

Synopsis of THE ANCIENT WOUND

This brief synopsis and glossary should set you up to be able to read Mud on the Boots of Kings' beta version without too many issues. If you have any other queries, please ask me on Discord!

Alrik and **Lumi** live in Cinura, the frigid outpost of an oppressive empire. Alrik is a mailman, but longs to be a naturalist. Lumi, on the other hand, lives in a condemned basement with her brother, **Aurin**, and sneaks off to conspire with revolutionaries. They don't know each other, but they both know **Dr Melalhir**, a jovial scientist with a shady past who teaches Lumi illegal magic on the side.

Alrik witnesses **Baalgali**, a rich young foreigner, accidentally kill one of the city's leaders in a magical drug haze. He confronts him at the man's funeral, but Baalgali warns him off. A week later, Alrik is arrested for 'terrorism,' and it doesn't take him long to figure out that he's been framed. But before Alrik can spend a night in jail, he's snuck out by Dr Melalhir, who hands him a magic book and tells him to run away from Cinura as fast as he can .

Lumi, along with a small group of young rebels - **Girrin**, **Yuon**, **Ford** and **Malbry** - travels to Ollossos, a frigid magical wasteland, to gather artefacts of power and gain the upper hand in the rebellion. She is joined by her brother, who has snuck aboard, much to her dismay. Much like Alrik, she has been given a magical book by Dr Melalhir, and the two discover that they can communicate instantaneously between them - they're magically joined.

Kenneman, a spy, discusses Alrik and Lumi's fate with Dr Melalhir, his associate. When Melalhir says he'll tell Kenneman's secrets, Kenneman kills him in cold blood. He orders explosives, under the codename 'black glass' to be sent to Cinura and the imperial capital, Canalas City, after liaising with another spy, a man known only as **S**.

While Lumi travels south, Alrik travels north, and the pair of them become fast friends despite their differences, communicating via their books. However, Alrik notices a conspiracy brewing - the very ship he's on is carrying some of Kenneman's explosives, and believing the payload is treasure, the crew mutinies. Alrik barely escapes with his life, with the help of two allies, named **Jeang** and **Mawari**, and reaches shore, and makes the rest of the way to Canalas City on foot. He is saved by a bizarre insectile creature named **Ghii**, who has been following him for some time, and hints at extraterrestrial origins. After a short time, Ghii leaves.

Arriving in the capital, Alrik meets Baalgali and is initially hostile, but learns that he was a victim of the same conspiracy, and not in fact the one who framed him - Baalgali was purposefully drugged by a third party to sow chaos. The two grow closer, and along with a half-Skandrian* sex worker named **Prudence**, become some of Alrik's first ever friends - more than friends, in Baalgali's case. It doesn't last, though - Kenneman's bombs make it to Canalas City, and destroy half of parliament house, sending the city into chaos - when some

ruffians attempt to loot the place, Alrik shoots one dead, and this haunts him forevermore. Soon after, A violent revolt starts in Cinura, led by none other than Kenneman himself, and Alrik rushes home to get there before imperial forces do. He does this by breaking **Sarensa**, a giant pterosaur he's been spying on for months, from King's royal menagerie, and flying home.

In Ollossos, Lumi's group are harrowed by ancient magic, harsh cold, and monsters - notably the **Spectre**, a shapeless creature that appears to be trying to communicate with Lumi. They are also harrowed by each other, and at one point Lumi flies into a rage and leaves the tent they share, going and sleeping with Malbry. Eventually, they reach the ancient wound - the site of the apocalyptic event that gives Ollossos its terrible power. Here, reality disintegrates, and Lumi performs dangerous magic to save her friends from its collapse. One of Yuon's eyes transmutes into stone. In the process, she releases an army from a wrinkle in space-time, a group that cocooned itself from the event a millennium before - they're called the Lefaneie. They are led by a powerful general, **Olifiela**, who Lumi begins courting to gain her support in the rebellion. At length Olifiela agrees to help, in exchange for a home in the Cinura for her people, and they head north.

They make landfall only days before the imperial battalion arrives, and Alrik reluctantly joins Lumi's group, using his knowledge of the city to help protect it. The Lefaneie, Lumi, and Alrik make a cautious alliance with Kenneman, agreeing to scare the imperial battalion off with magic and numbers. The plan falls through and there is a slaughter. Alrik, finally fully committed to the cause, leads Lumi and her people through the city and ultimately to a bittersweet victory. There are rumours that somebody in the Lefaneie group betrayed their cause, but nobody knows who.

The invaders are repelled at great cost. Great swathes of the city are destroyed, and Lumi's brother, Aurin, is fatally shot by a mysterious rifleman who *teleports away* somehow. Kenneman flees. Lumi, Alrik, and everyone else in Cinura are left in the ruins wondering if the choices they made were the right ones.

In the epilogue, Lumi receives a letter in the mail from a group calling themselves Joyrey's Men, who claim that they can help her avenge her brother's death. Kenneman, meanwhile, with Jeang and Mawari revealed to be his associates, goes to strike a deal with the **Dorus**, a malevolent, magically powerful forest from which Melalhir's two books were created.

A Few Important Places and Things for Your Journey:

Continents

Tokarey - The continent that contains Roit, Dubcloch, and the majority of featured locations in *The Ancient Wound* and *Mud on the Boots of Kings*.

Huzun - A continent far to the northwest of Tokarey, containing the tropical lands of T'fonk and the powerful Eawari Empire, important in *Mud on the Boots of Kings*.

Akkand - A continent across the eastern sea from Tokarey, home to Kandrii and Skander-Sareen and dozens of other nations only lightly explored in these novels so far.

Countries and Cities

Cinura - An isolated city, formerly known as Southern Refuge, founded by refugees fleeing war two hundred years before the events of *The Ancient Wound*.

Roit - The country in which Cinura is located, right at its southernmost tip.

Dubcloch/The Canalian Empire/The Crown - The imperial powerhouse that dominates Tokarey, centred in its capital of Canalas City.

***Skander-Sareen** - The capital city of Kandrii, a nation across the sea from Canalas City and its former enemy, now ally/rival.

Inivan - An island nation near Canalas City known for industry and its pale, freckled people, including Jeang.

The Hetterfields - A region of Dubcloch inhabited by a dozen nomadic tribes of tall, strong, irreverent people known as the Hetterfolk.

Animals

Juksha: A hornless rhinoceros relative that takes the place of the horse in Einean life. Originates from Kandrii.

Mountbock: A large goat species used as mounts by the Hetterfolk and some other peoples.

Falar: Another word for pterosaur - can range from the size of a small bird to a small aeroplane.

Thirn: A general term for a feathered dinosaur, as distinguished from a bird by a bony tail and wing claws. Most large thirns have unfortunately gone extinct, but some still cling on in isolated areas.

Magical Terms

Biwid - A plant with inherent magical properties.

Toxaument/Tox - A concentrated tincture of biwids, consumed by a human or incorporated into a machine in order to produce specific magical effects.

Quodrine: The unusual extra-spatial dimension accessed in order to enact magic.