

SECTION - 1 - LAND KING HALL

LKH - P1 - THE LAND KING

You awake to find yourself staring transfixed into the eyes of an old, fanatical looking man. The hard lines of age are carved into his face with determination. Above a thick curly beard with it's black nearly gone are two sunken eyes that you feel see into your very depths. You begin to feel the world around you: warm, indoors, but the man's stern gaze compels you not to look away. He is saying something but the words are muffled. As you stand unblinking, suddenly the man's eyes close and he seems to shrink and collapses backwards against a heavy oaken table.

"It is done." he says and the world rushes into you. You breath and realize you are in a very large room. ~~The walls are grey brick stone, and adorning one is a large red tapestry bearing a the symbol of a golden axe.~~ Surrounding you in a square is a table donning brazzers and candelabras. Coming to your senses, you notice a small man in motley attending the old man's at his side.

"Ah good," the older man says, "You are whole and about. We thought perhaps.... well, here you are." You notice the man's expression is much more relaxed now, even exhausted. You see that he is wearing a black robe with white trim. Upon his head is a small bronze circlet.

"I suppose I should explain what happened. My name is Alaric and you are now in the land of Cythera. You were summoned in my final, desperate attempt to save the land and its ruler from chaos and madness. I am that ruler, and I share a special bond with this land of Cythera and its people. For over two hundred years I have used my magic to keep it prosperous.

Unfortunately, my power has begun to wane, and with it, Cythera has started slipping into chaos. It is as if that bond were dissolving, and the land somehow forgetting me."

Alaric seems ghost-like in the warm glow of the fires, staring into them. "I do not understand it. The more impotent I become, the more frustrating it is to see it all slipping away, like waking from a dream..."

After a moment, Alaric brings his stare back to you. "I have trusted the fates to summon an outsider, from Mater Theia herself, for only an outsider will be able to see through this cloud that blocks my vision. You, of course, are that outsider. Do not think that I did this on a whim - it has cost me most of my remaining power to do so. I must trust you to help me. I am sorry for the danger this costs you, but you are my, and Cythera's, last chance."

Before Alaric/The Land King let's you go, he reaches behind him and present a long slender chain of gold, adorned with a strange jewel with the shape of an axe cut into its face.

"Here, this amulet is yours - it bears my symbol. When worn around your neck, it will save your life if you die. You can also use it to bring a companion back from the gates of death, but be warned, it has a limited number of uses."

#He gives you an amulet on a gold chain.#

At this he turns and makes his way to a door on the West end of the room.

[[Your archetype is Explorer or Mystic]]

You should visit the Magisterium in Pnyx to learn to use your magical powers.

[[Your archetype is Fighter, Swordsman, Beserker, Storyteller, or Rogue]]

Despite your lack of magical abilities, the scrolls will still be useful to you.

[[Your archetype is Mage or Wizard]]

You've got a knack for magic - a trip to the Magisterium in Pnyx will be worthwhile.

"I've got some quarters made up for you - Magpie will show you the way."

{Magpie resumes conversation with a tour of LandKing Hall.}

LKH - P2 - THE FOOL

The fool approaches and gives you a stare. Hunched slightly to his right, he gawks at you with a curious smile and seems to have a pleasant demeanor. His wild curly brown hair frames his face almost like a goat.

He spins suddenly and opens a panel into the greater area of the room. Waving towards you he says, "Follow Magpie, you should." He opens a metal door to the East and holds it open.

As you step through the portal you find yourself in a hallway stretching North to South. On both sides of the door stands a stone warrior looking to each end of the hall. A glint catches your eye on the ground and you notice the floor for the first time. Black marble bricks catch the glow of torches on the walls, even the grout seems to sparkle. Magpie tugs you on your arms and beckons you to continue once more, you notice he's rolling a dice around in his left hand.

The fool points to a wooden door towards the north, "At the end of the hall, the library is. Much learning can be found in there, from the books written by elders. Do you well it might to learn."

The hunchback leads you South down the hall, passing another door on you left that you see a man in armor walk through. He takes a moment to stare at you and then walks on. You enter a fork leading East and West. The fool takes you west and then almost immediately turns left In a passage of wooden doors and further halls. You smell the smoke of small fires, and hear the muffled voices of those in other rooms, as well as someone singing nearby. The fool stops and opens one of the doors, swings it wide and then turning to you,

"These are quarters for you. Provisions in there are. The things in your quarters are yours, serve you well they shall. But be careful not to steal from others. Cythera is an honorable land, and such deeds will serve you ill.

#The fool looks around quickly.#

Magpie is the fool, but even Magpie knows your journey will be dangerous, young one.

Good it would do you to learn what you can. Important visitors come and go, but you are unique. Demodocus stays across the hall, for the nonce. Talk with him, Magpie would, would that Magpie be you."

Magpie begins to scamper away when he stops, and thinks for a moment, "Also, one might ask around to see if somebody would like to @join you on your quest..." He stares at you curiously once more, and then disappears.

Looking inside your room, you see a large ornate rug bearing the symbol of the Land King, the two-headed axe. The room looks fit for a soldier. To your right you find a massive workbench; lying on top of which is what appears to be armor, coins and other items. In the far left of the room is a simple looking feather bed. To its left is a small desk with a large scroll atop of it and an oil lamp burning strong. In the right corner of the room is a dresser with three drawers and a large mirror sitting beside it.

LKH - P3 - THE OMEN

You enter the room and close the door. Quickly coming to terms to the alienness of this world, the shock of this not being a dream begins to overwhelm you. You feel a little dizzy and suddenly the world seems a bit blurry. You swore you were alone but now a strange looking face fades into view. It's eyes are large and pupils small. Under a wide brow sits a wide upturned nose jutting out over a toothy smile.

"Poor little human - so far from home, and so far from the truth... You do know, don't you, that Alaric is not all he says he is. True, he is bound to the land, but as a usurper. He does not belong in the position of power, and he upsets the balance of the world by being there. And you, my friend, are just another puppet in his play.

Now is the time of change, and you are at the pivot point. But which way will the balance swing? To the East? Or to the West? And myself? I am Omen, and my master has instructed me to watch for one like you. At great price to myself I come to you, as a vision, to warn and guide you, protect and teach you. Know you this - there is more going on here than meets the eye, a power struggle as old as the world itself. And in this struggle, you are trapped.

If you ever expect to be free, heed my advice well. Alaric must be destroyed to restore the land, and in the end, you will do this or be destroyed by the fool king. To aid you in your destiny, we have a small gift, to prove our word. But first, you must learn the ways of the land, and to this end my master has prepared a small test of your abilities. For you must hone your skills. As a sword is tempered, so must you be. Seek your way out of this proving grounds, and along the way you might find your reward. Follow our counsel, and you will be well rewarded - ignore it at your own peril. Until we meet again, be on your guard, and trust not what your eyes behold."

LKH - P4 - OMEN'S TEST

You begin to collapse from your dizziness but before you can hit the ground, suddenly your strength returns to you. You are no longer in your room. You stand in the middle of a small dungeon chamber with a single torch meekly shining on the wall. To your East you see a portcullis blocking your way further into the dungeon. In the North West corner of the room you see an open scroll on the ground, In the opposite corner you see a lever sticking curiously out of a gear in the ground. The rest of the small room appears empty.

Omen Scroll 1:

Welcome, Human, to my little test for you. It is not hard to pass, and will give you some of the skills you need to survive (though you may feel like a creature in a cage). I hope that Omen did not startle you. His appearance is strange, but don't let that deceive you.

You have already passed the first part of the test - you have read this note. Next, you must pull that nearby lever to open the gate, leading you to the next room. There you will find a locked trapdoor. Find the key, open it, and then go down the ladder.

You pull the lever with a heavy heave and the portcullis flies open. Through the portal you find yourself in a slightly larger room covered in cobwebs and ash. A section of the floor seems different in the North East corner. Directly to your south you see a chest underneath a burning torch. In the opposite corner you see pale shapes crumpled together.

You lift the dusty lid of the chest up and with a light thud it rests against the wall. Inside you find another scroll and [3] unlit torches.

Omen Scroll 2:

Sorry, the key is not in this chest, but good try. Look to your south - notice anything interesting about the wall?

You examine the wall carefully in the dark but see nothing. With your torch in hand you carefully scour the wall. You realize that one of the bricks doesn't quite fit the part of the wall. Pushing it, a section of the wall suddenly slides away and a passageway is revealed.

Inside the small secret room is but a simple wooden crate and a mouse hole on the opposite wall.

Sliding the lid off the crate you find small dusty key emblazoned with the symbol "D" upon its handle.

You shine your torch into the mouse hole and see a chain. You pull the chain and another section of wall slides away revealing another secret room.

Laying in the middle of the room is another scroll.

Omen Scroll 3:

Ah, very good, very observant, finding that second secret door, but not all discoveries like this lead to reward, unfortunately. However, this one does...

After what seems like countless checking, you find a brick in the wall that is loose. You take it out of the wall and find... nothing but dust. You almost leave when you notice a strange shape in the dust. You poke at it and realize it's a gold ring.

You put on the ring and get a strange feeling.

Returning to the larger room, you use the D key on the trapdoor and reveal a ladder leading down. Once down the ladder you find yourself in a dark room with another scroll on the ground next to a strange looking object.

Omen Scroll 4:

Have you seen enough? Ready to leave? This room is trickier - the door is locked by a spell. You have but one chance to get this one open -

take that strange looking object, what you would call a bomb. Pick it up, light it, and then toss it so it lands right next to the door. Stand back and let time pass...

As you enter the room the strange face appears before you once more, along with the dizziness.

"Well done, human. That wasn't so hard now, was it."

[[You didn't pick up the ring]]

"Too bad you didn't find your reward - your lack of attentiveness does not bode well... Still, I am not without pity - I promised you help, and so you shall have it. I shall grant you another boon - this magical mapping device, that lets you see where you've been. Remember our advice, and perhaps we shall meet again - I shall be watching you and your actions. If you ever find yourself returning to my little 'Test', I'll tell you a secret. When you pull the lever in the first room, an illusionary wall opens under the torch, so you can walk through the wall there. From that secret room, just take the ladder down to my quarters here. In the mean time, I will return you to your quarters - speak to no one of this encounter of ours."

[[You did pick up the ring]]

"And I see you found your reward - that was well done. May it serve you well. Still, even this may not be enough, so I have another gift for you. I shall grant you another boon - this magical mapping device, that lets you see where you've been. Remember our advice, and perhaps we shall meet again - I shall be watching you and your actions. If you ever find yourself returning to my little 'Test', I'll tell you a secret. When you pull the lever in the first room, an illusionary wall opens under the torch, so you can walk through the wall there. From that secret room, just take the ladder down to my quarters here. In the meantime, I will return you to your quarters - speak to no one of this encounter of ours."

LKH - P5 - THE HUNTER

The world fades away and when it returns you find yourself back in your spartan quarters at Land King Hall. The atmosphere at the castle seems unchanged from when you were last here. The door to your room remains closed, and the table along the wall is still covered in

items. You can still faintly hear someone singing in the room across from you.

Inside the drawers of the dress you find sandals, a woolen [cloak] and a [satchel].

On the workbench you find a [sword], [40 oboloi], [leather breastplate], [leather helmet], [10 unlit torches], [buckler].

On the desk you find a complete [map] of the island of Cythera.

Inside the desk you find an assortment of magic scrolls:

{Scroll of Directed Nexus}

{Scroll of Detect Concealment}

{Scroll of Detect Traps}

{Scroll of Vision of the Night}

{Scroll of Minor Enbrightenment}

{Scroll of Death Strike}

You step out of your room into an empty hall. In the passageway to your north you see a guard walk by. The singing is louder out here now, and it's coming from the door directly across from your own.

You knock on the door and it opens forward, you see a jovial man with thinning curly hair playing a lyre and singing in the corner of the room. He seems lost in his song, a ballad, but then notices you staring at him.

"Ah! You must be the newcomer. I've heard rumors about Alaric summoning you... If @rumors I hear are true, you've come none-too-soon. Much is wrong, and Alaric seems unable to deal with it. Oh, I'm sorry, allow me to introduce myself. I am Demodocus, the Bard." As he says this he strums his lyre with a smile and then sets the instrument down behind him.

"Though I've not been there recently, I heard from a friend that something is very wrong in @Catamarca. People have been getting sick, a few have even died. It may be just a rumor, but my instinct tells me a great story could start there."

Demodocus seems content to stay, "Off on some adventure? Well, sometime you'll have to tell them all to me so I can make a ballad..."
{Conversation Ends}

The bard picks up his lyre and begins to practice once more as you leave his room.

LKH - P6 - ALARIC'S CHAMBERS

Returning back to the main hallway you walk left and come to the end. There is an old bust of some forgotten hero, his face somber, next to a metal door to the North. Stepping through the unlocked door you find yourself in a large, clean bedroom with carpet on the floor, and a small desk in the middle.

In the South-East corner of the room is a small wooden door, behind which you find a closet containing a large dresser and mirror.

On the Desk in the middle of the room you find a blue book, written by hand. The words inscribed on the cover read, "Exploration of Seldane Ruins by Timon"

The focus of my research has now turned upon the ruins outside of Pnyx, situated at the source of the River Tirynth. After considering the others ruin sites, the similarities between the building materials, as well as the architectural style, clearly indicate a common origin. Though minor stylistic variations have been found, I believe these are indicative more to the purpose of the buildings rather than any other factor. The construction of these ruins might be the key to connecting the various pylons discovered in remote locations, as well as the more recent discoveries dwelling in the swamps south of the Khalkis Plains...

Along the west wall is a tall bookcase containing many musty tomes and books of all sorts. The bed in the corner of the room is large and shrouded by a canopy. It is currently empty. To the north is a large metal door on either side of which is a stoic gargoyle sitting, arms wrapped around its necks, staring off into the floor with a stoic expression, its wings raised and covering it, opposite him is a strange creeping plant that seems to be taking over the North West corner of the room and threatening to entangle the door if left unchecked.

Behind the locked door seems to be some kind of private research room. On the various workbenches are strange instruments, bottles of ink and food half eaten and forgotten. There is an aroma of sulfur

and the West wall is lined with an enormous bookshelf and still more books are on the bench.

There is an old tome open on the bench, the initial inscript reading, "Alaric, Landking"

The origin of our Lord Alaric is shrouded in the depths of the unknown, but the people will never forget when he destroyed the power of the Third Tyrant in 216. Many is the tale that has been told of how a stranger came to court, claiming simply that 'The rule of Tyrants is over'. The blinding flash of light that followed left the Tyrant and his supporters dead.

Understanding his motives for what followed is even more difficult, for he seemed to cast society adrift, claiming that he'd return only after a fair form of government had been selected. But it was through this that six individuals formed a the basis for our current government.

On the corner of the bench you notice a scroll inscribed with the title, "The Artifact of Pnyx"

A mysterious green crystal was found in the ruins outside the city of Pnyx - this crystal has caused much debate among scholars over the builders (and their powers) of the ruins. This much is clear - it is the potential source of much power, though unlocking the power is beyond all who attempt it, rendering this artifact to almost more of a curiosity, rather than a truly important find.

At the bottom of the scroll is an illustration of the artifact.

In the bookshelf you find a red book with the tile "Seldane Ruins of Pnyx"

When the original mages were exiled from Cademia by the First Tyrant, they came to eventually settle at the mouth of the River Tirynth. It wasn't long after the first settlement was built that ancient ruins were found at the headwater of the River Tirynth. The ruins were surely not created by man, the building materials alone being beyond the skills that man possessed to shape. Thus the builders were called Metics, after a legendary race that common folk claimed to have seen from time to time.

The book illustrate a strange figure with a hand placed upon a large stone pillar.

There is a plate on the bench containing a half eaten meat pie that surprisingly still looks fresh enough to eat. You notice that beside it is a well-used and well-kept blue book with the inscription, "Sapphire Book of the Crown." You find the way it was written confusing and hard to make sense of though cryptic passage sticks out to you:

As all can be derived from nothing, the Unity of all that exists is the basis for all that exists, and this is the first step from the Infinite to the final expression. This is the first principle of consciousness...

To the East is another large metal door, the keyhole appears to be glowing with a strange purple light.

LKH - P7 - THE VOID

As you step through the Eastern door of the laboratory you enter the quiet darkness of an unknown chamber. This area gives you a sense of power, something you can almost taste in the air. As your eyes adjust, you begin to make out many brazzers arrange on the floor in some kind of pattern. Occupying either end of the room are two pools filled with water that almost sparkles with energy. To the north is a door of stone with no apparent way of opening it.

As you step up the stone door, it suddenly opens letting you through it. Beyond the door is complete is a few steps of ledge and then complete darkness. It is impossible to tell just how large this chamber is, and then slowly you begin to see stars, just a few at first and then hundreds, thousands, countless stars appear all around you. It seems impossible, but it's as if you are in the very heart of the cosmos and the more you gaze into the void, the more it seems to show you.

Eventually you are able to wrench yourself free from the void and make your way back to Alaric's Bedroom. Through the Eastern door you find yourself back where you first arrived.

Looking again at the room you notice it's most interesting feature is the black onyx floor with a glowing triangle in the middle of it, which is surrounded by a high bench. To the South you notice for the first time a bench containing many bottles of strange colored liquids.

POTIONS:

{Clear Mind, ORANGE}
{Sustenance, GREY}
{Free Motion, BROWN}
{Healing, WHITE}
{Mage's friend, BLACK}
{Antidote, BLUE}
{Smith's Friend, RED}
{Far Sight, PURPLE}

LKH - P8 - THE COOK

Going out of the main hall on the right, you notice a wooden door without handle or lock. As you approach you smell the rich aroma of meat roasting and bread baking coming from the other side of the door. As you enter you see an old woman kneading bread as a stone oven fills the room with warmth behind her. The woman appears weary but happy.

To your immediate left is a small room packed with large crates and foodstuffs.

As you walk into the kitchen she greets you, not turning away from her dough. "Greetings, and welcome to our world, stranger. I am Emesa, Alaric's @cook." She turns her long nose at you and gives a slight bow, her thinning curls falling slight onto her face. "If there's @anything I can do for you to help you in your @journeys, please, just ask..." She takes her dough and throws it onto the grate above the fire.

She offered you some bread, "Well, I can offer you some @food if you like, but what we have around here won't keep you nourished for too long while off on travels... Who knows how long it will be before you're able to find another place to @catch a meal? You'll be able to get a something to eat at various @Inns, of course, but for a price."

She seems to stare off for a moment and then looks at you with a warm smile, "Oh, I imagine you'll be traveling far and wide soon. Be careful, keep your eyes open, and perhaps see if you can get some people to help you along the way. Nothing like having friends to help you out of a rough spot... I don't travel much myself, so I don't know much about the goings on in the land, but my @husband never seems to stop talking about it. Perhaps he can tell you a thing or two?"

She moves more bread from the fire and looks lovingly into the flames, "Yes, my husband is Hadrian, the captain of the guards here... A loving father, and a strong man, although Alaric's ailing health has him troubled. You'll find him at the Land King's side most of the time these days..."

She stops kneading her dough and casts her gaze to the ceiling, "He works so hard to protect and care for Alaric in these times of strife, I worry about him... He rarely sleeps, and has become quite withdrawn of late... I think his @concern for Alaric is overpowering the man I love; it's quite a burden for him to bear. You see, Hadrian's sworn duty is to protect Alaric, and Land King Hall, but now that an unseen force has afflicted his liege, he is left powerless to do anything about it."

She stops and turns to you, "Hadrian's concern for Alaric has in turn led to my concern for my husband. He hasn't even had time to properly @mourn the passing of his mother, let alone tend to his family that still lives."

She turns away and frowns, she looks tired in the shadows, "Hadrian's kindly mother passed away recently in Catamarca. She was such a kindly old woman, but one with much life left within her. A terrible shame to have it stolen from her."

"Please, talk to my husband. You'll find him at the Land King's side most of the time these days... and thank you for listening to an old cook's worries."

She puts a fresh piece of flatbread in your hand and walks you to the door.

LKH - P9 - THE WARRIOR

As you explore the halls you are met with a guard who gives you quizzical look and then an excited smile. He slaps your arm as if to see if you are real and then says,

"Ah, you are the one that was summoned by Alaric - my name is Hector, and I am honored to meet you! Well, I hope Alaric knows what he's doing. No offense, but you don't look like much of a hero to me... However, I suppose looks can be deceiving, as my @mother always says." He laughs. My mother's right around the corner in the kitchen, usually. She's a kind-hearted soul, and it kills me to see her working at such a menial job. She's here mostly to be close to my @father, I think, and she does seem to enjoy her work. Well, she prepares all the meals for folks in Land King Hall, including Alaric himself! Say, I bet if you asked her, she'd be more than willing to cook you a hot meal... Alaric is more than just our ruler, he binds the land together in some strange way that I don't understand. I may not know exactly what is going on, but I do know that as Alaric has weakened, the land has suffered as well. Much has happened in Cythera that would be unthinkable just a few scant years ago... It's as if the land is stricken with a disease, and can no longer fight back against agents of evil. I've heard stories of criminals roaming rampant, and stranger still, of odd creatures roaming about. How I'd love to give them a taste of their own medicine! Dark-hearted cowards! Cythera should return to the just land it once was... Yes, I hope to honor my father, as well as make a name for myself. I am named Hector because our legends tell of a great warrior named Hector, and I must follow in his footsteps. I've been training and studying the ways of a warrior. My father helped me out with that; he's a great warrior in his own right, as well as a patient teacher. My father Hadrian is the head of Alaric's guards - it is a very honorable profession. I think I've passed the point where training alone can help me, however...

I would be honored to join you, but my duty lies here, to my father. I can only go if he approves."

Possible arc here of having Hector need to prove himself to his father.

LKH - P10 - THE CAPTAIN

Traversing the castle, you come across a rather wide hall stretching to the North. At its end you see a throne with beams of sunshine raining down onto it. A long red carpet with purple and gold trim runs the length of the hall to the throne and emblazoned upon it just before the throne is a circle with a green triangle with black surrounding at the bottom, a line of yellow above it and a line of blue above that. As you make your way closer to the throne, you see it sits upon a cross shaped pyramid of marble steps and granite. At the top is the stone chair that is the throne. A beam of sunlight sits upon making it a stage unto the room. Sitting there is Alaric the Land King with his fool, Magpie beside him. There are a few guards along the perimeter of the room as well as an older warrior with a proud demeanor addressing the king. As you approach the throne, the king looks to you and the older man notices. Turning to see what the commotion is, the man turns with a furtive look and then smiles with mild surprise. He bows.

"Greetings, and welcome to our world, stranger. I am Hadrian, the Captain of Alaric's Guard. I have lived here with my family for most of my life and here I shall remain. My wife is Emesa, mother of my son and head cook for the castle. My son is Hector; he is a fine lad - he will be a great warrior and leader, once he has a bit more experience. My family and I are at your service."

Hadrian takes a step towards you and looks you over, "You seem unstained by battle, friend. Perhaps you'd like some training?"

"I am honored that you have an interest in my boy, but I'm sorry to say that he's not yet ready for that journey. He's a skilled fighter in sparring but he lacks the experience a true warrior needs. If I sent him with you now, his mother would never forgive me. Perhaps another of my men is better suited to your purpose?"

{If player questions Alaric} "You were chosen by Mother Theia but it is not my right to force anyone on this journey. When I called into the void, I let the fates decide who they would send. I can give you what provisions you need, but it is up to you to find others who would join you."

An earthquake shakes the castle and damages the training room. Hector uses the panic this brings the castle to challenge his father. The earthquake reveals a secret passage.

LKH - P11 - THE QUAKE