

[Ori'elen Medresiya Far'gosh Ostolyed](#) V2.0

[PVT Tara Levin](#)

[ART FOLDER](#) - updated: 2024/10/02

[Chapter with <sketchy>Illustrations](#) - because moar content and I want to show off the fact that I can draw (or sketch at the very least, in this case)

ELVES AND BATTLECRUISERS - 24

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“We will act as catalysts of the spell.”

Words said with meaning bought with the conviction of offering two thousand five hundred years worth of memories to act as fodder for extracting someone else’s own. A spell requiring access to the zeitgeist that culminated from the city of Meshid’s entire lifetime.

Two thousand five hundred years of cumulative experiences and understanding that can only be harvested because of their Elven heritage and the unique nature of the Cyclings. For whenever an Elf cycles, their previous memories compress and lighten within their souls and form a false cloak of mana around them perceived only by their individual minds and accessible only as dreams within dreams.

It is through this Harrowing Cycle granted to them by the very gods who bore them that elves are able to transcend the limits of time and be the repositories of this world’s cultures and experiences. Proof positive being the branded rings upon their eyes for every Cycle they... survived.

However, there is a caveat, of sorts, for it is that the fewer the Cycles, the less dense the mana-memories become, and the easier for them to be accessed. And for every Cycle experienced, the difficulties of successfully getting through the next one will be multiplied as much. And it is because of that that only those that had but one ring on their eyes be the offerings for the Rite of Recollection.

He and the four other elves with him were freshly out of their first Cyclings, barely a dozen years since they each came out of their own respective hometowns and villages. It is by oath that they and others like them offer their first Cycle in the search for The Hero, Ori’elen, Lichslayer, godspawn, and avatar of Words. And when their chapter of the Hidden Cult of the Remnants

were called upon to invoke the Rite of Recollection upon the Newcomer who claimed Edaria's godmark, there was no hesitation from all five of them who stepped forward for the task.

The five would-be Observers all nodded to each other as their wooden platforms floated down on streams of magic towards the center of the court to surround the Human for the spell. A spell they have practiced and prepared for for almost all of their first five hundred years.

They readied themselves to hear the parameters for the Rite.

"Everything before the day of the crimes I'm charged with, sir." She spoke with a practiced manner that betrayed a certain tradition that he couldn't yet make out. The woman's voice was crisp, full of intent, with just the hint of mockery that he's sure was just his imagination.

"What can I say, guilty on all charges for those, I'm not gonna deny that I beat up these two and was more than a handful for the guards. Force of habit." The woman's admission of guilt as if there was no shame in her crimes hit the five of them like a thundercrack in the middle of the night. Integrity in the face of shame like that comes so few and far between in their collective lifespans. The stuff of stories passed down and talked about for years on end in towns and villages like rumors of hidden nobles in derelict mansions or bards just behind the next hill.

The Observers cast the first spell, tendrils of mana materializing from just off their field of vision as they directed it towards the strange mass of existence that was the strange woman. His forehead twitched as his third eye strained to detect the coating of mana that was supposed to be how it recognizes the shape and location of a soul.

The mana they locked onto her wrapped around her invisible soul in the shape they were familiar with, but still, it's as if it were a fish under a murky river. They know it's there and what it looks like, but they just couldn't see what it is. For the first time in all their lives, the group of five were both puzzled and disturbed over the realization that this may be what the other races without manasight perceived the world.

However, they still had a spell to cast and did not want to dally. Using the shape of the soul as a base, they were able to rummage through the layers of her experiences until they found the time point of which the woman was accused. From there, it was mere calculations that they were able to find the day prior to her crimes.

Now, all they need is to structure the mana in a way that traces the entirety of her life. Fortunately, the "heft" they felt of her soul meant that she was roughly less than a century old.

"Twenty five, actual." The woman said in that strange, crisp manner she has conducted herself for the latter part of the trial. What a strange way to word it though. Is it from this tradition of speech she has obliged herself into?

Nevertheless, the way the spell fitted perfectly upon a count of twenty five major divisions on her soul made her statement ring true. So the five of them crafted the latticework that would be the

“window” from which they will peek through the woman’s entire life, each thread constructed of chains of mana, each link a circle of five circles connected by another five smaller ones.

There was however, something strange with the structure that the window had settled into. A bulge, about ten times the size of the entirety of the temporary cage they created can be felt but not perceived somewhere within the confines of the soul itself. It was a strange feeling thing. Like the ghosts of a hefty meal you never ate stuck in the confines of the wrong side of your gut.

But still, this must be a result of the woman’s strange nature of the woman’s magically uncaged soul.

“Very well, you may proceed.” The judge ordered.

They pushed on with the spell. The woman’s memories opened up to them like a flower. Raw and divorced from any context, words without meaning, thoughts without derivations, an incomprehensible, chaotic gestalt of experiences that none can penetrate simply because they were not of the same mind.

Which is where the five Observers came in.

The five elves reached into themselves down through the depths of their third eyes and into their minds as they pulled out their own memories. Streams of mana flowed out of them converging above the woman, floating like seaweed in shallow water.

A globe made of an assembly of pure mana crystals then manifested on the ceiling and pulsed out a wave of magic perceptible only to those who were involved in the casting. The wave caught the stray strands of memory emanating from the five of them and pulled it towards the globe hovering over them. As the threads of their memories swirled closer towards it, they began to split apart. One thread of memory became two, two became four, on and on until their memories became incomprehensibly numerous fibers of mana slowly revolving around a central point and connected to the elves.

He saw his memories diverge into their component experiences, the basest of thoughts, the dissections of each moment split off and sorted according to what they are and how they may be required. A scraped knee during his first years was taken away from a merry run across the fields which in turn was taken away from the touch of his Father’s hand on his shoulder. The pain of his injured flesh taken away from the surprising jolt and loss of balance when his foot stubbed on a stray root. The split second of fear when he saw blood on his hands no longer related to the sharp smell that came from the fluid that oozed out from his knee.

To their third eyes, an image of the globe itself then lowered down unto the cage that reflected the woman’s being, connecting not physically, but by some strange force from its own mass as both seemed to want to pull towards each other. The closer they got, the more that some sort of distortion in their shape began to take place, as if there was some pronounced upwards curve in the forces at play closer to the surface of each metaphysical element.

A strand of the woman's thoughts touched the globe's mana and her voice shot through the room like an arrow whizzing by their ears.

"If y_- th_k -'m _i- for t_e -ew, l'- y_-r_ ga-, Sk_pp-_"

The distorted, chopped up syllables of a language none of them know rode the stray streak of mana that pierced the globe above them. The swarm of their own unraveled memories stained the memory with their "color", if such a word existed for mana, changing it, morphing it into something they, and by extension, the crowd within the Chamber understood.

"Private Tara Levin, your contract is hereby leased on to the Civilian services of Captain Lucas Ibrahe, CSF, SEF and the Military command of Commander Itorri Vasquez, CSF, SEF." It was a strange weightless yet gravelly voice like someone speaking underwater but with the clarity of a siren in song. The inflection and cadence strikingly similar to the way the woman did in her trial. The words, all of them understood, but the voice itself was a mystery.

A mystery that would be solved soon enough when more of Tara's memories are exposed to the recontextualizing powers of their extracted experiences.

"Successful completion of your lease will grant you the rights to your Military Custom rig with a 20N85B configuration and maintenance manuals less the combat capable equipment should they be installed in future iterations prior to lease completion." It continued, "Failure to pay the required amount and its subsequent interests will result in increased penalties along with forfeiture of any and all rights to your assigned rig and as well as an extension of your service requirements."

A disturbed array of emotions washed over him at hearing those words. Because his memories are intertwined with the others and the woman's he wasn't sure who felt those. Be it his own, his compatriots, or an echo from her memories when she was caged in a most heinous and insidious trap made of debt and obligation. But he knew it was himself who balked at the idea that she was *sold* into the service of two men. A slick sour wetness started to claw at the base of his throat at the very thought.

But there was a spell and Rite to complete. He endured his first Cycling... this was nothing compared to that.

The memory they just witnessed was but a stray thread from an entire fabric of a person's being; a mere minute in a life of twenty five years.

Whole bundles of the woman's memories kept reaching out from within the cage they made towards the mass of mana they have created above her. As soon as each memory touches the crystals within after being colored by the individual strands of experience to give them context, a pulse burst forth connecting the minds of everyone within the chamber even closer to the subject.

The memories accelerated the pace of which they reached towards the globe and then, when the last piece of magic flowed out from Tara and gathered and mingled amongst the elves' dissolved experiences, a flash of light burst forth engulfing the room in a blinding white flash.

They all found themselves gathered on top of a mountain of sorts, surrounded by sheer cliffs on all sides. The ghostly images of the people in the Chamber looked around worriedly at the scenery around them.

The first thing they all saw was the sky. Blue, outstretched and cloudless from horizon to horizon as they stood on the top of an isolated cliff. Tall, leafless trees jutted out from the center of this isle in the sky like giant needles piercing the heavens. From beneath them, an indescribable noise made out of an uncountable number of bleating and howling of animals they don't recognize. And yet, when they looked down from the edge, all they saw was this thick, off-brown fog with only hints of the ground below as small twinklings of light and lurking shadowy formations.

Around them, they saw more islands like the one they were in, spires too far to register any color, each one distinct from another.

The elf saw his fellow Observers and the people they brought with them look around with absolute perplexity in their eyes. These were people from scattered places in A'kasiya and he was willing to bet that they have not seen from experience or stories a place quite like this. Not with the sky that shade of blue-green, not with the strange seamless rock this mountain was made of, nor even with the material those trees in the center of the island were made of.

Then, suddenly, a great bird flew over their heads, wings so wide, it blotted out the sun. It didn't flap, but it roared. A roar so loud and unabating that the air around it shimmered in terror. It flew so low, the sound of its passing threatened to blow away the skin on their backs despite them not really existing there. Beneath its belly, was stuck an array of downturned cauldrons spilling strange gasses and smoke from within its insides that glowed an intense blue.

The great orb hanging from the real ceiling hummed, taking in the ghosts of true memories accumulated within the city for the last two thousand five hundred years. The ghosts of the city's memories mingled with the disassembled real memories from the five elves and threaded themselves along Tara's. The orb pulsed as if echoing an entire room voicing a collective understanding.

A wave of magic issued forth from the construct and the spell shifted and twisted, as if searching for the owner of the memory herself. The location changed from the top of the cliff they found themselves in to the bottom and suddenly the scene couldn't make sense.

They found themselves on a wide yet impossibly smooth black pathway surrounded by towers of light stretching out towards a sky they cannot see. Humans of all shapes, sizes, and color traveled along the edges of the road while these massive legless beasts crawled on the middle at speeds that don't align with their shapes. Light burst from the faces of these beasts blinding the crowding witnesses as they rushed along the road and straight through some of the less

fortunate members of the nobility. Fortunately, they were all aware enough that these images were but memories projected for them to play around in. The ones who were almost run over by such a massive beast looked at it with pale faces and widened eyes over the idea that there was a non zero chance that that would have actually happened to someone real at some point.

Truly, the Observers themselves, who had the images go through their minds first before it was filtered and digested for the Council and others to understand, can confirm that that was actually the case. Especially here, in this place where Tara came from, where it is much more common than the woman can be shamed into admitting.

The only thing preventing the people from crossing the road into danger were railings of impossibly straight and sturdy wood lining the entirety of their path. Looking around, they found people coming out of shacks made of stone and transparent leaves leading towards tunnels that provide access to the other side of the dangerous street.

They saw more of those shacks, all identical, all constructed the same strange way on every corner they found, eliciting questions from everyone along the lines of “why would these Humans exert so much effort for such infrastructure?”

He Observed the scene before him as did his fellow elves. The shadows of slender mountains so tall, they blotted out the sky to but slender streaks of blue, loomed over all of them as a crowd of thousands drowned out their little group of mere hundreds simply walking in their daily routines.

Speaking of the crowd, they all marveled at the sheer diversity of cloth and quality that surrounded them. As each moment passed, a new person came into being, becoming a permanent part of their simulated experience of Tara’s world. The place rapidly became a crowded street not seen outside of the busiest hours of Meshid’s marketplaces.

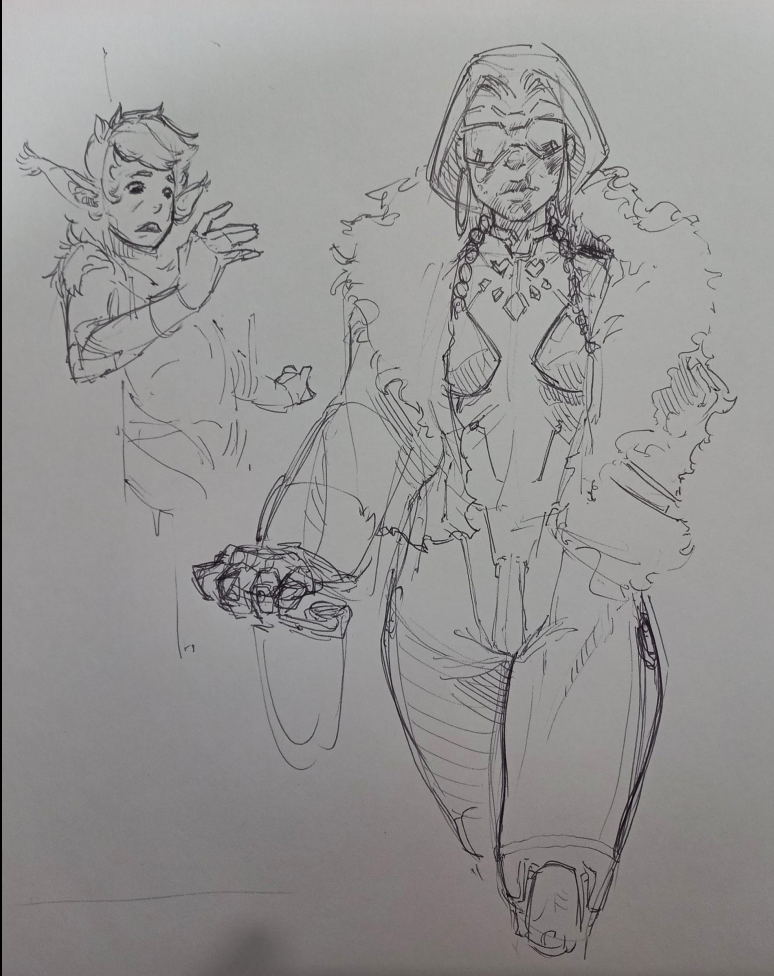
Each person is a singular expression of their individual self that even though the humans all looked somewhat the same to them, you can pick one out based on their dress alone.

A woman passed by him, wearing a jacket of fur so fine and so long, the fibers wafted along with her motions as if she were swimming. The fur was dyed in the most vibrant shade of blue, it almost hurt his eyes looking at it. Her hair was arranged in a way that invoked the image of a hooded cloak over her head and it too was dyed in the same colors as her clothes. From her nape was more of her hair, decorated in beads that looped around on the front to her back from under her arms, mimicking a shirt of sorts.

She was clad in clothes so tight that it might as well have been skin. In fact, he thought it was until he noticed the strange gems adorning her suit like jewelry but without strings that let it hang on her like necklaces like the pattern on her body suggested.

What’s even more startling to him, though, was that she adorned herself even further with strings of light hanging in loops from her ears and as bracelets on her wrists. Both of which

attracted him to the reflective surface of her second skin and on the mask she wore. A full-faced mask that shimmered like polished gold and he could swear that if he were there in actuality, he would see his distorted reflection staring back at him in shock.



The woman walked past him, sauntering in boots that reached to her thighs in ways that flattered her form to the extremes. Heels so tall, he wondered how her ankles functioned. But when he focused on her feet as he thought so, he realized she was actually walking on tiptoe as her legs tapered off to an impossibly sharp point that looked like she was stabbing the ground with every step.

He may have witnessed someone of some reputation as there seemed to be a clearance around her as she walked along this seemingly increasingly densening crowd. The number of people is slowly increasing to the point that there are pockets of the population actually walking shoulder to shoulder and back to front.

He tore himself from looking at the woman to marvel at the sights around him, still unsure at what they

all beheld. The towers of light had on them images and texts they could not comprehend rolling up like scrollwork at a steady pace. One of the nobles with them, a Degreri, which is rare here in the Shared Lands, walked over to the base of one of the towers to touch it and it recoiled its hand from the heat of whatever was emanating the images. The mushrooms on its head and face shifting into a shape that mimicked pain and awe while spores shed all over in reaction to its emotions.

Above them appeared more of the beasts on the road but this time, they *flew* in defiance of gravity. They were not as numerous as the ones on the ground, but there was enough to elicit attention to their presence. That one caused the majority of those with them to abandon pretenses to dignity to gawk and point.

These beasts - no, they saw one of the flying ones disgorge a crowd of twenty onto a platform not far from them before lifting away into the distance. These were not beasts, these were carriages; carriages that flew without anything to pull them with.

True, there are such things all over A'kasiya, but they were mostly considered frivolous displays of excessive uses of mana and material. But to see them here in such quantity and triviality? Yes, he understood full well why the nobles acted as they did.

But it all didn't make sense just yet. The shadows of the mountains that overpowered the sky above them emitted lights in cliffsides that seem to say there was something in them. The buildings around them are constructed with this strange monolithic rock that was too smooth to be of any practical use. What seems they found in the architecture was from the not-wood that pervaded almost everything using joinery techniques they don't recognize.

Everywhere were these strange boxes with transparent barriers showcasing their contents that were even smaller boxes made to look like the things that housed them. They were cold to the touch in front but scalding hot at the back. A... unique way of creating a cold space, if not harsh for everyone around it.

Everywhere they looked, giant floating images of what they can only assume were market stalls of such magnitudes, it was bordering on ludicrous.

Everywhere around them, people were displaying wealth that rivaled kings and poverty that can crush saints in ways that made the Observers balk at the actual disparity and scale when Tara's memories provided them with the context firsthand.

None of it made sense and they were all at the verge of panicking because the Observers were starting to lose grasp of the reality of which they provided. That was when the spell shifted again, but instead of putting them someplace else, Tara's memories echoed along with the strands of magic orbiting the construct in the Grand Chamber.

Suddenly, knowledge, or rather, a strange equivalent of it, flooded the Observers' minds. Elements of Tara's memories suddenly changed and shifted to accommodate their newfound understanding.

These beasts on the road. They were known as cars and trucks. Their forms changed ever so greatly from crawling misshapen things to objects on wheels of black leather filled with air. These were this world's primary form of long distance transportation, ferrying between one person to hundreds at a time from personal to public use.

They were also used to transport goods and commodities in such scales and speeds that it almost shook him from his maintaining concentration for the spell. Again, such *wonders* made him ask one more time to himself, "Why would these humans even need such logistics?"

He can remember, such as it was now that he can feel his memories fading for every moment Tara's are being translated, studying up on such matters. Such scales of supply lines would mean that they are produced in such quantities in singular locations.

Which then leads to another question of, "How many of these people are there in just one Kingdom to need such quantities of anything?"

The spell increasing the amount of their comprehension continued to change the land around them. The transparent leaves they found to be abundant all around the place turned into what it actually was.

Glass.

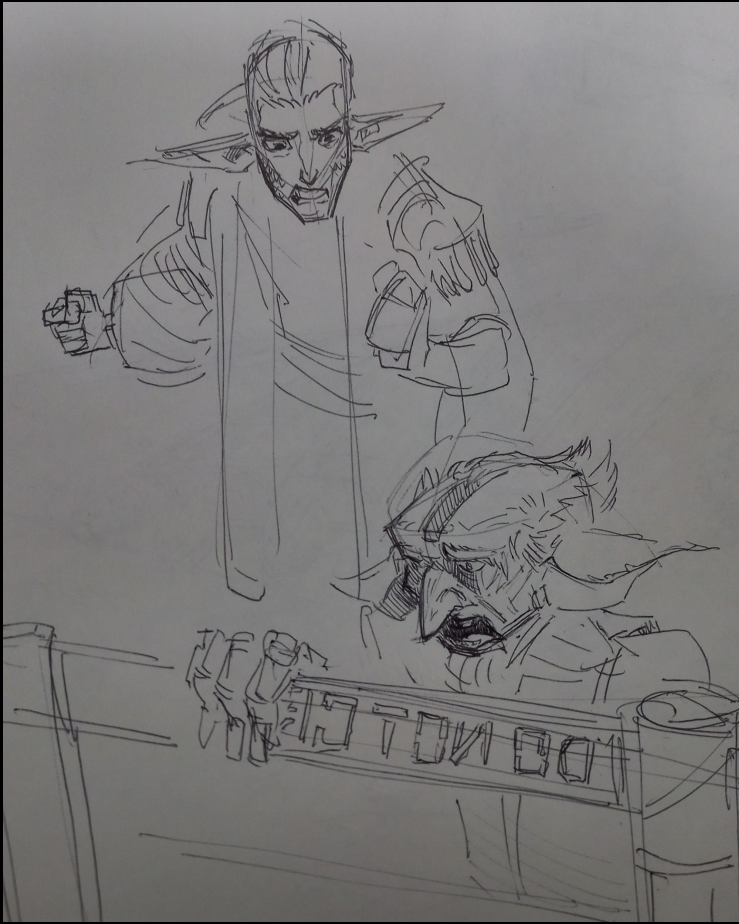
Which extracted another wave of gasps from the crowd including the Observers. Glass was the lowest tier fire-touched item that can be remotely obtainable. And even then, it was so hard to transport that acquiring it may as well be a luxury expense all by itself. Were it not so fragile and heavy, glass would have been an excellent currency.

And it's *everywhere* here. In every shape and color imaginable.

A stifled scream rang out from behind him and he turned around to share in the shock. The mountains they were looking at were not mountains at all. They were buildings.

Clad in glass.

One of which was made of a solid piece of seamless glass that was so thick, they can see the green beneath its surface and so solid, it barely let out a sound when they rapped it with their knuckles. Was it the way it was constructed that lent to its strength? He would need to ask a Constructor Mage, none of whom, unfortunately, are present with them.



"Metal." the word was uttered beside him. It was the goblin, Professor, Sadadorious Melor. His hand was palming the strange barricade that lined the streets that shepherded the crowd away from any oncoming cars.

"Impossible!" replied Councilor Soratia as he appeared next to the redstripe. His eyes wide beneath his hooded scowl.

The professor, seemingly overwhelmed by the sights they are bombarded with, slapped it with his hand. A clear sound that echoed and reverberated along the railing's structure. It was melodious as it was heavy and it caused the Councilor to recoil in surprise.

"You and I have been around the substance, F'len," Sadadorious said. His eyes, tired from keeping up formalities, simply looked at the markings on the councilor's face, a scaled pattern of triangles on warped and discolored skin all across his lower jaw. "It would benefit us both if you could be objective in the matter."

"It's *metal*!" The Elf said, the four rings on his eyes flaring brightly amidst the near-black of their sclera.

"And yet they have it *everywhere*!" Sadadorious absently waved his hand behind him, the spell itself sending a wave of added comprehension at the scene before them as if to illustrate the educator's point.

Suddenly, the vehicles gained more definition. Stone and rocks, wood and leaves, all gave way and became iron wrought and shaped into forms and angles they didn't know were possible. The ground beneath them suddenly littered with plates of squared metals of unknown purpose. The building around them, the material they initially thought was joined wood sloughed away to reveal painted metals underneath. Metals used to prop up structures smaller than his house.

Metals used to decorate the streets.

Metals, the stuff of legends, used as containers for their refuse as the smell wafted towards them. A hideous, heavy, rotted stench so foul that more than enough of the crowd gagged at the very scent of it.

And yet, the spell compelled them all to go to the alleyway where the noxious scent originated. It was dark, barely three feet across between the two buildings so tall, the sky was missing from view.

However, as they went deeper into the alley, amidst the shadows of two impossible giants, where the scent of decay started to inch closer and closer to overpowering, the distance between the two walls started to widen, revealing a somewhat more open space.

It wasn't a very large space in proportion to everything they saw, only about twenty feet wide, but at the very least it allowed for the stench to vent away from them.

In front of them, was a fence that stretched from wall to wall made of metal wire that stood at teen feet high. Imposing despite the flimsy nature of its make. Even more so when they saw the top of the fence was decorated by wires brandishing wickedly shaped blades that upon closer inspection, were sharp enough to cut to the bone if not snag on your skin.

If not a weapon, it was definitely the most terrifying of deterrents.

Yet somehow, they found signs of infiltration on the very thing that was supposed to ward off intruders itself. For on one side of the fence, the deterring razor-enhanced-wire was bent and misshapen as if something was pressed down upon it from above. Looking at the set of clothes on the other side, it seemed evident on how the infiltration was done.

They found themselves on the other side of the fence, suddenly in the presence of what seemed to be a shanty town. Interlocking boxes of rotting fabric and thin, battered, and bent metals shaped in what could only be assumed as habitation. Everywhere they looked, there was a person in varying shades of discomfort, disinterest, and duress. And even though the spell hasn't yet completed filling up the place with a proper rendition of the population around them, the oppressive air was palpable.

They were not so pampered to know this was what counted for slums in this city of wonders as they, despite being incorporeal here, avoided the sludge that inched along the center of the "town".

It was when they noticed a streak of blood rounding a corner when they knew where to go next.

"Of course I'll be there tonight, we don't want Mama Martha to come over to our unit and hand us our asses again, right?"

The voice was light, high pitched, and sounded exceedingly young.

"Yeah yeah, it went fine. Gut cutter nicked a vein something bad but at least they slapped some re-gel on it before I left. At least I got us some slog for the next week or two, liver'll be fine next month for 'nother cut."

The... the what, now? The question unexpectedly lanced through the Observers, halting them in their tracks and staggering some of their guests with it. The implications and explanations from Tara's memories are disturbing and terrifying in equal measure.

"Don't worry about it, at least it'll keep the other kids from turning sour."

Was she talking to herself? The Observers and the assembled crowd of nobles came closer to the tiny figure in the dark and damp corners of the slum. She was hunched over, obviously in pain.

Blood streaked on the wall she was leaning on from a wound on her side. Her pale skin reflected what little light came through. A neat, impossibly straight scar ran through most of the right side of her shaven head and all across the back of her nape. From her head jutted out strange metal plating that seemed to be more than just decoration.

Strangely and disturbingly enough, they found on the *child's* neck, was a hole of sorts just under the base of her skull.

"Anyway, gotta hang up, got a client waiting for me. Yeah. No, it'll be quick, he knows I'm cut. Don't worry!"

The way and cadence of her speech was that of someone talking through a sending crystal, although they could find nothing on her ear other than the garish metal piercings adorning them.

The girl inched closer to the end of the alley she was on, the light from beyond a straight line in the darkness. Just outside, was a car of the flying kind just waiting for her to exit.

As soon as she did, someone tossed her what seemed to be a small, palm sized tube of sorts which she caught midair. Her expression at receiving it was a mix of gratitude and annoyance, what about, the Observers couldn't say.

She pressed a button on one end of the tube and a wicked looking needle suddenly poked out from the other side, and without hesitation, she stabbed herself with it. Right on her injury.

The Observers and all their guests flinched at the barbaric sight. But yet, there may have been some sort of potion within that tube, a kind of potion that requires such crude and careless delivery that caused her to steadily even out her breathing and within a scant few seconds, stand up straight.

The girl tossed the tube aside, its contents spent as it rolled towards the nearest corner to join an innocuous-looking heap of trash.

“My favorite gofer.” A voice came in from the car. The shadowy figure only had a hand out through its window holding what looked to be a finger-sized wafer with gold leaf at the end.

Tara took it and promptly slid it into a hole at the back of her head.

The elf didn’t know who it was who was retching at the sight, but he knew he wasn’t that far behind in doing so. Especially since the spell is explaining to him that whatever she put into her head is injecting information straight into her mind like some perverse idea of a book.

“Well Tara? You taking the job?” the voice from inside the car asked.

Tara just smiled crookedly, despite obviously still in pain. “Yeah, why not? It’s not like I got nothing else to do.”

End of Capter 24

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Lore Notes:

[\(Slowly cleaning up\) Glossary](#)

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Post mortem notes and thoughts:

- I just realized that describing magic and its intimate effects is like trying to describe the direction in which quarks “spin”. Both fun and confusing.
- This delay was brought to you by... groceries, dayjob crunch, and taking too long ~~playing~~ on Cyberpunk 2077 researching the mood for Verdant

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