

Darnit gets taken away again to talk to General Arrow about some ideas the General wants to run by him.

Cleveland has invited us to the Halls of Heorot.

Now that we're back in the camp, Carlos is in Ego form (and was the whole time in camp).

Most of the camp has been torn down and cleaned up. The General's HQ is one of the last remaining.

The site where the floating island was was the Whidmore operation on Magmus. In the post-mission debrief, we were told this, as they told us this was the illegal operation they were here to stop, though they said it in such a way that its legality may have been a contention.

Dorinda's mask has proximity sensors for Whidmore, and he is not on Magmus. She was certain he was, but is no longer. We considered scouting the fallen encampment, but with Whidmore no longer around we decide to go to the Halls instead.

At Heorot, it's filled with people having a blast. All else is the same though, each room having its thing going on.

When Ego arrives, there's a shining glittery waterfall that drops right in front and Peppermint appears.

"Check out what I can do!"

Peppermint is super high energy, very excited.

We thank Peppermint for the phoenixes.

"What can I get for you all!"

Ego: "Got any Iron Castle beer?"

"Never heard of it, but you can head to the mead hall!"

Hrothulf: "Could you fill my flask with bourbon?"

"Gladly!", and fills it from his finger.

Dorinda thanks for Wren. Says we had a vision of a phoenixes and a towering, kind of modern, iron castle. Peppermint doesn't seem to have any special information though. Just reached out to Wren as his bird guy.

Izar asks for the pool to be brownie batter. Peppermint says "Yes! Give me 15, lemme get the tapioca crew through their rounds, then I'll hook you up."

Among the visitors, about 60% magmen. Lotta elves, half-elves, humans. Some others. Pretty normal spread.

We expected a little more, but the occasional Freelander recognizes us and gives props. Seems like either by ignorance or other, most people don't really seem to recognize us.

Ego decides to make herself look particularly nice and head to the mead room in hopes of getting info from some intoxicated folk.

Dorinda goes to the combat arena.

Hrothulf goes to the meats kitchen.

Izar heads to the hot tub-ioca.

Dorinda walks into the room and a handful of Freelanders yell, "Fresh meat! You coming in?" to see if she wants to spar. It's simplified, a lot of arm wrestling, a battle royale, there are some bets being placed. Dorinda goes for it.

Hrothulf is successfully duped to fill out the short-order cook line, and he just gets mesmerized slapping together reubens and philly cheese steaks, and all kinds of epic sandwiches. When we find him later he's still going at it.

Ego is doing her best Jessica Rabbit

Mentions a town that rings a bell as Hrothulf's growing up place. Buddy Jethro(?) got paid some sweet credits under the table doing a job for not-sure-who to make a huge tower thing and they shipped it from Jethro's place to Southrenheim. Building something new. "You know girl, I could take you down there \*wink\*."

"Oh that would be nice we could make a real day of it," Ego flirts. "Let me get you another drink." She buys another, hoping he'll fall asleep as he's started to. He mentions the rooms upstairs hinting at a romp in bed. Falls asleep while he does and she tries to sneak away, but he pulls her in instead.

Izar gets a bath of brownie batter and lots around him are enjoying it. He's asking about places of worship here and any weird arcana stories. Maybe more about Hrothulf and his weird (bloodthirsty) family. But mostly... Izar is here to PLAY!

He's bouncing around asking Magperson after Magperson. Hears of a northwestern kingdom. A queen lady who fancies herself a snake goddess. She was someone they suspected was potentially in league with Whidmore, but the intel ran dry after a while and they left her at a "Probably not associated". While looking for others of power and influence, it was more difficult to get info from the south, Hrothulf's family heritage lands, because no one was willing to say anything, too afraid of the new king in town. He's been eradicating all of his siblings. He's kind of untouchable, should probably avoid him, has people scared out of their minds, has dirt and manipulation over everyone in that kingdom. No recourse now, but as soon as they have some info they'll have to get a bigger army.

Izar asks what his defenses are like.

That whole kingdom has been nomadic for generations—tent folk—but he's locked them to a single plot and doesn't allow them to move. Their way of life has been turned upside down.

Nothing terrible ecologically so they haven't taken action, but suspected of working with Whidmore.

Asks about an iron castle.

They say that sounds on point actually.

About snake lady, Izar asks if she's old, what color she is.

Didn't seem that old. Orange-y yellowish. She looks Huan-ti, but warm colors because she part of the Salamander race.

After Dorinda has successfully pinned her fourth combatant, she's really frustrated none of them have tapped out and she had to resort to pinning. She has a sizable fan base offering to by beverages. A lot of people have won good money on her. She decides to change strategy and start placing some bets on other combatants, looking for underdogs she can bet on where she can perceive an advantage. She figures the people competing might not be the best to talk to, so she uses gambling to insinuate herself into conversations instead.

Her betting goes *very* well.

She's largely asking about Whidmore, but also broaching iron castles, magical fauna like phoenixes.

She learns as soon as the boom went off, his personal bots—fancy red ones—jumped ship. He had his own personal floating island, so they knew as soon as the boom went off he was gone, and they're not sure where he went. She asks about his connections on planet. These people are more convinced the salamander queen didn't have motive, though she had the influence and Whidmore was doing the work in her territory. But she was bizarrely a passive agent, totally out of character for her. She's usually very involved in running her kingdom, but Whidmore plopped in and she just let it happen. But they just wound up unconvinced she was actually involved. No money trail, none of the offworld backers' money was going to her.

Dorinda asks more about her.

She's in the northwestern quadrant. She's fierce and fearless. Not mean, but pretty controlling. But her only son has gone missing and they're not sure what happened to him.

Dorinda suggests maybe Whidmore kidnapped him. They don't seem to have thought of this. Unsure how he'd do it, but say maybe so.

Asking of phoenixes, he's told of sunbirds. 3-ft wingspan. In their migratory season now, doing nesting in a southern migration now. They have yellow/orange/red feathers, camouflaging here, a common delicacy here.

Hrothulf notices all the pickled veggies for the sides are spontaneously refilling. It's great. He doesn't have to quick-pickle anything.

We rendezvous in the meat room. Tip jar overflowing, Hrothulf donned in apron and hat, very much in his element. He's conscripted two sous chefs to help. He's working with Cinder, who used to be a waitress in a diner, and Blaze, a magman with frosted tips in his spiky hair who is in awe of Hrothulf's skills. Hrothulf is happy to coach them and help them improve their skills. Asks about their part in this endeavor.

Cinder is a data analyst mostly. She's not great at talking about it. She can work a spreadsheet like none other and predominantly has focused on the lava movements and potential impacts on Whidmore's operation on that. She thinks Whidmore would have had some significant detrimental effects but is glad he was stopped. She says they're indebted to Hrothulf's work here—she knows about his part.

Blaze goes in, blows stuff up, got to wrestle one of the bots. Thinks they're weird. He's a grunt. Ex-military with the Confederation, just happen to be behind a gun.

Dorinda tries to snap Hrothulf out of his focus. Asks whether Watermelon's Wail is in good shape.

The group finally finds Ego, held by this half-asleep Magman, practically begging her to take him upstairs. Dorinda helps extricate Ego. Hrothulf pulls the Magman away.

Ego moves behind Hrothulf out of site and turns to Carlos.

To Hrothulf: "You buzzkill. You're the worst. No wonder you're not the king!"

Hrothulf laughs, goes like he's going to pat him on the back, and instead slams his face into the bar.

He bounces back up, three teeth missing.

"That's right! Beat up the peasants just like your little brother does."

Hrothulf takes him to the sleeping room, brings his teeth in a glass of milk and a glass of water next to that and tucks him in. "Good night, sweet prince. May you rest well and dream of fiery women."

Carlos turns back to Ego. "My hero!" she says, joke flirting with Hrothulf.

Izar finds that here with the nomadic communities, they don't really set up temples so much as spiritual experiences. Journeys in the wilderness, sweat lodges, etc. Not a lot of formal religion, though plenty of religious people. Only the six solid lands might have small plots of high elevation points where the lava has cooled enough. They're pilgrimage points.

Peppermint pops in: "So what do you think of my new place? Isn't it great that there are so many people!? What would you change? What could be better?"

We suggest a game room. Arcades, d&d, a larp room.

She's getting ideas, glitter is bursting forth from Peppermint as she focuses, the cloud pushes into the ceiling and half one of the rooms is now a free arcade. She makes an announcement and Pacman dots appear to guide people to the room.

Dorinda asks what Peppermint knows about the salamander queen in the northwest quadrant. Peppermint is entirely focused on the party though, just says he hasn't seen any salamanders here. He's totally neutral. Says Charlie Whidmore was one of the best things that ever happened to him. Hopes he tries terraforming another area. Look at the business!

Dorinda shares what she learned about the Salamander Queen, says she sounds like someone we ought to talk to. Maybe we can help her find her son.

Ego tells of the castle Jethro's been working on. Izar shares what he learned of the matter too.

We decide to investigate the Salamander Queen first.



We consider our transportation options. We prefer to avoid being scanned, as we would be on public transportation. We consider purchasing a Frelander vehicle, but land on finding transport on a fire sailboat.