funeral of the Archduke while gathering information on the current political landscape of the city

Iban: I specifically want to check in on Yvaine

Leigh: I would like to see if the Archduchess is still in any danger

Cadenza: Cadenza wants to enjoy the people-watching (mourners do tend to love good music after all), keeping a close eye on the princess, and chatting up the attendees to try and learn more about how the Archduke's death has impacted the people (who's happy, who's mourning, who's looking to gain something, etc)

Alseid: I'd like to make sure that the cloaked figure with the lantern from my previous ibga is not present. My guess is that they left, but you can never be too sure

Lydia: Lydia will prepare a statement about the ArchDuke's passing. His openness in their first meeting to establish relationships with foreigners, his kindness and stalwart confidence with the Blight Campaign.

Cookie: Just happy to be here.

Response

A Rathfall Farewell

The city bustled with activity as preparations for the archduke's funeral procession were underway. Rathfallians from all over watched their streets throughout the week, their faces somber, as they witnessed workers hang green banners from windows and balconies, a symbol of mourning and respect for the fallen leader. Many of the Unbounded observed the subtle change in clothing, darker hoods of black, purple, and gray are worn by nearly all adults while in public during this week of mourning.

The main thoroughfares in every district were swept clean, ceremonial incense censers were hung, and dried flower petals from Rumil's house were scattered along the two-day route that the procession would take, traveling through most districts on their way to the final destination in **Old Rathfall**. Shops and businesses closed their doors, and many draped their facades with black cloth as a sign of mourning.

The **House Fortinbras'** 1st regiment was out in force, assisting local knights and sheriffs, ensuring that everything proceeded smoothly while maintaining order among the crowds. They were dressed in their finest uniforms, with black armbands signifying their grief. Many marched alongside the Archduke throughout his last campaign. They all are prepared to escort their fallen leader one last time.

Chapter 1: Whitecrown

The Archduke's final journey begins in the small village of **Elderhill**, near the southern tip of the Whitecrown district. This small unassuming village is famous for being the site where the first Rathfall king fell in defense of the city over a millenia ago. Tradition dictates that every ruler of Rathfall begins their final march to the Chalice on the main hill of the town. In the early dark of the morning, this hamlet with normally no more than a few dozen residents, has ballooned a hundred fold.

The sun has not yet risen, as the bailey town center glows brightly with magically extended light spells. All of **House Rumil** is present. **Landgrave Forsythe** stands solemnly, a veil covering his head as fine furs drape his stout frame. **Syr Sarker**, in his ceremonial military uniform, displays all of his war medals, most of them having been awarded by the Archduke himself.

Chamberlain Barclay and his wife, **Lady Barclay**, are seen side whispering as they stand poised and elegant. **Knight Commander Wraithana**, adorned in her freshly polished bronze armor, commands her **Emerald Guard** to protect the perimeter, three of them presenting colors. **Baron and Baroness Cooper**, stand close to their extended family who are all present, each in matching cloaks.

Yvaine Rumil, now the Archduchess Pro Tempore, stands over her father's casket at the top of the small hill, draped in black lace and adorned with poppy flowers, the symbol of her house. Standing next to her is her newly wedded husband, the Prince Consort Pro Tempore **Byras Montague**, firmly holding her hand, showcasing his dedication and support. To her other side, **Prince Tristan**, dressed in white and gold reminiscent of the Archduke's outfit from his sister's wedding, while eating an apple, as he would insist it was important he doesn't miss his breakfast.

Prominently in the front of the crowds stands **Attendants Gregor, Attendant Sable, and Attendant Alseid**, the Unbounded of House Rumil. **Baroness and Lost One Lydia Fallingstar** stands next to them. A long time ally of House Rumil and perhaps something more in the near future. Alseid and Sable have recently joined and already are receiving an education in proper etiquette. Misstepping at a courtly function can be difficult, but standing out at the biggest funeral in decades? Disastrous. Yet Alseid is particularly vigilant, keeping watch for the mysterious hooded figure he saw in Whitehaven over the winter months.

An ornate carriage drawn by six black construct horses arrives. Stepping out are the four pallbearers helping move the coffin, **Attendant Iban, Viceroy Fortinbras, Master Weaver Raido, and Syr Tully**. They are all dressed in matching ceremonial black and silver hooded garb, the traditional robes for guiding someone to the **Court of the Empty Chalice**.

Montague steps up the small hill onto the stone platform overseeing the entire town. He pauses in awe of the sea of people in every direction. The torches dance back and forth as the hint of a dawn's light begins to peak over the horizon. Montague breathes out. He must start his speech. When his voice carries out, a practiced, even tone rings pleasantly over the crowd.

"Archduke Rumil.

I never knew him as his given name, Josef. Even in private, his mantle of leadership was worn, and proudly. Under his banner, Rathfall reached for glory, and in many cases, seized what it could. Josef was unrelenting in his desire to present a Rathfall that was just, good, and mighty. It was under Josef's rule that we thwarted foes seen and unseen. That we accepted the Unbounded as partners. That we reached into the very Blight and found malatite, a potent new aegis against a previously unassailable force. These glories, and many more, mark the life and rule of Josef Rumil."

Montague's confidence slips, his voice breaking. The voice of a king broken, the next words come from a grieving man.

"To me, Josef was the f-. He... tried to do so much. We differed often. When Josef named me Seneschal, it was a political appointment. A punishment. It was meant to ridicule the last standing Montague. And it did. But the more I served Josef, the more we respected one another. Long after my father died, Josef looked in on me. While you threw vegetables at me in the streets, this man showed me the first mercy I knew as a noble in Rathfall. While you threw stones at my House and harassed my servants, he taught me a regal bearing. While...those that threaten us...terrorized my House and murdered those caught unaware, Josef granted us safe harbor at Whitecrown.

I'm truly going to miss Archduke Rumil. And the moments I spent with Josef, a man closer to me than my own father, taught me more about being fit to rule than any Montague in our history."

Where the Chips Fall

As the speech finishes, the pallbearers follow cues and lift the casket, transferring it quietly to the carriage as the Emerald Guard presents the House and city colors. The selunari bagpipe player begins a [sorrowful tune](#). As if almost in response, the first beam of dawn light begins to paint the hill gold. Lost One Lydia is the only one to catch the single tear falling down Fortinbras' cheek before it is quickly wiped away.

The tune finishes, as silence blankets the air for several moments. The pomp and circumstance is temporarily lifted as the riders need to take several minutes preparing to depart. Some of the Whitecrown citizens begin to leave quietly while a vast majority wait patiently. The nobles begin to congregate and take advantage of the small break to briefly mingle before their carriages depart.

Viceroy Fortinbras, Squire Gregor, Attendant Iban, and Syr Tully approach the casket, readying to transfer it back to the carriage. Before they do, they all stop and salute at the same time. For the past few years, many of these four men often have not seen eye to eye on almost any matter, but when it comes to their fallen leader and friend, they stand together. Iban's eyes begin to wander and become fixed on Knight Commander Wraithana and her guard.

During this time, many rush to check on Yvaine. Alseid and Lydia move to give their condolences. Lydia, tears also beginning to build in her eyes, speaks of the Archduke's openness during their first meeting several years ago. She continues revealing how much she

admired his kindness and stalwart confidence during the Blight Campaign. Alseid places a hand on Yvaine's shoulders, remarking how proud she should be for the outpouring of love her father is receiving.

Yvaine puts on a reserved face as she responds, "Attendants, I thank you so much for your kind words. Even if not everyone here is doing so out of love." Her eyes darted past Alseid to someone behind him.

All unbounded glance over at the sound of laughter. Prince Tristan is seen cracking jokes with Baron and Baroness Cooper. Knight Commander Wraithana moves over and whispers something into Tristan's ear. He nods and shakes her hand without further word. He then calmly walks over to Landgrave Forsythe, leaning close to her ear. Iban is able to notice the Prince carefully slipping a sealed envelope into her dress sleeve before pulling away and winking.

Moments later, Gregor and Iban walk over to Yvaine. Iban holds her hands, his lips remain pursed as he assures her that the Unbounded will move the stars and moon to protect her, as it is what he swore he would do at the request of her father. She smiles ever so numbly, trying in vain to conceal her pain. Gregor recognizes this and steps up as they both pause to stare at each other's eyes. Iban steps back briefly, sensing a tension building between the two. In a brief moment of weakness, the Archduchess lets her guard down and hugs Gregor, concealing the tears.

"Really sister? Another? Are you looking to collect a knight from each district?" quips Tristan from several feet back. Red flashes across Gregor's eyes as he turns to grab his hilt. Iban immediately places a hand to stop him. Three Emerald Guard rush to raise their spears. Their Knight Commander steps in front of Tristan, her hand also ready to draw. Fortinbras and Tully watch intently.

A tense standoff lingers, before Archduchess Yvaine calmly shifts into the middle of the conflict. Weapons on both sides slowly lower.

"My dearest brother, we have a long two days ahead of us. Try to save the fireworks till the end."

The Prince produces a sly grin, "of course, my lovely *acting* Archduchess."

Everyone steps back. Gregor apologizes to Yvaine and explains he must leave at once to Whitehaven. She nods, her cold, social armor back on. Gregor turns away to leave as the carriage begins its long march. Sable will join him in leaving for Whitehaven.

Chapter 2: Five Bridges

The procession wound its way across **Rumil Bridge**, rolling through the district of **Five Bridges**, passing under the green banners that fluttered in the breeze. The crowds watched in respectful

silence, many bowing their heads or crossing themselves as the casket passed by. A familiar face sticks her head out of a doorway, **Cookie**, finally seeing the funeral march, begins to dart through the crowd following it to its next stop.

Platinum Plaza in the center of the district carries a stark contrast to the humble starting point of Elderhill. The plaza center is adorned with glistening fountains, marble statues, and grand, towering buildings, all bathed in magically enchanted golden light. Save for the few hundred citizens that chose to march from Whitecrown, the only attendees allowed in the plaza proper are the local nobility, high standing merchants, and several local military forces that serve the minor houses. The rest of the laypeople peer on, staying hidden from plain sight in their windows and doorways. Countless peasants and workers work around the restrictions by climbing their way to the neighboring roofs to get a better view. It is not everyday, you get to see so many nobles out, let alone the elusive **Count Sebastian Idris**.

Count Idris's carriage arrives, itself made of polished mahogany, intricately carved with designs of vines and flowers, and lined with plush velvet cushions in deep, rich blue colors.

A dozen liveried servants, impeccably dressed in matching uniforms, emerged seemingly out of nowhere and attended to the carriage, in perfect choreography. Some held parasols to shield Count and Countess Idris from the morning sun, while others carried baskets of flowers to scatter in his path

The horses that pulled the Idris' carriage were purebred stallions, their coats gleaming, their harnesses adorned with silver bells that tinkled with every step. The carriage itself was drawn by six of these magnificent beasts, their muscles rippling as they pulled the carriage through the streets with an effortless grace.

As Count Idris's carriage passed by, the crowds gasped in awe at the display of wealth and power. It was a scene straight out of a fairy tale, a vision of luxury and excess that seemed almost too extravagant to be real.

All of **House Idris** are in attendance, dressed in full outfits in anticipation for what appears to be many after parties. **Earl Humphrey Hanover** is seen dressed in the traditional court attire popular from the last century. **Lord Balthasar Von Armsburg** stands in his military uniform, pristinely maintained while accompanied by his chief officers from **The Cage**. **Lady Emilia Riva**, **Lady Anne Carnossa**, and **Lady Juliet Lofthill** are sitting together, exchanging whispers behind their hand fans. The twin brothers, **Syr Fabian** and **Syr Hector Evroux** stand at attention in their full battle armor in rank with their personal guard. **Syr James Donovan** stands apart from the other nobles, his eyes never leaving Yvaine. A retinue of Greencloak Captains are present with **Lady Anastasia Greencloak**. Her uncle has not been seen publicly since Yvaine's wedding night. Iban allows himself to smirk at this thought.

Count Idris steps out of his carriage, his well manicured feathered eyebrows shimmering in the morning light, with his ruffled ascot, bright blue jacket, and immaculately polished leather shoes.

He takes a small bow and waves to the crowd before turning to assist his wife in coming down from their carriage next. They move forward as the Count begins to give a speech.

"We here at Five Bridges mourn the loss of the late Archduke Josef CM Rumil. I knew him all of his life. I remember how proud his father was the day he was born. I recall the concerned crease in his mother's brow when he left for the military at a very young age. I can still hear Master Raido's chastising voice when a twenty-something Rumil would stumble into his father's court, drunk with a maiden in each arm."

The Count pauses for a brief moment.

"I was at this very spot giving the same speech about his parents, his brother's family, and of course, his wife Mora. I had hoped for more time before giving this one."

"Josef was fun-loving in nature and carefree spirit at heart, yet never failed to be the fatherly figure this city needed. He knew when to come down hard, but most importantly, he knew when to hold back."

The Count turns his head to Byras and Yvaine.

"As we move to a brighter future that Josef helped build, we must not forget our past and what got us here in the first place. Foundations are built to last, we are built to last, and destroying the foundations of a building only brings ruin."

Please, I am tired of giving these speeches."

The Cookie Crumble

As the speech finishes, the funeral march begins its preparations to depart as the nobles begin to mingle again. The Evroux brothers and Earl Hanover give their brief condolences to Yvaine and Byras before departing. Lady Greencloak stands her ground with her guards, on watch for any would-be assassins. Lady Riva, Lady Carnossa, and Lady Lofthill all move to embrace Prince Tristan warmly, exchanging pleasantries and catching up. All of the Unbounded exchange glances, concerned with the suspicious behavior of the Prince. But with the Greencloaks watching their every move, none can get close enough to listen without arousing suspicion. Lydia catches the small smirk given towards her, convincing her that this is all part of the Prince's plan.

But he didn't plan for Cookie.

Cookie, the unbounded orc baker, has been moving through the crowd with practiced ease, her unassuming outfit blending into the bustling throngs stationed at the edge of the plaza. Noticing the trees and foliage within the plaza park area, Cookie is able to move silently and unnoticed near the clandestine conversation. Her time with Klack's glade has allowed her to comfortably move through nature without attracting attention.

As she lay waiting in a nearby foliage, Prince Tristan and the other nobles are engaged in a quiet conversation, yet her keen ears are able to catch every word of their conversation.

"...the next market in Whitehaven," Prince Tristan was saying in a hushed tone. "It's the perfect place for our secret gathering. No one will suspect a thing."

Lady Riva nodded, her expression serious. "Agreed. We must be cautious. The fate of the kingdom hangs in the balance."

Cookie's heart raced with excitement as she realized the significance of what she had overheard. She knew she had to report this information to the other unbounded, but first, she needed to slip away unnoticed. As the processional carriages begin to depart, a call is made for all to return to traveling to the next district. A perfect moment for Cooke to slip out.

As Yvaine is helped back into her carriage to leave by Lydia, Lydias sees that Yvaine's attention is briefly distracted by someone still standing in the plaza. There, at attention, having never moved, is Syr Donovan. He nods and salutes. Yvaine conceals a tear and shakes her head, moving back into the carriage without further acknowledgement. Lydia takes note of this.

Chapter 3: Rook's Alley

As the funeral march entered the casino island of **Rook's Alley** in the middle afternoon, the atmosphere took on a surreal and almost festive quality. Despite the somber occasion, the streets were lined with minstrel groups, each occupying a street corner and playing [unusually joyous, upbeat music](#).

The minstrels, dressed in colorful costumes and wearing masks that concealed their faces, play lively tunes on their instruments, creating a cacophony of sound that seemed out of place in a funeral procession. Their music echoed off the walls of the tall, ornate buildings that lined the streets, filling the air with a sense of unreality.

The contrast between the mournful faces of the procession participants and the cheerful music of the minstrels created a strange and eerie atmosphere. It was as if the island itself was participating in some bizarre and macabre ritual, adding to the sense of unease that hung over the funeral procession.

It was a tradition as old as the island itself, a way for the inhabitants of Rook's Alley to honor the passing of their leaders in their own unique way. Despite the strangeness of the scene, there was an undeniable sense of reverence in the air, as the city paid its final respects to the archduke amidst the lively sounds of the minstrels' music.

The march continued through Rook's Alley, on **Confidence Road** ending at the **Millard Clock Tower**. The island's reputation for eccentricity and excess was well-known, and even in death, it seemed, the archduke could not escape its influence.

Many, but not all of **House Sorsha** are present, standing by their **Countess Shae Sorsha**. **Vizer Tizzy Tang**, recently added to the Sorsha court, wears his trademark golden jacket. **Baron Keagan Vito** looks pleased at the decoration and fanfare he helped organize, as he casually flips his coin. **Syr Mariko Yamato**, a crane-kyn with flowing silk robes, holds her ceremonial family bow. Lastly **Rook Sebastian Castbreaker** signals the bands to stop playing as the Countess steps up to speak.

"My fellow citizens of Rathfall,

Today, we gather to mourn the passing of our beloved archduke, a man who dedicated his life to the service of our great city. As we come together in grief, let us also take this opportunity to reflect on what his life and his death mean for us.

In this coming season of change, it is crucial that we do not let ourselves be consumed by secrets and personal alliances that divide us. Instead, let us use this moment to further unify our city, to come together as one people, bound by our shared grief and our shared love for Rathfall.

There are those among us who may feel lost at this moment, who may feel as though they have no place in our city. To them, I say this: you are welcomed and loved here. Rathfall is a city of compassion and understanding, and we will not turn our backs on those in need.

Let us honor the memory of our archduke by being the best version of ourselves, by not forgetting the family left behind, and by working together to build a better future for Rathfall.

May his spirit find rest in the Chalice, and may we carry on his legacy with pride and dignity.

Thank you."

The Chess Pieces are Set

The rhythm and ritual of this funeral procession is becoming instinctual for the Unbounded at this point. Several of the Unbounded maneuver to look for signs of what the Prince will do next. Surprisingly, a member of House Sorsha, Baron Vito is the first to move by approaching and pulling aside Yvaine and Byras for a private chat. Iban and Lydia are able to stay close by and listen.

As he pulled Yvaine and Byras aside, Vito's voice was low but firm. "My archduchess, my prince consort, I must warn you," he began, his gaze flickering between the two nobles. "The Prince is moving aggressively forward with his campaign to upset the council vote at the end of the year. He seeks to gain more influence over the council, and it is clear he will not stop until he achieves his goal."

Vito paused. "House Sorsha can support House Rumil in this matter. If you require our assistance to...convince the minor houses, we are at your service. Together, we can ensure that the council remains balanced and fair."

Yvaine and Byras exchanged a glance, not surprised, but clearly troubled by this news. Yvaine, her voice steady and determined, responds. "Thank you, Baron Vito. Your offer of support is most welcome. We shall not forget this gesture of solidarity."

With a respectful nod, Baron Vito withdrew, leaving Yvaine and Byras to discuss their next course of action. Attendant Iban remains nearby, a silent sentinel; he and Lydia are ready to relay any further messages between the two houses if asked.

Meanwhile, Syr Mariko, a figure of elegance and authority, approached Prince Tristan with a measured pace, her expression calm yet resolute. Alseid and Cookie move nearby to observe unnoticed.

As she pulled Tristan aside, Mariko's voice was soft but confident. "Your Highness, I must speak with you about a matter of great importance," she began, her gaze steady. "It is no secret to House Sorsha that you are moving forward with your campaign to upset the council vote at the end of the year."

The Prince playful shrugs, up-playing the childish fool for a few more moments.

Mariko paused, allowing her words to sink in before continuing. "I must warn you that many of the Unbounded fiercely support House Rumil in this matter. They see Yvaine and Montague as a beacon of hope for change, and they will not easily be swayed."

She looked at Tristan, her eyes unwavering. "House Sorsha stands ready to assist you, Your Highness. If you require our help to... convince the minor houses, we are at your service. Together, we can navigate these turbulent waters and ensure that the council remains a fair and balanced institution."

Tristan's expressions are inscrutable as he listens to Mariko's words. After a moment of silence, he smiles wide. "Thank you, Syr Mariko. Your offer of support is duly noted. I shall consider our options carefully. Perhaps we can discuss this further during the next market"

He hands Mariko a scroll with a meeting place. Mariko bows and withdraws, leaving Tristan to ponder her words. Alseid and Cookie catch Mariko handing the scroll to a nearby minstrel who responds with a nod and begins the run off.

Alseid and Cookie glance at each and recognize: the chase is on.

Enter Masked Bard, Stage Left

As Alseid and Cookie rush to catch up to the minstrel through the crowded streets and twisting back alleys of Rook's Alley, the air is thick with tension. Cookie pushes through another merchant's candy stall with determination, but even her prowess was challenged when she turned the corner into an alley only to stumble through a cleverly placed, hidden magical scroll trap that *slows* her movements.

Alseid, following closely behind, found himself ensnared by another trap, this one releasing a poison gas that clouded their mind, making it difficult to focus on the chase. Despite their best efforts, they glance down the alley to see that the minstrel was about to escape successfully.

A loud smack echoes down the alley as the fleeing bard is knocked completely off their feet, crashing to the ground and bringing an abrupt halt to the chase. Stepping out from a side passage, is a mysterious other minstrel in a flowing red dress, clad in an ornate bard's mask and travel guitar.

She removes her mask, revealing themselves to be **Cadenza**, the renowned noble from faraway mists. Cadenza's presence in Rook's Alley hints at a deeper intrigue, one that Alseid and Cookie had unwittingly stumbled into. She hands them the scroll with a smirk. They all read it and now know of the exact location in Whitehaven for the Prince's secret meeting at the next market. They rush back to meet up with the procession before it departs.

Chapter 4: Shademire

As the funeral procession enters **Shademire** by the evening of the first day, the atmosphere returns to somber yet reverent. This district is full of rustic villages and small towns, all with quaint cottages and winding streets, that have come alive with the flickering light of large bonfires that had been lit in each town center to commemorate the passing of the archduke. The crackling flames cast long shadows across the cobblestone streets, creating an eerie yet peaceful ambiance.

The procession made its way to **Cellló**, the largest city in Shademire. The more mourners follow behind the archduke's carriage, their faces illuminated by the warm glow of the candles each was holding in remembrance. As they all reached the great hall, one could look back on the parade of flame that seemed to stretch on endlessly, a sea of fire and light that stretched into the horizon.

The **Dimora Great Hall** is a grand structure that looms large against the night sky of Cellló. Here, the end of the first day of the procession is celebrated with a feast, a chance for the mourners to gather together and share stories and memories of the archduke.

The great hall is filled with the sounds of laughter and conversation, a stark contrast to the solemnity of the day. Unlike most other houses in Rathfall, **House Bengalo** does not have traditional minor houses. Instead there are several dozen artisan guilds that litter the district,

each overseen by a Guildmaster or Guildmistress. Most are seen in the great hall tonight with **Countess Bengalo** at the head table with her advisor and esteemed alchemist **Jakob Merre** and her assistant **Whip Quinn Archezino**.

"My fellow mourners,

We gather here today to honor the memory of our beloved archduke, a man whose legacy will forever be remembered. One of the many achievements we must celebrate is his unwavering dedication to making the Grimere Expanse safer for all who dwell within its lands from the Blight.

I trust that our fallen archduke understood that safety was not just about protecting ourselves from external threats, but also about fostering an environment of healing and security within our own city. If he were still alive, he would work tirelessly to root out the dangerous blight that threatened our land, but also recognized that true safety comes from within.

As we mourn his passing, let us also take this opportunity to heed this wisdom. Let us come together as a city to heal the wounds that have divided us, to build a community where every citizen feels safe and valued. We here in Shademire often do not see eye to eye. But we will stand united when injustice comes to our doorstep. Let us honor his memory by continuing his work, by striving to make our city a beacon of safety and security in the Grimere Expanse.

May his soul rest in peace, and may his legacy inspire us all to create a better, safer future for Rathfall.

Thank you."

The remainder of the feast has Unbounded socializing with the workers and citizens of Shademire while keeping an eye on the various guild leaders the Prince tries to schmooze. Lydia learns of a dark elf mining guild, called **Lantern's Shadow**. They invite her to join them at their next night out in Iron Hills. Iban takes part in a rousing drinking contest with the **Filigree Guild**, those who specialize in furniture making (who knew they could party the hardest?). Cadenza enthralls several guild leaders with a rousing performance set, in between spirited debates about the responsibilities of nobles to those that serve them. Often to Prince Tristan's frustration as Cadenza's social splash makes it difficult for him to engage with as many guild leaders as possible. She receives an open invitation to join **The Six Arms bardic guild**.

Cookie exchanges recipes with members of the **Golden Cauldron**, the premiere culinary guild of Shademire. Rumors of Cookie's famous baking from the wedding have reached many ears in Shademire. She is invited to join their guild, if she wished.

As the feast draws to a close, the mourners disperse to find quarters for the evening, grateful for the warmth and hospitality of Countess Bengalo's hall.

A Midnight Intruder

Alseid had quietly excused himself from the feast before its ending, his curiosity piqued to find where the Emerald Guard were storing and guarding the archduke's body for the night. He made his way to an outside veranda overlooking a small garden, where he expected to find where the body was being stored.

However, what he found there was far more disturbing.

As he entered the veranda, he saw a picture-esque tableau of the Shademire forest in the background behind a humble but well maintained garden. The archduke's casket is seen on display, flowers decorating the nearby pillars and moonlight pouring in from above. Such a stunning picture is immediately overshadowed by an Emerald Guard lying motionless on the floor, clearly dead as another guard is kneeling by the casket, actively engaged in a dark ritual. Alseid watched in horror as a pool of blood began to form around the casket, summoned by the guard's twisted magic.

Before Alseid could react, the guard turned around revealing to be a vampire thrall with ebony skin and red eyes. It attacks him with an unearthly speed and strength. Alseid finds himself quickly overwhelmed by the monster's ferocity, struggling to defend himself.

As it seemed that Alseid would be overtaken and made a meal, **Leigh** emerged from the shadows of the woods, their presence announced by the bursting power of their earth magic. With a wave of their hand, Leigh *shuns* back the vampiric creature, forcing it to retreat with a hiss of frustration.

Alseid watches as the vampire thrall flees into the night. As the adrenaline of the encounter began to fade, Alseid realized the gravity of the situation. The safety of the archduke's body was compromised, and darker forces were at work in Rathfall than he had ever imagined.

As both unbounded wait and catch their breath, a supernatural silence falls over the veranda, broken only by the gentle rustling of leaves. Suddenly, **a mysterious female figure** manifests from the wood's edge, ethereal and otherworldly, like a swirl of leaves given form.

With a graceful pass of her hand, this lady of the woods summons swirling magics in the form of leaves, weaving them into a vortex that enveloped the pool of magically summoned blood. The leaves danced and twirled, their colors shimmering in the moonlight, as they lifted the pool from the ground and carried it away, leaving the stone floor clean and pristine once more.

But her work was not yet done. With another gentle gesture, her magics open the casket and lift the archduke's body into her arms, cradling him with a tenderness that belied her ethereal nature. With a touch of her hand, the archduke's body glows brightly for a few seconds, before revealing a further cleaned body, his outfit replaced and renewed. With a final glance around the veranda, as if to ensure that no trace of the dark ritual remained, she caresses his cheek and floats the archduke's body safely into the casket and magically seals it afterwards.

Alseid and Leigh watch speechless as this magical (or fae?) creature vanishes back into the evening shadows of the woods. They couldn't help but feel a sense of awe and wonder. The mysteries of Rathfall were deep and ancient, and they had only just begun to scratch the surface.

Alseid and Leigh are dumbfounded, unsure who will believe this story.

Chapter 5: Riftguard

The entire tone of the procession shifts the next morning, when news of the attack reaches Viceroy Fortinbras and Syr Tully. The march's pace becomes quickened and the traveling crowd is asked to keep a minimum distance for the rest of the day.

The procession makes its way through **Riftguard** in the early morning, the first light of dawn painting the sky with soft hues of pink and orange that day. As they pass by a surprisingly large amount of woods that dot the landscape, the lumberjacks they pass each stop their work and remove their hats, paying their respects to the fallen archduke.

The sky briefly darkens as the procession approaches the famous **Lightning Fields** of the Mistweavers. Here, the air crackles with the sound of magically enhanced lightning that strikes the constructed towers every few minutes, as the energy is absorbed and channeled by the mistweavers' ancient and mysterious arts.

Finally, the procession reached the pastoral town of **Licourt**, where the **House Kindershaw's** palace and estate stood proudly amidst the rolling hills. Due to safety concerns, the masses were kept outside of the garden grounds, and only vetted nobles were allowed to enter and hear the Kindershaw speech.

Inside the garden grounds, the air was filled with a sense of regality and poise. The nobles gathered around to listen as the Kindershaw delivered a speech honoring the archduke's memory. Many of House Kindershaw are present. **Countess Stefi Kindershaw** makes a rare appearance, her servants attending to her every need at a moment's notice. **Viscount Adolous Kindershaw** stern, slightly overbearing demeanor resonates strongly from the second floor balcony he lords over. **Lord Oliver Kindshaw** and his **Courtier Aura** are present by the gardens with a group of rustic individuals hailing a minor house banner not recognized by anyone in the procession. **Magistrate Marie-Louise Bonaventure**, part of a minor house of mose-kyn, is seen silently chastising servants not standing in the exact correct formations.

In classic Kindershaw fashion, no noble personally delivers the speech, rather one of their diplomat servants orates what was penned. **Valet Mildew Brandyburg** approaches the podium, their hands trembling slightly as they prepare to deliver the funeral speech for House Kindershaw. Clearing his throat, he begins, their voice wavering but gaining strength as they spoke. approaches the small crowd.

"We gather here today to honor the memory of our late archduke, a man of great vision and courage. He was not afraid to make bold maneuvers to empower the change he wanted to see in this world, and for that, we are forever grateful."

Mildew pauses, taking a deep breath before continuing. "Let us all take this lesson to heart. Let us not be afraid to stand up for what we believe in, to fight for the changes we wish to see in our city and our world. The late archduke showed us that change is possible, but it requires courage and determination."

The Unbounded glance over to see both Tristan and Yvaine nodding along.

As Mildew continued to speak, his nervousness seemed to fade away, replaced by a sense of purpose and conviction. He speaks of unity and strength, of honoring the past while looking towards the future. And as he concluded the pre-written speech, the gathered nobles and unbounded rose to their feet, applauding the courtier for their heartfelt words and the message of hope and change that they had delivered.

As the speech concludes, the black carriage is already ready to leave. No longer for this march is the ceremony guiding the casket being honored for the second day. The Prince is barely able to pass a small written message to Viscount Kindershaw before needing to jump back into his carriage. The funeral march has rushed past Riftguard, leaving a trail of honor, remembrance, and a dust cloud in its wake.

Chapter 6: Iron Hills

The funeral procession progressed through the vast lands of the **Iron Hills**, a rugged and majestic landscape that stretched as far as the eye could see. Very early into their visit to Rathfall's largest district, they passed by the **Ghost Ward**, a formerly haunted area of Rathfall now inhabited by bayou hobling refugees. The atmosphere observed was eerie yet strangely peaceful. These eccentric hoblings, largely hailing from the **Boodin family**, watched in silence as the procession made its way through their territory, their eyes filled with a mixture of curiosity and respect.

Half the day was spent passing by hundreds and hundreds of acres of farmland and pastures for livestock, a testament to the hard work and dedication of the farmers who called the Iron Hills home. The **Grand Quarry**, with its sheer cliffs and vast expanse, was a sight to behold, stretching nearly 1,000 square miles at its widest point. Lydia recalls this is where she found ancient moon rock last year.

The march finally ended at the **Iron Colosseum** in the ancient city of **Fortopolis**. As the procession approached the city, they were greeted by the sight of the entire 2nd Rathfall army lined up on the road, weapons at attention, paying their respects to the fallen archduke. The somber mood was palpable as the army stood in silent tribute, a powerful display of respect and honor for their fallen leader.

Viceroy Emil Fortinbras leaves his duty as pallbearer briefly to step up and deliver his speech to his fallen friend.

Today I speak to you, not as a Viceroy, but as a dwarf grieving the loss of an Archduke and more importantly, a good old friend. Josef, I knew that it was very possible for you to pass before me

from old age, yet I always believed that we would be claimed on the field of battle. We have fought side-by-side so many times. I thought the Chalice would claim us a thousandfold during our many campaigns, but we always rose to the occasion and came out victorious.

My friend, I did not always agree with your decisions. You know I would not have pushed so far into the Blight as you have done, but I know your choices were always guided by the love of this land and its people. I have heard it wonder in whispered voices I follow you out of fear, duty, or even ambition.

It was none of these. I followed your example of love. I love this land, a love for its people, and for the future that you saw that it could have. Let us not fall back into the old way, Let us continue to strive to be the best that Rathfall can offer.

You were not just a ruler, but a father. In Princess Yvaine I see you have fostered a spirit and love for this land and its people. I will do my best to help guide her, protect her and treat her like one of my own in your absence. We watched her grow into the woman she is today and I know neither of us could be more pleased with who she is becoming.

Your legacy will truly be felt within this land. And your passing will only slightly diminish us because you have left us stronger than when we began. Know that Rathfall will be able to thrive even after your loss because of what you established. The sign of a great leader is what is left when they are gone. So I do not mourn for Rathfall at the loss of her Archduke, for she will endure. But I mourn with those here as one who has lost a brother.

The entire army raises their weapons in the air in silence three times. The clanging of the spears echo throughout the large stadium. As Prince Tristan attempts to briefly mingle and network, each military leader he approaches grips their weapon, telling him to move back to the procession group. It is clear very quickly the Prince has very little friends in the Iron Hills.

Chapter 7: Old Rathfall

As the funeral march made its push through the ancient district of the Old Rathfall, the atmosphere was one of solemn reverence. The streets, lined with millenia-old buildings and cobblestone pathways, bore witness to the rich history of the city.

The mourners walked in silence, their heads bowed in respect, as they passed by the old streets and alleyways that had seen so much over the centuries. The **Pelagius's Basilica** loomed in the distance, its majestic spires reaching towards the sky, a symbol of charity and tradition.

As they approached the Basilica, the mourners felt a sense of awe and humility. They knew that they were walking in the footsteps of generations past, honoring the memory of the archduke in a place steeped in history and tradition.

As they entered the Pelagius Basilica, the mourners were greeted by the soft glow of candlelight and the sound of hymns sung by the choir. The air was thick with incense, creating a sense of peace and tranquility that filled the grand hall.

All of Rathfall's **Earth's Chosen** are present. **High Vindicator Constantine**, the leader of the Earth's Chosen in Rathfall is seen in full red ceremonial robes that contrast to his stone elf white complexion. **Vindicator Judas**, a nervous looking elf that watches over as the protector of the Five Bridges sanctuary is seen next. **Vindicator Peter**, is a venerable human, small in frame, but armed with a warm smile and pleasant demeanor. As the protector of the Whitecrown sanctuary, he had the closest relationship out of the vindicators. **Vindicator Tiffini**, a younger bunny-kyn in charge of the Pauper's Launch sanctuary. **Vindicator Magdalene**, a mysterious older dark elf, in charge of the Iron Hills sanctuary. **Vindicator Levi**, a very finely dressed dwarf who oversees the Rook's Alley sanctuary. **Vindicator Simon** is seen swigging down a hidden flask as he wipes his ogre tusks. Simon wears several badges that denote his leadership position in Shademire and his connections to many of their artisan guilds.

Missing was disgraced **Vindicator Phillip**, who is currently serving a twenty year sentence for his part in the Vengeful Winter and the creation of the Ghost Ward. His Vindicator seat and Constantine's old seat still need to be filled by the end of this year.

As the totality of the funeral procession reaches its final destination inside the grand hall in the, the air was filled with a sense of solemnity and reverence. However, the somber mood was soon interrupted by the sight of a small personal unit of Gavarian royal guards marching through the hall of the Basilica, their banners of peace waving in the wind.

Emerging from the guard is **Queen Pavia** and **Sir Euron**, who approached Yvaine amidst the gathering. Queen Pavia wore a warm smile as she embraced Yvaine, whispering words of comfort and support unheard by the others. Yvaine, in turn, smiled and thanked her, clearly touched by the queen's gesture. Iban salutes his queen, a tear gently running down his cheek.

After their brief exchange, Yvaine stepped forward to address the gathered crowd in a long black dress and a single green ribbon delicately laced through her braided hair.

"My fellow mourners," she began, "we are honored by the presence of Queen Pavia and the Gavarian royal guard. Their message of peace is a beacon of hope in these troubled times."

This gesture of unity and understanding, stresses the importance of coming together in times of grief to support one another.

Her words resonated with the crowd, and as she concluded her speech, there was a sense of renewed hope and determination in the air.

Thank you all for being here to honor the life of this true hero among men. History books will remember him as the man who would stop at nothing to end the Blight. The man who did not know the meaning of the word 'failure.' The definition of a fearless leader.

But I will remember him as the man who held my hand when mama died. The man who taught me everything from battle tactics to how to overcome heartbreak.

Yvaine's voice breaks.

I will remember him as a loving father. Today, we say goodbye, as we bid him farewell to the Chalice, but he will be with us forever in how we fight for what matters to us, how we treat those we love, and of course, how we drink our ale.

The gathered crowd softly chuckles. Yvaine pulls a flask out of a discrete dress pocket and raises it.

To Archduke Rumil. May his memory be a comfort... To daddy.

As she takes a large gulp, the people begin to cheer "to Archduke Rumil!" And Yvaine quietly wipes away a tear and returns to her seat beside her husband.

In accordance with Earth Chosen law set over a millennia ago after the Necromancy Wars, the archduke's coffin is cremated.

As the mystical green flames enveloped the archduke's coffin, Alseid and Leigh stood by, watching the solemn ritual unfold. The air was thick with the scent of burning wood and the crackling of the flames, a stark contrast to the hushed silence of the gathered mourners.

With permission, Cadenza plays [a farewell tune](#) as the flames rise.

As they watched, Alseid and Leigh noticed something odd. A familiar swirl of leaves lifted from the starting embers, dancing and twirling in the air before flying through an open window into the night sky. Leigh, recognizing the leaves, "Must have been stuck to the casket."

The sight was both beautiful and haunting, a poignant reminder of the archduke's connection to fighting to restore the natural world and a symbol of his spirit being set free. As the last of the embers faded, the funeral procession came to an end, leaving behind a sense of closure and peace.

OOG Notes

Congrats! You finished this massive IBGA! A lot of lore and information was dropped, so to help you as players decipher it, charts were created to be referenced below for your convenience. Not all interactions labeled below were explicitly written in the IBGA, but it is assumed all characters witnessed it or were told about it from the others who attended. This is to act as a primer for a large majority of nobility in Rathfall and also where each noble may lean politically with supporting either Tristan or Yvaine.

You have received enough information to be able to unlock a stealth mod that will be happening on Saturday night of the next event (after the town mod) to collect further information on the Prince's plans. Warning, getting caught during this will have dire repercussions for the remainder of the season.

While some PCs got invited to specific artisan guilds in Shademire, there are over two dozen guilds accessible to interested players. Research more in game to discover them.

Yvaine, Byras, and the pallbearers will remember everyone by name who went on this group ibga.

House Rumil

Nobles	Talked To Tristan	Talked to Yvaine
<i>Baron and Baroness Cooper</i>	X	
<i>Chamberlain Barclay & Lady Barclay</i>		X
<i>Knight Commander Wraithana</i>	X	
<i>Landgrave Forsythe</i>	X	X
<i>Prince Consort PT Montague</i>		X
<i>Syr Sarker</i>		
<i>Syr Tully</i>		X

House Idris

Nobles	Talked To Tristan	Talked to Yvaine
<i>Count & Countess Idris</i>	X	X
<i>Earl Humphrey Hanover</i>		X
<i>Lady Anastasia Greencloak</i>	X*	
<i>Lady Anne Carnossa</i>	X	
<i>Lady Emilia Rivas</i>	X	
<i>Lady Juliet Lofthill</i>	X	
<i>Lord Balthasar Von Armsburg</i>		
<i>Syr Fabian Evroux</i>		X
<i>Syr Hector Evroux</i>		X
<i>Syr James Donovan</i>		X*

House Sorsha

Nobles	Talked To Tristan	Talked to Yvaine
<i>Baron Keagan Vito</i>		X
<i>Countess Shae Sorsha</i>	X	X

<i>Rook Sebastian Castbreaker</i>		
<i>Syr Mariko Yamato</i>	X	
<i>Vizzer Tizzy Tang</i>		

House Bengalo

Nobles	Talked To Tristan	Talked to Yvaine
Countess Céline Bengalo		X
Jakob Merre	X	
Whip Quinn Archezino		X

House Kindershaw

Nobles	Talked To Tristan	Talked to Yvaine
<i>Countess Stefi Kindershaw</i>		X
<i>Viscount Adolous Kindershaw</i>	X	X
<i>Lord Oliver Kindershaw</i>		
<i>Magistrate Marie-Louise Bonaventure</i>		
<i>Valet Mildew Brandyburg</i>		

House Fortinbras

[None were discernible from the waves of soldiers present]

Earth's Chosen

Nobles	Talked To Tristan	Talked to Yvaine
<i>High Vindicator Constantine</i>	X	X
<i>Vindicator Judas</i>		X
<i>Vindicator Peter</i>	X	
<i>Vindicator Tiffini</i>		X
<i>Vindicator Magdalene</i>	X	
<i>Vindicator Levi</i>	X	
<i>Vindicator Simon</i>	X	

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