

SAGA OF THE CRYSTAL BEARERS
THE TIME OF THE JUDGES



A FOREST OF BLADES AND CRYSTALS
EDWARD ABLEMAN



Saga of the Crystal Bearers
Time of the Judges
A Forest of Blades and
Crystals

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Time of the Judges
Return To Myth'gar

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Prologue: Setting the Game Board

Aeacus stood over the game board, resting on a table in the chamber of games. His brothers, Minos, and Rhadaman stood to either side of him, looking at the game board as well. This was it then. Their long journey was to end here, with a jade and gold game board.

They had been summoned to Eliysum by their father. Zeus had locked the way to Eliysum long ago and refused visitors, but when they arrived from Hades the path was opened to them. As they entered the hall of Zeus two others were leaving.

One was tall and looked much like Zeus himself, but was broader and more muscled. His white-hair and beard were also kept in a longer fashion than Zeus was known for. He was dressed in long gray robes and had a crystal xiphos hung from his hip.

The other was a man of diminutive stature. Bright red hair and a beard sticking out in all directions as if he had just woken up. He smelled of tobacco, alcohol and wore red leather armor with a matching headband.

As the two groups passed, the large white-haired man spoke. "Burnheart, wait here for these three, they will need your help getting to the Forest of Eternity. When that is done you will have completed your end of the bargain. I part ways with you as a friend and hope we will cross paths under better circumstances when next we meet." He had a pleasant mid-range voice.

"Ooh aye, I'll be sticking around for these three, but you already be knowing when we will meet again." As the little man spoke he pulled out a small white tube from a box he held. Then he lit the end of it and began smoking it. As the tall man began to walk away from the little man, Burnheart, cleared his throat. "Oh and Widuz Gar, good hunting." He looked at the three brothers. "Well go on, get! Daddy is waiting on his little men."

They had entered Zeus' Hall then. Hera was there with him and did not seem happy to see them. Zeus' reaction to them was as always, indifferent. Zeus then informed them that they needed to find a way into a realm referred to as The Myth Wood. He needed them to Judge the realm. Judge its history, its people, its very essence. For he had just been informed by his brother, Widuz Gar, that the answer to an ancient mystery was hidden in the Myth Wood.

Zeus was not clear on what sealed the realm from others but knew that it had been sealed for quite some time, and even Realm Rovers were prevented from entering. He believed the best course of action was to travel to the Forest of Eternity. There one could find a guide to almost anywhere.

So they had left, and Burnheart, a Realms Rover, had taken them to the Forest of Eternity. The trip there was not quick or straight forward, but they made it safely. Once in the forest Burnheart took them to a Pub. At least that is what he called it, to the brothers it resembles a Library more than anything. Burnheart parted ways with them there.

It was in this odd Pub/Library that the Barkeep/Librarian introduced them to Vala and Nobu. Two robed and hooded individuals that styled themselves as guides to anywhere, and they claimed that they knew how to enter the Myth Wood. The brothers let them be their guides.

They traveled to the heart of Yggdrasil and found the chamber of games. The entire chamber was of one shade or another of hardwood. Furnished with a wooden table with enough chairs for four, and a jade and gold game board setting on the table.

Aeacus looked to Nobu. "What do we do now?" He was at a loss. It looked like nothing special to him. Sure it was of exquisite craftsmanship, and a one of a kind piece, but still just a game board.

“Nobu thinks it would be good if judgy men each be taking seat. Then place their judgy hands on the board. The board is *of* the Myth Wood, so it can act as a gate *to* the Myth Wood.” The strange, hooded man then turned to the other guide. “Is that not right Vala?” He would always ask her to validate something he knew was right. Like he was pointing out how smart he was. He also spoke in the third person a great deal of the time. Aeacus found it annoying.

“Yes wise Nobu, you are correct again. My books tell me that if the three touch the game board they will find themselves in the Myth Wood.” Vala was always referring to her books, yet Aeacus had never seen her read one.

“What say you brothers?” Aeacus looked first to the right where Minos stood. Minos’ response was to place his hands on the board. Then Aeacus turned to his left where Rhadaman stood. Rhadaman too answered by placing his hands on the game board.

“Good, now call upon your powers of Judgment that Zeus gave to you.” As Vala gave the direction each of the three found themselves doing just that. One moment they were in the chamber of games, the next they were gone.

* * * * *

“Well Vala, that went better than expected.” Nobu looked at the game board with pride.

“Yes it did. We should not dither though. They have made themselves part of the realm. This will create a gate we can use to venture into this sealed off realm, but the gate will not stay open for long and its presence may summon the Rovers, or worse.” She spoke matter-of-factly. “This may be our only chance to discover the secrets of this Realm and why so many powerful beings fear it.” This time her voice was filled with excitement.

“And Vala, our only chance to find out where or what happened to our brother. You didn’t forget about him already did you.” His voice was nasally and condescending.

“Oh never, wise Nobu. We must find out where our compatriot has gotten himself off to.” Her voice was not nasal, but just as condescending.

They took each other's hands and focused on the game board, making sure to not touch it. A green glow surrounded both of them, and then they were gone.

* * * * *

Deep in the forest of Myth'gar is a longhouse. No trails made by man or animal lead to it. Even if a human were to chance upon it, they would mistake it for a fallen tree. Unless, of course, they chanced by it in the winter. The curl of blue smoke rising from what looks like a broken branch may give it away.

The longhouse is Jor'Gufihtarhala. Hall of the Gnome leaders. It is owned by none and can only be entered if one is no taller than six inches. It is here that once a year the leaders of the Six major tribes of Gnomes gather to discuss and plan the year ahead. Inside the hall is a six-sided table, so all may look at each other, none above the other but all with their place.

At this table sits Sonnet Wordsworth, Rondel Quillswielder, Mike Mouserider, Chisel Veinfinder, Traveler Pathmaker and Melody Songsinger. None look happy. Several look as if they are dealing with indigestion. They all drank a potion that shrinks them to their current size. It has been more than a thousand years since the gnomes of Myth'gar have naturally been so short.

Sonnet clears her throat. “I call the one thousand four hundred and fifty second meeting of the Gnomen leadership to order.” Her words are very clear and precise. “I will forgo discussion on other topics at this time, as the arrival and demands of these so-called “guides” is

of utmost importance. All agree?" She pauses and five nods of agreement are given. "Traveler, would you be so kind as to list the demands?"

"Of course," a deep voice issues from the lean gnome across from Sonnet. "1. They wish for large amounts of mythrainum crystals, 2. They wish delivery of said crystals to towns on the other side of the gates to Valhalla and Helheim respectively. 3. They would like instructions on forging mythrainum into weapons to accompany these shipments. 4. And finally they wish us to aid the soon to arrive Crystal Bearers when they place gnome statues on stumps or miniature farm dioramas placed throughout the Wood." With his last words spoken, the entire hall echoed with silence.

"These two, Vala and Nobu." Rondel sliced into the silence. "While they seem harmless enough, they have proven they can operate the gates. They also seem to know far more than what is healthy for us. Not to mention they seem to have the blessings of the Six." Rondel, with his slightly nasal tenor, spoke quickly and to the point.

"As I understand it", Mike drawled slowly. "These 'Crystal Bearers' will be much like the Einherjar of old. We will not see them, and they will not be able to harm us. It seems easiest to just help these 'Guides' out."

They all took a minute and mulled Mike's words over. "While I don't disagree with Mike." Chisel's sharp, clear voice seemed to focus the listeners. "I feel it important to point out two things. First, both Nobu and Vala seem to be able to interact with the spirit population of Myth'en. Second, the Six have been quieter than normal since their arrival. These facts concern me and make me suspicious of the 'Guides'."

"Tis true that we have not all the facts, and these two may prove to be liars in fact. Yet I counsel patience and perceived acquiescence. For we will prevail with fortitude, patience, and deception." Melody's sing-song voice floated through the room with rhyme and verse. All the other leaders nodded in assent.

"Then, we are agreed. We will do as they ask for now, but be continuously watchful." Sonnet's precise words fell on the gathering. Once again, they all agreed. "Then I call this meeting adjourned."

Chapter One: A Caravan from Val'Haven

Steven found himself at the head of a caravan, on a wooded trail right outside a sort of wooden gateway. His memories were mostly gone. While he remembered his name, and that it was his caravan, that was about it. A quick search of his pockets revealed a book. It was titled "Myth'gar Journal". An equally quick thumbing through of the journal told him his goal was to get the caravan to an outpost site in the west, and then to find his way to the Gate to D'Eirstad.

When he looked behind at the people in his caravan, he counted eight. Six men and two women. Two of the men looked young, but all looked capable. Steven thought he should maybe get to know some of them, but with his lack of memories he was not sure how to do this. So he led the caravan further down the trail.

It was not long before they happened upon a bespectacled woman who had a hut just off the road. "Greetings Crystal Bearers, welcome to Myth'gar, I am Vala your guide." At her words Steven noticed that all the members of his caravan except himself had crystals around their necks. Different colored crystals but all cut the same. "Here now, step up one at a time. I will need to record your names and get you some weapons. Myth'gar is not a safe place at the best of

times, and now is not the best of times. Don't worry that you have amnesia, or that you look different than you may remember. Just make up a name for my book and all will be well"

It was in this way, listening in, that Steven learned the names of each of his traveling companions. There was Knute Tzak the apprentice smith. He had in his possession a large hammer that looked quite a bit like an anvil, with the dubious moniker of being a hammer of unmaking. Mike was one of the two younger men. He had come with a large brass colored hammer, of which bore strange runes on it. Then there was Azrael, a strong, energetic man who had come with a rapier already in his possession. Azmar was a quiet man with fierce eyes. Vala gave him a xiphos. Ben was the other young man of the group. He too was given a xiphos by Vala. Athorryn was one of the women in the group, she came armed with a rapier. Hrafngelir with his long beard and pipe conveyed an aura of wisdom; he received a xiphos from Vala. Finally there was Ciara the archer. She had her own bow, but did take a dagger from Vala.

"Now that we have you all recorded, let me give Steven here some directions to the nearest outpost." A loud horn could be heard blasting throughout the wood. "Well, it was bound to happen eventually. That warns us that monsters are about. Be on your guard." Vala walked up to Steven and gave him directions. Afterwards, he would not be able to repeat them but he knew where he was going.

Steven kept to the directions he had been given. The hike to the outpost site was long but mostly uneventful. They did run into two young men with crystals on. One was named Zander, the other Billy. Zander had a rapier with a red dragon on the guard. While Billy carried a xiphos. Steven welcomed them into the caravan.

On the way to the site they also passed by the sealed ruins of, what the sign called, Fen'Arwen. No entrance was visible and no one felt like looking too hard, so the caravan continued on. It was not much after they passed Fen'Arwen that they entered an open field by a lake. At the far end of the field was the remains of an old forge, a couple of run-down huts, and a canopied merchant's stall.

At the canopy, waiting for them was Vala. "Well that took you all long enough. No matter, welcome to your outpost. Knute, you will want to get the forge up and running. You will need the help of the gnomes for that. Someone will need to head to the Graveyard of Einherjar's rest. There you can purchase a ghost from The Darkness to run the Gnome Emporium. With that open you can purchase gnome statues to leave at stumps so the gnomes will know to get you coal. You will need that to get the forge going." Her words kept coming about what they should do next, faster and faster. She finally stopped, and looked at all the blank stares she was getting. "Ok let me start over.... First things first. Look in the wagon for a shield."

As Azrael was searching the wagon, a band of goblins appeared on a trail no one had noticed on the north edge of the field. They came in fast with murder in their eyes. Zander, Billy, Ben, and Mike immediately took flight. That left Azrael, Knute, Azmar, Athorryn, Hrafngelir and Ciara to fight the horde. The defenders led by Azrael put themselves between the monsters and the wagon.

Once the battle was fully engaged Zander's group returned. Stealthily coming upon the monsters from behind. In this way the four were able to vanquish the monsters with no real injuries to the caravan group. In only a few seconds the bodies of the monsters seemed to vanish. Small pouches were left behind on the ground where the monsters had fallen. The pouches contained some coins, and a scale or tooth from the respective monster as well as a green stones with different runes engraved on them.

Azrael returned to looking through the wagon. He pulled from the wagon a white shield with a hexagonal design on it. Two red stripes cut across the shield in diagonal lines. "Is this what you're talking about?"

"Yes that is it. Very good, now put it on the Outpost shield stand. Once you do you will be able to make improvements to the outpost. Oh also you will need to name a leader for your outpost, as well as name it."

Azrael placed the shield. After much discussion they all agreed that Hrafngirr's suggestion was the best for a name. Fizbandurr, there was much discussion on the number of "R"s at the end. After more discussion it was agreed Azrael would be the leader.

Chapter Two: A Caravan from D'Eirstad

Thandoryn found himself at the head of a caravan, on a wooded trail right outside a sort of wooden gateway. His memories were mostly gone. While he remembered his name, and that it was his caravan. That was about it. A quick search of his pockets revealed a book. It was titled "Myth'gar Journal". An equally quick thumbing through of the journal told him his goal was to get the caravan to an outpost site in the east, and then to find his way to the Gate to Val'Haven.

Looking up from his journal he saw five men materialize around his wagon. They all had lost looks on their faces. He took note that, around their necks, they all had crystals of different colors but cut the same way. He also noticed he did not have one. He looked down the trail from the gate. He could see a makeshift lean-to with an older looking man standing next to it.

The older man was yelling something, but Thandoryn could not quite make it out. The older man began walking their way. When he was almost right up to them, he stopped. "Dear me, Nobu forgot all about his glasses." The man reached into a messenger bag he had slung over one shoulder. He pulled out a pair of gold wire rim glasses. It took him a minute to get them in place, but once he did a large smile stretched across his face. "There, Nobu has glasses on, now Crystal Bearers can see him. Greetings Crystal Bearers, and Steven too. This is Myth'gar and I am your guide, Nobu." He paused waiting for some sort of response. They all just looked at him blankly. "Hmm, let Nobu check his book."

The strange man rummaged around in his bag again. He pulled out a book and began reading. This went on for some time. Thandoryn looked at the title of the book "**How to be More Efficient: Undated Quarterly Personal Planner Diary and Goals Organizer Journal with quotes, To Boost Productivity**". As his eyes lifted from reading the cover, they met the gaze of Nobu through the wire rim glasses. "It is rude to read other people's books while they are reading them, Steven." He looked perturbedly at Thandoryn, then cleared his throat. "Anyway, let's go to my place and write everyone's name in my ledger there. Don't worry if it is your real name or not, it will be once I write it down." He then headed over to his lean-to.

Thandoryn shared glances with the other men. But with nothing else to do they followed Nobu. The only furnishings inside the lean-to was a table. On the table were books, a statue of a man in blue robes holding a crystal above his head, and a statue of a wingless dragon. Nobu walked up to the table and pulled a brown leather ledger from the pile of books. "Here now, tell me your names and any weapons or fighting like stuff you want, but not you Steven, you get the caravan and that's it."

The five men that had materialized around Thandoryn's wagon got in a line and gave Nobu names. First was Tyrrin, he fancied himself a magic user, but he had a dagger as well. Then H'Jarmen, he said he was a smith's apprentice, but Nobu gave him a gladius from a rack of

weapons that was outside the lean-to hidden in the bushes. Orellius was next, he had his own xiphos. Leo, a tall, broad warrior type, asked for a sword. Nobu grabbed a gladius from the rack for him. The last of the five was Kamek, a young-looking man, he too was a magic user, he had come with a staff of magic throwing.

With all the names in the ledger, Nobu seemed very happy with himself. Then a horn could be heard blaring throughout the wood. “Oh. Yes that would mean monsters are about, good luck with that.” Nobu started shoohing everyone out. “If only Steven had been quicker about getting you all here, oh well can’t be helped now. Nobu will give Steven direction to the outpost site, then we can get started.”

Thandoryn had had enough, “Why do you keep calling me Steven?” he asked.

“Steven, you are not very bright are you? Nobu calls you that because that is your name.” Nobu sounded exasperated with the question.

“No, my name is Thandoryn. I do not remember much, but *that* I do.” Thandoryn sounded just as exasperated.

“No, it says right in my ledger that Steven will be the caravan driver...” Nobu reached into his bag and pulled out another book. This one titled “**How to make People Like You: Learn to improve Charisma, Build Rapport, Win Friends, and Connect Effortlessly**”. He only read for a short time then looked up at Thandoryn with a deep sigh. “Fine you are Thandoryn. Now here are the directions to the outpost site.” Thandoryn heard what Nobu said but would never be able to repeat it. Still, he knew where to go.

When Nobu was done giving directions he turned to the other five. “Now follow Steven and watch out for the monsters.” Nobu turned away then, taking off his glasses yet still talking out loud to himself. “Now Nobu will take off his glasses so they cannot see him. Then he will walk ahead of them to the outpost. This will surprise and amaze them.” He wandered off down the trail in the opposite direction he had given Thandoryn fully visible to everyone.

No sooner had Nobu gotten out of sight and the caravan started moving when a group of goblins attacked. Thandoryn, weaponless and depending on the others to protect him, decided a fast retreat was the best course of action. When he had gotten far enough away that he could not hear the sounds of battle he stopped to catch his breath. Next to him breathing just as hard was Orellius.

“Why did you run?” Thandoryn asked.

“Did you not notice the goblins trying to kill us, of course you did. You ran too.” Orellius stated plainly.

“Yes, but you have a sword.” Thandoryn stated the obvious.

“Yes, and I have legs too. Guess which one I’m better with.” Orellius deadpanned.

Thandoryn had no quick reply to this. He looked around. “Well the good news is the outpost site is just ahead.” Thandoryn led them off the main road. Down a winding trail and into a cleared area in the forest. In the clearing was an old forge, a run-down hut, an ancient cream colored building, and a canopied merchant’s stall. Waiting for them at the stall was Nobu.

“Greetings Orellius, Steven.” Nobu looked around them and the wagon. “The rest of the group?” He asked blandly.

“I fear they reached an untimely end at the blades of a group of goblins.” Orellius replied.

“No problem, they will be back up and at it in no time. You might have to run back to the gate and show them the way here. In the meantime, there should be a shield in your wagon.” Nobu stated.

Orellius looked through the wagon and pulled out a white shield. It had a compass like design with three skulls in the center. Two blue stripes ran parallel across the shield. He held the shield up for Nobu's attention.

"Yes, that is the one. Good, place it in the outpost's shield stand. Then name the outpost and claim leadership." Nobu seemed very intent on the order of things.

Orellius walked over to the stand, placed the shield. He looked around the forest hoping for inspiration. "Brighten Creek, shall be the name."

Chapter Three: Fizbandurr

Steven had been standing around for quite some time. So much was going on that the others had mostly forgotten about him. This gave him a chance to observe the Crystal Bearers of Fizbandurr. How they worked hard to establish their outpost, and to learn about this strange forest they found themselves in. Their lack of memories, because it was shared by all, was no major impairment. It was just one more thing that brought them together. Still basic needs were the primary focus.

Vala had explained that though they had a small amount of food in the wagon, any more food they needed would have to be gathered from "Gnome Farms". Those were in fact just dioramas of farms placed throughout the wood. You had to go to a place called the Gnome Emporium to purchase a gnome statue.

To open that up they had to go to a place called Einherjar's Rest. It was a large graveyard in the center of Myth'gar. There in a chapel looking structure was a strange man going by the name of The Darkness. For a bag of food, he would give you a wandering soul. Well in fact he would give you a glowing orb, but shortly after getting it a person would materialize with their hand on the orb. As long as they held it they had physical form. This person could then be installed in the Gnome Emporium and sell you gnome statues. If one of the Crystal Bearers tried to just go to the emporium to get a statue, they died.

Once you had a statue you placed it at one of the farms and in some little time food would show up there. The same was true for coal or wood only you needed to put the statue at a stump in the wood with an ax in it. Up until now the coin needed for the statues was from the monsters that were killed.

So many monsters, every time you turned around a group of them showed up. Which brought up the other interesting bit. If you got killed in combat you would come back to life as long as you had a piece of what Vala called "refined mythrainum" on you. She sold it and it seemed to work. She said she would only sell four pieces to any one person. So if you died, that was not necessarily the end. However, what to do if you get hurt in combat but not killed?

Well, Vala explained that you could get a wandering soul from the Darkness and have that person open a shop at the outpost. She said a tavern (potion shop), a church, or a bank could be opened in this way, but each also had other requirements. Like placing a candle at each of the Shrines throughout the wood to open the church. Or collecting enough flowers for the potion shop. Both the church and the potion shop could heal injuries.

There was also the matter of the forge. Knute had noted that it was a Rune Forge. Vala had then explained that it was one of three such forges in Myth'gar. One here, one at the other outpost site, and one sealed in a place called Champion's Fall. She then explains that to light the forge you would need coal, but also a burning ember from the endless flame that burned in Einherjar's Rest.

There was also some business about Knute wanting to translate a smithing technique he found. Vala told him he would need a Gnome smith statue and a lit Rune Forge for this. While Knute was happy to help with anything. He felt he could best serve the outpost by getting the forge up and running and learning a new technique.

If all this was not enough. Vala also, for a price, would let you pick a quest from the chaos box. These were random quests that Vala assured everyone would benefit people. The sticking point being once a quest was picked you had to try and finish it, no matter what it was.

It was at this time that Steven remembered that he was tasked with finding the gate to D'Eirstad and delivering the rest of what was in his wagon. As it turned out, that was several casks of mead. So he asked Azrael for some caravan guards.

Azrael tasked Zander, Mike, Billy, and Ben with gathering resources for the shop. He tasked Azmar and Knute and the newest arrival, Ruis, with the defense of Fizbandurr. Athorryn, Hrafngerr, Ciara and himself would guard the caravan to D'Eirstad.

Steven witnessed the opening of a church, a tavern called Tarq's Traveling Potion Shop, thanks to Ben, Ciara, Hrafngerr, Azmar, and Ruis. He saw the lighting of Knute's forge with the help of Ben getting a burning ember. He was also able to establish a trade route from the Val'Haven gate to Fizbandurr to the D'Eirstad gate with the aid of Azrael, Ciara, and Hrafngerr. Knute, Azrael, Zander, Mike, and Billy open the Gnome Emporium.

They had made contact with the other outpost, Brighten Creek, and had mutual protection pacts in place with them against the monsters. The outpost was coming along nicely.

Chapter Four: Monsters and Men

Visuvius found himself on a forest trail right outside a sort of wooden gateway. His memories were misty. Like a dream, soon to be gone. Before he forgot the dream that was his memories he saw in his mind's eye; stone wings, the thrill of hunting humans, a realm of darkness, a gold fist hammer. Older memories too, so confusing.

He blinked and most of the memories were gone. He remembered his name, that was it. He blinked again, there were others around him. He knew their names but not their faces. He looked to his left to see Virtuous and Drake, two cunning fighters. For just a moment he saw two goblins instead of the men he knew Virtuous and Drake to be. Then he looked to his right to see Syph and Draelich, another pair of warriors. Again, when he blinked, he thought they were goblins for a moment. The only woman in the group Cheff was standing at the back of the group. When Visuvius blinked while looking at her he saw a winged gargoyle looking back at him. The worst part was the looks they gave him when they blinked. He was not sure what they saw but it frightened them.

"Greetings adventures, welcome to Myth'gar, I am Nobu, your guide." A short older man with gray hair, and gold rimmed spectacles on, now stood in front of him. "You are looking lost, and Nobu hates to see people lost. Come to my little stand over here and I'll write your names in my ledger. We will get you all set up and I think send you to Brighten Creek, they are short on manpower." The short man spoke in a congenial way, and took Visuvius' arm and led him to a lean-to just off the road.

Orellius stood in the center of Brighton Creek, mostly just directing traffic. The rest of the caravan crew had returned from the dead just as Nobu had said they would. Nobu then

explained all the various things they needed to do, to get their outpost up and running. The problem was they had so much to do, and not a lot of people to do it with. Couple that with the monster raids and you had complete chaos.

A group of five men and one woman came up the path then and entered Brighton Creek. “We were told to speak with Orellius!” The large leader of the group boomed. They were all armed and looked like warriors who had seen a lot of fighting. Their eyes constantly scanning the trails and their weapons always at the ready.

“I am Orellius,” Orellius said as he walked towards the group. “Have you been sent to join our outpost?”

The group looked Brighton Creek over, and could not hide their underwhelmed expressions from Orellius. “Yes, a strange older fellow wrote our names in a ledger and then sent us to you.” The leader of the group said.

“Good, welcome aboard. Most everyone else is off protecting the caravan on its route to Val’Haven so we can get some extra dirks. We need four of you to go and purchase some gnome statues from the gnome hut to put on stumps and farm dioramas.” Orellius spoke in all seriousness. However, the group looked at him as if he had lost his mind.

“Kamek here,” Orellius pointed to the only other person currently in Brighton Creek. “will lead the group. Kamek pick three of these six and head to the Gnome hut.” He picked Virtuous, Drake and Cheff. They headed out in short order.

“What should we do?” Visuvius asked, indicating himself Syph, and Draelich.

“We have a few extra bags of food. Take one to the Darkness in Einherjar’s Rest. He will get you a merchant spirit we can use to run a potion shop or a church. But I should not send you three. The monsters have been very aggressive, and we have been losing people if we don’t send them in groups of at least four.” Orellius looked worried

A strange look came over Visuvius face, he blinked several times then looked Orellius straight in the eyes. “I do not believe you will see any monsters while I and my group are here.”

Orellius keeping his eyes locked on Visuvius’ spoke “Then go, and good luck. I feel that we do not have a great deal of time left to set up the outpost.”

Both groups returned completing their quests as well as the caravan group. A debate over what to do next ensued. Some wished to try the random quests Nobu had spoken of. Others felt they needed to return to the stumps and farms to check if resources had arrived. If they did not get there fast enough the people from the other outpost could nab their resources out from under them. Finally, there was the quest Syph wanted.

“I passed by this old ruin. I looked through a window and saw a rune forge, as well as a sword in there. The way in is barred by some odd energy force. A sign says four people must give up a life to open the way. We all know we will come back if we die, so I say let’s do it.” Syph said it so sincerely, it was almost as if he was not asking them each to kill themselves.

To Orellius’ surprise four others agreed to go with Syph. Vesuvius, H’Jarmen, Drake and Leo. “Fair enough, it is your funeral, off you go. Good luck.”

Syph’s group arrived at the ruins with little incident. The old stone walls had seen better days. You could still make out where shields had hung from the walls. Constant flooding in this part of the Wood had weakened the mortar and rotted any wood bits. Still, you could tell at one point it had been a proud Hold. The drawbridge was opened and looked to be on its last leg.

Still when the group tried to cross it an invisible force held them back.

“Greeting’s adventurers, welcome to Myth’gar, I am Nobu, your guide.... Oh it is you guys again.” The old man with the spectacles looked around him as if in surprise that he was not somewhere else. “Oh I see.” While saying this he took off his glasses and wiped them with a cloth he pulled from a messenger bag. He then put the glasses back on. “Sorry for disappearing on you like that, these are not that easy to see through. Anyway, so you want into Champion’s Fall. Nobu is very proud of your courage. Did you know that courage and stupidity are very close to the same thing,” He looked at each in turn to gauge a reaction. When he got nothing of note he continued. “I will need four volunteers to feed their souls to the bearer.... Wait no that’s not right, I mean give up a life to remove the bearer. Yes, that is it.” He stepped back and waited.

The four looked to Syph. “Right like the old man said, you four step up.” Syph said while stepping back from the four.

“Wait, this was your idea....” Leo was going to say more but Nobu interrupted.

“Good enough, these four will do.” Pain shot through all four. It was like fire burning them from the inside out. In a few minutes only burnt husks were left on the ground. Then as a strong wind blew through the wood, the husks broke up into black dust that traveled through the wood. When nothing was left of the four Nobu turned to Syph.

“Champion’s Fall is now open for business. You can bring a spirit worker here to run the place. Also, the sword is yours, and a page from the book of Anjmor De’Knotts. Good job by all.” He turned then and started off down the trail.

“Wait, that was it? Will they come back?” Syph’s questions came out in a rush.

“What were you expecting? You just wanted into the place. As to if they will be back, that depends on if they have any refined mythrainum to pay Eir with. Might take them a bit longer though. They must travel through Myth’ndher. That is the place of the Blackheart. Still, they should make it back... I think.”

Chapter Five: Behind the Curtain

“Well, Vala, I think that went well.” Nobu was standing in the center of Einherjar’s Rest, drinking from a tankard of mead. A few minutes before, a strange horn had sounded throughout Myth’gar. Then just like that all the Crystal Bearers and monsters vanished. The spirits began cleaning the wood as best they could. Gnomes did the rest.

“We almost forgot the chronospheres. I must have forgotten to write it down in my journal.” Vala was paging through a journal as they spoke, Nobu was sure it was not the one for “Things to do in Myth’gar before Skyld 15th”. Still, it was fun to watch her try to read, drink mead and talk at the same time.

“Almost is the key word. We let them know and they got right to it. We didn’t want them to actually set them all anyhow. You know, come to think on it, would we even want them to, in the first place? I don’t recall coming up with the idea for the chronospheres.” Nobu seems genuinely confused.

“It was Darkness’s idea. He is always so helpful with fun little things to kill off the Crystal Bearers. Remember when we first met him, and he gave us the idea of monsters. Who knew with souls from D’Eirstad and mortal remains here in Myth’gar you could make such fun little killing machines?” Vala said all this while still paging through her journal.

“Yes, he is very helpful. So helpful in fact I find myself suspicious of him. Why help us? I know we had run into a bit of a bind there. Getting to this realm and then having no way to unravel its history and mysteries. Then this kindly spirit man who steps out of a black portal, like

I don't know where that leads, tells us all the memories of this realm are trapped in crystals." Nobu took another drink from his tankard.

Vala turned another page and then started speaking where Nobu left off. "Once we knew that information, it was not hard for us to realize we would need mortals to put on the crystals so we could pull the memories out of the crystals through them. But who would have guessed we needed to attune the crystals to the mortals through shared experiences?"

"Yes, far more work than I thought this would be. Still, I must admit it is fun watching them run around doing things." Nobu put the empty tankard down.

"By things, you mean getting killed? Because that is my favorite part. They die, then come back. That has got to be traumatic. I wonder how many times a soul can die before it is too much for it?" Vala closed her book and looked to where Nobu was looking.

Three almost identical transparent men stood next to some headstones in Einherjar's Rest. They looked to be tall men with long white beards. Each wore robes and a pointed hat. One had blue robes, one red, and the last green. They each held a glowing crystal in their hands.

"Vala, Nobu, report!" The voice seemed to come from the one in blue, but their mouths did not move.

"Oh great Aeacus, all goes to plan, your judgyness." Nobu bowed as he spoke.

"Really? Because as I remember we were to judge this realm and then be gone. Instead, we find ourselves stuck here with new forms and no way to find the histories and mysteries of this realm without your aid. That was not our plan!" Aeacus' voice was dripping with sarcasm and menace.

"Yes, we had no idea touching the game board would do that to you.... So very, very sorry, still now you are at least partially here. We did guide you fairly. Bad luck you being stuck in Myth'en and all the knowledge being stuck here in Myth'gar. But lucky for you that Nobu and I are here to help." Vala spoke but also walked close to the apparition and seemed to be studying them. "By the way how are things going with those odd Six Higher Power fellows?"

"They are no help at all. Our presence seems to be weakening them in some way, and they refuse to tell us anything. Their "Saints" are just as bad. Saint Mephisto tried to kill us. He failed of course. Still, open hostilities towards us are not helpful." This voice came from the one in red, Minos, Vala thought.

"How is your experiment on the mortals going? Any results?" This was from the one in green, Rhadaman.

"We have barely gotten started. The information given us by this Darkness fellow has been very helpful though. It seems if the Crystal Bearers have similar experiences as the memories in the crystals, then they are more likely to synchronize with the crystals and gain the memories." Nobu answered.

"What sort of similar experiences can you present them with?" Minos asked.

"So far fighting for survival and building a communal living space." Vala responded.

"What will you give them next?" Minos seemed intrigued.

"Well again, the Darkness fellow has given us these Black skull tokens to place around the Wood. He claims it will sow betrayal. He claims there was a great deal of that in the past." Nobu flipped a black token into the air. "Also, we thought of increasing the power the Monsters have. Make survival even harder."

"Very well, continue with your plan. We will try to communicate with the Six. You should also get more information about the past from this Darkness character. He seems to know a lot and likes to share." As Aeacus spoke the three began to vanish.

Once the three were gone Nobu picked his tankard back up. He looked around the Wood and noticed the Gnomes and spirits had pretty much cleaned everything up. All he had to do now was prepare for the next “event”. It was good that time flows differently between the three realms: The Myth Wood, Valhalla, and Helheim. He and Vala had plenty of time to work.

“Nobu?” Nobu stopped and turned to Vala. “You know who the Darkness is, right?”

“Yes wise Vala, Nobu knows. Still, he is useful. He was active in the Wood back then.” Nobu started towards his stand.

“But Nobu, he is trying to use us for his own end. He is trying to manipulate us. I do not like those who try to manipulate us. I enjoy manipulating others far, far more.” Vala was almost speaking to herself so when Nobu replied she was startled a bit.

“They all try to manipulate us. If they could only see behind the curtain and realize who they were actually dealing with...”

Chapter Six: Myth'en

The three judges brought their full consciousness back to Myth'en. For all intents and purposes, it appeared as if they were still in Einherjar's Rest. The only difference was that, on occasion, where the headstones were, buildings would be instead. A blacksmith's shop, a potion shop, a bank, as well as a fort, all materialized then dissipated again. The only constant was the raised square under the oak, and the chapel.

The three found they could speak in each other's, as well as in the two guide's, minds now. They had no real need for speech. Yet relying on this too much made it difficult when it came time to speak with the other inhabitants of Myth'en. Those being a myriad of spirits, the six Saints, and the Six Higher Powers.

Maybe we should split up? Minos thought.

Not a bad idea. I believe there is no distance in Myth'en we cannot communicate over. Rhadaman thought back.

Fine. I will try the Monarch again. Minos, see if you can find the Recarnite, and Rhadaman try the Anarch. Aeacus' thought galvanized the decision.

In the higher plane of the Myth Wood, Myth'en, there is a secluded tree. It appears to be of the willow variety, but who can be sure in a plane of thought and spirit energy. By this tree is a bench of wood and stone. Often if you look you will find the Recarnite seating there. Never far from him is Saint Rokai. Appearing in green tunic and polished silver pauldron.

Walking up the winding trail to the secluded tree, Minos appears as a tall white-haired man. With a long white beard and wearing green robes. Saint Rokai barred his path as he neared the tree.

“State your business.” Saint Rokai intoned.

“I come... to have an audience?... with the Recarnit.” Minos spoke as if speech was a new concept to him. Clipped and searching for words.

“He is meditating right now, if you have a concern you may voice it to me.” Saint Rokai was rooted firmly in place.

“We, my brothers, and I, grow frustrated with your noncompliance. We have stated what we wish. We need to know the history of the Myth Wood. All of it. So we may judge this realm and return to our father.” Minos found speech easier as he grew angry.

Saint Rokai addressed Minos “The Six Higher Powers are frustrated by your appearance. You were not invited into the realm. No one was. You have forced your way in, and brought mortals into the realm as well. The Gates were sealed by the....”

“Enough Rokai. Say no more to this being.” The Recarnite stood and turned to Minos. “You act and speak as if the Six need care about your wants.” His eyes bored into Minos’. “Be gone from here.”

Minos found himself back in the strange Einherjar’s Rest.

In the higher plane of the Myth Wood, Myth’en, there is a black stone fortress. It appears ancient and menacing. To those who know the history of the realm it very much looks like Shadow’s Hold, the first fortress of the Myth Wood. In the great hall of this Hold is a blackwood throne with blue runes inscribed on it. Next to the throne is a chained black chest. Often if you look, you will find the Monarch seated on the throne with his feet propped up on the chest. Never far from him is Saint Vandergrah. Appearing as a tall, thin, bald man. In his hands is one of the three Hammers of Unmaking.

Walking through the ancient fortress to the black throne, Aeacus appears as a tall white-haired man. With a long white beard and wearing blue robes. Saint Vandergrah barred his path as he neared the throne.

“State your business.” Saint Vandergrah intoned.

“The same as it was last time. My brothers and I are here to judge this realm. First, we must know all of its history, and secrets. Once that knowledge is ours, we will judge the realm fairly and be gone. Our father waits for our verdict.” Aeacus was tired of repeating himself. Every time he dealt with these Six it was the same.

“We did not ask you to judge us. In fact, we do not want your judgment.” Saint Vandergrah’s words were spoken calmly but the menace in them could not be missed.

“Our father, Zeus, ordered us. There is no power higher than him.” Aeacus could hear the child-like petulance in his own voice but did not care. This backwater realm would fall in line or else.

Saint Vandergrah smiled, yet his words were just as menacing. “I understand your problem now. You misunderstand where you are. This is not a realm of chaos, or order. It is not even a realm of balance, though it tries to be close to that. This, the Myth Wood, the realm according to Lady....”

“Enough.” The Monarch spoke and what he spoke became law. “Vandergrah, give him none of our secrets. He can learn about them the old fashion way, through experience.”

The Monarch walked from the throne to stand before Aeacus. “Before this conversation I had never heard of your father. But the realm remembers him. A bit differently than I think you do however.” The Monarch paused and locked eyes with Aeacus. “I will give you a secret but not one of the Myth Wood. Zeus is not your father, now be gone.” The Monarch spoke and what he spoke became law.

Aeacus found himself back in the strange Einherjar’s Rest. Standing next to his brother.

In the higher plane of the Myth Wood, Myth’en, all the way at its very edge is a void. It appears as swirling, changing things. Nothing stays the same for long and trying to keep track of it results in nausea and headaches. It is believed that if you look long enough, and can keep from going mad, you will see the Anarch. Not far from this void rests a large black wolf.

Walking towards the void, Rhadaman appears as a tall white-haired man. With a long white beard and wearing red robes. The wolf looks up at his approach but otherwise shows no sign of interest.

“I come to speak with the Anarch.” Rhadaman aimed his words at the swirling void.

“Well, it is good that I am here then.” The voice came from behind Rhadaman. He turned to see a man seated at what appeared to be a desk. The man was dressed in strange clothes that Rhadaman could not make sense of. “Is the three-piece suit too much? I’m never sure if I should dress casually or not for these meetings. Still you can never go wrong with a suit and tie I say.”

The man got up and walked around to the front of the desk and then sat on the edge of it. “Well, you wanted to speak? Speak.”

“My brothers and I...” Rhadaman began.

“Yes, yes the whole ‘judge the realm’ bit. I know. You’re aware that we have no intentions of letting that happen, also it is dull. I expect more from a forced visitation from other realms. No army, no mind control, nothing fun.” The Anarch tapped his foot as if growing impatient. “Tell you what. I will give you all the knowledge you need.”

“That would be wonderful. Please do.” Rhadaman was overjoyed by the turn of events.

“The Einherjar could fight and die, then come back to life. It was because of the mythrainum. To this end they fought a lot and all that went against them, in the end failed. Until they fought themselves.” The Anarch stood again and walked back to his seat. He wrote some in his ledger, then looked up. “Oh sorry I thought you understood. We are done now, you may go.”

“Will you cast me off with a thought as the others do. I will find myself back at Einherjar’s Rest with my brothers?” Rhadaman prepared himself for the shock of being moved.

“Why would I waste my energy on that? You walked here, you can walk back.” As he finished speaking, he was gone.

Rhadaman began the long walk back.

By the time Rhadaman arrived back at Einherjar’s Rest, the three had already communicated the separate encounters telepathically. The only thing left was to decide on a path forward.

I for one think what the Anarch said was some sort of riddle. He is telling us more than the rest and maybe it holds the key. Rhadaman thought.

That is only if he was not outright lying. They admit they have no intention of helping us. Was Aeacus’ response.

I’m not sure they are capable of lying. They seem to be bound by the rules of this realm just like us. Was Minos’ reasoning.

They must be able to lie. The Monarch said Zeus is not our Father. Anger infused all of Aeacus’ thoughts.

Technically he said Zeus is not your father, he said nothing about Rhadaman and I.... Minos’ thought was a mix of humor and smugness.

Let us not focus on that bit of news. I think that was to distract us. Let us focus on what the Anarch said. As always Rhadaman was the voice of unity between the three.

An uncomfortable feeling passed through all three of them. Like the feeling of falling in your dreams.

This has all taken too much time. We should check in on the Guides. I do not trust them. Aeacus’ thoughts were in agreement with the other two. They pushed their consciousness back towards Myth’gar.

Chapter Seven: A Forest of Blades and Crystals

“Nobu, Vala, report!” The looks on the guides’ faces was hard to read, but Aeacus thought it was misgivings.

“Oh great Aeacus, all goes to plan, your judgyness.” Nobu bowed as he spoke.

“No Nobu, it does not.” Vala sounded exasperated. “You want a report, I’ll give you one.” Vala straightened her shoulders and then cleared her throat. “First, the black tokens worked well enough. Cheff got one and turned on all of Brighten Creek. Michael got one and managed to create a cult to the Blackheart. That was sort of good. All the squires rebelled and that was helpful. Tyrrin got one but was quickly cured.

Second, the Monsters corrupted shrines and got the use of magic. That was a little too good because they then ran around destroying outposts. We have not been able to keep a stable settlement since we last reported to you. As of right now, the Squires or the Cultists, not sure what they prefer to be called, have an outpost called Home. The rest of the Crystal Bearers are holed up in an outpost they called New Townland.

Third, they got a forgemaster in Champion’s Fall, but we are more than sure he is working for the Darkness. Which leads me to the subject of the Darkness. Every helpful thing he has given us has backfired in one way or another. The cultists worship the Blackheart, and the monsters do as well. The monsters were even able to create a shrine to this Blackheart.

Fourth, they unlocked the Black Tower. That has unleashed some creature named Hero’Win Mytherin. It is a complete unknown, but seems to like magic users. Turns out any magic user will do though, because it doesn’t care if you’re a Monster or a Crystal Bearer.

Fifth, the Monsters now have crystals too. I have no idea what that is going to do but it is going to be hard to pull memories from the mind of a synchronized monster. Also, they have bad breath. Oh, and the monsters have a leader and he has a Daemon Blade.

Last, but by no means least. They synchronized the chronospheres. That means we lost the use of the spirits. All three realms are now moving at the same speed. But don’t worry, now if we give a gnome a spirit orb they become visible to the Crystal Bearers and the monsters, so we still have hireable labor.” Vala took a breath and paced back and forth a bit. “Oh I almost forgot, some of the Crystal Bearers and monsters were able to ignore the call of the horn. So some of them stayed behind and are trying to live here.” Their report done, Vala started to walk away but looked up and saw Nobu looking at her in amazement. “What?” she asked.

“Nothing oh wise Vala, just that Nobu is amazed you said all that in one breath...well mostly one breath. Do you feel lightheaded?” Vala looked about ready to answer. “Never mind.” Nobu then turned his attention to the judges. “The only truly bad thing to report is that only a few of the Crystal Bearers were able to synchronize with their crystals and that was only a little bit.

The three judges just stood thinking between themselves for a moment. As the minutes went by Nobu poured a tankard of mead and Vala paged through her journals. Finally, the three’s attention came back to the guides.

“We believe the black crystals are the Recarnit’s doing.” Said Minos

“We believe the synchronization of the chronospheres was helped by the Monarch.” Aeacus said with anger in his voice.

“We believe the gaining and losing of outposts was helped by the Anarch.” Rhadaman said. “We were also told by the Anarch that the Einherjar of old could die and come back to life due to the mythrimum in this realm. That in their time they did a lot of this. The only thing that could truly beat them was when they turned on each other.” At the end of Rhadaman’s words the three judges gave the guides time to digest the news.

“So if we want them to synchronize with their crystals we either need them to die a lot or turn on each other?” Vala asked.

The three judges looked at each other. Then turned back to the guides. “Yes Vala, Nobu, we believe that is the answer. We have made a judgment, but not our final judgment on this realm. Myth’gar will become a forest of blades and crystals. The blood of the Crystal Bearers and the Monsters will water the earth of this realm.” The three spoke in unison, and then vanished.

“Well that was creepy.” Nobu commented

“What was? The speaking in unison part? Yeah, a little.” Vala deadpanned.

“I thought you were going to have to spell it out for them there at the end. In fact you kind of did.” Nobu scratched his head as he spoke. “Not the brightest bulbs are they?”

“You work with what you got.” Vala said as she finished updating her journal. “So now what. We didn’t get much for our efforts.”

“I think my dear Vala we will need to play the long game here. Good thing we age so well.” Nobu took another drink from his tankard.

Epilogue: Those Not Seen

Meredith D’Knotts awoke in the small room of the Black Tower.

She had been met by a group of gnomes shortly after entering Myth’gar. They had taken her to a council of their elders. In the meeting she learned that the gnomes were used to seeing members of the church of the Six passing through Myth’gar. However, this year it was not safe.

Two strangers had arrived, Nobu and Vala. They had powers over the gates, and had convinced the gnomes to help them. This did not mean the gnomes trusted them. So when Meredith arrived with the Scroll of Honor, the gnomes knew that they had to keep the artifact out of the strangers hands. To do this they decided Meredith would need to lay low for a bit at one of the farms.

She didn’t mind. Life on the farm was pleasant enough, and the gnomes were gracious hosts. Almost daily, a gnome would stop by with updates on what the Crystal Bearers were up to or about what the new monster were doing. Because the time spheres were out of sync Meredith knew they had nothing to fear from any of them.

Then one day a gray elf showed up. This was a surprise because all the gray elves had either left the Wood or been mutated into monsters. Not this elf. She said her name was Ivolice, and that she was a maid at the Gray Tower. This meant nothing to Meredith but the gnomes put great stock in it.

Ivolice informed Meredith that the Lady needed her to bring the Scroll of Honor to the Black Tower. When Meredith asked who the Lady was, everyone at the farm stopped and looked at her as if she was mad. Yet no one answered her. After much insistence on Ivolice’s part, Meredith agreed to go to the Black Tower.

Once she arrived at the Black Tower things got weird. Magic from the tower mixed with magic from the scroll. Meredith found herself taking on the form of a forest sprite. She was still human in general but now made of wood and twigs. Knowledge flooded her mind.

She was now Hero’Win Mytherin, guardian of the Black tower and avatar to the Mystic.

OttoVon worked the forge in complete darkness. He could hear his master rage in the background, but was trying to stay focused on his latest cup. It was easier to work when one of the Crystal Bearers summoned him to Champion's Fall. Still he was getting the hang of working in the dark.

"I was so close. BUT NOOO! They had to thwart me. The monsters are mine. Mine! I say." The Blackheart raged.

"Yes master, yours, they are yours." OttoVon had stopped trying to have a conversation with his master a long time ago. It didn't matter what he said anyway.

"I know that the Recarnite is to blame. He never liked me... I did try to kill him, but still he never liked me. How dare he give them Crystals. Now they are tied to Myth'gar not Myth'ndher. Still they are mine!" The last bit he screamed.

"Yes master, they are yours." OttoVon had learned when to answer, and how to do it without drawing attention to himself.

"Those Guides are fools. My cult and my monsters will win me Myth'gar. We will redouble our efforts come the spring. I will command two thirds of the Myth Wood, the Six can rot." The rage was passing. The Blackheart sounded pleased.

"Yes, the Six can rot master." OttoVon was not even sure if the Blackheart was still there, but it never hurt to agree with the master. It would be a long winter. OttoVon was looking forward to the spring.

In the higher plane of the Myth Wood, Myth'en, there is a graveyard. Not the copy of Einherjar's Rest/King's Rest, but a forest graveyard. It has black wrought iron fences with a black trellis for its gate. Paths crisscross past the headstones and trees grow where they please. Often if you look into the graveyard you will see the Arbiter hovering next to a headstone.

Never far from the graveyard is Saint Riddick. Appearing as a lean yellow and black hooded man. Saint Riddick guards the way to the Arbiter. Today however is not a normal day.

"What is wrong with her Rokai?" Riddick asks with concern.

"I'm not sure, Riddick. Her power is lessening. Yet they are not leaving the Myth Wood." Rokai spoke while looking over the form of the Arbiter lying prone on the ground. She was becoming less tangible with every passing day.

"What are they going to do about this? They can't let her die." Riddick sounded panicked looking over to the Mystic and the Sentinel who stood off to the side of the graveyard deep in discussion.

"We are already dead Riddick, I don't think we can become more dead. Give her time and she will recover." Rokai sounded sure of himself.

"What do you think Mar...I mean Mystic? Is it the judges that are doing this to her?" The Sentinel fidgeted with his spear as he spoke.

"You can call me Marta, Elric. It is ok to do so. We may be the Mystic and the Sentinel, but they are just job titles. To answer your question. I think it is them but they don't know they are doing it. If they did, they would use it to leverage us to give them what they want." The Mystic adjusted the green pointed hat she wore.

"You're right." The Sentinel stated. "Mephisto wants to destroy them, and I tend to agree with him. I have never seen the Monarch so angry. If he commands me, I cannot disobey." The Sentinel did not look like he wanted to disobey.

“I understand your feelings, all of your feelings, but we cannot. If we destroy them it will only be a matter of time before others come looking. Besides if we hurt them we could hurt Sekhet... the Arbiter. Now you have me doing it.” The Mystic was frustrated. “I have my avatar now. Maybe we can work with these Crystal Bearers and gain the upper hand?”

“It is not like the old days Marta. The Crystal Bearers are not Einherjar, they are not what we were.” The Sentinel seemed equal parts sad and proud.

The Mystic looked over to the prone Arbiter, and the others. “Maybe they are not, but in time they could be better than we ever were.”

Crystal Bearers

Crystal Bearers, do not enter Myth'gar lightly...
neither in heart, nor mind.
Nor should you exit it lightly.
You will leave a piece of yourself behind.

Protect and defend Myth'gar
Protect and defend your Soul Crystal
Protect and defend other Crystal Bearers
Protect and defend your Honor;

Battle is your Honor
Your skills and abilities are your Honor
Your Magic is your Honor
These are the duties of a Crystal Bearer.

Sometimes the cost of Myth'gar exceeds what we could ever think to pay.
And whether it be recognized now, or in some distant time,
or not at all...
This is the price you pay.

So if you are found worthy, do not enter Myth'gar lightly...
neither in heart, nor mind.
Nor should you exit it lightly.
For you will leave a piece of yourself behind.